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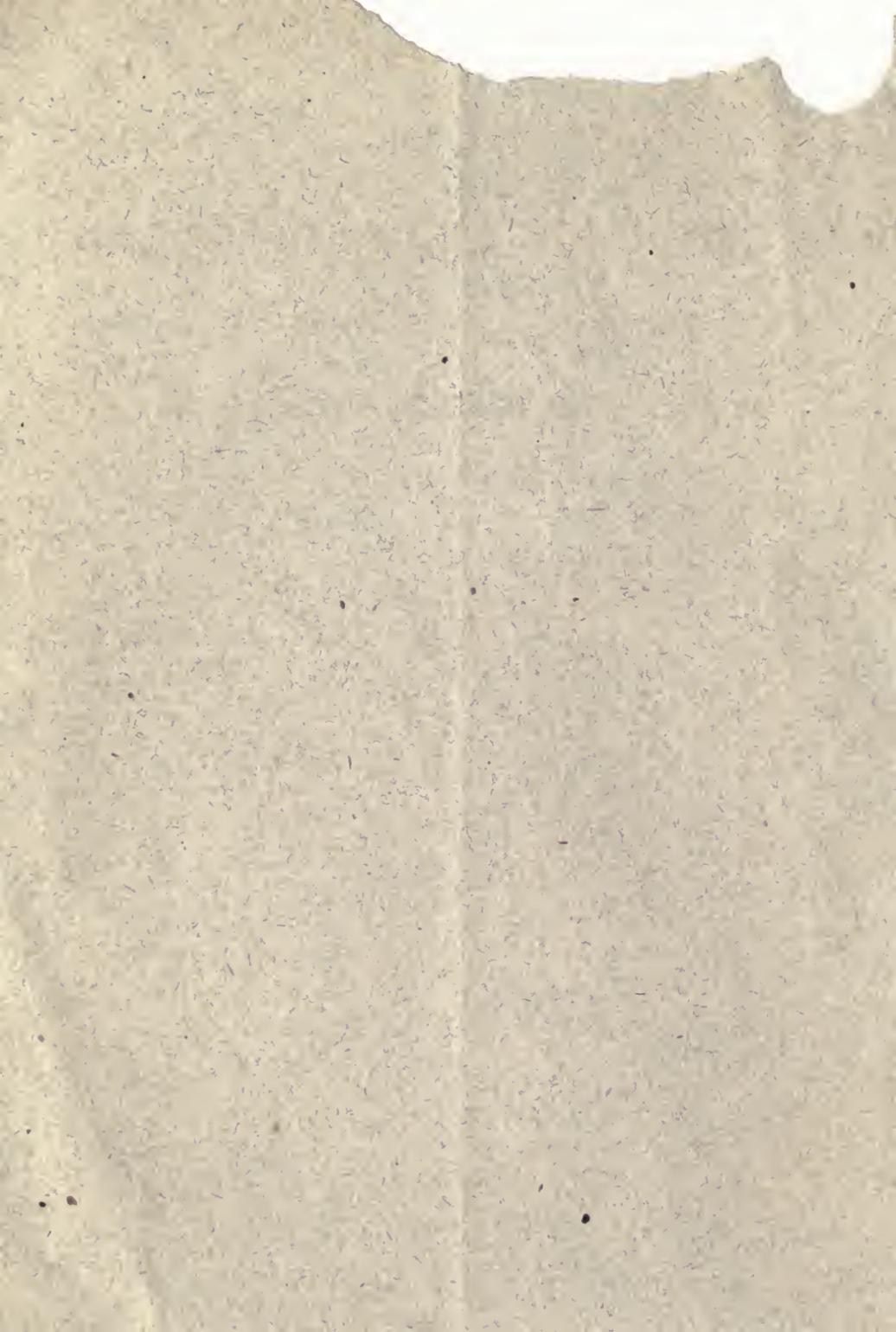
Dr. Frankfort

Patristic and Talmudic Studies.

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# Patristic and Talmudic Studies.

FROM THE GERMAN OF DR. M. FRIEDLANDER.

BY JOSEPH KRAUSKOPF.

MOSAISM AND PLATONISM.

The writings of the fathers of the church of recent centuries differ widely from those which appeared in the times of the first teachers of the new faith. While the former offer too much shade, the latter present more light. Although occasionally, Janus-faced, glancing very fondly with one eye into far distant regions, ogling the heathen world, from which they had not yet entirely severed their connection, yet the other eye was exclusively devoted to us, and with it they looked at us so charmingly pleasant, so faithfully true, that we could no longer bear any grudge against them. Still we could not oblige them so much as to accept that Platonic love with which they wished to make us happy. Plato had won them completely, had ensnared them with his highly poetical philosophy. Intoxicated with this Platonic draught, they turned to the Jewish Mysteries and—singular! before their deluded eyes stood their Plato, his very self. How came he in these works? How came this heathen Saul among the prophets? This burning question had to be answered and an answer was soon found. Plato—so the answer ran—had attended the Jewish schools, had studied thoroughly the Mosaic law, and had translated it into his beloved Greek.\*

This seemingly harmless phrase became in course of time a firm basis, on which the fathers of the church built a powerful, religious, philosophical system. A bridge between this side and the other was thus found; nay, it had existed long ago, but the deluded people could not see it. According

to this discovery, Plato's divine philosophy originated in the Mosaic law; it was, therefore, holy and could no more be forsaken. It was now an invaluable treasure. The Jewish law naturally felt itself highly flattered and much rejuvenated when it heard that such a glorious scholar as Plato had derived all his philosophy from its source. With this new adornment it could display itself, with great advantage, among the philosophers of heathendom. From this forcible union of Mosaism with Platonism new products arose, which departed from the doctrines of both, and which made every possible effort to cause confusion in both, and finally boasted of having refuted the arguments of spuriousness and apostasy which had been made by both.

## REPROACHES MADE AGAINST CHRISTIANS BY JEWS AND HEATHENS.

The heathens, namely, reproached the Christians—as the fathers of the church repeatedly report—that they have frivolously turned their back to all the customs and manners of their fathers, to precipitate themselves into the ocean of Jewish myths and fables; that at the same time they neither worship the God of the Jews nor practice their laws; that they have adopted a path, shunned by both, to which neither Greek nor barbarian traces lead.†

The Jews considered it very presumptuous in the Christians that they, as strangers and renegades from a heathenish camp, had dared to attack the religion of their fathers in an insolent and shameless manner.‡

\* Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. ix. 6. Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. i.

† Ib. Lib. i. 2; Lib. xvi. So also says the Jew of Celsus Orig. Contr. Cels. Lib. ii.

‡ Præp. Evang. i. 2.

Because—thought they—if a Christ really had been foretold in their sacred writings, it was done by Jewish prophets, and these would have promised him to Jews alone and not to other nations. What else of good and beautiful had been promised concerned the Jews alone; the Christians, however, committed great wrongs in claiming for themselves all that had been promised to the Jews exclusively; that they committed irreparable wrongs by basing these promises on false rendering of Scriptures.\* Their manner of hunting with eagerness after every evil that had been proclaimed against them and of flinging it into their faces whenever a chance presented itself, they considered highly disgraceful, and as a still greater outrage did they regard their marvellous silence about all those bright and joyous promises for their future, or, when obliged to speak, their taking it all for themselves. This was the greatest folly of all, so contrary to all human reason, to claim for themselves the rewards promised for the observance of the Mosaic law, to which they never adhered.†

Who will deny that these reproaches, results of sound reasoning, had their full authorization. It is, indeed, a very presumptuous act to invade a strange, entirely unknown region, to snatch it from him who possessed it for thousands of years; to destroy the old, juicy plants and in their stead plant a variegated, fascinating imitation of a plant, imported from distant regions, and moreover to force the unhappy possessor, not only to disavow all claims upon his ancient inheritance, but also to compel him to deny it most emphatically and to exert himself to his utmost to bring natural and unnatural proofs that this state of affairs, which had just now been established, has already existed for ages, thus what the murderous knife with his own hands to extinguish with it the spark of life, and dying to exclaim: Thus has God decreed it in His holy writings centuries ago! It is self-evident that at such impertinent demand the Jew exclaimed with the prophet: "I had a vineyard on a rich hill-top and I fenced it in and cleared it of stones, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in its midst and also a vine-press I hewed out therein, and I hoped that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth—worthless fruit." Or was he not obliged to oppose the impetuous invader with the words of the same prophet: "When ye come to appear in my presence, who has required this at your hand to tread down my courts?"

These reproaches, made by the Jews against the Christians of the first centuries, based on good reason, and the mutilations of Scriptural passages from the hands of the Christians, were still not of such a nature as to cause ill will or a spirit of persecution among them. How striking is the contrast between these representatives of Christianity and their fanatical and persecuting successors? The former were people endowed with humane feelings and imbued with a sacrificing love for their neighbors of different persuasion, whose only fault existed in revelling upon the open and dangerous sea in a tottering, loosely-constructed vessel whose sails were filled with religious enthusiasm, and all this with the firmest conviction that they possessed the safest compass and the most infallible basis.

How could it be otherwise? Filled with the Platonic philosophy, were they not completely overcome when they thought they had found the same doctrines in the Old Testament? They could hold back no longer. They poured as much of their holy ardor as could be obtained over the heads of the indifferent Jews. "One must be a Jew," exclaims Origenes in ecstasy, "to be contented with the natural sense of Scriptures, here is deep philosophy hidden everywhere."

#### BIBLE ENTHUSIASM.

Although both adhered with the same fervor and devotedness to the Old Testament, yet they could not understand each other. There existed between both parties differences somewhat similar to that which is manifested in the indolent, miseducated, sentimental city dweller, and the sober, unsophisticated farmer who toils in the sweat of his face. Place the former in a luxurious rural district and there is no limit to his admiration; his frantic enthusiasm finds no end; he loses himself gradually in this revery, climbs to its misty heights further and further; the ground beneath him seems to reel; he notices it not; his excited phantasy has transplanted him from reality. Partly with compassion and partly with disgust he regards the farmer below who, in the midst of such sublime scenes, pursues his prosaic vocation without sharing his ecstasy, who even turns aside from him who indulges such indolent enjoyment, and absorbs himself in his healthy labor. This reminds us very forcibly of the following words of Germany's great poet, with which he addresses a metaphysician, who is very conceited of his own wit:

„Wie tief liegt unter mir die Welt!  
Raum seh' ich noch die Menschlein unten wallen,  
Wie trägt mich meine Kunst, die höchste unter allen,

\* Praep. Evang. i. 2.

