BETWEEN THE DEATH OF Aristotle and the composition of *De rerum natura* there was a space of three hundred years, more or less, from which we have but the most mutilated works of the philosophers who lived in it, works which consist only of quotations out of context and secondhand reports. It was during this period that the Macedonian conquest of Greece was completed and in its turn disintegrated. The freedom of the city-states disappeared into the Roman Empire when, in 146 B.C., Greece was conquered for a second time. It was the period of the growth of Alexandria as a metropolis, where Jews and other Asiatics, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans began to associate in intellectual conversation. Provincialism was on the wane, as it was bound to be when men of different cultures met. The sciences, we know, began to take the form in which they have survived, in rational systems rather than merely as unconnected groups of data. The critical method of editing texts based on grammatical and rhetorical studies was developed. And whereas on the one
hand there was a general fusion of the many gods into a few divinities, Cronus, Moloch, and Saturn for instance becoming one in spite of their profound differences, on the other there was a proliferation of gods. By the time of Cicero, as we have seen, there was a temple to Faith, another to Courage (Virtus), a third to Honor, and others dedicated to Ops, Salus, Concordia, Libertas, and Victoria in Rome. This was not something which died out with Paganism. For only a short time later we find the Christians deifying the Logos, Sophia, Providentia, and possibly Spiritus. By the time when William Blake wrote that he saw Eternity the other night, such synonyms for God had become habitual. In fact, the pagan practice in this regard as well as in doctrine, was so close to that of the Christians and Jews that it was possible for Philo to pronounce his famous sentence that Plato was Moses speaking Greek. This was repeated in various forms by others and no one seems to have been sure just who was its author. Eusebius attributes it to Numenius, but it could also be found, though much later, in Clement of Alexandria. For our purposes we need only note that the truth was lodged in an individual and that this individual expressed the meaning of some sacred text. The contribution of the individual was not the discovery of a new truth or even of new evidence for old truths. It was simply exposition of a text which was eternally and irrefutably true.

In Philo Judaeus the sacred text was of course the Bible as translated by the Seventy. No pagan author, not even Cicero or Seneca, and certainly not such Stoics as Posidonius or Panaetius, hesitated to find fault with the founders of what they called schools of philosophy. They seem to have taken it for granted

1 There was also a multiplication of philosophic sects. Varro counts 288 of them in his day. See Zeller, History of Eclecticism, p. 173, n. 1. Cf. Cicero De legibus ii. 11. 28 (Teubner ed., p. 415).
3 See Clement Stromata i. 1, and Eusebius Praeparatio evangelica (Teubner ed., 1867) xi. 10. 14 (p. 25) and ix. 6. 9 (p. 477). In Jerome we find the phrase, "Either Philo Platonizes or Plato Philonizes" (De viris illustribus c. 11; Migne, PL, xxiii, p. 659).
that a man was free to criticize anyone, even when they believed in the authority of the *consensus gentium*. In fact the *consensus* eliminated the individual errors by its very nature. Edelstein, in his article on Posidonius to which we have already referred, points out how that writer differed in his doctrines from his Stoic predecessors, and in Panaetius we find similar points of originality. But when we come to Philo we find his contribution only in his peculiar interpretation of the sacred text and, though there is certainly plenty of room for doubt about the accuracy of it, we need not doubt that for him philosophy was exegesis. It is no longer an autonomous science; it consists in drawing out of an authority what is concealed and therefore unrecognized in him. Philo, one can be confident in saying, believed that what we call his philosophy was “implicit” in the Bible. His task was simply to make it explicit.

We all have to use authorities for certain information. If we wish to find out how the Law of Gravitation was phrased, we go to Newton, but we do not believe that the business of a physicist is first to find out what Newton believed to be gravitation and then to expound it. We do not think that because Newton deduced and framed that law, it must be true and that any evidence to the contrary must be explained away. The use of a sacred text which we are discussing in this chapter is diametrically opposed to this. Whatever the sacred text says is absolutely true, and, if there is anything apparently true and yet inconsistent with the text, it must be false. If, moreover, there is anything in the text which for some reason or other seems to be untrue, then the exegete must show that in spite of appearances, it really is true. This technique has survived into our own times, not merely in Biblical exegesis, but also in the exegesis of philosophic authors. It is often assumed that if there appear to be inconsistencies in Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, or Immanuel Kant, to take outstanding examples, one of the statements must be unauthentic, a corruption of the text, an interpolation, a scribe’s error,

or the effect of traditional misinterpretations of the text. To take but one example, and that a famous one, if there are inconsistencies in Aristotle, they must be explained away as evidence of the growth of his thought; those ideas closest to Plato’s being the earliest and the others later. In effect this is based on the assumption that no man ever contradicts himself and, if he changes his mind, this is anomalous. Fortunately for Philo, he was mainly interested in interpreting the Pentateuch where the inconsistencies, though they occur between the first and second chapters of Genesis, are not so great as those which are to be found, let us say, between Jeremiah and Amos, Ecclesiastes and Job. To reduce these inconsistencies, it was necessary that he have a method clearly defined and fortunately one had been prepared for him in the tradition of allegorical interpretation. Minucius Felix (Octavius xix. 10) attributes to Zeno the identification of Juno with air, Jupiter with the heavens, Neptune with the sea, Vulcan with fire, and the reinterpretation of the other gods of the populace as the elements. In Cornutus⁵ we find Athena explained as God’s sagacity and her identity with Providence; she was after all born from the head of Zeus and this could not be accepted literally. (It could of course be rejected.) Saint Augustine refers to Varro as maintaining that Minerva really means “the archetypes of things which Plato called ideas” (De civitate Dei vii. 28). Bréhier points out how Philo accepted several of the allegorical interpretations of Cornutus and how he does this without “trying to justify them by Biblical texts.”⁶

In Plato those myths which related indecent or otherwise unworthy stories of the gods were not allegorized. In the Republic they are simply rejected as lies, however old they might be; gods just could not be thought to have committed the acts reported of them by the mythographers. Moreover, to Plato and Aristotle, as to their predecessors, Xenophanes and Heraclitus, no text was

⁵ Lang, p. 35, 7.
sacred. But in the post-Aristotelian period the myths were re­tained as if they were sacred and the literal meaning of the stories was supplanted by allegory. It is hardly necessary to point out that the Greeks had no Bible, for even Homer and Hesiod were not supposed to be inspired recipients of divine revelation. On the contrary, the standard myths, like the genealogies of the gods, often existed in variant forms and a man was free either to accept or to reject them, or to accept some versions and to reject others. But as time went on we find the descendants of these men under a compulsion to accept them all, as if they were true because they were part of the tradition of their culture. Moreover, men began to feel that the truth was something to be concealed from the populace which was either too ignorant or too untrustworthy to be given such knowledge. This distrust of the people may have been due to several causes, to the actual treatment meted out to certain philosophers, the main of whom was Socrates, to the difficulty of making the man in the street understand the literal expression of scientific truths, and to the sheer pleasure of knowing something which the great majority of men do not know. To share in a secret is, I suppose, a great delight, but part of the delight comes from the small number of initiates with whom one shares it. If need be, one invents secrets in order to keep the majority in the dark. Thus in the Italian Renaissance we find the opinion current among the intellectuals that an emblem has a value measured by the difficulty of understanding it. That a parable might be clearer than that which it illustrates does not seem to have occurred to these men. Some went so far as to say that the reason why Christ spoke in parables was that He knew that the people were not fit to be given the naked truth. The Pinax of Cebes in ancient times was analogous to the Faerie Queene to the extent that it represented something which anyone could understand on the surface, but which only a few could

In Jewish and Christian circles the acceptance and rejection were done for the individual by the establishment of canonical and apocryphal versions. See the introduction to my translation of The Hieroglyphics of Hora­pollo (New York: Pantheon Books, 1950).
interpret. To write obscurely and to do so deliberately is not a practice which died out with Lycophron. The invention of allegories, however, is the reverse of allegorical interpretation. In the one case a supposititious concealed meaning is read out of what purports to be a literal statement; in the other the literal meaning of an idea is deliberately concealed.

If then one assumes that a text is allegorical, its interpretation requires a code by means of which it can be translated into non-figurative language. If, for instance, one speaks of the sun as Helios and of the earth as Gaia and says that Gaia yearns for the embraces of Helios who repulses her advances, one can then turn this about and explain it as the attractive and repulsive forces of gravitation and even, if one wishes, measure the strength of the yearning and repulsion by the masses of the two divinitics and their distance from each other. Many of the alchemical descriptions were not less fantastic than this and all had to be translated into terms of alembics and fire, distillations and precipitations. In my first example one takes the language of Newtonian physics as literal; in the second, the recipes of a chemical laboratory.

