Platonism in the 2nd century takes on certain characteristics which fulfil a development over the centuries after Plato and anticipate the movement towards Neo-platonism of the 3rd century. First among these tendencies is a drive towards transcendence. The one supreme first principle so grows in significance that the lesser agents between it and the world are either swallowed up or left with little substance. With this transcendence goes a tendency towards theology. For the first time Plato is essentially a religious philosopher with an idea of God, a theology.1 And this theology is reflected in works such as those which concern Hermes Trismegistus, works which have no claim whatever to philosophical content.2

The drive towards transcendence on the one hand, was balanced by an appreciation of the world and its complexity on the other.3 For the world was seen as a cosmic whole unified by divine powers which ran through it. The Stoics had taught the divine unity of the kosmos and this became part of Platonism.4 With these two emphases the place for the forms between the first principle and the visible world became less important. God was too remote to be joined easily to the world of men. He absorbed the forms within himself and became no less transcendent by doing this. But nature abhors a vacuum and into the cosmic space between God and the world came hordes of demons. Demons could either be disembodied spirits who had never had a body or the souls of the departed, or the souls within living beings. But they filled the gap in a non-rational way and added to the religious rather than philosophical world. Platonism as a picture-book was replacing Platonism as a philosophy.

There were exceptions. Albinus still regarded logic as important. He talked about definitions, categories and causes, but the general tendency is clear.5 Numenius has three gods: the first god ultimate and transcendent with the forms as ideas in his mind, the second god both creator and created, and the third god the visible world.6 The second god does not stand

4. See W. Theiler, Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonisimus, (Berlin, 1930), Teile II and III.
out clearly. He is tied closely both to the top and to the bottom, to the first god and to the third, and he may be absorbed into either of these two.

Celsus, the chief critic of the Christians, puts forward a systematic theology in which the ultimate first principle is above being, but is not identified as the One. The knowledge of God is to be found through reason and argument, but because like is known by like, it has ethical components as well. Indeed, the life of the philosopher has a monkish tendency as the philosophers live in small separate communities to follow their way of reason and assimilation to God. The true reason or true Logos points to a universal indivisible truth. It rejects any claim to a new and complete revelation. For truth is ancient, and only ancient truth can set man free from death. Again, particular events like those on which the Christians set great store, could never be the centre of universal truth. True reason, true word, stands over such falsehood. Yet the God to whom such reason points is not unlike the God of whom the Christians speak. Removed from all physical attributes and human perception, he is accessible through a spiritual vision which is attainable through assimilation or growing like God as far as man may. For Celsus, the parable of the sun sets in antithesis that which is and can be thought over against that which becomes and can be perceived. In the visible world the sun is the basis for the sight of the eye, both the fact of seeing and the manner of seeing, and for the objects of sight. The sun is the ground of the existence of visible things, and the ground of their visibility. Without the sun the eye cannot see. Without the sun there can be no sense of sight, all objects are invisible, nothing exists, and even the sun itself is not visible. In the same way, without the highest first principle, the mind cannot think and there can be no knowledge. For, without the first principle, the objects of thought cannot exist. This statement brings out clearly, the second-century significance of the world of forms. The intellectual powers of mind, thought (nous), knowledge (noesis), and their objects, mental or intellectual things (noeta), truth and being, are all dependent upon the one power, the one cause of all things. For Celsus the world comes through a process of the emanation of the many from the one beginning, although he fails to refer to the supreme principle which is beyond being as the One.

The controversy of Origen with Celsus reveals little understanding from Origen of the way in which his opponent reached his conclusions. On the other hand, the refusal of Celsus to accept the One as a first principle is surely due to his awareness that such an acceptance would severely challenge his belief in many gods.

7. Dörrie, Theologie, p.52.
8. Ibid., p.28. Cf. C. Andresen, Logos und Nomos, AKG, (Berlin, 1955), pp.146-188.
10. Ibid., p.45ff.
Justin’s account of the world and God bears no trace at all of the doctrine of the forms. Perhaps the reason is that when (D.2.6) Justin learned from a Platonist for the first time, he was overwhelmed by being able to perceive non-material things, and the vision of ideas or forms gave wings to his mind, so that he felt that he had suddenly become a wise man and was soon to gaze on God. The doctrine of ideas had become for some Platonists a quick way to God by direct perception and mystical ascent, and Justin is turned against this particular view by the solid argument of the Christian who meets him and asks him questions.  

