

29. Meyer, Marvin W., *The Secret Teachings of Jesus; Four Gnostic Gospels* (Vintage Books 1986)

I picked this book up to have quick access to the four main Gospels created by the Gnostics. In his introduction, however, Meyer makes several statements germane to the topic of the relationship between Gnostics and the earliest Christians.

Page 3 of this book is the first page of *The Secret Book of James* and has this description that seems very likely to be a true accounting of an actual event, but perhaps not with the author of this book present. Here is how he imagined, however, that the disciples acted after Christ's death and resurrection:

The twelve disciples were all sitting together, recollecting what the Savior had said to each of them, secretly or openly, and organizing their recollections into books. I for my part, was also writing my book.

Of course there would be nothing to say in a secret book if it ended there, so the next line is:

Behold, the Savior appeared, He had left us, and we had been watching for him.

Then comes the dialogue and in it are some pretty fascinating tidbits about becoming as Christ and being saved for the sake of those who are to be born in the future, etc. I found it interesting reading, but as Meyer says in his introduction to these four books of the Gnostics, the first three of the four may include genuine sayings of Jesus. Even so, however, they are added to or otherwise put into a context that makes them fit into and be supportive of the Gnostic religion.

Meyer's introduction of Gnosticism and Christianity covers materials already covered in previous books reviewed and essentially agrees with them. These were second century works with older traditions about what Jesus said incorporated. Some of the later material is more clearly Gnostic. Like Crossan, Meyer suggests the Kingdom sayings may be genuine. He also suggests the parables in three of the books may be genuine. Genuine in this case meaning they reflect stories and saying coming from Jesus.