Philo could do no more than this. To his way of thinking the Bible had to contain not only the truth but all the truth. Hence whatever was said by Plato, Aristotle, and the early Stoics which was true, must be hidden in the Bible. And, in reverse, since there must be a literal version of Biblical wisdom, that version must be found also in those teachings of the philosophers which were true. When the Bible spoke of individual people, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they must be seen to be incarnations of psychological characters, in their turn to be interpreted as moral qualities. For the significance of any human being at this time was his moral behavior. This may seem strange, but when one realizes that to Cicero the Academic and Peripatetic philosophies were the same, differing only in name, one sees that it was not difficult to pick and choose one's thoughts wherever one wished.

\[\text{Qui rebus congruentes nominibus differebant (Academia i. 4. 17).}\]
In harmony with this vagueness, this negligence of rationality, we find Philo translating his allegories into the language of Aristotle, Plato, and the Stoics at will. He goes even further on the road to complete confusion than this, for when he uses the number symbolism of the Pythagoreans to interpret any Biblical verse in which a number is mentioned, he translates an allegory into another allegory before reaching a literal version of its meaning. The one philosophical school which he disdains is naturally that of Epicurus, in which he agreed with Cicero. His eclectic method is obvious when one runs through his writings even hastily. In the *De congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratia*, for example, he says (79), “Now just as our general education tends towards the acquisition of philosophy, so philosophy too is for the possession of wisdom. For philosophy is a cultivation of wisdom, but wisdom is the science of divine and human affairs and of their causes.”

If now we turn to Aëtius, we find him saying, “The Stoics said that wisdom was the science of divine and human affairs, and philosophy the training in useful art.” Philo also took over with modifications his doctrine of the *Logos* from the Stoics, that of his Intelligible World from Plato, his interpretation of the angels as powers from Aristotle. He makes the “first man” a cosmopolite (*De opificio mundi* xlix. 142; LCL, p. 112), and his *Life of Moses*, as is generally recognized, is an account of the life of a Stoic Sage. Yet it is also true that he corrects all such ideas when it is necessary to draw a conclusion which is in harmony with traditional Judaism, as he understands it, and when he sees that his philosophic information would be discordant with it. The Intelligible World hence is created by God and exists in God’s mind (iv. 16; LCL, p. 14). The powers of Aristotle are far from being angels and are not even arranged hierarchically between heaven and earth. Though he accepts the Stoic notion of rigorous laws of

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10 I am using the text in the Loeb Classical Library (edited by Colson and Whitaker), since the Cohn-Wendland edition is not available to me. It is abbreviated as LCL.

nature which are immanent in nature, he does not identify Fate or the system of natural law with God. Commenting on the Twenty-Third Psalm (De agricultura xii. 51; LCL, p. 134), he speaks of God, the shepherd and king, as ruling the elements and the heavenly bodies, as if He were the Zeus of Cleanthes, but he adds that God has appointed his “own right reason and first born son” as his lieutenant, a phrase that is far from the theology of Cleanthes. In the treatise on the giants (De gigantibus ii. 6; LCL, p. 448), he identifies the angels with those beings “whom the philosophers call daimones,” but whereas the daimon of Socrates dwelt within his soul and prevented his doing wrong, the angels of Philo inhabit the air as other beings inhabit the sea, the land, and even the fire, the last being “chiefly in Macedonia.” And finally, though the Sage is to model his life on that of the Stoic Sage, nevertheless the first man to be created was the best man who had ever been created and each successive generation is weaker by the extent to which it is farther from the Creator (De opificio mundi xlix. 140 f.; LCL, p. 110). It therefore cannot be denied that both Bréhier and Wolfson are correct in insisting that, in spite of Philo’s use of current philosophies to translate his allegories, he also had a philosophic position of his own. It is not our purpose here to write a summary of his system in so far as it is a system, but to indicate the changes which he introduced into the solution of the traditional problems which previous chapters have dealt with.

I

1. The division of things into the apparent and the real is not based merely on the distinction between the world as perceived

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12 See esp. De migratione Abrahami xxxii. 179-81; LCL, p. 236.
13 He uses Plato’s symbol of the magnet and the iron rings which hang from it as the appropriate emblem of the successive degrees of weakness. Cf. Ion 533d, e.
and the world as known to the reason, but also upon the Platonic
distinction between the particulars and the universals. Philo takes
over the ideas of Plato, but first he makes them archetypes existing
in the mind of God. His God, it should be recalled, is neither
the Demiurge of Timaeus nor the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle.
He is the God of the Bible who, as history went on, was to share
some of the characteristics of each. To begin with, He was a
Creator, whereas the Demiurge had at hand unformed matter
which it was His function to organize and fashion.\(^{10}\) In the second
place, though He is also transcendent, He is a person resembling
a man all of whose powers and faculties have been magnified and
purified. Neither the Demiurge nor the Unmoved Mover was a
shepherd or king nor did he care for human beings as the Biblical
and Philonic God did. The action of the Demiurge apparently
ceased once He had fashioned the universe according to strictly
rational procedures, and that of the Unmoved Mover, though
very obscure, was called attraction and was probably directly felt
by the first of the spheres.\(^{16}\) The ideas, as archetypes, were not
God's thoughts, nor did the Unmoved Mover effectuate his pur­
poses by intermediaries such as angels. In neither Stoicism nor
Epicureanism is there any mention of a **logos** which could be the
first-born son of God, and any myths which might have men­
tioned the children of the gods would have been interpreted
allegorically or rejected. In Philo the gap between God and the
world is filled by the angels. And just as in the Pseudo-Aristotelian
**De mundo** God rules from within His palace, like the Great King
(**De mundo** 398a, b), so Philo's God (**De decalogo** xiii. 61, xxxiii.
178; LCL, pp. 36, 94) rules invisibly and remotely,\(^{17}\) surrounded
by bodyguards and minor officials. These are but a few evidences
of Philo's independence of his philosophic predecessors. It is

\(^{15}\) See F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, p. 35.

\(^{16}\) For differences between the Unmoved Mover and God, cf. G. Boas,
**Some Assumptions of Aristotle**, p. 25.

\(^{17}\) For the reverse of this, viz., that the Emperor is a terrestrial replica of
God, see V. Valdenberg, "**Discours politiques de Thémistius dans leur rap­
I, p. 220.
measured by his ability to fit their doctrines into the truth which is expressed in the Bible. Where Biblical truth cannot be successfully interpreted as an anticipation of secular truth, it is the latter which was to be modified. Since Moses speaks of creation, Philo’s God must be a creator, and since a created world must have had a beginning in time, the world of Aristotle, without beginning or end, must be rejected.\textsuperscript{18}

If Philo had not been interpreting the Bible, it is likely that his work, like that of so many others would have perished. But in view of its usefulness to Christian exegetes, it was preserved. There can surely be no other reason. For in it are so many ideas that run counter to the prevailing philosophic theses, and its method is so different from that utilized by the pagan philosophers that they would have thought of it as simply another of those barbarian eccentricities which were hardly worthy of serious consideration. Its purpose was to make Judaism as a religion intelligible, to turn the Bible, especially the Pentateuch, into a philosophic treatise, and, though that might have made Judaism more palatable to Romans who were looking for novel religious doctrines, it had no influence on such philosophers as Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, both of whom used their philosophies as guides to life. It was the Christian Fathers who saved Philo for posterity.\textsuperscript{19}

Of Philo’s application of the allegorical method, little need be said, for at best his interpretations of Scriptural texts are simply literary curiosities. One or two examples will perhaps suffice. In

\textsuperscript{18}De aeternitate mundi might seem evidence to the contrary, for the arguments in favor of an uncreated and indestructible world are presented with vigor, in keeping with Peripatetic doctrine. But at the same time the treatise ends with the words, “What then has been passed on to us about the indestructibility of the world has been said forcefully. But what is to be said against each of the arguments must be shown in what follows.” This would seem to indicate that something was to follow and that in it Philo would present the other side of the case.