The continuation of the argument gives us the clue to the direction of Justin’s thought. God is not to be seen by every soul, irrespective of its likeness to God and virtuous disposition. God can only be seen by those who, by their way of life have achieved a degree of perfection which enables them to see and hear. The prophets and the friends of Jesus have achieved this and therefore their testimony should be heard. The soul is not merely dependent on external aid for its vision of God. It is also, and this is the turning point, dependent upon God for life itself. The soul lives not by its own essence but by participating and sharing in God. Only God possesses life in himself (D.6) and all else lives by dependence on him. The philosophers who have claimed essential life for the soul are therefore repudiated. Truth is to be found only in those who are filled with the Holy Spirit which gave knowledge as well as life, and enabled thereby to see and hear the truth. ‘They gave witness to the truth above all demonstration and worthy of belief. The things which have happened and which are happening now force you to accept the statement which they made.’ (D.7) Only in this way is truth to be found. The gates of light are opened through prayer when God and his Christ give wisdom to man that he may perceive and understand. In this negative section the direction of Justin’s account of participation is already clear. He is concerned with participation of souls in God that they might have life and that they might have wisdom. The soul has life through the gift of spirit, and wisdom through the gift of Logos.

Justin’s most important single concept is that of the logos spermatikos, by which he explains the presence of some Logos in all men, and complete Logos in Christ. He comes to this viewpoint in consideration of those who had taught or spoken well before the complete truth came in Jesus. Lawgivers and philosophers found and contemplated some part of the Logos. Because they only had a part and each found a different part, they

often contradicted themselves. But they knew enough to get into trouble, as for example happened to Socrates who was rejected on the same grounds as Christians are rejected, by the authorities of the day. But Socrates knew that it was hard to find the father and maker of all, and hard when he had been found to say anything of him. Yet Christ was able to do this difficult thing through his own power. He was known in part by Socrates, ‘For he was and is the Logos present in every man and he foretold future things both through the prophets and in his own person when he shared our passions and taught these things.’ There is both continuity and discontinuity between the Logos known by Socrates and the Logos found in Christ. ‘For he is a power of the ineffable father and not simply the vessel of human reason.’ (2.4.10)

Justin further clarifies the relationship between the part and the whole, between the seed and the Logos himself. Plato cannot be accepted because he only knows part of the teaching of Christ. Like Stoics, poets and historians, he had a share in the *logos spermatikos*, and he saw what was related to the Logos which he shared. Participation provides the clue for the relationship between part and whole, between the copy and the real thing. For the Logos is not cut up in the same way as a physical thing. Those who possess only part, possess a copy and not the reality. Whatever others have rightly said belongs to Christians because the Logos is theirs. Those who wrote before Christ came saw the truth darkly through the words sown in them. But there is a difference between the seed which copies and the thing itself ‘in which there is participation and imitation according to the grace which comes from Him.’ (2.4.13) The difference between the seed and the reality is the difference between part and whole, between a copy and the real thing. Participation points to a logical and metaphysical relationship. The Logos in Socrates is logically dependent upon the ultimate truth of Christ as it is ultimately dependent on the reality which is in Christ.

More ink has been spilt on Justin’s *logos spermatikos* than on any other aspect of his thought. Even in the last 20 years it has been claimed on the one hand that Justin is deeply pessimistic on the powers of human reason, and on the other hand that he is highly optimistic concerning those powers. It is not normal for scholars to come to exactly contrary conclusions in the face of the same evidence. The cause of the puzzle is a verbalist approach to Justin instead of a problematic approach. Participation is the key to what Justin is saying. This is clear if one looks either at the problem he is attempting to solve, that of partial truth and the whole truth, or at his definition and argument. The spermatik Logos is to the whole Logos as the

particular is to the form. This does not remove difficulties because participation is a difficult notion to handle, but it shows that the difficulties are the same difficulties with Plato’s forms and Justin’s Logos. And since for those to whom Justin wrote, participation was an intelligible idea, it was the right move to make at the crucial point of his argument.