† Ibid.

So nahe an des Himmel's Zelt!"  
 So ruft von seines Thurmes Dache  
 Der Schieferbeder, so der kleine, große Mann,  
 Hans Metaphysikus, in seinem Schreibgemache.  
 „Sag' an, du kleiner, großer Mann,  
 Der Thurm, von dem dein Blick so vornehm  
 niederhaut,  
 Wobon ist er—worauf ist er gebaut?  
 Wie kamst du selbst hinauf—und seine höchsten Höhen,  
 Wozu sind sie dir nützlich als in das Thal zu sehen?"

As this metaphysician, so the fathers of the church looked from the heights of their Platonic Bible enthusiasm at the prosaic Jews, who, situated in a God-like paradise, contented themselves with a very plain, strength-nurturing diet, who could not be induced to partake of the delicious nectar and the eternal youth-conferring ambrosia, so bountiful on this misty height, who even preferred the piece of healthy bread, the result of their own handiwork, to all their fabulous, celestial manna, which vanished into nothingness as soon as it was brought into clear sunshine. The fact is the Jews were and remained rational in their religious intuitive vision. They also understood the loose game of Bible exegesis, but with them its influence was never more than that of a game. The very essence of their existence, namely, monotheism, was not to be touched, else their kind disposition and good nature was at an end. And it did come to an end when the apostles of the new doctrine, who, infatuated with the Platonic philosophy, would get scent of a new philosophical system in every word of the Old Testament, forced themselves among them, disputed with unheard of audacity with their teachers, and criticised their actions in a shameless manner. The method of training the old, monotheistic religion to their new systems found no attentive ear among the Jews. Such a method could never promise itself a popularity among that people. Traditional Judaism has denied its own sons who had tried to accomplish this. The Aristoboles and the Philo, whom the fathers of the church raised to the very sky, and whom they blindly followed through thick and thin, are entirely ignored; Talmudic literature has nothing to report of them. The great mass knew them not and the present generation knows them scarcely by name. They have rendered great service to heathenism, to whom they opened the Jewish treasures, but none to Judaism, which had philosophically evaporated under their handling. But of this we will speak later.

We said that the fathers of the church during the first centuries stood in very close relationship with Judaism, and this existed

in their clasping the Bible with all their might, considering it the purest, holiest and most divine source, from which issued their own religion. No Jew has ever believed the divine origin of the Bible more positively and more devoutly than these; no one has made greater efforts to have it promulgated and to find recognition for it from all sides. They have delivered the Jewish literature to the world, have sent forth many streams from the Mosaic source. And with what incessant diligence is its praise spread. The whole Pagan literature is attacked by them, only to bring evidence of the truth and the old age of the Old Testament. Poesy and prose is rummaged to gain, perhaps, some slight spark which will speak for the ancientness of Judaism and its literature. And when they discovered but an *ignis fatuus* of very doubtful luster how intensely is it entreated to loan for but a few moments its flaring light. It is quite perceptible that self-love was the main agent that prompted them to this glorification of Judaism; for it is self-evident that, if it is once shown that the Jewish root is beyond any doubt an ancient, healthy, age-defying radix, the trunk issuing from such a primitive form must necessarily be strong and entitled to great hopes.

EUSEBIUS CITES GRECIAN AUTHORS WHO SPEAK FAVORABLY OF JUDAISM.

This continual activity of the young church in playing the mediator between heathenism and Judaism is demonstrated so clearly in the case of Eusebius that there is no difficulty in pursuing the course of this new doctrine through the stages of its preparation, development and ultimate result. The charges preferred against Christianity by the pagans, that they had blindly surrendered themselves to the Jewish mania for miracles, had to be, if not entirely removed, greatly weakened, and this could only be accomplished by producing indisputable evidence of the infallibility of the Jewish religion. If they succeeded even by finding but a few straws in the heathen literature for support, their position in the eyes of the pagans would be far more favorable.

With this object in view, Eusebius says in his preface to the ix. volume of the *Praep. Evang.*: "It is high time, since it has been proven already that the Jewish oracles were not heedlessly accepted by Christianity, but only after mature consideration, to show that Judaism with all its organization was well known to the most renowned Grecian authors, that some showered praises on them while others even pursued a similar theology."<sup>e</sup>

<sup>e</sup>Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* vol. ix preface.

"We shall necessarily have to show," he continues, "that many Grecian authors make mention of the Jews and Hebrews as well as of their philosophy, which flourished even in early times. This fact will explain that not without counsel and judicious circumspection have we concluded to prefer the Jewish philosophy to that of the pagans."

The manner of proof is, indeed, very primitive. Passages are cited from Porphyrius, which he again had copied from older authors, and which sound so heathenish that the deceived mind can discover therein nothing else but a glorification of the Jews. Very curious stories are frequently told of them and of their ways of life regarded with heathen eyes, and from this standpoint highly praised. Among other matters their sacrificial culte is very definitely spoken of. Their sober and ascetic manner of life is very emphatically mentioned. Special praises are bestowed upon them, because "on certain holy days they devote themselves entirely, throughout the whole day, to their God (which is very appropriate for a philosophical sect), and in the evening with upturned eyes, looking at the stars, they offer praise to their God" (Lib. ix. 2). Further proofs for his assertions he finds in Hecateus, "who does not only distinguish himself as a philosopher, but also as a social man," and who had dedicated a volume to Jewish history. Whatever he reports has reference to external appearances alone, which clearly shows us that he never had an insight into the internal development of the Jews.

We find verbose descriptions of the country, city and Temple. Special mention is made of the fact that an image of a god, a grove or any similar emblem of idolatry can nowhere be found; that the priests take an active part in bringing the offerings; that they were, moreover, forbidden the use of wine. In conclusion he narrated an interesting story, in which the hero is a Jew, who has highly distinguished himself for being entirely free from prejudice.

An important discovery, and one which was of great service to Eusebius, he believes to have been made in the peripatetic Clearchus. But Eusebius was not aware that the passages of this author had been interpreted before by Clemens of Alexandria (Strom. i.). Clearchus finds passages, even in Aristotle, in which honorable mention is made of the Hebrews. "What I have to tell you about this subject," thus Clearchus makes his great philosophical beginning, "will seem to you very strange and peculiar."

Here he tells us of a most excellent Jew, who in customs and language was entirely Grecian, and whose acquaintance Aristotle

had accidentally made in Asia. There many philosophers frequently met, questions of great importance were discussed, in which this Jew had rendered greater service to these sages than they had to him.

Having finished with Clemens, Eusebius begins with Numa, King of Rome. As a follower of Pythagoras, he said, he copied from Moses the manner of divine worship, prohibited his subjects every plastic representation of the deity, and taught them that God can only be conceived as *spiritual*, never as *corporeal*. This is the cause that the Romans during the first one hundred and seventy years, though building many temples, never decorated them with any likeness of the deity.

Passages like these are for the fathers of the church invaluable treasures, and they gather them with unceasing diligence. When the Pythagorean philosopher, Numenius, ingenuously drops a word about the relationship between the Platonic, Jewish and Egyptian philosophy, or when he says that the prayers of Moses had great influence with God, then the rejoicings of Eusebius and his colleagues are beyond description, and, with many thanks, they accept these confessions from heathen sources as the most reliable proof of the divinity of the Jewish religion (*ib. L. ix. 5*).

Poetry also was rummaged, and the discoveries in this branch of literature were valued much more since they originated in the works of one of the oldest poets, Chceribus. According to him, the Jews had accompanied Xerxes in his expedition against Greece. He reports them to be a people wild and fear-inspiring; their language sounds like the Phoenician; their home is in Solymis, near the great swamp. Their repulsive head, shorn all round, strikes terror into the lines of the enemy; instead of a helmet they wear the smoked hide of a horse-head.

Whether this description, which is certainly not very flattering to the Jews, is true, of course we can not say. The fathers of the church were allured by the antiquity of this poet, and his reference to the Jews had to be noted. Their only motive in citing this passage was the geographical position of their country, which left no doubt but that the Jews were really meant. (*ib. 9.*)

Not yet had the power of demonstrating the good old age of Judaism reached its highest point. Gradually were they approaching to that triumph, a success which, in their wildest expectation, they never hoped to realize. Until now, great men had spoken favorably of Judaism, but all these were only men. How, now, if a god opens his mouth and gives certainty to their claims by

his own mentioning of the Jews? How, if Appollo himself, is full of praise of Judaism in his oracles, how then? Did not this give the heathen theory that the Christians had precipitated themselves into the ocean of Jewish myth and fables—a death blow? And Appollo has really spoken so, and Porphyrius had learned it by listening, had carefully marked all his words, and had arranged them, so that as soon as the fathers of the church had need of them, they might be ready for use.\*

PROOFS THAT THE GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY IS DERIVED FROM JEWISH SOURCES.

The little we have said so far will, perhaps, suffice to show what steps the church took during the first few centuries, in order to approach gradually, its ultimate object, Christianity. The next ardent wish was to prove that Jewish theology is the oldest, and that all philosophy originated therein. The entire tenth volume of the Praep. Evang. treats of this subject, and nearly exhausts itself in endless quotations. The Greeks are here frequently accused of plagiarism, they are charged with a want of originality, that they borrow from other nations, that their alphabet even was a foreign invention. "It is established," so thinks Eusebius, "that Cadmus, who first taught the Greeks grammar, was a Phœnician, which fact explains why some of the ancients call the letters Phœnician. But these were not invented by the Syrians, as some maintain, but by the Hebrews. At the very first glance we notice a striking resemblance between the names of the Hebrew and Greek alphabets. But since each letter of the former contains a hidden meaning, an important signification, which fact can not be maintained of the latter, it therefore proves conclusively that the letters of the alphabet are not of a Grecian, but of a Hebrew origin."

Now the twenty-two letters of the alphabet are scrutinized one by one, out of each separate letter a meaning is forced, then an experiment is made with three by three, four by four, and so on in every possible manner that any sense could be forced by means of combination.

"Anything similar to this"—so Eusebius closes this favorite subject, of which he speaks again (xi. 6)—"you can not find among the Greeks, and you can not help but admit that the facts which I have so far laid bare clearly show that the alphabet is not the possession of the Greeks, but of the Hebrews; that the former had secretly taken them from the Jews, and with but slight changes transferred them to their own

language. What difference is there between Alpha and Aleph, Betha and Beth, Gamma and Gimmel, Delta and Daleth, Zeta and Zai, Theta and Thet? This assures us, beyond doubt, that the alphabet is of a Hebrew origin and not of a Grecian, since each letter has sense and signification."†

By this discovery Eusebius makes considerable of an advance toward establishing his views. He has now reached such an elevated point that he has a clear view on all sides and can therefore work with greater ease. If it is once clearly settled that many Grecian authorities spoke favorably of Judaism, if it is beyond all doubt that its antiquity reaches far beyond any other religion, if finally the honesty of the Greeks in literary affairs is questioned, if they are even caught at numerous thefts, then is he a happy Archimedes who has found a standing place outside of the earth, from which position he may lift her out of her hinges and suspend her by the smallest spider's web.

