

there was no way to prepare oneself for the sublime enjoyment. This levelling, it was thought, tended to inhibit and shrink the soul.

3) Christian exclusivism in making the claim that the truth embodied in Jesus was the full character of truth, tended to deny validity to the pagan religions, etc. The older religions made maximum opportunity, supposedly, for the fuller expression of ideals in the use of multi-forms. (If you could not find something to worship in the older polytheism, there was not much hope for you!) Rejecting multi-forms meant that Christianity was limited in approach to ideals and thus was wrong. It should be refuted and its followers better educated.

Porphyry, as had Celsus before him, pointed out contradictions in the Bible realizing that if the Bible were not real there would not be much reason for the existence of the church. He was an advanced higher critic in his time and denied the biblical concepts of God's will and control for mankind. You will discover that there are very few new arguments in the critical bag that were not anticipated or given in seed form by these early pagan philosophers. When, as in our age, you find churchmen advancing these ideas, you discover how dark the plot of evil has become. The enemies of the church have long known that the destruction of the Bible was necessary for halting the progress of the church.

Porphyry's attack on Christianity was balanced with reason and force, not a mere emotional pogrom. The nature of neoplatonic thought and the high ideals of intangible worship however, could never capture the religious life of the common man or even be applicable to his circumstance. These exalted ideals (as with gnosticism) remained the property of a select few although neo-platonic thought will circulate in the church among an elitist choir in various dimension in years to come.

The pull of neo-platonism may be seen in three lines of ideal. It worked with a common problem--man's limitation in a physical life-setting; offered an advanced knowledge through the use of multi-forms thus making itself more accessible to anyone, and it offered a superiority in religious conduct and reward.

As with gnosticism, its fruit may be seen in the New Age movement of our time