Plato’s account of the world soul is the most spectacular evidence of his participation in the logos or seed of the logos. He speaks physiologically, says Justin; he is concerned with the nature of things when he talks of the cross in the universe.\(^{15}\) Plato didn’t really understand what this was about because he was thinking at one remove from the reality of Christ. But reading that the sign of the cross was the source of life and salvation to those who had been poisoned in the desert, ‘He said that the power after the first God was placed cross-wise in the universe’. He is able to give second place to the logos who is with God, and also to speak of the Spirit in the third place because he speaks an imitation of the Christian view. Among Christians these truths may be learned from those who are illiterate and uneducated but have found wisdom and faith; even those who are crippled and blind, and incapable of reading or learning, know these things which Plato grasped after, for they are ‘not the result of man’s wisdom, but are spoken by the power of God.’ (1A.60) Here the move from an external world of forms to the soul is again clear.

Justin’s use of argument indicates that together with an insistence upon the need for direct access to and faith in Christ, on the importance of perceiving by faith that which is ultimate, he preserves an unmistakable respect for argument and logic. Every part of his defence to the Emperor is argued and every part of his case against the Jews depends on argument. His own philosophy, that of being a Christian, is reached on grounds of argument combined with faith. ‘For these reasons I am a philosopher.’ He has not taken the path of mystical flight which the popular Platonism of the Hermetic writings took. There is nothing that the simplest cannot grasp, for the apostles were simple men and the Word does it all.\(^{16}\) Yet precisely because Christ is Word or Logos, the Christian follows the wind of the argument and invites others to do the same. Irenaeus has preserved a passage from Justin’s work Against Marcion in which he insists that he would not have believed the Lord himself if he had declared to him a God other than the Creator. (AH.4.11.2) Here the logical importance of the world of forms is firmly maintained. The danger of placing the world of forms within the one divine person is that rationality might be swallowed up

15. Iris Murdoch sees this as one of ‘the most memorable images in European philosophy’, The Fire and the Sun, (Oxford, 1977), p.87.
16. Justin sees the movement of the apostles out into the world as part of the history of salvation; 1A.39, 50.12 and elsewhere.
in adoration. Justin has clearly avoided this threat, because of his dominant love for truth.

Intermediate beings in the form of demons and angels still persist.¹⁷ The demons are fallen angels who transgressed their allotted task, who sinned with women and produced the offspring who are the special cause of evil and suffering to Christians. The demons who replaced the forms in the world of Plutarch exercise a comparable role in the thought of Justin. Their activity however is not neutral to the pursuit of truth, but deliberately negative. They are hostile to truth, they have fabricated false stories of the gods in imitation of Christian truth, and they do all in their power to bring harm to the Christian cause. Angels in Justin play a limited role. They are concerned to express the greatness of the divine power. They follow after Christ and the Holy Spirit as obedient servants.

Finally in Justin apocalyptic assumes some of the significance of the world of forms. Justin’s apocalyptic is concerned with time, with a final reality. He is concerned to declare the return of the one Saviour and Judge of all. He is the first to speak of a second coming,¹⁸ and speaks of our living in the middle of His coming. (D. 54 and D. 51.2) It was necessary for the second coming to take place, in order that the prophecies concerning Him should be fulfilled. Only half the prophecies have been fulfilled, those which concerned His humiliation. ‘For the prophets foretold His two advents, one which has already taken place as of a dishonoured and suffering man, but the second when it has been declared that He shall come again with glory from heaven with His army of angels. Also he shall resurrect the bodies of all men who have lived. He shall clothe those of the worthy with immortality. He shall send those of the wicked in eternal consciousness with the bad demons, into everlasting fire.: (1.A. 52.3) The Jews will look on Him whom they pierced as the prophets had foretold. He will show the tokens of His cross, for He is the same Lord. He will be preceded by the man of sin, and by Elijah, the healer and restorer. He will fulfil the expectation of all nations. He will bring resurrection to the bodies of those who have died, and both His return and resurrection point to judgement. There is one Judge, and His judgement is sure. Christians are men of good hope. (1.A. 14.3) They look to the return of their Lord, to live with Him in a new Jerusalem and in eternal bliss. They endure this middle period¹⁹ because they are confident that sin will be destroyed. The future is the future of Jesus Christ.