PLATO, A PUPIL OF MOSES.

"If then"—so Eusebius says, who places us *in medias res* with the speed of an arrow—"if then, the Greeks coincide in their views with those of Jewish theology and of the prophets, we can not be in ignorance for a moment in what quarters we must look for the original. The thing to be well considered here is, whether the older took their views from the younger, or *vice versa*. Whether the Hebrews derived their views from Grecian philosophy, which they were not at all versed in, or whether the Grecians borrowed theirs from the Hebrews, whose literature they well knew, these Greeks who, moreover, studied with the greatest energy the customs and organizations of most nations." (Ibid. x. 8.) And now we are literally drowned in a flood of proofs, whose object it is to show that Plato philosophizes in numberless cases like Moses. Eusebius takes any passage out of the Old Testament, expounds it, enlarges on it, unconsciously passes a Platonic idea into his interpretations, and then he rejoices in finding that Plato teaches precisely the same as the Old Testament. A few examples will illustrate this novel way of expounding. Eusebius finds in the words (Gen. i. 26): "Let us make in our image," the doctrine of immortality of the soul, as he continues in his philosophy: "The substance of the soul must be immortal, because the soul has been created in the image of God." What other meaning does image and likeness of God convey but the imitation of the qualities

\*Ib. 10 Just. Cohort. ad Graec. c. 25 ed. Otto.

† Praep. Ev. Lib. x. 5; Lib. xi. 6.

and virtues of God? And now he is already deep in Platonic philosophy, and exclaims, as if surprised by its own shadow: "Exactly the same, Plato teaches in his Alcibiades, so that one imagines he hears a pupil of Moses." (Ibid. Lib. xi. 27.)

When Plato further says: "As for the study of law, the younger disciples should not be permitted to form their own opinions concerning it, or be allowed to criticise the same. They should regard it as sacred and inviolable, as if it were dictated by the Deity itself. But if any of the older ones find therein something too difficult to understand, then let them consult the representatives of the law, or with their associates, to which discussions the younger disciples must not be admitted" (de Lege i.). So is also this an old practice among the Jewish savans, from whom he had copied it. As a proof of this, Eusebius, as well as his predecessor, Clemens of Alexandria, quotes a verse from Jes. 7, out of all its connection and falsely interpreted, which in Greek translation reads: "If you do not believe you will have no understanding;" and another similar verse from the 115th Psalm: "I believed, therefore have I spoken." These Platonic-Biblical precepts, says our guarantor, Christianity also has adopted, since this branch of sacred writings could be more readily grasped by the yet young members of the new faith. To enter deeper into it requires maturer age. In fact, Eusebius is very anxious to deduce all Platonic views of the education of children from the Old Testament. Poor Plato! Let him but stir and they are pursuing him hard with the Biblical whip. "I know," says Plato, "that the beginning of everything is of great importance, and we must, therefore, have regard for the tender child, whose mental faculties are open to every impression and which can so easily be harmfully trained. Must we then tell the child all sorts of tales and fables? By no means. We must, on the contrary, examine carefully the material to be narrated, must make a judicious selection by putting aside all that is not suited for a child. The collection of stories, gathered in this manner, must be handed over to parents and nurses in time with special instructions, to recite them continually to the child, so that the development of mind and body keep equal pace," etc. This view, the result of plain and honest thinking, is again considered by the fathers of the church, as copied from Judaism. "Since we all know that gifted men and prophets, imbued with the divine spirit of the Lord, had taught the same, and that, moreover, Jewish parents and educators had long since pur-

sued this plan, had laid a good foundation to a beneficial education by reciting to the children the stories and events of the Old Testament and from which they hoped the very best results." (Ibid. xii. 5.)

Every other remark of Plato upon this subject is similarly treated. When he recommends that an interest should be aroused in the child in its earliest infancy for that subject which shall be its profession when it grows to manhood, that is, let the child play with the plow, build houses, etc., if it is to become a good farmer or a successful architect; that the child by play and profitable amusement must be gradually advanced to the reality and to usefulness; then again no credit is given him for his original researches, he has again copied from Moses, who says: "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." And even the following words of Plato: "Under discipline I understand that virtue in which the child has perfected itself first of all. This virtue will enable it, should it be overpowered by a passion of any sort, to select the right path, hate the evil and love the good." Also these simple words we find in the much older Psalmist, which are supposed to convey the same meaning: "Come ye children, hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."

#### PLATO'S VIEWS ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD DERIVED FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The similarity in the Platonic and Biblical views concerning the creation of the world present to Eusebius by far the greatest opportunity for displaying his childish dilettanteism. Here he not only discovers a similarity in thoughts, but also in expressions. Moses says: "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night and also the stars. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth." To this the following words of Plato are placed in close connection: "The word and the cognizance of God have discovered the course of the sun, moon and the five other planets, to serve as determinations and separations of time, and God created and fixed them for the purpose of remaining faithful to their courses."

"Here you plainly see," exclaims Eusebius, joyfully, "that the words of Plato correspond entirely with those of the Old Testament." He says nothing more than that which Moses said long before him: "By the word of God the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all his hosts." And when Moses says, "And God placed them in the firmament of the heaven," etc., then Plato writes, "And he fixed them for their course," etc. (Ibid. xi. 30.)

We will follow no further this critical father of the church in his stray wanderings, because it is in the first place too fatiguing, and in the second place the examples which we have mentioned will amply suffice to answer our purpose. If we now consider the amount of proofs, gathered with the greatest trouble and labor, we find that two questions oppose themselves upon us; first, why did not the fathers of the church adhere to Plato, whom they loved to such an extent as to make him a pupil of Moses? Secondly, why did they not content themselves with him rather than throw themselves into the arms of "his teacher?" Both questions can be answered from one standpoint, if we but take a hasty glance at the condition of the heathens during that time the riddle is solved.

#### PLATONISM THE STEPPING-STONE TO CHRISTIANITY.

Heathenism with all its myths and fables had come to an end. No one would believe in it any longer. Olympus with its gods was left in the lurch. People had begun to look at this unapproachable sacred mount with critical eyes. This old religion could weather the storm no longer; a new one was expected to rise, Phenix-like, from its ruins, and this hope could only be realized by the aid of philosophy. But since the great mass was unable to climb to her misty heights, Madame Philosophy saw the necessity of coming down to them. But where was the teacher who understood how to make this divine spark the common possession of all? Thousands wasted time and labor, but not one succeeded. Christianity has accomplished it. On the part of the heathens every possible instrument was set in motion to mould out of the various philosophical systems a popular religion, but there was none more suitable for that purpose than the Platonic-system. Here they found a great, an all-embracing deity, which could be easily divided into three powers, each of these again could, without any difficulty, be transformed into a god, and thus both the thinking and unenlightened classes were highly gratified. The former saw in this

classification but one God, whose universal power they subdivided, in order to get a clear comprehension of his infinite greatness; the latter shaped it into a trinity to suit their former worship, polytheism. These still saw three divinities, for they abhorred the idea of one God. One God, though they, is as good as none; (*unus den nullus est.*) Such results were all they expected. This fully assured them, that philosophy alone could release them from the bonds of superstition and despondency, that only this would succeed in forcing into the background the wide-spreading nihilism, and thus inspire the old now discredited myths, with new hopes and rejuvenated vigor.

#### PHILOSOPHICAL DILETTANTEISM.

A new life began to unfold itself now. There was a running and a racing from one philosophical sect to another. Everywhere an unquenchable thirst manifested itself, not for knowledge, but revelation. On account of this change, shallow and greedy sophists swelled with pride, and caused their pupils to follow them obsequiously. But the pupils at length grew tired of their overbearing masters; they forsook them and sought refuge with some other benighted sect. The heathen philosophers, who had gradually climbed to the highest point of knowledge, alone found peace and comfort in their earnest studies. Philosophy, they thought, was that branch of science, which, alone could make them happy and blessed. Not so contented was the great mass of hot-headed disciples, who were forever changing their schools as well as their philosophical systems. They wished to obtain the much desired result with the greatest possible speed, and wherever an obstacle hindered their progress, they looked for an experienced guide to help them across. These were men with restless heads, flaming hearts and an enthusiastic phantasies. They were, therefore, corrupted philosophers, being discomposed by the numerous systems, they remained superficial thinkers.

#### HILLEL AND THE HEATHEN.

The slow progress they made in the rugged path that leads to knowledge discouraged them. They yearned for revelation and as they found it not, they wandered from school to school until they sank, exhausted and weary at the door of Plato to regain their former strength through his doctrines. Thence to Christianity was but a short leap. Very characteristic of this period, is the story narrated in the Talmud, of the heathen who requested of Hillel to be taught the Jewish religion, while he could stand on one

leg. This is no exaggeration, it simply illustrates how eagerly they longed for revelation, and what steps they took to procure it. Even the mysteries of other sects were resorted to, since their own could no more pacify their yearnings. The answer which our teacher gave to this absurd question is highly important. It shows us how well he understood those people. He knew that their passionate enthusiasm would entirely evaporate before they had accomplished the first half of their journey. They were aspiring to the grand result, but dreaded to perform the necessary work. He could not dismiss him without a word of comfort. He therefore gave him what he wanted, and what he conscientiously thought to be the essence of Jewish religion, namely, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," "every thing else," said he, "is commentary to this verse.\*

THE AUTHOR OF "THE RECOGNITION" AND JUSTIN MARTYR DESCRIBE THEIR ADOPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

These proselytes from the various Pharisaic philosophical schools were the actual builders of the church. This is by no means our individual view alone. Let us but read the confessions of the first fathers of the church, and all that we have said so far will be fully corroborated.