\textsuperscript{19}See, e.g., Eusebius Praeparatio evangelica vii. 13 (ed. Dindorf, Leipzig, 1867, Vol. I, p. 373) and xi. 15 (Vol. II, p. 33). Philo is used by Eusebius as one who testified to the Second Person of the Trinity and who proved the antiquity of Jewish lore.
De opificio mundi (iii) he is speaking of the six-day creation. The question arises of why six rather than any other number of days. The answer is that six is the most productive of numbers, being twice three, three times two, and six times one, and since the odd is male and the even female, six is both. The reasoning may seem strange and would induce one to believe that every human being is a hermaphrodite in view of the undeniable fact that his parents were each of a different sex. For Philo points out that three is the first of the odd numbers—one is not a number—and two is the first even number, and six is their product. The perfection of six is thus established and the world which was made “in accordance with” the perfect number is therefore also perfect. The numerical allegories are paralleled by others. One of the best known is Philo’s interpretation of the story of man’s fall and rehabilitation. Adam here becomes the Reason (nous) and Eve External Sensation (aisthesis). If one ask why such identifications should be made, the answer is simply that man is active and woman passive according to an old tradition and that the reason and sensation are also active and passive, respectively. Since man for years had been characterized as a rational animal and the word Adam meant man and Philo was interpreting the story of the Fall, he argued that something must have happened to man’s essential nature when the Apple was eaten. What happened was a weakening of the reason. But what was the temptation? The temptation was incarnated in the Serpent which was pleasure (Legum Allegoria ii. 18. 71; LCL, p. 268). The yielding to the enticements of pleasure corrupts the reason. “Pleasure is likened to a serpent for the following reason. Just as the motion of a serpent is twisting and various, so is that of pleasure” (ii. 18. 71). It attaches itself to the five senses and to sexual activity as well.

20 If one’s appetite for number symbolism is not satisfied with this sample, one might read De opificio mundi xiv. 45 ff. (LCL, pp. 34 ff.) on the wonderful number four or the long section beginning at xxx. 89 (LCL, pp. 72 ff.) on seven.

21 Legum Allegoria i. 30. 92 (LCL, p. 208) and ii. 11. 38 (LCL, p. 248), respectively.
Philo proceeds to expatiate upon the sensual pleasures in detail, as if it were necessary to prove to his readers that each sense has its pleasures and that the sensual life is especially pleasant. These can be mastered only by self-control, temperance, which is also lodged in the reason. But if the reason has been corrupted by the pleasures of the senses, something more is required to rehabilitate it. The rehabilitation is told in the story of the three Patriarchs. Each of them typifies a way of searching for the good—“one through instruction,” Abraham—“one from nature,” Isaac—and “one from practice,” Jacob (De Abrahamo xi. 52; LCL, p. 30).

Thus three men, historical figures, stand for three ways of achieving virtue, not that the Pentateuch says so overtly, but that Philo so interprets their lives. That the Bible might be simply a historical narrative and nothing more does not seem to have occurred to him. That if he had wished to show that virtue was to be attained by instruction, nature, and practice, he might have done so without recourse to Revelation also does not occur to him. That, furthermore, if God had wished to show man the way to moral excellence, He need not have done it so obscurely, is not questioned. The Ten Commandments are after all as clear and simple and literal as the restrictions on food and the other laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Why then is the way to rehabilitation so clouded in allegory? This is not explained by Philo. One wonders whether his problem did not really arise from his inability to believe the story of the Patriarchs as it stands in Genesis and for that reason alone he resorted to allegorical interpretation.

To return to our main theme, the first distinction in Philo is that between the world of things, men, historical events, and that world which is eternal and imperishable, consisting of what the former world signifies morally. One finds nothing of this sort in either Plato or Aristotle, Epicurus or the early Stoics. But after Philo it became customary to search for hidden—moral—meanings in physical events and such a book as, for instance, The City of God, is constructed about that search. It is to be sure a history
of the Mediterranean peoples, but it is a history beyond which is the lesson of crime and punishment. This lesson was of course also taught in the Bible and it is possible that when the Bible was introduced into the pagan world through Philo, history made sense for the first time, if by "sense" one means something other than the literal meaning of the narrative. The Fall of Man and his subsequent degeneration did not make consistent sense in Hesiod, for no one reason is given by him to account for it. When the story was moralized by Aratus, degradation was caused by man's loss progressively of his innate sense of justice, though why this sense should have been lost is not explained. Aristotle in his Politics also made sense out of certain political events in his theory of the three forms of government which are inevitably corrupted. Polybius in the second century A.D. did likewise. Many historians were willing and able to draw lessons from individual events of the past. But in Philo one sees a general pattern underlying the temporal series of events, the pattern determined by man's relation to God. His explanation of the Fall is based on a theory of knowledge, a theory which could be tested empirically, and his account of Adam and Eve as symbols of two of man's cognitive powers and their interrelations, though far from being accurate as Biblical exegesis, was nevertheless an account which could be accepted by men trained in the classical tradition of philosophy. The curious thing about its future is that instead of taking over this side of the story, philosophers took over the supernatural side instead, with the result that the lesson of history was a caution to obey divine commands instead of restoring the reason to its primordial position. One might have said that in every individual are to be found both Adam and Eve and the Serpent, and that is undoubtedly what Philo meant to convey to his readers. But that is not what either Saint Augustine or any other of the Fathers wished to convey to theirs. It was man's first disobedience which was important to them, a disobedience which

22 Phaenomena 96-136. For the fortunes of Aratus, see Primitivism in Antiquity, pp. 34 ff.
could be redeemed only by the Vicarious Atonement of the Second Adam.

Another distinction was that between the sensible world and the intelligible world. According to Wolfson, the term Intelligible World or noetic cosmos "is not known to have been used before him [Philo]." In any event, the term names the archetypal pattern of the world in which we live, the sensible world. Its inhabitants, like the ideas of Plato, can be apprehended only by the reason, never by perception. But unlike the Platonic ideas, they form an organic pattern in which each item is related to every other. Just what this relationship is is obscure, but since the pattern is created by the divine Logos, it is not unreasonable to conclude that it is rational, possibly that between genera and the species which they include, and those more general classes which include them. Another difference between Philo's world of ideas and the ideas of Plato is that in Philo they are first created by God and then have an existence of their own outside of their Creator. But since one can have nothing intellectual without an intellect to think it, they exist within an incorporeal mind, the Logos. This Logos is not the mind of God but a distinct being, sometimes referred to as the Son of God, as in the Fourth Gospel. Thus in the supernatural world there are also two beings, God and the Logos, whose mind is the world of ideas. But there is still a "lower" form of beings, powers immanent in the material world which are not the angels, though they too are called powers, and which account for the permanence of things. God does not enter the material world, for that would be "unlawful." But these powers can enter into it and they conserve the shapes and qualities of corporeal things. The separation between the Creator and His creation is made a bit wider here than it would seem to have been in the Bible, where God speaks directly to Moses on Mount Sinai, as He did to Adam after the Fall or to

25 See _De agricultura_ xii. 51; LCL, p. 134.
the young Samuel. Such speaking may not come under the head-
ing of entering the material world, but at any rate the Creator's
intimate relation to the creation in such passages seems to amount
to direct contact with at least one item in it, the mind of man.
On such occasions, then, the gulf is bridged, but normally it re-
 mains open.

We now come to a fourth group of beings between God and
the sensible world, the angels. The angels are guardians of nations,
cities, and sometimes individuals. They are at times called powers
but their chief function is to carry out the commands of God,
not to maintain the permanence of objects. They fall into choirs,
but whether they are grouped into inferior and superior ranks, as
in Pseudo-Dionysius, is not clear. There is an indication in De
Cherubim (ix. 27; LCL, p. 24) that the Cherubim symbolize God's
goodness and absolute power and are thus closest to Him. But
nothing is said here of any hierarchy of angels running from the
Cherubim down.27 "The other philosophers," says Philo (De
somniis i. 141; LCL, p. 372), "call them daimones, but Sacred
Scripture prefers to call them angels, using a more suitable word.
And this because they transmit the exhortations of the Father to
His children and the needs of the children to their Father." In
De plantatione (iv. 14; LCL, p. 218) he assigns them to the air
and gives some of them a more elevated position than he gives to
others. These, he says, the Greeks called Heroes. There is thus
indicated, but vaguely, a difference in degrees of power or nobil-
ity of function among some of the angels. When he interprets
Jacob's ladder, he makes it the symbol of the air with one end on
earth and the other in heaven. Just as heaven is inhabited by the
astral intelligences, the water by aquatic animals, and the earth
by terrestrial, so the air is inhabited by these invisible beings. They
are as a group better than the terrestrial beings (De somniis i. 22.

27 In Ps-Dionysius De Coelesti Hierarchia c. 6 (Migne, PG, iii), the heav-
enly beings (ousiai) are grouped into three orders, the "most sacred Thrones,"
the Cherubim and Seraphim; the Powers, Dominations, and Virtues; the
Angels, Archangels, and Archons (principalities). There is nothing so de-
tailed in Philo.
Moreover, the purest and best of them, the daimones, are the eyes and ears of God and watch over the cosmos as a whole. These would surely be superior to the others. Some angels descend to earth and inhabit human bodies. As a whole then the angels fill the space between heaven and earth and exercise a constant katabasis and anabasis. Hence we have here a definite, if vaguely phrased, conception of a cosmic hierarchy of beings. But whether it is original with Philo or derived by him from contemporary writers now lost, we do not know. Its importance to us here is its similarity to ideas to be developed by the Neoplatonists.