¹⁷. See Foerster, TWNT, 2, 1-10.
¹⁸. The importance of a second coming is that it preserves the unity of the logos and God. One Christ who comes twice is consistent with Justin’s monotheism; two Christs would not be.
¹⁹. This has been taken to mean ‘in the interim of his coming’, which is linguistically possible but not the best translation in the context.
IRENAEUS

Irenaeus specifically rejects the forms because he sees them as the basis for the Gnostic doctrine. Democritus and Plato were the first to say that things were made as copies or images of forms which truly exist. This world is therefore nothing but a shadow of the reality which is beyond. ‘These men, in consequence, have called what Plato calls forms and patterns, the images which are above; so through merely changing the name, they boast that they are the inventors and makers of this kind of figment of the imagination.’ 20 (AH.2.18.3, following MS Clermont.).

Irenaeus uses argument against the Valentinians to indicate their lack of rational basis. There is no logical control on the way in which these people speak, and they might just as well speak of melons or gourds since their fantasies are not subject to rational control.21

By contrast Irenaeus uses argument to insist on the unity of God, of his supremacy over the angels, of his responsibility for creation, of the absurdity of the idea of emptiness. It is equally absurd to suggest that the Creator and angels could have been ignorant of the Supreme God. It’s just as foolish to say that He who is over all and free could be a slave to necessity. The idea that created things are only a shadow of the pleroma is absurd. One God, one world, one word of God, provide a rational basis for thinking about the world. Irenaeus turns the Platonic antithesis against the Gnostics. The heretics are like Aesop’s dog who dropped his bread while snatching at a shadow. In their grasp after unreality they have lost the bread of true life. (AH.2.11.1) God is a God over all, all nous and all logos, and there is no other world beyond Him on which He must depend. (AH.2.16.4)

Irenaeus then rejects the world of forms because of the place which it plays in the Valentinian scheme. He does, however, take one aspect of the Gnostic approach, and uses it to his own advantage. Certainly in this matter he is following the fourth gospel22 and perhaps he may not have been consciously meeting the Gnostics on their own ground. Irenaeus uses persis-

20. Harvey comments that Plato taught: ‘the prototypal ideas eternally subsisting in the nature of the Deity, were the origin of form and order’. Democritus followed the same move with his atoms, pointing to a hidden ultimate reality. Harvey asks ‘What therefore is more probable than that the forms of Democritus and the ideas of Plato should have descended from the same source as the Cabbalistic Sephiroth, that is from the traditions of the earliest Eastern theosophy?’ 1,293f., Sancti Irenaei Libros V adversus Haereses, Cambridge, 1857.

This comment is historically unjustifiable, but hermeneutically illuminating. For men tire of thinking and the forms change from the cutting edge of Plato’s ruthless logic to theosophical fantasy. This happened in the Platonic underworld of the first few centuries and in later Platonism frequently. That is why Christians could have claimed to be better Platonists than many of their contemporaries.

21. A.H. 1.5.2. Augustine spoke similarly of the fornicatio fantastica of the heretics.

tently the language of aesthetics, of perception and vision. For the Gnostics, as von Balthasar has shown, the secret to all things was an aesthetic myth.\textsuperscript{23} The truth was seen and felt as a higher heavenly reality beyond all things. For Irenaeus the glory of man is the vision of God. (\textit{AH}.4.34.7) Man sees God’s glory and hears His voice. (\textit{AH}.2.6.5 + 5.6.1)\textsuperscript{24} The truth is revealed or shown to those who perceive it. The same account of faith as the vision of the glory of God may be seen in the fourth gospel. It is clear that Irenaeus, as well as arguing against Gnostics is concerned to put forward a rival aesthetic, with indirect Platonic and direct Johannine antecedents.

The chief point of logical similarity between Irenaeus and Plato’s forms is to be found in the doctrine of recapitulation. The summing up of all things in Christ represents Him as the first principle of all things, embodying the perfection of that which had fallen away through the sin of Adam. Now for the greater part, the account of recapitulation moves in an historical plane. On the other hand, the restoration of all things in Christ through His life and death and rising again, is a restoration of the imperfect to perfection, of the incomplete to the complete, of the dying to life. Man, who had ceased to be truly man, is restored in the image and likeness of God. So there is in Christ himself the perfect form of man, and the end of human life is to become like Christ and like God, made in his image and likeness. While things on earth are not copies of heavenly reality, for man the logic of the forms is essential; by sharing in Christ, the true word, he is made again in the likeness of God. (\textit{AH}.3.19.1,3; 4.34.7; 5.1; 5.16.1)

So then for Irenaeus the world of forms is swallowed up in Christ, and men find their true humanity in Him. He is the only archetype who exists and he is the only one whom men need. Truth is fulfilled in human life by following Christ alone. As the fourth gospel (Jn. 1.18) declares, he alone declares the invisible Father, and he is the way, the truth and the life.