The author of the Recognition, whose name is Clemens Romanus, writes: "For a thought within me, whence originating I can not tell, led me to constantly ponder on my mortal condition and to discuss such questions as these: Whether there be any life for me after death, or whether I am to be wholly annihilated; whether I did not exist before I was born, and whether there shall be no remembrance of this life after death, and so the boundlessness of time shall consign all things to oblivion and silence, so that we shall not only cease to be, but there shall be no remembrance that we have ever been. This also I revolved in my mind, when the world was made, or what was before it, or whether it has existed during all time. . . . While I was continually revolving in my mind these and such like questions, I was pining away wonderfully through excess of grief. . . . Having, therefore, such a bent of mind

from my earliest years, the desire to learn led me to frequent the schools of the philosophers. There I saw that nought else was done save that doctrines were asserted and controverted without end, contests were waged, and the arts of syllogisms and the subtleties of conclusions were discussed. . . . And I was all the more tortured in the bottom of my heart, because I was neither able to lay hold of any of those things which were spoken of as firmly established, nor was I able to lay aside the desire of inquiry. . . . What, then, shall I do? This I shall do: I shall proceed to Egypt and there cultivate the friendship of the hierophants or prophets. . . . Not to make a long story of it, whilst I was tossed upon these billows of my thought a certain report, which took its rise in the regions of the East in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, gradually reached us. . . . For it was spread over all places, announcing that there was a certain person in Judea who was preaching the kingdom of God to the Jews, and saying that those should receive it who should observe the ordinances of His commandments and His doctrine. And that his speech might be believed to be worthy of credit and full of divinity, he was said to perform many mighty works and wonderful signs and prodigies by his mere word; so that, as one having power from God, he made the deaf hear, and the blind see, and the lame stand erect, and expelled every infirmity and all demons from men; yea, that he even raised dead persons who were brought to him, and that there seemed to be absolutely nothing which was impossible to him. . . . About the same year a certain man, standing in a most crowded place in the city, made a proclamation to the people, saying: "Hear me, O ye citizens of Rome. The Son of God is now in the land of Judea, promising eternal life to those who will hear him, but upon condition that they shall regulate their actions according to the will of him by whom he hath been sent, even of God, the Father. Wherefore turn ye from evil things to good, from things temporal to things eternal. . . . Now the man who spoke these things to the people was from the regions of the East, by nation a Hebrew, by name Barnabas. . . . Learning of these things, I began, with the rest of the multitude, to follow him and to bear what he had to say. *Truly I perceived that there was nothing of dialectic artifice in the man, and that he related without craft of speech such things as he had heard from the Son of God or had seen.*"†

חוד שבוע כוכבי אהד Sabbat 31 א \*

שבא לפני שמאי א"ל גייריני עימי שתלמדני כל התורה כולה כשאני עומד על רגל אחת דחפובאמת הכנין שבידו. בא לפני הלל גייריה א"ל דעלך סנ לחברך לא תעביד זו היא כל התורה כולה וארך פירושה הוא זיל נמור

† Recog. Lib. i., c. 3: Igitur cum a prima aetate in hujus. emodi animorum intentione versarer, cupiens

This confession clearly shows how easily these shifting philosophers were satisfied, how little their head, and how much their heart wanted, and how correctly Hillel had criticized their abilities. Let us now look over the account which Justin Martyr gives to Tryphon of his adoption of Christianity. "Philosophy is, in fact, the greatest possession, and most honorable before God, to whom it leads us and alone commends us; and those are truly holy men who have bestowed attention on philosophy. What philosophy is, however, and why it has been sent down to man, have escaped the observation of most, for there would be neither Platonists nor Stoics, nor Peripatetics, nor Theoreticians, nor Pythagoreans, this knowledge being *one*. I wish to tell you why it has become many-headed. Those who first cultivated it (*i. e.* philosophy), and who were therefore esteemed illustrious men, were succeeded by those who made no investigations concerning truth. These latter only admired the perseverance and self-discipline of the power as well as the novelty of the doctrines. Each thought that to be true which he learned from his teacher; then, moreover, these disciples handed down to their successors their derived ideas, and others similar to them; and this system took its name from the originator of the doctrine. Being at first desirous of personally conversing with one of these men, I surrendered myself to a certain Stoic. Having spent considerable time with him, without acquiring any further knowledge of God, (for he, himself, did not know, and deemed such instruction unnecessary), I left him and betook myself to another. This man was called a Peripatetic, and fancied himself shrewd. And having entertained me a few days, he requested me to settle the fee in order that our intercourse might not be unprofitable. Him, too, for this reason I abandoned, believing him to be no philosopher at all. But since my soul was eagerly desirous to hear the peculiar and choice philosophy, I went to a Pythagorean, very celebrated—a man who thought much of his own wisdom. And when I had expressed my willingness to become his hearer and disciple, he said, "Well, are you skilled in

music, astronomy and geometry? Do you expect to be able to perceive any of those things which conduce to a happy life, if you have not been first informed on those points, which wean the soul from sensible objects, and render it fitted for objects which appertain to the mind so that it can contemplate that which is honorable in its essence and that which is good in its essence? Having commended these branches of learning, and explained their necessity, he dismissed me when I confessed my ignorance. Accordingly I bore it rather impatiently, as was to be expected, that I had failed in my hope, the more so because I deemed the man had some knowledge; but reflecting again on the space of time during which I would have to linger over those studies, I was not able to endure longer procrastination. (Dial. c. Tr. c. 2. (ed. Otto.) *In my helpless condition it occurred to me to have a meeting with the Platonists, for their fame was great. I, thereupon, spent as much of my time as possible with one who had lately settled in our city,—a sagacious man, holding a high position among them—and I progressed, and made the greatest improvement daily. And the perception of immaterial things quite overpowered me, and the contemplation of ideas furnished my mind with wings so that in a little while I supposed that I had become wise; and such was my stupidity. I expected forthwith to look upon God, for this is the end of Plato's philosophy.* (Dial. c. Tr. c. 2. (ed. Otto.) And while I was in this state of mind, wishing once to be alone with my thoughts, I went into a certain field not far from the sea. And when I was near the spot, a certain old man, by no means contemptible in appearance, of meek yet venerable mien, followed me at a little distance."

This old man straightway kindled a desire in his soul for Jewish philosophy. By this he easily procured a passage for Justin which led from the Plato to the Prophets. After some debating *pro* and *con*, the object of which was to lead Justin's vain efforts *ad absurdum*, he presently began to plead with all his oratorical skill in behalf of the Jewish prophets. For at the close of his converting speech, he says: "There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings

aliquid discere, philosophorum frequentabam scholas, ubi nihil aliud quam dogmatum adsertiones et impugnationes videbam agi sine fine certamina artes syllogismorum conclusionumque agitari versutias, etc.

Ibid. c. 4. 5 sqq.

Ibid. c. 7. Quibus ego auditis, cum reliqua multitudine sequi eum coepi et audire, quae se diceret. Intelligebam sane quod nihil aliud uicæ artis esset in homine, sed simpliciter et absque ullo dicendi furo, quæ audisset a filio dei vel vidisset, exponeret.

are still extant, and *he who has read them is much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know, provided he has believed them.* For they did not use demonstration in their treatises, seeing that they were witnesses to the truth above all demonstration, and worthy of belief; (Dial. c. 7.) and those events which have happened, and those which are happening, compel you to assent to the utterances made by them, although, indeed, they were entitled to credit on account of the miracles which they performed since they both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and proclaimed His Son, Christ." etc.

Such words easily persuaded this lone-brooding Platonist. Unexpectedly he found the man who pointed out a bright future for him and the road that leads to it. With great eagerness and zeal he threw himself into this new ocean of thought in which a new world arose before his eyes. He himself describes in the following manner the impression the old man's words left upon him. "But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the Prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher."

MOSES AND PLATO, FAVORITES OF SENTIMENTAL PHILOSOPHERS.

Justin could not possibly have spoken clearer. He could not have afforded us a better insight into all his thoughts and into the manner of his conversion. He shows us how he entered with trembling impatience the vestibules of the various schools without, however, advancing further, because the one was too superficial in its teachings, the other too greedy after gain, the third demanded from the applying pupil, a too thorough preparation, which, of course, he did not have at all, and to acquire it, he lacked entirely the necessary zeal and patience. Finally he is accepted by the Platonists; there the yearning after knowledge is appeased. Sporting on this wave of flattered hopes and pleasant dreams, he was gradually undulated to the broad sea of "Jewish Philosophy." Thus the fathers of the church substantiate on all sides, that Moses and Plato coincide throughout, and are not as foreign to each other, as appears at the first glance.

The expression, "Jewish Philosophy," which we have quite frequently used, is by no means an arbitrary adaptation of our own. The Jewish literature before and after

the Christian period was to the Heathen, as soon as it ceased to be looked upon as a *terra incognita*, the substance of all that, which was termed "Philosophy." The Alexandrian Schools are entitled to the credit of having made this most happy discovery. Since the time when Aristobol labored to show how Plato had extracted his philosophy with the most unscrupulous discretion from Jewish literature, how much of the Pythagorean system was drawn from these sources, how many songs and flowers of rhetoric, even Orpheus had plucked from the garden of "Jewish prose and poesy." Since then there was no end of comparisons. This was carried to such an extent, that the further they advanced on this purely imaginative path, the less space they had, until their foothold at length disappeared entirely, and hypotheses, fluttering in the air, were accepted as incontestable truths. We must but hear Philo's views on this topic. He is so much overcome by this mania that he makes every philosopher of Greece a pupil of Moses, "whose doctrines are highly esteemed, not only by Jews, but—which is the more amazing—also by those whose reputation for wisdom is of great renown."\*

And after some remarks concerning the contempt in which the Greeks and Barbarians held other religions, and even their own, he continues. "But not so with our law, this has secured for itself the devotional adherence of Jew and Greek, continent and island, the orient and occident, Europe and Asia, in short the whole inhabited world."

This view did not remain isolated. Educated heathenism has partly accepted it, and has made it current. We soon see well known biblical personages step to the front and become pillars of the highest wisdom. Special reverence was paid to the Patriarchs. They were considered men who had sipped knowledge from the purest springs. Of Abraham it was affirmed that he surpassed all the others in wisdom, and that he had invented astrology.†

The names of these patriarchs became consequently so familiar to the heathens, that they were even used in the formulas of the magicians. (Orig. c. Cels. L. iv.) The emperor Julian himself, who considered the prophets wicked and unworthy of their

\*Compare Dahne, d. jud.—alex. Religious—Phil. I. S. 78, sqq.

†Eupol. ap. Euseb. Praen. Ev. Lib. IX. 6.