The two worlds, then, of Philo are linked by the beings who exist between God and Matter. There is first the Logos, identified with the Intelligibles, then the highest and purest angels, then the lower angels, then in an indefinite position the powers who maintain and conserve the shapes of things, then men and of course the irrational animals and plants. Below them all is matter. The reason why God created the world is precisely the reason why Plato's Demiurge created as many things as were composable, namely that, being good Himself, He wished everything to partake of goodness and could not begrudge spreading His goodness as far as possible. But since in the beginning there was nothing but God Himself to share His goodness, he had to create a world into which His bounty could spread. In doing this, He first created the Intelligible World as a perfect pattern for the world of material things (De opificio mundi iv. 16; LCL, p. 14). This act of creation was an act of thought and neither was there preexistent matter for God to manipulate and fashion nor was there any command that matter appear. The corporeal world of the heavens was not created until the second day. Whether Philo believed that primary matter was itself created by God or not is

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28 This whole passage, by the way, anticipates Plotinus' account of the descent and return of the soul, as given in Enneads v. 1. 1 and iv. 3. 8.
29 Bréhier moreover points out the parallel between this and Epinomis 981b, as well as certain parts of Phaedrus 248. See op. cit., p. 128.
a moot point. Since he clearly said that God alone is real (*Quod deterius* xli. 160; LCL, p. 308), if he was to be consistent he must have thought that matter, unless it were identified with God, was unreal. At the same time when he thinks of the creation of material things, he thinks in terms of an idea being incorporated, as an architect's plan is put into material form. But in the case of that matter which is the human body, Philo maintains that it was created not by God's direct act but through the co-operation of assistants. Why He did this, Philo admits (*De opificio mundi* xxiv. 72; LCL, p. 56), is really known to God alone and one can only offer a guess as a solution to the problem. Philo's guess is that man is of a mixed nature, partly good and partly bad, and that it was unfitting for God to create anything evil. He is responsible for the good in man, the assistants for the evil. There is therefore a notion in the back of his mind that there runs throughout the universe of beings a principle of decreasing goodness corresponding to their priority and posteriority in the order of creation. In Plotinus, as in Porphyry and the later Neoplatonists, a similar principle is found to the effect that the maker is always superior to what he makes. And we find here at least a dim premonition of that principle in Philo. In a fashion it was anticipated by both Plato and Aristotle, since they both believed that an idea when incorporated was always imperfect, but of course in neither of them was there any hierarchy of goodness running through the *scala naturae*, for except in certain scattered sentences of Aristotle there is no *scala naturae*. The vegetative soul does indeed exist as matter in relation to the sensitive soul and the sensitive soul as matter in relation to the rational. But the general tenor of Aristotelianism runs counter to the idea of a hierarchical universe.

2. In such passages of Philo as those which discuss the significance of numbers we find evidence of what has been called Neopythagoreanism. Cicero attributes the revival of Pythagoreanism to Nigidius Figulus, but what Nigidius actually taught is not

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31 See for instance *Enmead* v. 2. 2.
known. Diogenes Laertius gives the teachings of the Pythagorean circle in an epitome of an account by Alexander Polyhistor, a contemporary of Philo. This epitome is therefore twice removed at least from its source. It runs as follows (Diogenes Laertius, viii. 25):

The monad is the first principle. And from the monad comes the indefinite dyad, as it were, matter supporting the monad which is a cause. And from the monad and the indefinite dyad are the numbers. And from the numbers the points. And from these the lines, and from these plane surfaces, and from planes solids, and from these sensible bodies, of which moreover there are four elements, fire, water, earth, air. And there are interchange and intermingling throughout all things and there is born of these the animate cosmos, intellectual, in the likeness of a sphere, the earth holding the central position and being spherical and encompassing.

We have seen notions similar to this in the fragments of Speusippos, so that whether they go back to the semimythical Pythagoras or not, they are much older than the first century b.c. Whether their author had any clear idea of what he meant by the indefinite dyad's being, as it were, matter to the monad, I cannot say, but one guesses that he had in mind the picture of the tetraktys in which the first four integers were arranged as points under the One, and when they were added up, they made ten, the basis of the decimal system. The common-sense way of explaining the generation of numbers after two, is to point to the operation of addition. But Pythagoreans were interested in the generation of numbers not in operations which might presuppose the existence of that upon which the operation is made. And since one was not supposed to be a number, even by Aristotle, the existence of two could not be explained by addition. That lines, planes, and solids should be generated out of numbers became a generally accepted idea well into the Renaissance, and the words square and cube were taken literally, even when applied to the product of a number by itself and the product of a number by its square. To generate the elements out of the geometric simples could have been
derived from *Timaeus*, in which various regular solids were associated with them. But a detail which I have not found in Philo or in his predecessors, but which was to reappear in Plotinus, is that of the constant interchange and intermingling of the elements, analogous to the collisions of the Epicurean atoms—a relative novelty in this period, though it too had been anticipated in a different form in the mixture of Anaxagoras' atoms. In Philo, God is also the One and the first principle of all things, but there is no indefinite dyad in him and no generation of the points, lines, planes, and solids, to say nothing of the elements, out of the numbers. The numbers in his writings have symbolic meaning, as we have seen, but creation is attributable to the ideas and the ideas were not numbers.

3. In Pseudo-Archytas, the monad and the indefinite dyad are replaced by two primary principles, “one corresponding to the ordered and the definite, the other corresponding to the unordered and indefinite.” These belong to two opposing classes, the definite being beneficent, the indefinite maleficent. “Wherefore when they have come into being in art and in nature, they share in these two primary things, both in form and in substance.” The forms are causes of particularity; the substance is the underlying matter which receives the forms. But now there must be something to bring about this junction and that is the work of God. “So now we say that there are three first principles, God and substance and form. And God is the artificer and mover, substance is matter and the moved, and form the art and the source from which substance is moved by the mover.” God then has the function not of creation but of bringing together into some sort of harmony matter and form, evil and goodness. Though the language here is Aristotelian, the underlying idea is not. There is no first principle in Aristotle which harmonizes good and evil, form and matter. Opposites are not harmonized in him; they remain what they are and replace each other in cases of change. That is, if a good thing changes in respect to its goodness, it can only be-

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come evil. And though forms become particularized when embedded in matter, (1) there is no external cause which brings this about, except in the case of art where the artist incorporates the form, and (2) it is inherent in the natural order that most forms be potentially present in their matter. Moreover, there is no identification of matter with maleficence and of form with beneficence; that which has perfected its form is always better than the unrealized potentialities of a thing, but the substratum has no power to do anything whatsoever, good or bad. It receives forms and that is all. One can see even in this small fragment, however, the beginnings of a pluralism which also appears in Philo and which later thinkers were to try to organize.

This comes out more clearly in some words of Syrianus commenting on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* where he says that Archytas called the first cause (God) a "precausal cause." This removes God from the cosmos, while retaining Him as the ultimate cause of it. It foreshadows Philo's statement (if the author was earlier in date than Philo) commenting on Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for man to be alone," and "the only being which is alone and in itself is God and nothing is like God." *(Legum Allegoria ii. 1. 1; LCL, p. 224)*.34 Though the arguments by which the complete transcendence of God is proved are not given, one can see that if there is to be a cause of everything whatsoever, it cannot be found in the known cosmos, for everything in that cosmos is assumed to have been itself caused. But if it is outside the cosmos, then nothing can be said of it except that it is alone, unique, and, as later theologians were to see, unqualifiable and ineffable. Furthermore *(De opificio mundi ii. 8; LCL, p. 8)*, anything which we can see has been caused, and if something has been caused, it is acted upon. Therefore there must have been an agent to cause it. When it is a question of the whole cosmos, its cause must be purely active and in no respect passive. But such a being is pre-

34 Nothing is like God, one suspects, only in the matter of being alone, for Philo needless to say does not deny that man was made in the image and likeness of God.
causal in the sense that it is prior in nature to all observable causes. They are acted upon as well as acting.

