

The Influence of Plato on Maimonides.

(A Study of the Platonic Elements in Maimonides' Theology.)

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Introduction.

1. Aim and Scope of Our Study.

In attempting within the limits of a comparatively short treatise to give an account of some of the theories of writers so voluminous as Plato and Maimonides, I am attempting, as I am well aware, a task of no ordinary difficulty. For the shortcomings in the execution of it I would crave the indulgence of the critical reader, pleading that I am writing, at best, only as a plain man for plain men.

Our study will confine itself primarily to a comparison of the theological notions contained in Plato and Maimonides. We say 'primarily'-- and advisedly so -- for in both systems, metaphysics and theology are closely interwoven and, at times, even inseparable. Plato's whole system is the result and direct outcome of his investigations into the ensouling power of nature. For this reason, we shall be obliged to resort, frequently, to certain metaphysical concepts. But, in the main, our thesis will attempt to show, just wherein and to what extent Maimonides was influenced in his theology by Plato, and also to indicate, wherever possible, that, in spite of foreign guidance, Maimonides preserved the essence and the independence of the Jewish view of life and the world.

2. Importance and Influence of Plato.

The student of philosophy, whatever may be the modern system to which he is most inclined, will find his account in returning to the well-spring of European thought, in which all previous movements are absorbed and from which all subsequent lines of

reflection may be said to diverge. As Jowett observes, "The germs of all ideas, even of most Christian ones, are to be found in Plato." (Jowett: Introduction to Volume 1.)

Plato's followers, however, have seldom kept the proportions of his teaching. The diverse elements of his doctrine have survived the spirit that informed them. Logical inquiries have been hardened into a barren ontology. Semi-mythical statements have been construed literally and mystic fancies perpetuated without the genuine thought which underlay them. A part of his philosophy has been treated as a whole. But the influence of Plato has extended far beyond the limits of the Platonic schools. The debt of Aristotle to his master has never yet been fully estimated. Zeno, Epicurus borrowed from Plato more than they knew. The moral ideal of Plutarch and that of the Roman Stoics, which have both affected the modern world, could not have existed without him. In fact, all who came after him, more or less, availed themselves of weapons either forged by Plato or borrowed from him by contemporaries or successors.

A wholly distinct line of infiltration is suggested by the mention of Philo and the Alexandrian School, while Gnostic heresies and even Talmudic mysticism betray the same influence. What is known as Arabiophilosophy owed to Arabia little more than its name and its language. It was a system of Greek thought, expressed in a Semitic tongue, and modified by Oriental influences, called into existence among the Moslem people by the patronage of their more liberal princes, and kept alive by the intrepidity and zeal of a small band of thinkers, who stood suspected and disliked in the eyes of their nation. Their chief claim to the notice of

3.

the historians of speculation (Plato and Aristotle) comes from their warm reception of Greek philosophy when it had been banished from their original soil, and whilst Western Europe was still too rude and ignorant to be its home. (Ninth to twelfth century.) Attempts have not been lacking in this period (ninth to twelfth century) and at all times to fuse the scattered doctrines of Jewish thought into a system modeled after ancient philosophies as to form, statement of principles and methods of deduction. The zenith of this influence of the Jewish intellect by the mental products of the Greeks was reached in the works and in the personality of the sage par excellence -- Moses ben Maimon. In view of the fact that we shall resort frequently to certain Platonic metaphysical notions found in Maimonides' "Yad Hachazakah" and his "Moreh Nebuchim" and in order to be able to appreciate the significance of these notions and the relation they bear to the rest of his philosophy, we thought it advisable to introduce our subject with an orientation into the questions and problems that confronted Maimonides. In the next few pages we shall, therefore, attempt to indicate the purpose and leading ideas of the two monumental works of Maimonides, the "Yad Hachazakah" and the "Moreh Nebuchim", laying especial emphasis on the latter.

3. The Purpose and Leading Ideas of Maimonides' Works.

The "Perplexed" for whom the "Moreh Nebuchim" was written, are as the writer himself says, the thinkers whose studies have brought them into collision with religion -- philosophical students who have arrived at conclusions concerning the Primal Cause, the nature of man and the universe, and other metaphysical questions, that leave them puzzled how to deal with Scriptural sayings ap-

parently inconsistent therewith. Thus his work is divided into three parts:- (1) "An exposition of the esoteric ideas (sodoth) in the books of the Prophets, (2) A treatment of certain metaphysical problems, (3) An examination of the system and method of the Kalam"--the metaphysics of the Mohammedan Mutakallemin or metaphysicians. Maimonides himself,^{who} would naturally incline to the Arabic ideas on philosophical subjects, such as 'creatio ex nihilo' and the 'Word of God' (Kalam) was a zealous Aristotelian; and his task was to oppose the Mutakallemin's arguments, and to show his philosophical principles as not inconsistent with Scriptural expressions.