Even, the Talmud knows something about Abraham's occupation with Astrology. *Sabb. 156 a.* And says at the same time, that God had dissuaded him from it. Since, such a science has no value for the

great God, repeatedly shows the highest respect and veneration for the patriarchs. He says: "Although I am not one of those who celebrates the Jewish feasts, I nevertheless worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who originate from the sacred theosophic race of the Chaldeans, and who worship the God that is great and mighty, and who is gracious to those who like Abraham revere him." And in another place he asserts that the Heathens worship the same God as the Jews, but only under different names.

Thus we see how the Heathens sought approaches everywhere, how they made comparisons wherever an opportunity presented itself. The sole object of all this was to form a union between Heathenism and Judaism, and this was entirely accomplished as soon as the Jewish religion was elevated to the dignity of Philosophy. *For now could the heathen also run as easily from a philosophical system, that did not please him, to Jewish philosophy, as he formerly wandered without scruple or difficulty from one sect to another.* All that it required, was to regard this new philosophy in the light of their old one, interpret it as they previously did, and Christianity was a completed actuality. Yet of all ancient philosophers, Plato is the only one who afforded the easiest and surest passage to Moses. Both not only spoke a very winning phantasy-exciting language, but the substance of their teachings is suited to human necessity, it engaged the heart more than the head, it dips the abstract ideas too difficult for the understanding into the warm blood of the heart, and makes them tangible as well as visible, gives them form as well as color.

Wie einst mit glühendem Verlangen  
Phygmalion den Stein umschloß,  
Bis in des Marmor's faßte Wangen  
Empfindung glühend sich ergoß."

So both embraced with lover's arms the marble cold ideas, until they began to glow and re-animate in the bosom of these bards. Those ever agitated questions concerning the creation of the world how coldly have they been treated, how inconspicuously have they been solved by these greatest philosophers of antiquity! These knew no pity, no sympathy for mankind. In cold, overwhelming words they unveiled their bare truths. According to them, the world has existed from eternity, man is a mere product of nature, a little better organized but not entitled to special claims. What a painful consciousness for a heart agitated by a burning mania for miracles! This was despair instead of solace. In this icy world Moses and Plato seemed like a well warmed room in

the winter, which, though but dimly lighted by a little lamp, still gives comfort to its pious inmates, who severed all intercourse with their fellowmen, and who in this half-darkness, feel much more comfortable than those outside under the bright, but cold winter sun. This comfortably furnished and heated cell affords peace from the restless, unsatisfactory racing along the various regions of science. Deceived in their wild anticipations, they now feel inclined to confine their vessel to the still and quiet waters of their faith.

Plato and Moses! These were men, who, inflamed with the wish of elevating mankind, based all their efforts upon the ardent zeal in making them happy. They entertained, therefore, their own views about the creation of the world, by which the How? and the Where? can be readily seen. They did not teach like Thales, that the world was created from water; not like Anaximenes, that the universe was produced from air; not like Heraclitus, that nature was caused by fire; not like Epicurus and Democritus, that the earth was developed from atoms; not like Empedocles, that the globe was generated from the four elements; their theory is not gray, it is the golden tree of life, on which hang the choicest fruits and to enjoy them, we have but to pluck them. They taught that by emanation, the great Deity itself sent forth a second principle, which he placed as a medium between Himself and the world which was to be created, in order to create everything by this means; "on account of which, the Jews named this principle, "The word" *Logos*, or *Wisdom Sophia*, often "Divine Power" *Theou dunamis* — [Præp. Ev. L. vii, 12]. This, the fathers of the church claimed, is very manifest in the Old Testament. The frequent "God said" demonstrates clearly that the "Word" of God created all things. (Præp. Ev. L. vii, 12.) While these heathenish half-philosophers Platonize thus in the Old Testament, they are already in the midst of Christianity, and propelled by the force of this newly discovered truth, they instantly sought to convert the remaining blind world to their faith, a task, which as a whole was not difficult to perform. For as the great mass of the uncultivated Heathens revered Jesus on this account, because he seemed to them more powerful than any one of their gods, so also the philosophers raised the Jewish religion to the very skies, because they expected to find therein the best philosophical system.

It has already been mentioned, that at the time, when Jesus made his first appearance, the Heathens anticipated from philos-

ophy a positive as well as a benefiting religion. But those Heathens who could boast of a mind of their own, and who had received a thorough education, could not be induced to take part in erecting an edifice, placed on a religious philosophical basis, and which was destined to suit all classes of people. This opposition was quite natural, for, on the one side, they felt confident that they could find in their own philosophy anything that any other religion, even the best, could offer; on the other hand, their whole being revolted at the profanation of this divine wisdom. They would never permit, that their sublimest treasure should be surrendered to the mercy of a frenzied rabble, that it should be placed before the most uncultivated like the daily food. This induced Celsus, Porphyrius and Julian to oppose Christianity with all the force at their command. "Your religion," says Julian to the Christians, suits all classes of society, as much the merchant as the toll-gatherer or the dancer, whose pursuits differ so much, and who are nevertheless guided by the same religion." These men, trained in the old philosophical school could never dream of creating a national religion. This is therefore the work of those sentimental philosophers who judged more with the heart than with the head, who sympathized with the necessities and miseries of the people.

They were philosophers of the people, who united the language of the heart with the well-known scientific methods of the various schools, and thus formed a league, by which they completely defeated the most important philosophers of the Heathens. "They beat us," says the same Julian, "as the proverb says, with our own weapons, we permit them to murder us with our own swords."

#### PLATO AND THE TRINITY.

Let us now continue to follow our leader to the very keystone of Christianity upon which everything depends—we mean the Trinity which rises like an immense beacon between Judaism and Heathenism, in order to invite those who are tossed about on both sides in the stormy sea to take part with them in the safe harbor of their faith.

All those numberless praises lavished on Plato, the boundless reverence paid to the Hebrews and Moses, all those colossal stones of buildings gathered from the most distant places were to serve but one purpose, namely: *to form unyielding pillars for the Trinity-monument, "a column which has existed from eternity and which has outlived ages"* We shall not examine whether Orpheus has actually taught the Trinity in his songs,

whether Pythagoras in his philosophy—as the fathers of the church maintain—but so much is undoubtedly true, that Plato has imparted to his best pupils, in a most careful and sacred manner, the doctrines of the Trinity. The manner in which the church applies every word of this philosopher, turning and twisting it in every possible way, marks the violent road which they pursued from the earliest times, and on which no obstacle was too great for them.

We must naturally ask ourselves: *How came this heathen philosopher to the most sublime of all revelations, how came it that he taught a similar Trinity and yet differed from the Christians in the third cardinal point?* But instead of receiving a plain answer, the fathers of the church, by modifying his doctrine, give it a very popular form and maintain just the contrary, namely: "And if any one will attentively consider the gift that descends from God on the holy men—which gift the sacred prophets call the Holy Ghost—he shall find that this was announced under another name by Plato in the dialogue with Meno. For, fearing to name the gift of God, 'the Holy Ghost,' lest he should seem, by following the teachings of the prophets, to be an enemy of the Greeks, he acknowledges, indeed, that it comes down from God, yet does not think fit to name it the Holy Ghost but 'virtue,' (Aretay) (Justin Cohort. ad Græc. c. 32).

But in reality what has Plato taught on this subject? Well, in general but very little, but more than sufficient for these phantastic, hypothesis-seeking philosophers. His pupils, especially the latter ones, precipitated themselves with a violence of a soul despairing and yearning after revelation upon this portion of the Platonic philosophy, expanded it as much as possible, extended it to all sides, so that gradually there appeared a very pleasant, plastic tangible system. And as the Trojans, in former years, entered triumphantly their city, rejoicing with the direful gift of the Danaï, without having the least presentiment, that from this Grecian present woful sufferings would ensue, so also the Platonic Jews, mounting the three-headed philosophical Pegasus, galloped with it into Jewish literature, not giving a moment's thought that by this seemingly harmless sport, the heart of Judaism must be rent assunder. There they stood now, wedged between door and jamb. Larger grew the rent, more injurious the confusion, wider and wider expanded the yawning commissures—a crash—to pieces fell the doctrine of the unity of the Old Testament, and through the crumbled waste stalked boastingly Polytheism—reduced to three Godheads. Such results the

Aristobules and the Philos have brought about with their Plato.

Before answering these Jewish-Alexandrian philosophers, let us first hear what Plato and his school have to say. Speaking of the world as a creation of the most god-like Logos, Plato, (in Epimenide) says: (*Hon Kosmon etaxe Logos Ho Pantown Thiotatos*), and in another place he speaks of a God that governs past, present, and future, the Father and Lord of the beginning, as: (*Hegemonos Kai Aitiou Pater*). This causes Eusebius to make the following joyful exclamation: "This is evident that Plato reasons from Jewish standpoints, otherwise, how else could he describe that other God as the highest of all things and as the Father of the superior leader? How could he possibly address the Father of the Demiurgos with the title Lord, when no Grecian author before him has ever done the same?" (Praep. Ev. xi. 16).

A letter of Plato to Dionysius, written in mysterious, awe-inspiring words, affording thus unlimited space for diverse interpretations, is by far the most important document on this all absorbing question. He speaks of a mighty King of the Universe (*Pantown Basileus*) for whose sake all things have sprung forth, and who is the cause of all good (*Aition Hapantown Kalon*), and he mentions moreover a second and a third principle. In these words of Plato, the fathers of the church find the doctrine of the sacred Trinity repeated in the manner in which Jewish literature had taught it, (Praep. Ev. Lib. I. xviii, xix, xx: VII. xii.) But since these read Plato with commentary prepared by his own pupils, we think it will not be unprofitable to make a short review with the reflective reader of the writings of the latter, and thus be enabled to follow more closely the course which this doctrine had taken for the final development of Christianity.

#### THE NEO-PLATONISTS.

Plato has taught—in his own words which have just now been quoted—his Trinity in a hazy outline. Misty as it was, it nevertheless attained great favor in later years, and the less it could be understood the more it excited the minds of his pupils. These explained those mysterious words, that the first Almighty God and cause of all good has produced by emanation the second, called *Nous*, and this again the third, called *Psyche*. This interpretation gradually gained its ground: They soon accustomed themselves to consider these qualities which, though but spiritually conceived by this great teacher, yet, nevertheless belonging to

one and the same deity, as three God-heads differing in person, being fully assured at the same time that Plato never meant anything else by this mysterious doctrine. So also Plotin confesses that his explanation of these mysterious words of Plato is not original, but was the common opinion of many before him. (Praep. Ev. 18, 19, 20. vii. 12.) The Genesis of this holy Trinity is very evident to him. Fire transmits its heat to surrounding objects. Snow confines not the cold to itself alone, but shares it with neighboring things. The same can be applied to all odors. The sun sends his rays through all the universe, without suffering the least loss of heat. In a similar manner—so he philosophizes—we must think of the first deity, which, by emanation caused the second, and this again the third.

