

9. Pseudo Judaeon Christian Sects

Synthetic groups seem to have abounded in the days of the early church in which the ideas native to Judaism were, in part, tied into various degrees of pagan thought and even some Christian expressions. These are probably more important than I am willing or able to admit so I just mention a few of them and when you see the names in some other class or some other book you will remember that at least we had 'em noted here:

Ebionism

A culture of Pharisaically minded Jews who regarded Jesus as a legally pious human Messiah while denying virgin birth and essential deity. Paul was considered an apostate from Judaism and it was thought that the Old Testament ritual system was generally to be enforced on all.

Nazarénes

"Jewish Christians" who believed in Christ's essential deity, etc., but saw Paul as the true apostle and bound themselves to a strict observance of the Mosaic law. Of the New Testament they accepted only Matthew among the Gospel writings.

Elkasites

Probably best described as theosophic Jews, this group rejected Christ's divinity, etc., but spoke of him as a higher spirit or an angel...perhaps even the highest archangel. They observe circumcision, the Sabbath, ceremonial washings, and followed a strict asceticism. Making use of astrology, et al, they taught of an "inner circle" with regard to the fulfillment of the law and an "outer" or weaker bunch of hopefuls.

In the case of these groups, we have splinter cults. The Ebionites felt that at Baptism Christ was taken to a higher or divine station and some have suggested that the book of Colossians was written against their influence. We are certain that we can see their inroads in affecting the expression of doctrine but not always able to show the immediate cause and effect.

At this point we leave the formative voices of theological thought and move to a more pressing part of the course...one which we cannot do without.

F. Procedural Notes

We have not finished the propaedeutic and prolegomena