Irenaeus’ rejection of the ‘intermediate world’ of forms has its compensation in his elaborate \textit{oikonomia} of time. (\textit{AH}.2.47.2; 4.48.1) There is no heavenly ladder stretching upwards, but there is a heavenly history on earth stretching forwards. Apocalyptic moves horizontally through time. Here on earth God’s purpose will be worked out, not in some fantastic realm above.

\textbf{Clement}

Clement provides the most explicit account of the world of forms given by any Christian in the second century. This is because he is not frightened of the Gnostic systems as were the three other writers with whom we are


\textsuperscript{24} As Maximus of Tyre put it, in oft-quoted words, \textit{nous noēta horai kai noētōn akouei}, Phil. 11, 60 a.
concerned. He put out a true gnosis, and so far from turning away from the forms, he corrected them by reference to Plato and Paul and made them more rational than they had been in Gnostic hands. His true philosophy and true gnosis oppose, by more stringent argument, the pseudo-philosophy of the Gnostics. The gifts of the Spirit, says Clement, show how perfection has many parts which are brought together in one. (S.4.25. 155f.) Similarly, Plato had spoken of perfection. The man who looks on the divine forms or ideas, looks on God and himself becomes a god among men. In the Sophist 216 B, the man who does dialectic is a god. And in the Theaetetus 176, the leader in philosophy lives above the common level, searching the heavens. Only the wise truly live, as Homer and Scriptures join to show. The object of the Platonic vision is the eternal ideas. For Clement, God is above all things in solitary unity. What then corresponds to the eternal ideas? Clement writes, 'God then is indemonstrable, and consequently cannot then be the object of knowledge; but the Son is wisdom, knowledge and truth, and all that is related to these things. Indeed proof and description can be given of Him.' The word who is the image, face, power, servant, instrument of God, conveys the truth which men may contemplate.25 He is, unlike the world of forms, not simply an object of knowledge. All the powers of the Spirit come together in Him as their final point. He cannot be described by listing his individual powers, for he is 'not simply one thing as one thing, nor many things as part, but one thing as all things.' Here we are dealing not with a hierarchy, but with a complex unity. 'All things come from him. For He is the circle of all the powers rolled into one and united. Therefore, the Word is called Alpha and Omega. In him alone the end becomes the beginning, and ends again at the original beginning without any gaps.' (S.4.25.157) The theme of the Word who is both one and many runs through all Clement’s writings, and there is no need to give detailed references here. From the concluding invitation of the Protrepticus, where he calls men to be placed in order within a symphony or harmony of God, through to the dialectic of Book 7 of the Stromateis, the Word is one and many. The world of forms is contained within the Logos. What does this mean for Clement? It means that while Christ is the total truth of the Father, there are many parts in his truth and men have grasped one part and torn it away from the whole. (S.1.13.57) If He is to be known, then the scattered members which the philosophers have torn apart need to be drawn together under the dominating logic of His truth. Here we are faced with a similar idea to that found in Justin, an idea which Clement is able to use, because he sees the partial truth of those who do not know Christ as participating or sharing in the whole. There is still the difference between the

25. Clement: Strom. 5.14.94; Paed. 1.7.57; Strom. 7.2.7; Paed. 3.1.2; Prot. 6; Strom. 4.25.156.
copy and the reality. (Strom.1.38) But the whole world of reason and discourse falls within the divine word.

Consequently, Clement is able to speak of a true dialectic (1.28.177), of the place of logic in human knowledge and argument. He distinguishes between the kind of knowledge which men talk about so much, that which deals with argument, proof and definition, and he moves on from this to a true or spiritual form of knowledge. But the dialectic is still there and it remains important as a logical skill. ‘The true dialectic, then, is linked with the true philosophy. It examines things and tests powers and first principles and rises from them gradually to the supreme essence of all and dares to go beyond to the God of all things.’ (S.1.28.177) Dialectic uses reason and not the senses to find out what the truth is. Yet the upward climb cannot take place without the help of the Saviour or the Logos, who removes from the eye of the soul ‘the dark film of ignorance which is caused by a sinful way of life.’ (ibid.)