4. Onatus, a figure so obscure that there is some doubt whether he ever existed, seems to take up the challenge. For he says,⁵⁵

God knows the life of animate beings, but He is neither seen nor perceived, except to an extremely few men. For God is intelligence (Nous) and soul and the guiding principle of the whole cosmos.⁶⁶ Now God Himself is neither seen nor perceived, but is contemplated in thought only and in the mind. But his works and deeds are both visible and perceptible to all men. But it would seem to me that God is not one, but that there is one greatest and highest and the ruler of the whole, while there are also many others differing in degrees of power. But He rules as a king over them all. He who excels in might and greatness and virtue. And this God encompasses the entire cosmos, but the other gods traverse the heaven in concourse with the whole, accompanying according to the reason the first and noetic God. Now they who say that there is but one God and not many are mistaken. For they do not at the same time contemplate the most high honor of the divine supremacy. But I say that the rule and power over similar things belong to Him who is mightiest and superior to the others. And the other gods are so related to the first and intelligible God as the chorus to the chorus master, and soldiers to their general, their taxarch and commander, it being their nature to follow and obey the orders of Him who is rightly their leader. It is the duty common to both the ruler and the ruled, nor can the ruled carry out their orders if they are abandoned by their guide, any more than singers can sing in unison without their leader or soldiers can win a victory without their general. Nature is such that it lacks nothing, either that which is innate or that which comes from without, wherefore it is not put together from two things, soul and body, for soul is throughout the whole, nor from some sort of opposites, for opposites are made to conquer and be conquered. In fact the mixture with the body weakens the purity of the soul, for it is pure and divine, whereas the body is mortal and mixed with dirt. . . . In every respect God has given the body to mortal animals because of eternal and inescapable necessity. For everything which shares in becoming is poor in nature and needy. The real God then, just as I have said in the beginning of my discourse, is Himself the first principle and the primary god. And divine is the

⁶⁶ The author uses the Stoic term (Doric), τὸ ἀγεμονικὸν.
cosmos and all things revolving within it. So in the same way is the soul a daimon for it rules and moves the entire animal. One must make this distinction, between god and the divine, and daimones and the daimonie.

It becomes clearer than ever that the distinction between appearance and reality is that between the inert, passive, unordered, formless, chaotic, and that agent or those agents which are active and introduce the order and form into matter. This active power is suprasensible, since the sensible is always the material, but who the few men are who can know God is not told us. Moreover, in their case God is seen and perceived, and it is tempting to conclude that they have a mystic vision of Him. Such a vision is hinted at by Philo too, though he also says that God is indefinable (*De posteritate Caini* xlviii. 167; LCL, p. 426), incomprehensible (xlviii. 169; LCL, p. 427), unnamable and ineffable (*De sommiis* i. 11. 67; LCL, p. 330). The hint is given in *De migratione* (vii. 34; LCL, p. 150) when he is speaking about inspiration. It has happened to him "thousands of times" when he has sat down to write and found his mind barren. Suddenly, he says, he has found his mind "by the power of the living God" filled with ideas. He was as in a Corybantic seizure and unaware of all things, "the place where I was, the persons present, myself, the things being said and the things I was writing." He was given then, he says, "expressions, conceptions, enjoyment of light, keenest vision, the utmost brilliance of distinct objects, such as might be produced through the eyes from clearest demonstration." Here, to be sure, Philo is not face to face with God, as he might be were he having a beatific vision, but some of the details such as the lack of self-consciousness, the intense light, the clarity of what he contemplates, are so similar to some of the details of the mystic experience as usually reported that one may at least wonder whether his experience of inspiration is not that of the mystic. For if God is incomprehensible, He can be known only indirectly through His works, and the most important of His works for a philosopher

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would be inspiration, as close a contact with the divine nature as would be possible. Unfortunately Onatus does not tell us just what the seeing and perception of God is like when they come to the happy few. And so we can draw only the vaguest conclusions from the resemblance between what he says about the knowledge of God and what Philo says about inspiration. But it is clear that the only knowledge which one could have of an ineffable, incomprehensible being would be through a vision.

Each of these writers, it will be observed, can give reasons for asserting the incomprehensibility of God. They may not know what He is, but they do know what He is not. And since He, the incomprehensible, is the one reality, known to exist through reasoning but not known through reasoning, we seem to have come to the point where even the reason is unable to reach what really is. Since, moreover, it arrives at the truth through inspiration, not through reasoning, man is left in the desperate condition of knowing what he wishes to know but incapable of finding it through his own efforts. It would be absurd to attribute such a conclusion to the philosophers whose works remain only in scraps and tatters, for we naturally can have little idea of what they said in the lost pieces. But at least in Philo's case we have plenty of evidence that the truth is before us in a book, that the underlying meaning of that book is to be discovered only through interpreting it as an allegory, and that the meaning of the allegory comes, or at least sometimes comes, through inspiration. There are of course dozens of passages where the exegesis relies on the commonplaces of Stoicism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism, and Philo does not tell us at what point his reliance on the philosophic tradition breaks down and he has to wait for revelation. One suspects that the point is reached when the tradition or its implications seem to be in conflict with the Bible, as Judaism interpreted the Bible. An example of this would be the matter of the eternity of the world. Hence one is forced to conclude that Zeno and Cleanthes, Plato and Aristotle, were all Moses speaking Greek when they agreed with Moses. At other times they were simply mistaken. And it
was Philo himself who could distinguish between what they had borrowed from Moses and what they had imagined for themselves.

II

1. The two worlds of Philo are linked, as we have said, by the angels, some mounting upward and some descending, as in Jacob’s ladder. But there is little, if any, evidence that he was thinking of them as symbolizing different “degrees of reality,” though apparently they did possess different degrees of power in the sense that some had functions which were more important than others. Moreover, though Philo, as we have seen, makes plentiful use of Pythagorean number symbolism, there is no text which I have found in which the overflowing of the One into the other numbers is asserted. God is a creator, not a fountain from which all other beings flow. The gap between the real and the perceptual is not filled with beings of decreasing “reality” which emanate from the ens realissimum. Whatever exists between God and this world is created by God, and this includes the ideas as well as the material world.

There were, however, in the first century B.C. the following data which might induce men to believe in a hierarchical universe, a term whose meaning we hope will become clearer later, as well as in emanation as opposed to creation. First, there were the psychobiological theories of Aristotle, to the effect that in the soul the vegetative faculty, corresponding to plant life, was a matter to the sensitive faculty, corresponding to animal life, and the sensitive faculty was as matter to the rational faculty. Moreover, within the rational faculty there was a division between the passive reason and the active reason and the former was as matter to the latter. But between the human reason and the Unmoved Mover there existed no graduated scale of beings. Aristotle also believed in the existence of zoophytes which were partly vege-
table and partly animal and this might have suggested that there were intermediate stages of being between any two stages. But if this suggestion were accepted as more than what it actually is, namely a belief in the existence of sponges and polyps, a serious error would be committed, for there is no mention in Aristotle of beast men, unless one thinks of natural slaves as such. Again, as far as Aristotle is concerned, there was always the possibility, realized by Porphyry in his Introduction to the Categories, that the relation between the species and the genus would be generalized so that each genus would be a species of a higher genus, until one reached the genus of all genera. But since Aristotle believed in the radical separation of the ten categories, it would have been strange for him also to have thought that they were all somehow or other directly “deducible” from the highest all-inclusive genus. They are actually ten ways of being, arrived at by observation, if not by an inspection of the parts of speech, and none of them is subordinate to any of the others. In fact some of them, such as action and passion, are antitheses. Finally, there might be a hint of a hierarchy in his theory about the spheres which were spatially arranged in order from the outermost to the innermost. It is true that the outermost was the best and presumably the sphere of earth was the worst, though Aristotle himself does not draw this conclusion. But the influence of the Unmoved Mover upon the spheres is left vague, nor do they proceed out of Him, nor are they created one after another from Him, nor does each of those below the crystalline sphere emanate from that immediately above it. Furthermore, since his world was without beginning or end, there was no thought in Aristotle of any genetic relation between parts of the world. Genesis occurs on earth in the growth of living beings and in art.

Nevertheless these various hints have induced some later thinkers to attribute to Aristotle a belief in a hierarchical universe and what induced modern scholars to make this inference may very

38 For further discussion of the hierarchy in Aristotle, see G. Boas, Some Assumptions of Aristotle, chap. 7.
well have induced the ancients to do as much. But more influential than Aristotle was Plato in the Timaeus which, as Lovejoy has shown, proclaimed the Principle of Plenitude (the term is Lovejoy’s) according to which all possibilities must be realized. But in Plato there is no suggestion of how the ideas came into being for the simple reason that he believed them to be eternal. They were not the thoughts of the Demiurge who, as a matter of fact created nothing, nor were they arranged in any serial order from the most inclusive to the least, nor were the primary categories of Identity and Difference, Motion and Rest, further reducible. Whatever the Demiurge fashioned, He fashioned in accordance with rational principles.

