

hand with mystery religions and can pretty well exist with modern day meditationists! But its basic thrust is a mystery knowledge of what cannot be known in any real sense. Its appeal to the masses was deliverance from the limitations of a material life and the most you could hope for was the unlimited freedom of a spirit being...maybe.

One may wonder why gnosticism could tempt the believers, including some notable ones like Tatian, into the grotesque form of Christianity it presented. Probably the answer lies in the points where it maintains similarity to Christianity. It opposed polytheism, claimed immediate revelation, spoke of an enlightened life and offered deliverance to those who most especially felt the confines of defeat and the misery of sin. It did not have the grounds for offering them very much but it made the offer and in the offer had its appeal and pull towards the masses. Due to the mystical nature, it could only draw a limited following...men on the street cannot understand very well such effete thinking. But it tended to draw Christians into its web in the idea that it offered more than could simply be had in Jesus. The temptations to want to know more than is given is a large temptation and sometimes shows up in groups that are not gnostic but are seekers of higher fulfillment.

2) Neo-Platonism

Our chart is on page 62 and Neo-Platonism is a rebirth of the Platonic ideals in an ethereal setting combined with the elevation of the soul to a totally spirit status.

Neo-Platonism came on the heels of gnosticism as a challenge to the church in the philosophical ideals division. Plato had postulated a real world of ideals known only by intuition. The physical things about us were not real but were abstractions, memories of what the soul had known in the "cave". There was reality but it was non physical and the spiritual nature of it could allow it to have only an abstraction in everyday life. Neo-Platonism saw a rebirth of this general concept with the combined turning from physical things. By concentration, sublimation of the inner man, etc., one sought to raise oneself to God. It is something of the idea of denying what you are to get to what you are not. The platonic ideal is set at total variance with Christian thought on this line although some aspects of it have appealed to some Christians at