

with each effort failing miserably but soon to be followed by another sally against the truth. One of the more recent was that of Schonfield in THE PASSOVER PLOT. But these ramblings of unbelievers should not upset us terribly--we need to remember the hammer and anvil story.

Primitive Syncretisms

A syncretist is one who weaves two threads together taking the strength from each while removing the individual identification and coming up with a hybrid product that he hopes will be stronger than the threads of construction. Syncretists avowedly hope to take the "good" from one system and leave the "bad". It is a program of compromise but it allows those who do not feel strongly about a particular form to co-exist nicely with others who do not feel strongly on their views. Validity of the ideal is what is lost in syncretism...what is gained is epistemological compromise. The ones with which we are most concerned are the following and you will understand that we are not going into much detail.

1) Docetism: Gnostic views were combined with some Christian teaching. The group held that Christ's real body was ephemeral (concrete things were per se bad) and that he therefore was no real person as we are. Christ's death and resurrection were phantasmal and the reality of the God substance was denied. Greek scholars will see the Greek verb "to appear or seem" in the heart of this term. The idea will show itself later in some of the teachings of Appolinaris.

2) Ebionites: The ideal was a combination of basic Christian ideals with various Judaistic elements. They opposed the Pauline soteriology and the virgin birth and sought the power rituals that were neither Hebrew nor Christian in derivation. Probably aspects of Christianity, Judaism, and the mystery religions of the east are seen in equal parts among the Ebionites.

3) Elkasites: While not being strictly Jewish, the attempt was to combine aspects of spiritual life of Judaism with that of the church. They were not literally close to either but emotionally drew from both.