There was also a suggestion of a hierarchy in the works of the Pythagoreans, especially in their theory of numerical relationships. The tetraktys is a pattern of numbers which might be said to flow out of the One, their source. It was, however, only a pattern and there is no evidence that between every two numbers there was supposed to be a third, nor that three, for instance, was better than or inclusive of or the source of four. The numbers were discrete integers in the Pythagorean fragments; how they “flowed” out of the One remains a mystery. There is a Pythagorean fragment preserved by Stobaeus (Vol. I, p. 188) which says that there are three species of number, the even and the odd and a third which is mixed, called “even-odd.” But this division is ultimate. Similarly Plutarch reports (Placita iii. 100. 11) that Philolaus believed in the existence of both the earth and the counterearth, as well as a central fire, an opinion attributed to the “so-called Pythagoreans,” with no mention of Philolaus, by Aristotle (De caelo 293a). But a cosmos with a central fire and two earths in opposite position is scarcely a hierarchical cosmos. We have also a fragment from Stobaeus (Vol. I, p. 16) which says

39 Hippolytus, who is of course much later than the men of whom we have been writing, attributes the following to Pythagoras himself: “The tetraktys is the source of everflowing nature, having roots”—of everything else?—“in itself, and from this number all numbers have their origin.” I quote this from Diels, Doxographi graeci, l. 20, p. 556.
that the decade is the guiding principle and organizer of the cosmos and another which says that one is the first principle of all things. In view of the almost impossibility of making any sense out of such scraps, it is perhaps wiser to suspend judgment.

The work known as "On the Soul of the World and Nature," ascribed to Timaeus of Locrus, is not authentic, for it reads as if it were of Platonistic origin, though it seemed Pythagorean to Proclus who has preserved it for us in his commentary on Plato's Timaeus. We shall leave in abeyance the question of its date and authorship, for it is certainly anterior to the fifth century A.D., and is in all probability much earlier. It may well be this work to which Clement of Alexandria refers in his Stromata (v. 604a) which would put it before the late second or early third centuries. Our own guess is that it is the work of some Platonizing eclectic of the early Christian period. It makes the cosmos the product of the Nous and of Necessity, the former being responsible for rational beings, the ideas, and the latter for material changes. "Of these on the one hand is that which is of the nature of good things and is called God and is the source of whatever is best, but the others, which are co-operative causes, are classed with Necessity. And things as a whole are divided into the ideal and sensible matter, which is as if a child of the ideas. And the one is without birth and unmoved and stable and sui generis, being both intelligible and the paradigm of the things which come into being. . . . But matter is a receptacle, both a mother and a nurse, productive of the third substance. For it has received into itself and been imprinted with images and by them it generates things as its children." The passage then proceeds to describe matter as itself eternal, though not immutable; it has simply the capacity for receiving ideas. It thus resembles Aristotle’s substratum, and indeed what we have so far is a combination of Aristotle's matter and Plato’s intelligible world with the particulars in between as the children of both. But now what was the Nous becomes God, and we are told that "before the heaven was, there existed in the Logos the ideas, the matter, and God, the Demiurge of the
better.” The Logos was not in God, but God, as well as the other two kinds of being, was in the Logos. This is neither Plato nor Aristotle nor anyone else whom we have discussed so far in this book, nor is it Philo nor the author of the Fourth Gospel. “And since the elder is prior to the younger and the ordered to the unordered, God, being good and seeing that matter received the ideas and was altered in every way but in a disorderly fashion, felt constrained to put it in order and from indefiniteness to change it into definiteness, so that they would be made harmonious with their bodily differences and not take on fortuitous directions.” He thereupon made this cosmos out of all sorts of matter so that it might be capable of everything. It was made one, of one kind, perfect, animate, and rational, “for such is better than the inanimate and the irrational.” It has a spherical body, “for this is better than any other shape.” Here there are obvious resemblances to Timaeus, but again there is no mention of a graded series of beings filling the universe from heaven to earth or from absolute Being to Nonbeing.

2. In Moderatus of Gades, presumably a figure dating from the middle of the first century A.D., there is a clearer suggestion of an ontological hierarchy in which the lower stages are derived from the higher. His views are found in Porphyry’s Life of Pythagoras and the Physics of Simplicius (p. 230). It is the account of Simplicius which contains the passage illustrating the hierarchy. According to the Pythagoreans, we are told, there is a “first One” which is defined as above being and all substance—or essence—and a “second One” which “is really real and intelligible,” the ideas, and a third “which is psychical and shares in the One and the ideas.” Then come the sensible things which do not participate in the ideas but are a reflection of them, like the images seen in Plato’s cave, the probable source of the figure. These are not real at all but a sort of “shadow” cast by the multiplicity in the intelligible world “or better something which has descended from it.” At last we have a clear case of degrees of reality ordered in a hierarchy, with a genetic relation running down from the
upper levels to the lower. How does the genesis of the lower levels come about? "The unique Logos . . . having desired that genesis of things come from himself, displaced by privation the multiplicity of all things and took away from them the logoi and ideas of himself. And this multiplicity he called amorphous and undifferentiated and unordered, though form, order, and difference and quality had been admitted throughout the whole." The descent is caused by privation. Genesis occurs by depriving a level of being of some of its characteristics. This could be a purely dialectical procedure, for one could reason that, if there is form in the world of ideas, there could be a lack of form somewhere else, and so with the other characteristics mentioned. So he says later that the material world does not have multiplicity as ideal but by privation and a "loosening" and removal and tearing asunder and degradation from being. Wherefore, he adds, matter is an evil thing, since it has fled from the good. Presumably then the genesis of the lower orders could come about only through a loss of "reality," for since the ideas are perfect, their exemplifications would have to be less perfect. The principle that the creation is always worse than the creator was to become a cardinal principle of Neoplatonism and the explanation of the inferiority of the created is adumbrated in Moderatus' theory of creation through successive privations. Since no one can be sure of the date of this account, it cannot be labeled a source of any other ideas of whose dates we are certain and is inserted here mainly for the interest which it would have if written in the first century.

3. In Nichomachus of Gerasa, also probably of the first century A.D., we find once again the theory that the world can be understood only mathematically, with the additional thesis that the numbers pre-exist in the mind of God.40 They are the paradigms in accordance with which all things are made, and through the "technical Logos" there come into being the universe as a

whole, time, motion, the heaven, the stars, and all their revolu-
tions. But above them all stands the Monad, which is both male
and female, and in it are mingled together God and matter in
some way, and, as in a general receptacle (lit., an inn) are found
chaos, confusion, mixture, darkness, blackness, emptiness, Tartarus.
The astonishing detail in this passage is the compresence of mat­
ter and God in the first principle, as well as all the horrors of
which the author is aware. In Neoplatonism evil is a lack of
reality, so that as the world proceeds out of the One, it loses
something. But in Nichomachus it is found embedded in the uni-
versal source. There is a possibility that the reasoning behind this
lies in the nature of the bisexual Monad, for it was generally be-
lieved that whereas the good was odd and male, evil was even and
female. But there is also a suggestion in the famous Pythagorean
Table of Opposites as given by Aristotle (Metaphysics 986a 22),
where the side of the table which contains the even, the unlimited,
the female, contains mainly, though not entirely, privations. But
to make sense out of such passages is too great a strain upon the
most benevolent imagination. At any rate one can say that it con­
tains nothing resembling emanation of a hierarchical series.

Our brief survey then shows us but one man who anticipated—
if our conjectural dating is right—the idea of an ontological
hierarchy, Moderatus. His hierarchy has the One at the apex and
matter at the base, and is formed by successive privations.

III

Alongside of a genetic hierarchy and a logical hierarchy there
exists a hierarchy of value indicated roughly in Moderatus also.

41 Miss De Vogel sees here an echo of the Stoic principle that God is ma-
terial, but it could just as well have been an inference based on the prin-
ciple ex nihilo nihil. If everything comes from the Monad, everything must
be in it.
42 For a similar, though far from identical, theory, see the selection from
Though there is a sharp distinction in Plato between the ideas and their exemplifications, it is also true that the ideas were inherently better than their exemplifications and there are passages so well known as to require no listing here which state that the good is the goal of all things, that which they are striving to reach. But Plato does not say that there are levels of reality, each of which has its own good and that all these goods can be arranged in order of betterness, the lower ones somehow or other descending from the upper. In fact in *Phaedrus* (250d) it is made clear that Beauty is the one link between the two worlds. In the *Symposium* there is a hierarchy of value in Diotima’s speech, where men are urged to proceed from the love of individual beautiful bodies to the love of general corporeal beauty, to beautiful forms, and laws, until one reaches absolute Beauty which is not attached to anything. But it would be in vain that one would look for a more definite hierarchical scheme of values corresponding to an analogous hierarchy of reality.43

It is possible that the first step toward fusing a hierarchy of reality with a hierarchy of goodness was taken when matter was said to be worse than the immaterial, and when the distinction was believed to hold good in the case of the human body and the human soul. When it was further believed that all action came from the immaterial soul and that the material body was always passive and inert, a further step was taken. But this radical distinction, though it later turned into two ends of a graduated series of beings, was not such in Plato and Aristotle, in both of whom the preliminary ideas appear occasionally, particularly in their ethical writings. Neither of them flatly says that the body and the material world are inherently evil, but Plato looks down on the purely sensual life given over to corporeal delights, and Aristotle has a program too by which the demands of our vegetative souls can be curbed. Neither teaches asceticism, but neither teaches debauchery. And, though the Stoics were materialists in their ontology, the matter which was the human body was sub-

43 Cf. Windelband’s *History of Philosophy*, Part I, chap. 3, sect. 11, par. 5.
mitted by them to the rigid control of the reason. Similarly, though the Epicureans were also materialists, they distinguished between those pleasures of the body which were to be avoided and those which might be gratified. But all this is common to the ethical teachings of the ancients and in itself neither invested all matter with the principle of evil, whether as a positive power inherent in it or as the privation of goodness. Nor, let us repeat once more, did any of these men maintain that between the material world and the ideal was a graded scale of beings which were less and less material and less and less evil.