He moves very naturally from logical knowledge to spiritual knowledge, which is ‘our Saviour himself, into whom we are now planted after being transferred and transplanted from the old life into good soil. The change of soil leads to fruitfulness. The Lord then, into whom we have been transplanted is the light and true knowledge.’ (S.6.1.2) The move from dialectic to contemplation was common to the second century Platonist. For Clement, it is a very simple move to make because the contemplation is of a person who may be trusted and loved. God is known face to face in His Son, and may be worshipped in every place through the Logos who is all things. ‘We are commanded to worship and adore the Logos, persuaded that he is our saviour and leader, and through Him to worship the Father. We do not do this, like certain others, just on selected days, but we do it continually through the whole of life and in every way.’ (S.7.7.35) So the crown of dialectic is love. ‘For love is no longer the desire of the lover, but a loving assimilation which has restored the gnostic to the unity of the faith, independent of time and place.’ (S.6.9.73) Yet he who has found this unity still lives by the patterns above, just as the navigator follows the stars when he steers his ship.

The most striking point where Clement takes over the logic of participation in the forms is found in his description of the indwelling Logos who joins men together ‘individually to each and in common to all.’ (S.7.3.16) All men are his, though some do not know it yet. (S.7.2.5) Some belong to him as friends, some as faithful servants, some just as servants. He would not be Saviour and Lord if he were not the Saviour and Lord of all. (S.7.2.7) The great dialectic stretches from the tiniest part upwards to ‘the first administrator of the universe who by the will of the Father directs the salvation of all.’ The work of salvation is done by leading as much on the
side of virtue as is possible without limiting man's free will, so that even the
dullest of men will perceive 'the one almighty good God who from eternity
to eternity saves by His Son.' (S.7.2.9) And in particular the Saviour enters
the souls of just men and He lives there as 'the one Saviour individually to
each and in common to all.' (S.7.3.16) By stamping his image on the one in
whom He dwells, He produces a third divine image. Here there is a similarity
with Plato's account of the picture which is a copy of a copy. God has
his likeness in the Son and the Son produces a third likeness in those in
whom he dwells. Clement, however, goes far beyond any account of the
forms in his use of this structure to express the unity and universality of the
saving word. Clement uses, again like Plato (Ion 533), the image of the
magnet, the one force which draws all men despite the variety of their
response. 'There on one original first principle which works according to
the Father's will, the first, second and third depend; and then at the extreme
limit of the visible world there is the blessed rank of angels and so, even
down to ourselves, ranks below ranks are appointed, all saving and being
saved by the initiative and through the instrumentality of the One.' (S.7.2.9]
The cosmic unity of the Logos is not remote, but central to faith; for Cle­
ment's account of the Logos as one thing as all things concludes 'Therefore
also to believe in Him and through Him is to become something unified, be­
ing indivisibly made one in Him; but to disbelieve means separation,
estrangement and division.' (S.4.25.157) And this unity of faith means
freedom from sin, being born again, serving God in the world, and passing
from ignorance to knowledge.

It will be seen that Clement has already moved from his concept of unity
to that of hierarchy. The world is one thing as all things, but men find their
place in that unity in different ways and at different levels. The variety of
man's response points to a 'chain of being' which commences from the
Logos. No sooner does one use this much abused phrase than one realizes
that it will not do for Clement without careful modification. His is not a
chain of being if one link of the chain depends on the next above it. All
depends on the Word, and men move up and down as they in various ways
move closer to the first principle of all. Here Clement draws on the language
of the heretical Gnostics to offer an upward way to closer fellowship with
God. Philosophy is concerned first of all with contemplation, then with the
fulfilment of commands, and then with growth in virtue. (S.2.10.46) The
true Gnostic depends upon a higher truth than that which is derived from
the argument of the Greeks. (S.6.9.78) The true Gnostic is higher than any
other holy rank, among the dwellings of the gods. He beholds God with a
pure vision that will endure to all eternity. (S.7.3.13) This is the result of
movement through many stages to the highest place of rest. (S.7.10.57) This
apocalyptic vision which uses metaphors of space and vertical ascent
replaces in Clement the historical apocalyptic which has a subordinate role.

