

times. Real life is lived in a spirit world with an abnegation of properties and things. The great thinkers in this school were:

--Ammonius Saccus: His death about 241, he is the first really well known teacher of the group and its earliest identified leader. Baptized a Christian, he turned from objective religion to be a follower of "wisdom" and "wisdom goals". He felt that the essence of truth was beyond the limited revelation of the Scripture and that the Scripture, at best, was a platform from which to leave in pursuit of real truth. Nothing that was final in itself could satisfy the need of the soul as it sought to participate in higher powers.

--Plotinus: Following Saccas, Plotinus (d. 270) combined a more systematic development to the ideas already given. He added an intense mysticism. He found himself in a state of ecstasy rather often and actually believed that he had been elevated to the sphere of God on occasion. He did not think he had become God, but he had been where God was. Plotinus is the theoretical thinker behind the major wave of neoplatonism. He did little writing (so far as I know) and the great literature thrust would come from his disciples.

Porphiry: The most expressive of the students of Plotinus, Porphyry (d. 304) was a champion of neoplatonism and an outspoken foe of Christianity. His works and anti-christian views were given in about 15 books and from what we know of him we may say that his ideas and their confrontation with the church worked in three major areas:

- 1) True worship consisted of exalting the soul to a pure knowledge by concentrating on ideals. Worship of a person (such as Jesus) was debasing as it demeaned the soul by making it subject to something that was physical, objective, and thus not the real good. Christian worship was too much tied to a "man" and to things that spoke representatively of the Deity. It was therefore not an expression of the soul but of the will and was centered on the material--very bad.

- 2) The levelling concept of Christian teaching put worship and soul expression on one level rather than on several stages of hierarchical worship such as angels, spirit beings, and the like. With no inferiors in the ascending order of the universe,