1. The deontological opposition between the world of goodness and the world of evil comes out forcibly, as all Christians know, in the New Testament. Though the world is the creation of God and though, when it was finished, “He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,” there is in Saint Paul an intimation that there is a fundamental opposition between God’s work and Him who made it. We have received, he says (I Cor. 2:12), “not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God,” and again (12:32), “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” Saint John (8:23) has Jesus saying to the Jews, “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.” In the same Gospel later (15:18-19) we read the words, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of this world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

In his ethical teaching the author of the first epistle of John (I John 2:15 ff.) is found to apply the distinction to action: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the

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45 Cf. John 17:4, 7, 14. See also Jesus’ prayer in 17:9, “I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me.” The world here is the cosmos.
world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away.” The important words here, as far as our purposes are concerned, are in the verse, “All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father.” In Chapter 4 of the same epistle, the two realms are said to be the habitations of good and bad spirits, the evil being of the world, the good of God. And in Chapter 19 (19) we come to the conclusion that “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” It would seem to follow that the world (cosmos) either has fallen into a lower rank after its creation or was not created good. But neither conjecture is substantiated in the New Testament and we have here echoes of a philosophy foreign to the Hebraic tradition.

The split between the world and God is paralleled in Saint Paul by the split between the flesh and the spirit. This requires no documentation, for it is common knowledge. The division is that between the evil and the good, as was the parallel split. In pagan philosophy this is best illustrated by those passages from Epictetus which have already been discussed. And, though Saint Paul speaks of the Law as having been given to the angels, he does not attribute to them degrees of power or goodness. One cannot step by step ascend to the Spirit; one must kill the “old man” and be reborn. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:5, 6). The emphasis upon the evil of both the world and the body is continued to be expressed throughout the Pauline Epistles and the fact that God created them both seems to be forgotten. Whether, as in Saint John (8:44), the world was submissive to the Devil as to a secondary deity in battle with the primary, I do not profess to know. But apparently what was later to become a Christian heresy, Manichaeism, was known in some form or other and its doctrines felt at the time the Fourth Gospel
was written. For in the Epistles of Paul we find also intimations that man was not made to live here below, being “strangers and pilgrims on this earth” (Heb. 11:13), a phrase repeated in I Pet. 2:11. The alienation of man from his true nature, his dwelling in a realm in which he is a stranger and a wanderer, his nostalgia for his true home, seem to be new elements introduced into Christianity if only in the form of metaphors. But it is easy to understand why some of the early Christians emphasized these metaphors and built them up into theological doctrines. This was not a period in which the new authority had been crystallized and heterodoxy annihilated. The dualism between God and the Devil, good and evil, spirit and matter, was as prevalent a belief in the communities which turned toward Christianity as it was in pagan circles.

2. The ideas which we see adumbrated in the New Testament passages referred to are usually called Gnostic. Though the root meaning of the term is knowledge, the kind of knowledge which it denotes is entirely different from perceptual or rational knowledge. Though there is no organized body of doctrine which is peculiarly and outstandingly Gnostic, as the New Testament is Christian, there are certain general ideas which appear among all the various Gnostic groups. First, as Puech points out, Gnosticism is less a Hellenizing of Christianity than an increasing orientalizing of it. He cites as his New Testament sources II Peter and the Deutero-Pauline Epistles. But most of our information comes from sources outside the New Testament, such as Ignatius of Antioch and the Pastor of Hermas. Since I have not had access

46 This is reinforced by the Greek text which runs, καὶ δ' πατὴρ ἀλων, and which would normally be translated, “and so is his father.” But the Authorized Version runs, “and the father of lies.” The Greek would induce one to believe that the Devil has a father, as Jesus had a father, and that the two fathers were in primordial conflict as are their sons. But I am far from capable of adjudicating such matters and prefer to leave them in the air.


48 In his monograph, *Où en est le Problème du Gnosticisme?* in *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, Nos. 2 and 3 (1934), following Reitzenstein.
to the original sources of this cluster of doctrines, I shall follow Puech's outline which is based admittedly on a fusion of several strains of thought.\textsuperscript{49}

Above the world, then, there stand two figures, the Father and the Mother, who is the Thought of the Father. She falls into the material world where she is held captive by two angels, sometimes called \textit{archontes}, who are beings living in this inferior world. In the earliest Gnostic systems the Father descends to rescue his Thought, who is variously called Sophia, Barbelo, or even the mother of the Seven Archons. Elsewhere the primordial couple is completed by a Son, a Son of Man, the Archetypal Man, Christos, and so on. The general tendency of this kind of fantasy is anti-Jewish, the chief Archon being Ialdabaoth or Sabaoth, the God of the Old Testament. There are thus two Gods, a good God who is transcendent and unknown, revealed by His incarnation, called Simon or more generally Jesus, and an evil God who is responsible for this material world. In the beginning then there is a complete dualism and a removal of the Father, the good God, high above the knowable world into absolute isolation, logical and existential. But sometimes there is what Puech\textsuperscript{50} calls, a "cascade of emanations forming a world of \textit{aeons} presided over by the Father and punctuated by dramas beyond time, of which the principal one is the fall of Sophia."\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Gnosis}, or the knowledge of this confusion of myths and symbols, obviously could be neither perceptual nor rational. For what could be perceived which would be direct evidence of the transcendent or furnish data from which the unknowable could be deduced? It is scarcely possible to frame an intelligible sentence expounding the beliefs which were pronounced with such majesty and incantatory power. Since the traits of the transcendent are beyond reason, they can only be revealed from a supernatural source, even

\textsuperscript{49} The curious might consult C. J. De Vogel, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 407 ff., for a bibliography and outline of some of the principal Gnostic doctrines.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{51} Cf. Irenaeus \textit{Adv. Haeres.} i. 1. 1–2.
though the very existence of such a source is a matter of doubt. Arguments such as that of the identity of Adam with Christ vs. Christ's assumption of Adam's body when He wished to visit the earth,\textsuperscript{52} clearly could not be settled by natural evidence. The very meaning of the terms is dubious and the kind of proof which would be satisfactory to both parties concerned has never been stated. The partisans of such views would demand either the production of some sacred text whose authority would be accepted by both sides or proof of some special revelation given to the proponent of one side or the other. There were probably sacred texts galore but their sanctity was not admitted by any consensus. And since revelation had a way of varying from individual to individual with the result that there appear to be inconsistencies even in the canonical writings of the orthodox Jews and Christians, whose interpretation of the text was to become authoritative?