The question which remains is whether Clement, in his description of the heavenly ladder which clearly aims to outstrip the enticements of the heretics, has sacrificed the unity of all the powers in Christ. Has he become as much a believer in an intermediate world as were some Platonists and all Gnostics? I do not think so, unless this section of his thought is treated in complete isolation. His concise description of the upward path is called ‘the greatness of Christ’ (S.5.11.71). All the dwellings, be they high or low, are in Christ. There is still only one world, one saving Logos who is active in the world, and one God to whom the Saviour brings men. The variety of progress within the Logos is due to the varied response of men and for their need to realize what Clement insisted in his Sermon to the Newly Baptised, that wisdom and virtue were not the work of one day or one hour. There was no instant perfection. Therefore the upward path in Clement with his many mansions, serves exactly the opposite function to that which it served in heretical gnosis. There was no instant perfection to which men could be brought, there was no hierarchy in which they were irretrievably placed. All men were his, and all had more to learn of his goodness before they gazed upon his face.

**TERTULLIAN**

Tertullian rejects the forms and dialectic because of the use which they have received at the hands of heretics. Valentinus drew his aeons and forms as well as his three-fold division of man, from Plato. Dialectic cannot help Christianity but can only dull the sharpness of the gospel and the demands and gifts of Christ. The Creator’s wisdom is not seen in a remote world above, but in the one world which He had made, in the intricacy of His creation within the smallest of creatures. The ant and its ant-hill, the bee and its cells, the spider and its web, the silkworm and its delicate threads, all these prove the wisdom of the Creator and His independence of any heavenly pattern.

For Tertullian the same militant exposition of one Saviour follows that of one God and one world. Christ has made men one, and rules over those for whom He died. He is ‘the same to all, king to all, judge to all, God to all, and Lord.’ The whole world is one commonwealth under Christ, and nothing is foreign to those who are His. And at the end of history the Word will come as ‘the power of God, Spirit of God, reason of God, Son of God, all things of God.’ (Apol.21.12) Now he has gone up on high, endowed with all the wealth of the Spirit, and he gives to men the gifts which the prophets

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foretold. In these last days he pours out the Holy Spirit on all flesh and gives spiritual gifts. *(Marc.5.8)*

Yet from the beginning, man had a share in God. The soul is naturally Christian. While it is not a part of God, yet it is derived from him. This is important in Tertullian’s answer to the problem of evil: man is derivative from, and not identical with, the God in whom he participates. The soul is ‘that original, God-like and genuine thing which is its proper nature, for that which is from God is not so much extinguished as obscured; it can be obscured since it is not God, but it cannot be extinguished since it is from God.’ *(An.1)* So that the testimony of the naturally Christian soul points to its divine origin. Yet man is not born a Christian, but must move on from the simple, true, universal, natural divine testimony, to that act of faith which makes him a Christian. With only a taste of Christianity, the soul may persecute the fullness which the Christians have found. The soul is born of God’s breath, immortal, corporeal, having shape, simple in substance, intelligent in its action, various in its manifestations, full in its power of choice, subject to accidental change, changeable in its faculties, rational, ruling, able to see into the future and from one original source. *(An.22)* Tertullian rejects Plato’s account of the soul as self-existent and divine, yet claims that it is immortal although a long way below God. It is *afflatus* and not *spiritus*. In this account of the soul, Tertullian, although rejecting Plato, is closer to Plato than his more philosophical contemporaries; for Justin insisted the soul depended on God for life and did not have its own immortality. It is hard to discriminate at this point because of the flexibility of terms.

Tertullian is far more Stoic than the other writers and sees spirit as a form of body. He is ready to accept the vision of a Montanist sister who saw the physical shape of a soul because she was very good at visions and revelations. He has a world which is well populated with demons and other agents. Yet his apocalyptic is chiefly horizontal, rather than vertical, concerned with history rather than heavenly space. But the two cannot be held apart, for Tertullian tells of a vision of the new Jerusalem, suspended in the sky, which was seen by many for over half a day before it disappeared.