Numenius treats the Trinity more plastically still. Yet he does not seem to care much about the third god, and his novel style of speaking of it attracts the attention of even the fathers of the church. Not one of them knew what to do with him. The Platonic school had of course afforded the easiest ascent from earth to heaven, from the material to the abstract by its doctrine of the Trinity. This ladder of ascension, while gradually expanding in its lofty height, until it merges in a potent, self contented deity, a purely spiritual, no longer conceivable God, it contracts in the same proportion beneath, until it falls to the ground with the substance to which it gave life and motion; and while the two divine beings are, in their activity in continual motion, the God above enjoys the most perfect and undisturbed peace and rest. He is the great King, who on account of fear, lest he might lose some of his dignity, dare not depart from his sphere, or descend from his aerial abode to come in contact with Hyle beneath. Therefore He has His servants who represent Him everywhere. He is the sun, which does not leave its orbit, but sends His rays to every part. He is the source from which emanates the Logos, the all-pervading spirit of the universe, so that they bring into reality His thoughts and execute His will. "There is not a doubt, whatever," says Numenius, "that the highest God keeps aloof from labor, and is the King of the world, that the world-creating God in his passing through the heavens, guides and arranges all things. (Praep. Ev. 18, 19, 20. vii. 12.

#### THE JEWISH PLATONISTS.

Just as the Neo-Platonists found their God, far distant from Hyle, who was every where represented by his Demiurgos, in the works of Plato, so the fathers of the church

found their Deity and his assistants in the Old Testament. Let us see how Justin expresses himself to a Jew, regarding this question: "You must not imagine that the unbegotten God himself came down or went up from any place. For the ineffable Father and Lord of all, neither comes to any place, nor walks, nor sleeps, nor rises up, but remains in His own place, wherever that is, quick to behold and quick to hear, having neither eyes nor ears, but being of indescribable might; and He sees all things and knows all things, and none of us escapes His observation; and He is not moved or confined (*Oute kinumenos*) to a spot in the whole world, for he existed before the world was made. How then, could He talk with any one, or be seen by any one, or appear on the smallest portion of the earth, when the people of Sinai were not able to look even on the glory of him who was sent from Him.....Neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any other man saw the Father and ineffable Lord of all, and also of Christ, but [saw] Him who was according to His will His Son, being God, and the angel, because He ministered His will..... Him they saw. (Dial. c. Tr. e. 127.)

Numenius, who has done his good share in the erection of this Trinity edifice, understands the relationship between the highest God, and His ministering Demiurgos to be the same as that which exists between the landowner and those who till the soil for him. The first God, the source of all life communicates this to the Demiurgos, who has been summoned to His immediate presence. This one again arranges and sifts this emanated life of God and transplants it on earth among men. (*Phuteuei kai dianemei kai metaphuteuei eis hemas hekastous.*) Numenius assigns to Demiurgos a situation of a mediator between Heaven and Earth, God and men. He is the messenger of the gods whose head extends into Heaven, where he receives all necessary instructions from the first God, and with his feet he touches the earth, to which he gives life. He is the pilot on high sea who steers the boat with the rudder, yet at the same time he has his eye turned to the sky to learn from its appearance the course to be taken.

This is the manner in which Numenius explains this emanation. All things earthly when given away, prove two facts, loss and gain. While the receiver gains, the giver loses. Not so with divine things. Here the giver loses nothing, while the receiver gains. If one imparts to another some of his learning he himself loses nothing by the operation, but the other gains. Similar is the case with light. This can be im-

parted to another body without sustaining the slightest loss. Just so has the second god proceeded from the first, without causing him any loss of his former power. (Praep. Ev. 18, 19, 20, vii. 12.) This Emanation theory of the Platonic school was universally adopted by the fathers of the church.

Justin Martyr gives the following account of the production of the Logos: "I shall give you another testimony, my friends, from the Scriptures: that God begot before all creatures a Beginning [who was] a certain rational power proceeding from Himself *dunamin tina ex heautou logiken*) who is called by the Holy Spirit, now the Glory of the Lord, now the Son, now Wisdom, now an Angel, now God, now Lord and Logos; and on another occasion, He calls Himself Captain.... He can be called by all names, since He ministers to the Father's will, and since He was begotten of the Father by an act of will. It is the same with ourselves; for when we utter some word we beget the word, yet not by abscission, so as to lessen the word which remains in us, when we emit it. So, also is it in the case of a fire, which is not lessened when it has kindled another, but remains the same; and that which has been kindled by it, likewise appears to exist by itself, not diminishing that from which it was kindled." (Dial. c. Tr. c. 61.) And in another place he says, "This power was begotten from the Father, by His power and will, but not by abscission, as if the essence of the Father was divided; as all other things partitioned and divided are not the same after as before they were divided. For the sake of example, I took the case of fires kindled from a fire, which we see to be distinct from it, and yet that from which many can be kindled is by no means made less, but remains the same." (Dial. c. Tr. c. 128.)

Thus the school of Plato had gradually succeeded in fully establishing a doctrine of a Trinity. One thing was still lacking to make it a complete success and to gain the full approval of the lower classes, and that was the "corporality" of these deities, with which they were wont to recognize their former Gods. But how came this doctrine into Judaism? For the fathers of the church maintained that they knew it and even revered it as the highest dogma. It stands to reason that they would not base their new faith on Heathenism, especially since they thought that they had fully proven Plato's theft from Jewish literature. The first fathers of the church discovered a Trinity doctrine in the Platonic school, and to give the new church a solid foundation,

this discovery had to be used as its substratum. But they also understood that it would be a cause for perpetual accusations, if it once became known that the strength of this new building depends on heathenism. They saw the necessity of making the groundwork from much older and more worthy material. Nothing was more fitted to be the bearer of this theory than Jewish literature of gray antiquity, the source of Plato's thoughts and views. This would be quite a gain in reputation for their church as well as for Jewish literature. But who was it, who taught that Plato's Logos could be found in the Old Testament, and thus kindled a torch for the founders of the church, by the aid of which a whole philosophical system could be brought to light? They were Alexandrian Jews, who for a long time had thirstily imbibed all their nourishment from the fountains of Grecian philosophy, but without rejecting Judaism, to which they clung with the fondest love. It was the most difficult thing for them to choose between Moses and Plato. They had to declare themselves for both, and they soon found—since they absolutely wanted it—that both had taught the same.

This foreign philosophy was to Judaism what a light in a dark night is to the comfort of a blind man. Although, notwithstanding, he has a light in his hand, he sees nothing, yet others see him, and this consciousness procures for him more safety and quiet. So also the Jewish philosophers in the beginning could see nothing in spite of their borrowed light. But gradually they deluded themselves into the belief that their Plato was akin to the Old Testament, and though they saw nothing in spite of their boasted farsightedness, yet from this experiment there arose an advantage of no small importance to men exterior to them, who began to notice and to observe Judaism, transfigured under the Platonic light. Aristobul already had made every possible effort to harmonize the doctrines of Grecian philosophers with those of the Old Testament, and moreover, to establish that the former were taken from the latter. So he says among other things that the divine voice is not an ordinary one, serving the winged word alone, but it is a creator of works, and in the same sense Moses conceived this divine voice, for it is said: "God said and it was done." Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato were also in unison as regards this view, when they maintained "to hear the divine voice." (Ap. Euseb. Praep. Ev. L. xiii. 12.)

THE LOGOS OF PLATO.

Here we have already the Logos of the

Old Testament in a misty outline. In the same manner we meet it again at another occasion, where Aristobul identifies it with the *Sophia* of Solomon, and, in his arguments against the Peripatetics maintains that *wisdom* had sat in the Council of God before the creation of the world, and that Solomon had explained it much more beautifully and more precisely than they. (Ap. Euseb. Praep. Ev. L. vii. 14.) By this identification of the *Sophia* with the Platonic Logos, Aristobul showed the way to the Christian Logos sooner than any one. Philo on the other hand sought to transmit the Platonic imagination to Jewish literature in a more systematic manner. These men of course had the very best intentions at heart, but were so involved in their preconceived opinion, that they sincerely believed to follow the footsteps of sacred truth, while in reality they indulged the sweet allurements of revelry. With eager hand they dug after treasures and shouted joyfully when they found rain worms. Their greatest aim, to prove that the powerful Platonic God, too unconceivable for the human mind, far removed from matter, was the God of the Old Testament, caused them to overlook the greatest blunders which they made. Keeping this aim in view and approaching it step by step, they could not notice in their ardent zeal, that the ground beneath them became more and more unstable. They watched with the greatest care the unapproachableness of their great God, would not even for a moment let him come in contact with the "desecrating Hyle," gave him Logos and Logi as attendants, so that these should, as divine attributes, execute all that was necessary. Actions like these estranged them at length from Judaism without their knowing it, without their wishing it. For, while the clear-minded Jew, not afflicted with this manner of Platonism, looked upon his God as the Creator and Maintainer of the world, the philosophical Alexandrian Jew tortured himself with his Platonic principles, and considered it nothing less than blasphemy to bring the Highest Being in connection with matter. The unity of God was thus destroyed by him. In the same proportion as they became estranged to Judaism, they approached Christianity. A passage from Philo will illustrate this statement. It refers to a word of the Bible, and it will on the one side afford us a clear insight into the way of thinking of a traditional Jew, of an Alexandrian Jew, and finally of a father of the church, while on the other side it will give us some information of the sad fate of some passages of the Old Testament, and of the metamor-

phoses they had to pass through, until it could finally be put aside as perfectly Christian. This following Hagada teaches how great a difference existed between the real Jewish way of thinking and the Philonic sentimentality. When Moses imbued with a divine inspiration wrote the Thorah, and when he came to the passage: "Let us make man in our image," he started up with terror and would write no more. His whole being resisted such an expression of plurality, and he began to accuse God, who dictated these words to him, that His divine unity would sustain heavy blows since men would conclude from these words that there are more than one God. "But the Almighty"—so it continues—"was not confounded by his objection, he insisted upon his writing down the fallacious words, saying to our lawgiver that he cared not for those who wished to mistake: Let him blunder" said he, "who wants to blunder."\*

This is the sound and unsophisticated Jewish way of thinking. They pass by without paying any attention to the resultless philosophical investigations, and trouble themselves not the least about those who are busily engaged in those researches. "Let him blunder," they say, "who wants to blunder."