However reasonable such questions may seem to the men who put them, it can hardly be denied that revelation is a vital experience whose significance outsiders may doubt but which was never doubted by the men who lived it. Like the beatific vision it carries its own proof within it. The end of the pagan period was moreover a time during which miracles were accepted not merely as unusual occurrences, but as evidence of a divine presence, though the classic philosophers had insisted that the best evidence of a god was the uniformity of nature. This was a time again when texts with clear factual meanings could be safely interpreted as concealing a "deeper" meaning, when gods could appear in mortal form not merely as incidents in fictions, as in the \textit{Iliad}, but in sober truth. Philo, indoctrinated as he was with rationalism, could maintain that verses which proclaimed the creation of the world in six days must be interpreted allegorically since, for instance (\textit{Legum Allegoria} i. 2), there could not be any days until the heavenly bodies had been created, but he still was under the compulsion to maintain the truth of the verses in ques-

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. L. Gordon Rylands, \textit{The Beginnings of Gnostic Christianity}, p. 144.
tion in spite of the paradoxes they contained. If one ask how men could accept inconsistent sentences as all being true, the answer probably is that revelation, being given to individuals, is bound to vary with the individuals who receive it, and that consequently consistency is not so important as the strength of one’s faith.\footnote{I have myself heard a reputable geologist maintain that the six days of creation were six geological epochs and that the years of Methuselah’s life were lunar months.}

The history of New Testament exegesis suffices to demonstrate what men will sacrifice for the sake of faith. Hence one should not be too astonished to find that emanation of aeons, the fall of Sophia, angels and \textit{archontes} flying about between heaven and earth, supernatural evil and good, the imprisonment of the soul in the body, incarnation of gods in men, the deifying of moral qualities, were all accepted as intelligible ideas. It is understandable that teachers and prophets should have called upon their pupils to have faith, since reason could give them nothing by way of answering their questions. But what is incomprehensible to a philosopher is that the pupils never seemed to ask for a clear statement of what they were asked to have faith in. Saint Paul, for instance, could speak of the crucifixion as a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks and proudly declare that he was a fool in God. But nowhere does he explain in rational language just how God in the person of His Son could be crucified, die, rise from the dead after three days and still remain at the helm of the universe. Was the world without God after the crucifixion and before the resurrection? Was God entirely present in His Son and also the\textit{ens realissimum} above the heavens? The consequences of either an affirmative or a negative answer to such questions would have been disastrous. A Plato, an Aristotle, a Zeno, an Epicurus, would indeed have found belief in such doctrines simple foolishness. But it seems to have been possible then as now for good Christians to label them mysteries and cling to them as essential to one’s salvation. Tertullian’s famous remark on the incarnation might be taken to mean that anyone could believe...
in rational demonstrations, but only a saint could believe in the logically absurd.

The breakdown in rationalism is best illustrated by citing a text or two from Gnostic literature. One of the simplest is in what is left of Valentinus, a second-century figure living in Egypt, as quoted by Irenaeus (i. 1. 1-2) in his book against the heretics. His series of supernatural beings is as follows:

In the invisible and unnamable heights is the perfect Aeon, pre-existing. And this they call the ultimate Proarche (Source) and the Propater (Pre-father) and Bythos (Depths). And He is spaceless and invisible and timeless and without beginning, and was born in silence and great solitude in infinite aeons of time. Together with Him is Nous, whom they also call Grace and Silence. And it is also believed that from Him is emitted Bythos (the Depths), this, source of all things and their seed, so to speak, the emission itself which they think to be ejaculated. And it settles down as in a mother in Sige (Silence) which exists beside Him. And when She has accepted this seed and becomes pregnant, She brings forth Nous, both like and equal to the emission, and She alone possesses the greatness of the Father. And this Nous they also call the Only Begotten and the Father and Source of all. And together with Him is emitted Aletheia (Truth). And this is the primordial and original Pythagorean Tetraktys, which they call the root of all. Now there exists Bythos and Sige and then Nous and Aletheia. But Perception and the Only Begotten alike are emitted from these and the Only Begotten emits Logos and Zoe (Life), father of all things which are to come after Him and source and form of all the Plenum. Then from Logos and Zoe are emitted in syzygy Anthropos (man) and Ecclesia. And the same is the primally born Ogdoad, root and hypostasis of all things, called by four names among them, Bythos and Nous and Logos and Anthropos, for each of these is both male and female.

The emission of the various beings is clearly described as begetting. The Propater of all things is beyond all affirmative description and is qualified exclusively in the negative: He is without space or time or beginning. But though He is spoken of as ultimate and alone, yet Nous also seems to be there at His side,

54 Strictly speaking, the Unique. But I follow John 3:16, as Irenaeus undoubtedly did.
possibly simply as the female nature joined with the male, for at the end of the passage we read that all the beings mentioned are bisexual. But the production of *Nous,* however, seems to be posterior to the existence of the progenitor of all things. And its birth is followed by that of Perception and the Only Begotten, followed again by *Logos* and Life, Man and *Ecclesia.* Since each pair of these beings is both male and female and has several names, one might arrange the series as follows:

The *Propater*—*Nous*

*Bythos*—Silence

*Nous* (the Only Begotten)—Truth (the *Tetraktys*)

Perception—the Only Begotten

*Logos*—Life

Man—*Ecclesia*

The process by which the levels are created is described as procreation, not emanation. We can, in spite of the obscurity of the passage, see that the primordial source of all things is a transcendent being and consequently ineffable. To this extent it resembles the God of Philo as well as the One of Plotinus. Whether the hierarchy is one of decreasing “reality,” goodness, and logical extension is not apparent, nor does there seem to be any way of reading a logical hierarchy of classes into it. One might say that the *Logos* and Life were more inclusive than Man and *Ecclesia,* but then we should have to infer that Perception (the Sensible World?) was superior to and inclusive of *Logos,* which seems unlikely.

There is, moreover, another hierarchical arrangement, this time of three kinds of beings, and this one does correlate them with levels of goodness. These (Irenaeus, i. 6. 1) are the spiritual, the psychic, and the material. The material is sinister and destructible; the psychical, which is of good omen, is between the spiritual and the material; the spiritual, which is in syzygy with the psychic, is “the salt and the light of the cosmos.” The spiritual beings are

55 The Only Begotten thus seems to be on two levels. But Irenaeus may be as confused as his source here.
never destroyed, for just as gold fallen into the mire does not lose its beauty, so the spiritual fallen into the material world remains spiritual. There are many material beings and many psychological, but few spiritual. This passage, however, does not explain the generation of the three kinds of being nor can it be correlated with the generation of the various levels of reality out of the primordial Father.

3. In Numenius, a second-century writer whose opinions are preserved for us mainly in the Praeparatio evangelica of Eusebius, we find that the primary source of all things is a God who is “self-existent, simple, self-caused, and without any division.” Below Him are a second and a third God who are one. This dual God is torn between wishing to remain stable and to move (lit., “to flow”). He comes into being by taking charge of matter and is in contact with the sensible world, into which He apparently brings order. Numenius is clear in saying that the primary God is not the Demiurge. The first God is free from all works and is king of all, “whereas the demiurgic God rules over everything as He proceeds through the heavens.” How the material world is made, whether out of pre-existing matter as in Timaeus, or out of the substance of the second God, what the role of the third God is in all this, since He seems to be a part or a name for one aspect of the second, are not clear. “When the God looks down upon us and considers us in His mind, He confers upon each of us the power both to live and to remain alive, as well as bodies, since the God attends to the control of things from afar.” In other words He passes on to us the immediate control of ourselves. “And when the God returns to His own heights the same [life] is extinguished, but the Nous enjoys the power of living a happy life.”

Here the second God acts the role of a guardian angel rather than that of a Demiurge. It is Numenius’ account of the differences between the two Gods which interests Eusebius and not the creation

56 This is from Clement of Alexandria. See De Vogel, op. cit., 1335e.
58 Praeparatio evangelica xi. 18. 10.
or genesis of the world below the first God. The first God, he is quoted as saying,\textsuperscript{59} remains essentially Himself, whereas the second, on the contrary, is moved, that is, changes. Accordingly the first dwells in the Intelligible World, the second in both the Intelligible and the Sensible. “Do not wonder if I say such things, for you will hear much more wonderful things. For opposed to the productive movement of the second God, I say that the productive immobility of the first is inherent movement, from which both the order of the cosmos, alone eternal, and its preservation are conferred upon the whole.” Moreover, this second God is not the \textit{Nous}. Referring to Plato, Numenius says, the first God is utterly unknown, being self-existent, “as if someone should say, ‘Men, He whom you conjecture to be \textit{Nous} is not the first, but there is another \textit{Nous}, older and more divine than this one.’” We are still left in the dark about the function of the third God and His relation to the second. Proclus interprets the doctrine somewhat differently. “Numenius,” he says,\textsuperscript{60} “celebrating the three gods, calls the first Father, and the second Creator, and the third Creation. For the cosmos, according to him, is the third God, so that the Demiurge in his opinion is twofold, being both the first and the second Gods, but that which the Demiurge has made is the third. For it is better to speak thus than, as he says exaggerating, grandfather, grandson, descendant.” This is all very obscure and it may well be that Proclus misinterpreted Numenius,\textsuperscript{61} living as he did some four hundred years later. But at any rate it gives a role to the third God. Even if the third God is the thought of the Demiurge, rather than the actual world created by Him, He remains an object, a substance, rather than an activity. So that we can, after making allowances for probable error, say that in Numenius we have, first, an unknowable, self-existent God, second a Demiurge, third an object of the Demi-

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Praeparatio evangelica} xi. 18. 20. \\
\textsuperscript{60} Proclus in \textit{Tim.} i; ed. Diehl, Vol. I, p. 303. \\
\textsuperscript{61} See De Vogel, \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. III, p. 427, 1352a, n. May I express my obligations to this work which reproduces many of the passages which have not been available to me at the time of writing this.