

duction. 2. A representation of a dialogue between a Jew and Jesus, which is followed by an address of the Jew to his countrymen. 3. A criticism of the doctrine of the Christians. 4. An attempt to reconcile Christianity with the religion of the emperor.

It is noticeable that many who have written upon Celsus overlook this last, but to us one of the most important divisions of the treatise. It constitutes the natural climax to the work.

Turning from the literary order to the philosophical method, we find that the author has chosen his central point of attack with great skill. He directs the whole force of his battery against the claim of Christianity to be a special divine revelation,—a religion essentially new and essentially superior. In exposing its pretensions to exclusive inspiration, he aims to exhibit the irrational character of its dogmas, its supposed miracles, its deification of Jesus, its claim to be the only means of salvation, its materialistic doctrine of the resurrection, and its unworthy views of God. And then, having shown that Christianity can rest simply where all other religions must rest—on the basis of universal religion,—he appeals in a reconciling tone to the Christians as citizens and patriots to support the emperor.

In the very introduction of the "True Discourse," the motive of the work comes out. Celsus accuses the Christians of forming secret societies in violation of law: their exclusiveness is political as well as religious. He then undertakes to knock away the props on which this exclusiveness is built. Christianity, he says, grew out of Judaism. It was of barbarian origin. The doctrines of Christianity have nothing new in them; they are common to the other philosophies. For instance, the argument of the Christians against the worship of idols is that they are the work of men, and an inferior cannot create a superior. Heraclitus, the philosopher reminds us, said practically the same thing before. The Persians had also rejected the worship of idols. Christianity, therefore, presents nothing new.

There is a passage in the introduction which we quote, because it shows the writer could not have been an Epicurean. In recognizing the heroisms of Christians who died for their belief, he says:

"I do not say that he who holds to a good doctrine ought to renounce it, either in reality or in appearance, for the sake of saving his life; but no man ought to accept a doctrine unless it is supported by reason. Some of the Christians are unwilling to give reason or to listen to reason concerning their belief, and make use of these expressions: Examine not, but believe; your faith will save you; wisdom is a bad thing; foolishness is a good thing."

He admits that there are wise and sound-minded Christians; but his general assertion is that Christianity is for ignorant men; that accounts for its rapid spread. There is an important historical fact implied here, namely, that when he wrote Christianity was making rapid headway and becoming a threatening annoyance. "The founder of the Christian sect,"

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