Entirely different is Philo's way of thinking. He also is surprised when he reaches the passages. "Let us make man," etc. But his surprise is not like that which the legend attributes to Moses. While the latter is inconsolable that he must write down these fatal words, the former exults in finding them. For he philosophizes with Plato that God is too sublime to come in contact with the material. The Highest Being was not permitted to create man. Man consists not alone of the divine light of heaven, the soul, but also of the sinful part, the body, and how was it possible, that God could ever be the cause of anything bad. This Moses himself teaches when he says that at the creation God spoke: "Let us create man," which denotes that God required the help of others, so that if man does what is right and just it can be attributed to God, if otherwise, to his Co laborers.†

כותב משה שהיה בשעה Genesis Rabb. 8 \*

את התורה היה כותב מעשה כל יום ויום כיון שהגיע לפסוק הזה שנאמר ויאמר אל' נעשה אדם כצלמנו כדמותנו אמר לפניו רבון העולם מה אתה נותן פתחן פה למינים אתמהא אמר לו כתוב והררצה למעות יטעה.

It can easily be imagined what use the fathers of the church make of this passage. Their triumph is a still greater one. With joy they reach their hand after that *ignis fatuus* of Philo, and find, "that the first cause had a consultation with the second cause *i. e.* God and His Son, about the formation of man. For, it is a self-evident fact that if one speaks, he must speak to some one, if one command somebody, this addressed, commanded person must be a body distinct from him who speaks or commands.\*

This passage gives some representation of the various changes of a Bible passages before it could make its last appearance as a corner stone of the Christian church.

Notwithstanding all his mistakes, his views, are nevertheless by far superior to the most important fathers of the church. He clings with all his might to Plato, forces his Logos into Jewish literature, but it remained here as purely spiritual as there. The Logos of Philo is no more than a mere contrivance to aid him in his explanation of the creation. It suffered nothing by its removal to the Old Testament. It had there the same significance as with Plato, the creating attribute of the great God. But the transplanting in itself was a severe assault on Judaism, For, if it is once established that Jewish literature teaches the Logos, there is then no stand-still with this supposition, but the whole territory of Jewish literature is levelled for its final purpose. Already they know that the Old Testament not only teaches the "Logos," the "Sophia," etc., but also a *Messiah* endowed with flesh and blood, saved for the redemption of the human family. How now, if some one should have thought to unite this spiritual Logos with the corporeal Messiah in such a manner, that the latter, if necessity required it, would lend to the former, this corporeal integument, how then? Why then we will already have a corporeal Logos, bodily before us, and Judaism will have built its own coffin from its own wood. These are the consequences of the philosophical doctrine.

And now the time has arrived to form a slight acquaintance with the Logos of Philo, to become fully convinced that it is in reality nothing else but a divine attribute and not a tangible or even a corporeal deity.

So much has already been written on the Logos of Philo and its influence upon the development of Christianity, that it would be of no necessity on our part, to say a word about it, if our subject which it comes in slight contact with it, had not demanded it. By carefully studying the writings of this Alexandrian philosopher, we

†De mund. opif. S. 15, 16, and in other places. Compare Dahne a. a. O. S. 322 sq.

\*Praep. Ev. L. vii., 12.

discover everywhere, that his acceptance of the Logos had a sincere motive beneath it, namely, the God of the Old Testament must never be brought in close connection with matter. His own words may tell us how he thinks of God. "But God is not a compound being, nor one which is made up of many parts, but one which has no mixture with anything else; for whatever could be combined with God must be either superior to him, or inferior to him, or equal to him. But there is nothing equal to God, and nothing superior to him, and nothing is combined with him which is worse than himself, for if it were, he, himself would be deteriorated; and, if he were to suffer deterioration, he would also become perishable, which it is impious even to imagine."\*

With such a view of the Deity, it is impossible to conceive a life in the universe without a mediatorial power, which should act as the intercessor between God and man. A conception of the Logos, as sublime as this, a world creating, a world-governing attribute of God, seems to him no mere offspring of an idle brain; he regards it a revelation to his soul from God. He describes this inspiration in the following manner. "I have also, on one occasion, heard a more ingenious train of reasoning from my own soul, which was accustomed to be seized with a certain divine inspiration, even concerning matters it could not explain even to itself; which now, if I am able to remember accurately, I will relate. It told me that in the one living and true God there were two supreme and primary powers, goodness and power; and that by his goodness he had created the universe, and by his power he governed all that he had created; and that the third thing which was between the two, and had the effect of bringing them together, was the Logos; for it was owing to the Logos that God was both a ruler and good. Now of this ruling power and of this goodness, being two distinct powers, Cherubim were the symbols; but of the Logos the flaming sword was the signal." These words need no commentary. "For many things"—he continues in his philosophy—"must co-operate in the creation of anything; by whom? From what? By means of what? And why? Now he, with whom the thing originates, is the cause; that from which the thing is made, is the material; that by means of which it was made, is the instrument; and why, is the object. Suppose any one should ask, what is required to build my house or city? Must there not be a builder, and stones, and timber, and tools? What then is the builder, but

the cause by whom the house or city is built? And what are the stones and timber, but the materials of which the building is made? And what are the tools, but the things by means of which it is made? And for what reason is it built, except to serve as a shelter and protection? This is the object. Now passing on from these particular buildings, consider the greatest house or city, namely, this world, for you will find that God is the cause of it, by whom it was made. That the materials are the four elements, of which it is composed; that the instrument is the "Word" of God, by means of which it was made; and the object of the building you will find to be the display of the goodness of the Creator."

In perfect harmony with the Platonic schools, he describes the influences of the highest being of the world by means of permanent emanation. "God, the highest being and purest light can not be seen by mortals, owing to its stupendous splendor. In widely expanded spheres about Him, the Logos, with god-like splendor, is situated. The many divine powers convey the received light by means of rays to the remotest regions, until the whole universe is resplendent with the primitive light.†

#### AUGUSTIN ON THE PLATONIC LOGOS AND ITS DIFFERENCE FROM THE CHRISTIAN LOGOS.

And now we are supposed to have discovered the Logos, the suitable convenience for the weak human family, the intercessor between God and man, not only in the Platonic schools, but also in Judaism. Notwithstanding this unexpected discovery, dates from almost the same time as that of the birth of Christianity, still, no one as yet has dared to build up Christianity from this Logos. All the preliminary conditions were contracted, the necessary material was at hand, the souls were in readiness for that decisive change—and not yet the anticipated religious catastrophe takes place—And why not? The holy Augustin, who of course should know it, since he was a pupil of the Platonists before he adopted Christianity, gives us an intelligent answer. "I have read," says he, "the Platonic works, and they have offered me the greatest joy, when I discovered in a thousand places that they teach the belief in God and His Logos. I have also found therein that the 'Word' has existed from the first beginning, that it was with God, that it was God, that everything, that is, owes its existence to it. I have moreover, read in these works, that the Logos did not depend on flesh, blood,

\*Philo Judaeus Leg. alleg. II.

† Philo Judaeus de Cher. Compare Dahn's a. a. o. s. 273 sq.

or the desires of flesh for its existence, but that it had been created by God Himself, and yet I have never read there that the 'Word' has become Flesh and has walked among us." \*

This was the only obstacle that prevented the formation of the new doctrine. The Platonic, religious philosophy had not yet reached that degree of popularity, by which alone it could go over with an overwhelming mass into the camp of the flesh and blood doctrine. The Logos was still too lofty, still too spiritual to become the redeemer of such restless and sentimental people, as we have described them above. It is true that everything was prepared for the reception of a new doctrine; it is true that Olympus, with his stock of gods, was left in the lurch; it is also true that the people wandered about with discomfited souls, panting after revelation. Not less is it true that philosophy accommodated itself gradually to step down from its lofty height and condense into a national religion; all this is true, but it did not satisfy them yet. One day Jesus made his appearance in the small district of Judea. From what circles he arose and in what sphere he labored, is known to all. His small band of followers, yearning for redemption, saw in him that Messiah, whom Jewish literature had foretold. But as such he could not claim recognition from the Heathens, and he would surely have been soon forgotten, had not other very important circumstances worked in his favor. There came the heathen-converting Paul, and behind him, at the expedient moment, appeared the right man in the right place, and spoke the right word, and his world caught fire.

#### JOHN, THE FIRST, WHO IDENTIFIED THE PLATONIC LOGOS WITH THE MESSIAH

It was the Apostle John who first discovered this world-redeeming word, and who cast it to thirsting humanity. He was the first who pronounced that the Platonic Logos and the Messiah of the Old Testament are one and the same, that he walked among men, had cleansed them from their sins, that the dark world was unable to see him. And when he began with his information: "In the beginning was the 'Word' and the 'Word' was with God, and the 'Word' was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him (Logos); and without him was nothing made that was made. In him was life; and the light was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . And the

'Word' was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

When this knowledge was spread abroad by the apostle, a lighting, making the whole world tremble, suddenly convulsed the people, seized upon the morbid Olympus, burned the Gods of Greece, and from the smoking ruins there arose triumphantly the glistening Platonic Trinity, having been gilded in a Jewish crucible. At length suffering humanity was resuscitated, ailing half-philosophers became at once hale and hearty. At last, after years of ineffable sufferings, painful vagueness, unutterable scruples, they have found what they have ardently but vainly sought. The Logos of Plato was no more unapproachable, it had descended from its lofty sphere, dwelt like a man among men, to redeem them, taught, suffered and hastened back to his Father in heaven, after he had sacrificed himself for the everlasting happiness of the sinful, human family. This was a tangible philosophy, one that was in the intellectual reach of every class of society. At last the How? and Why? were known.

When this mighty word of John began to spread, and to be understood in both parties, and to seize upon the mind with electric force, then the last barriers, which had till now existed between Heathenism and Judaism, began to fall. All at once the scales fell from off the eyes of these seeking philosophers, after they had eagerly drained the words of the Old Testament from cups prepared by Philo, and after they brought proof after proof of the truth of the Apostle John. In the height of their ecstasy those emigrating from Heathenism rushed upon the Jewish law, plundered, robbed, till nothing more could be found, and strangest of all—the booty they had gained became under their fingers a Logos. Like barbarians they act now in the "Old Covenant," quarrel with a whimsical stubbornness, the like of which the annals of history are unable to show. The enthusiasm of those "from the Heathens," finally took such dimension, that they, who could not read a word of the Old Testament, dared to fling into the teeth of the Jewish teachers, the most absurd of all charges, that they understood not their own writings. With the most unheard of audacity young pupils, who had hardly reached beyond the first degree of dilettanteism, dared to upbraid old sagacious teachers. What proof is more evident than the bold naivete of the enthusiastic Justin trying to explain the Bible to the Jews. Of course they laughed at his

\* Compare Basuage, *hist. des Juifs*. Liv. iv. c. 3.

childish, zealous fervency. And he was not the only one; many a father of the church looked upon the career of this fiery Justin and followed in his footsteps. They claimed that the Holy Ghost dictated it to them as well as it had formerly enjoined it upon their fore-runner. If the making of a good deal of noise may be considered substantiated testimony, then these soul-stirring followers of the apostles have accomplished incredible things, because a more deafening verbosity, a more bombastic redundancy of words, was never again witnessed. Even to-day, reading their books with a perfectly cool and collected state of mind, we are hurried over head and ears into this delusive charm, and we can readily understand what effect such a garrulity naturally had upon an injudicious, straying populace.

