

Information Page: Crude sketch of Gnosticism and ideals

- HEAVEN: God is here but he is impersonal, unknowable, undiminished and consists of spirit, mind, and soul but only in an impersonal way.
- THE PLEROMA: This is the atmospheric setting between us and God. God does not reach out to us..he is impersonal and uncaring..totally untouched by anything. But he has allowed some points of "truth" to fall from himself and be lodged in this area.
- THE EARTH: Where we are is physical, knowable, limited and failing. Not a good place but we are trapped here and are marked with all of its wretchedness. Hence the aim to escape here and be up there..in a totally insensate place.
- GNOSTIC TEACHERS: Have the ability to go into the pleroma and catch bits of truth to share with us. There is a charge, of course.
- CHRISTIAN GNOSTICS: Tatian moved that way and I will ramble on about it in class.

Equally improbable discussion of Neo-Platonism

This is a renewal of certain points of Plato, especially those built on innate knowledge and the concept of deity.

GOD.....still unknown, undiminished, unfeeling, but essentially good in that he is not bothered by any of the things limiting us.

LEVELS OF PROGRESSION or steps describe the various moves we make as we grow up to God. The idea is to be so delivered from the present limitations as to be made one with the deity.

MAN physical, mortal, earthly (all bad!) and composed of body, mind, and soul. The steps of deliverance are intended to free the non-material from the material. Man also has a "shadow substance" the intuitive reality of Plato's cave.

The procedure is that man draws from the shadow substance and by abnegation of the physical and mortal, moves towards assimilation with the sublime. The best known Neo-Platonists are Plotinus (d. about 270) and his pupil, Porphyry (d. ca 305).