

speech, where any one is free from wickedness, and is not conscious of having committed any wicked act, let him come. But what do these men say to those who are invited to join them? Whoever is a sinner, whoever is destitute of sense, whoever is foolish, and in general whoever is wretched, let the kingdom of heaven receive him. You say, God was sent to sinners, but was he not also sent to the sinless? Is sinlessness a crime? According to you, God will receive the sinner if he humbles himself before him, but will not receive a person that is righteous."

Celsus then goes back to the Old Testament. He objects to the cosmogony of Moses, because it makes the universe only ten thousand years old, whereas the universe is eternal. He finds in its myths opportunities for his favorite speculations in comparative mythology. In the story of the Tower of Babel he sees but a perversion of the story of Otus and Ephialtes, who attempted to pile Ossa upon Olympus and Pelion upon Ossa. The story of the destruction of Sodom he compares to Phaethon burning the earth. Celsus's conjectures in comparative mythology are not wilder than those of many who have lived in modern times. The interest that attaches to them is not that he succeeds in identifying such myths, but that he perceives that they spring from similar attitudes and exertions of the human mind.

But he has no patience with literalism. "The Jews, an ignorant people, occupying a corner of Palestine, not knowing what Hesiod had written, wove together incredible and insipid stories, and imagined that God created with his own hands a certain man, and a certain woman from his side; that this man received certain commands from God, and that a hostile serpent opposed these and gained a victory over the commandments of God. God," he says with biting scorn, "could not persuade even one man. Such absurd stories are fit only for old women. They speak also of a deluge with a monstrous ark having within it all things, and a dove and a crow as messengers, falsifying and ridiculously altering the story of Deucalion."

It is somewhat humiliating, in the midst of our nineteenth century culture, to reflect that the theology of Christendom is still founded on literal and materialistic interpretations of this old Eden myth. It is but a few months since a professor in a Presbyterian theological seminary in the United States was arraigned and condemned by the courts of his denomination for teaching that Adam's body might have been derived from other animals instead of from the red earth of Eden. And it is but a year or two since a preacher to the University of Oxford was summoned before six omniscient doctors of theology on the charge of heresy concerning the fall of Adam. Celsus, on the other hand, thought that the Ophites, a heretical Christian sect of his time, very justly denounced the character of the God of the Old Testament because he pronounced a curse upon the serpent who introduced the first human being to a knowledge of good and evil.

This cultivated and refined Platonist constantly rebels against Jewish anthropomorphism. It was too coarse and materialistic. But Origen did not like it any better. He himself was poetic and allegorical in his

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