Finally, Tertullian has an important place for reason and argument, so far from rejecting argument and following the way of the unqualified fideist.²⁷ He wants to preserve the uniqueness of Christianity and also to preserve Christian belief against its distortion by heretics who claim to be philosophers. Yet philosophy prepares the way for the knowledge of God by pointing to God. In reality there are many points of agreement between Christians and philosophers. Not only is Seneca often one of us *(An.20),

but Pythagoras (An.28), and even Lucretius (An.5) have points in agreement. Tertullian speaks of Justin with approval as 'philosopher and martyr.' (Pall.4), and he speaks, like Justin, of Christianity as 'the better philosophy.' Seeking must go on until the fulness of Christ is found. 'No one should be ashamed of progress; for even in Christ knowledge goes through different stages.' (Pud.1.11 and 12). Curiosity has its place and Hadrian was right to be an explorer of all curiosities. (Apol.5) The restlessness of the heretics is, however, to be condemned. (Praescr.14) Tertullian takes the cloak of the philosopher, not as a scandal before men, nor as an act of defiance, nor even as a sign pointing to the only worthwhile philosophy. The cloak points to custom and discipline, to a way and not to an end, and this discipline is strange to the world. (Pall.5.4) Tertullian defends his right to wear the cloak in the face of misunderstanding and alienation, and he wears it to show the constant change which marks his life and thought.

It is clear then, that for Tertullian as for Clement there is one God, one world, one Saviour. For Clement, the world of forms has been absorbed and taken up within the Logos. For Tertullian, the world of forms is to be rejected and Christ is to be explored. But the structure of the thought of each is the same, for both require argument. Both insist on the dependent nature of the soul on God, and both point to a theology of pilgrimage in the search for truth which will go on and on.

What did these four thinkers make of Plato's forms? The attitude of second century Christian thought to the Platonic forms is one of rejection if the question is taken in a literal sense. However, the rejection was directed against the picture-book or story-book Platonism of the Gnostics, and it took the form of a reassertion of the importance of those things which Plato had taught in his account of the forms—the ethical, rational, metaphysical unity of all things. Because there was one God who was good, true and eternally real, there could only be one world and it had to make sense, morally and logically. The Gnostics had used their celestial hierarchy to deny the essence of Platonism and to avoid its chief activity—that of rational thought. Christ was the one Word of God, the one object of knowledge. Yet, as the world soul of Plato, he determined the whole universe with the sign of his cross. All truth was one for it was part of the total truth which is Christ.

In Justin, truth was to be found wherever men had followed reason or logos and all logos participates in the one Logos who is Christ. The same Logos was also the true Nomos who brought together and surpassed the laws which God had given in different ways to men. In Irenaeus all was summed up in Christ, the one first principle, by sharing in him men were
restored to the likeness of God; participation again was the central relation for Tertullian, the soul was derived from God and turned naturally to him. Dialectic was a mistake because it did not lead to the unity of Christ. Here Tertullian rejected the forms as they were used by Gnostics for the good Platonic reason that they denied the unity of the first principle of all things. God, as Tertullian put it, was not God, if he was not one.

Clement took the more adventurous path by advocating a true dialectic. In this he was consistently Platonist and joined the Pauline doctrine of charismata and dunameis to the Platonic forms. At the same time he spoke of a spiritual knowledge which was the vision of God. Like Justin and Irenaeus before him, he claimed that intellectual vision came to those who believed. In this he shared the danger of all Platonism, which must combine rationality with perception, and which, when it loses its rationality, falls into that Platonic underworld of Gnosticism or Hermeticism which Clement strove to combat.

In their various forms of Logos theology, the four writers, contributed to the origin of the Geistmetaphysik which holds a central place in the Platonic development. What light do they show upon the relation between the two great themes of Greek metaphysics—the archē and the divine nous? They show, with drastic clarity, the close relationship between these two kinds of unity—a one which is nothing but one and a one which is also many. The logical distinction had been clearly drawn by Plato (Parmenides, 138-142 and 142-155). The sole theme of early Christian theology—one God, one world, one saviour—required the clarity of Plato's logic. The one first principle was intelligible through the one logos and the logos was one because of its unity with the first principle. God could not be God if he were not one or if there were worlds over which he did not rule or men whom he could not save. Now Gnosticism took a logic of unity and turned it into a pretty picture of plurality. Christians simply had to give Platonic monism its full force in order to show the weakness of the Gnostic position. That is why they needed the forms, not as part of a 'world view', but as part of a strictly monistic logic.