THE JEWISH ANSWER TO CHRISTIAN ARGUING.

It requires no proof that it was an utter impossibility to hold a quiet, scientific discussion with men so religiously mad as these were. Such circumstances prevented an explanation free from all passion and fanaticism. In fact, the Talmud is literally filled with humorous and witty sayings, testifying how the Jews considered themselves and their law too much superior to condescend to debate the question with them; how little they troubled themselves to measure their strength with an opponent, who brandished childish weapons. At the same time they were well aware of the fact, that such ideal preachings would spread like wild fire among the ignorant class, and where sound arguments failed, fictitious conceptions would succeed among classes unacquainted with the original sources. Therefore, the Jewish teachers prohibited the Jews from any discussion with a Christian. And Tryphon said "Sir, it were good for us if we obeyed our teachers, who laid down a law that we should have no intercourse with any of you, and that we should not have even any communication with you on these questions, for you utter many blasphemies," etc. (Dial. c. 38.) Therefore the hot-headed, fanatical Tryphon in his anger exclaimed. "It is permitted to burn the writings of the Christians, even if the name of God occurs therein; moreover, that when the threatening danger is nigh, a Jew should rather seek refuge in a Heathen temple, before taking shelter in a Christian church; for to him the God of the apostles was not the God of the Old Testament, but an idol. What should Jewish teachers of the Law reply, when they are told that the "Hebrew Oracles" have declared that the

Logos is a second god? What answer should they make, when the Christians try to persuade them that Moses himself had recognized two Lords, for it is written: "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire, from the Lord out of heaven?" What reply should he make, when they boast that even David had glorified the Logos in his psalms, when he said: "By the word of God the heavens were made." And in another place: "He sendeth his word and healeth them." And again: "The Lord says to my Lord, seat thyself to my right." What could a well versed Jew respond when he stumbled into such a cataract of Biblical quotations, pregnant with endless mentionings of the Logos? What rejoinder to their vaunting that Job taught the Logos by the name of *Sophia* and that Solomon had similarly spoken of it? What else could the prudent Jew do, at such ostentations of the Logos discovery, but keep perfectly silent? Should he expound their high-sounding arguments, when they referred to Aristobul and Philo, authorities that were nothing to him, but "oracles" to them? Yes, what should the earnest typical representative of Monotheism begin, when they prove from passages, which are torn from all connections, methodically arranged, leaving entirely out of sight their original place and importance, that Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and what else their names might be, the long list of prophets not excluded, had thoroughly proven the doctrines of the Logos, that the preachings of the apostle John were not new; that they were taught in the Old Testament many and many years before him? Here a scientific discussion was impossible. The blows of logic would rebound from their armed bosom, fallacies alone could gain free admission. There was but one answer, and that was mere indifference to all this frantic bustle, a fact, which manifests itself clearly in the dialogue of Justin with the not very scholarly Tryphon. To the many pointed questions of Justin, Tryphon with his brilliant, ready answers never lacks a suitable passage; be it a biblical passage, an extract from the Heathen literature, or any fable. The following will prove this assertion. "In the fables of those who are called Greeks, it is written that Perseus was begotten of Danae, who was a virgin; he who was called among them Zeus, having descended on her in the form of a golden shower. And you ought to feel ashamed when you make assertions similar to theirs, and rather [should] say that this Jesus was born man of men. And if you prove from the Scriptures that He is the Christ, and that on ac-

count of having led a life conformed to the law, and perfect, He deserved the honor of being elected to be Christ [it is well]; but do not venture to tell monstrous phenomena, lest you be convicted of talking foolishly like the Greeks." (Dial. c. 67.) In spite of all this, the assumed airy hypothesis so vague in the beginning, gradually stiffened to a pillar of Christianity, which, was too strong to be shaken.

THE EXULTATION OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON ACCOUNT OF THE PASSAGES QUOTED BY THE PLATONIC AMELIUS, WHICH SPEAK OF THE PROMULGATED LOGOS OF JOHN.

We naturally ask ourselves what part has been assigned to the Platonic school in this last grandest world redeeming drama? These, of course, could not be set aside, especially since the Christian propaganda would no longer confine itself to the meagre, well-grazed Jewish fields; there was a greater crop to be reaped from the large fertile plains of Heathenism. Also this is readily understood when we take into consideration all their previous actions.

Plato and his school, who have furnished all the ideas necessary for the structure of the Christian church, are now titled with all the attending pomp and ceremony *Plagiarists par excellence*. Step by step their opponents advance, forever hurling it in their face. You have never been able to produce an original thought, you showed masterly ability in copying, in remoulding and reshaping another man's thoughts. It was as easy to prove all this, as it was to force a Logos upon the Old Testament. The zeal they displayed in this noble task dimmed their eye and mind to such an extent, that it was now absolutely impossible for them to form any sound opinion; their decision was biased, and for their religious enthusiasm there existed no obstacle. Let us exemplify: Eusebius finds in the New-Platonist Numenius the beautiful words of John quoted in reference to the Logos, and this amply suffices to bring him into the seventh heaven of bliss. He does not ask the reason why Numenius finds himself necessitated to quote said passage, bestows not a glance to the notes which accompany this passage, has no eye, no ear for his commentary on these words of the apostle, knows not a word about the by no means flattering names which are bountifully lavished upon Saint John. Eusebius sees but one thing, and it puts into darkness all others, namely, the distinguished Platonic philosopher quotes the apostle John, which is the grandest testimony that could be

granted to the Logos. And what an abundance of Christian love showers this father of the church upon the head of this malicious Heathen! While the latter would not think of mentioning that author, whose words he quotes, but by giving it anonymously to his readers, the former most graciously shuts his eye at this contempt, and bestows upon him the most flattering praises, calls him "our most eminent, and most gifted pupil of Plato, one who is best versed in the Platonic doctrine." (Praep. Ev. xi, 18.) Had he studied this Numenius with a little less excitement, and with a little more reflection he would have discovered at once, that the same surprise which overcame him at the moment when he saw a Heathen, quote the apostle John, must naturally have mastered the feelings of Numenius, when he saw the original secret of his school openly expatiated upon by a "barbarian."

This philosopher expresses his thoughts on this subject most clearly when he says: "This is, indeed, the same Logos that has existed from times immemorial, and through which all that exists has been created. It is this very Logos of which that 'Barbarian' boasts that it has been in existence from eternity, that it is God, . . . so that one hearing such statements would actually believe that it is Heraklitus who is speaking thus." (Praep. Ev. xi. 18.)

But there is no remedy; Eusebius is deaf to all that which might disturb him in his religious enthusiasm. All his thoughts and feelings are concentrated upon one point, namely, Numenius, the great philosopher, had read the words of John, had admired them, and that by this testimony, rendered by a Heathen philosopher, much reputation for the Christian Logos was acquired. Captivated by this grand discovery, he expatiates upon it in the following manner: "Words like these Amelius could no longer convey from the doctrines of the 'Barbarian' unless they are free from all delusion and mystifications. This is an undeniable fact. And that he who is called the "Barbarian" is none else but John, the Apostle, surely no one will doubt, for it is he who first advanced this doctrine, who first of all, in spreading the doctrines of the Redeemer, began: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him, was not anything made that was made," etc. (Praep. Ev. xi. 19.)

THE EXULTATION OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON ACCOUNT OF A DISCOVERY OF A TRINITY IN THE WRITINGS OF PLATO.

In this manner they lost themselves more and more in their fallacies. The dark ages dawned, forced free research more and more to the background, and laid violent hands upon the former influence of Plato and his school. The Trinity was now erected; stripped from the Jewish-heathenish support, it stood now firm upon its own basis like a gigantic tower. Little danger did it anticipate from the philosophy of the Heathens in which it had originated, for its followers were now but few, and these were so firm in the adherence to their old belief that Christianity with its new religious training could not shake their convictions. But if any one, perchance, came across Plato and meditated therein, then there was no end to his surprise and ecstasy.\*

\* Basnage, hist. des Juifs. Liv. iv., ch. 4: Cependant, cela avoit tellement ebloui les Peres, que peu s'en fallu qu'ils n'aient fait de Platon un Chretien avant la Naissance du Christianisme. "Que Platon sorte et parlesse ici," s'ecroit un Theologien du cinquieme Siecle; c'est une chose admirable que tant de Siecles avant l'Accouchement de la Vierge et l'Incarnation d'un Dieu; longtemps avant que la Trinite

With an expression indicating surprise and astonishment he stood there, could not see enough, would scarcely trust to his senses. Did he not find in the works which were written centuries before the birth of Christ the *Trinity* most excellently described? His exultation was indescribable when he discovered that the Logos of John had already been expounded in the primitive ages by Heathen philosophers. He wept tears of joy at this discovery, passionately kissed the books of Plato and devotedly prayed to God, when he began to learn that the Trinity, so difficult for the human understanding, was nothing new, an every day doctrine of the heathens.†

de Personnes dans une seul Essence ait ete preche aux Nations, il ait par un Coup hardi, par un Genie heureux, et un stile inimitable, parle de Dieu le Pere, de la Parole du Pere, qui etoit son Conseil et de l'Amour de l'un et de l'autre, qu'il faisait une Divinite seule, indivisible, eternelle et souveraine.

† *Ibid.* On nous represente un Simplicien, Eveque de Milan, transporte de joie, eu trouvant dans Platon la Trinite aussi clairement expliquee que dans l'Evangile de Saint Jean. On a vu d'autres Chretiens pleurer de joie et baiser avec Transport les Livres de Platon. On a rendu Graces a Dieu de ce que ce Dogme impenetrable a la Raison humaine n'etoit pas etranger, puisque les Parens l'avoient connu.



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