The literary history of the tractate can be given in a few sentences. The "Moreh Nebuchim" or, according to its Arabic title, *Dalalat al-Hayirin*, was originally written in Arabic, although with Hebrew letters, and must have been known in Europe long before the appearance of the Latin translation attributed to the Jewish physician Jacob Mantino (Paris, 1520). The work was completed about the year 1190 -- that is, about fourteen years before the death of its author at the age of seventy (on the thirteenth of December, 1204). Not many years afterwards it was translated into Hebrew by Samuel Ibn-Tibbon, with the warm approbation and help of Maimonides. The tractate has since been rendered into German-- Part I, by R. Furstenthal; Part II, by Stejneger; Part III, by S. Scheyer. The Arabic text itself was first published, with an elegant French translation and learned notes, by the great Orientalist S. Munk, (Three Volumes, Paris, 1856, 1861, 1866.) The current translation in English with annotations from the original was made by Professor M. Friedlander (Three Volumes, London, 1885.)

It cannot be our object here to give an outline of the

"Guide of the Perplexed". An attempt may, however, be made to indicate its purpose and some of its leading ideas. The "Moreh Nebuchim" is the last of the three great works of Maimuni, of which the first two may be described as chiefly dogmatical. The first of these three which had occupied the author since his twenty-third year, and during all his wanderings, as well as while outwardly professing Mohammedanism, ⁽¹⁾ was completed at Fostat (Old Cairo) 1168. Originally it was written in Arabic under the title Kitab al-Sirag, "Enlightening," and it had for its object such annotation of the Mishnah as might either render the study of the Gemara unnecessary, or else prepare for it. Needless to say, it also contained the expression of Maimuni's own view, to which reference will presently be made.

(1)

A charge of apostasy from Jewish faith under Mohammedan persecution was brought against Maimonides, which was either suggested or corroborated by a letter on "Involuntary Apostasy", purporting to be written by Maimonides, and containing such sentiments as that death must be preferred to the worship of idols, but Islam is not idolatry, that the profession in a belief in Mohammed is not a breach of any Divine commandment, and that Jews should in such a case seek an opportunity to leave the country, but need not suffer martyrdom. The arguments concerning the alleged apostasy of Maimonides himself are well sifted by Dr. Friedlander, who finds such an act inconsistent with known events in his life and with utterances of his own, and disputes the genuineness of the above-mentioned letter, which is never alluded to either by Maimonides himself or by any writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. I am inclined to think that the name of Maimonides is satisfactorily vindicated on this point.

The work was translated to Hebrew by several scholars. Besides its general, it has its special interest, that it contains what may be described as the Jewish Confession of Faith in thirteen articles. The second great work of Maimonides was what is known as "Mishneh Torah", or Yad ha-Chazakah. It consists of an Introduction and fourteen books and is written in beautiful Biblical Hebrew. To say that it is a compendium of the Talmud scarcely gives an adequate idea of what is not only the greatest production of Maimonides, but in that department, the greatest work existing. It arranges the vast material scattered in the Talmud, and presents it in most lucid form -- although naturally from the standpoint of Maimonides -- embodying also the results of the whole previous literature. The work was begun in 1170, and completed on the seventh of November, 1180.

The philosophical treatise known as "Guide to the Perplexed" is in one aspect of it quite different from those two dogmatical works. It is true, indeed, that even in his great Talmudical work, Maimonides had "philosophised". This, especially in the first of the books of which it is composed (the Sepher ha-Madda.) For philosophy was to be introduced into the Talmud, and all such studies occupied in his view the same level as that of Rabbinic Law. In the language of a Jewish historian (Graetz) -- "Aristotle had a place assigned to him by the side of the Doctors of the Talmud." But in the "Guide to the Perplexed" the avowed object of Maimonides was to combine Judaism with Aristotelian philosophy, or rather to show the identity of the two.

On every side we are startled by what must have sounded as rankest heresy in Orthodox Jewish ears. Thus we are told that it is altogether improper to ascribe to the deity attributes of any kind. The "cosmos" was the Ideas of God translating themselves into objective

reality. Maimonides rejects, indeed, the eternity of matter, but only because there was not sufficient proof of it; else, he assures us he would have had no difficulty in reconciling it with the language of Scripture. The 'cosmos' consisted of a series of different essences. Supreme among them, and partaking most of the Divine nature, were the four groups of angels, subordinate to each other, and standing in the relation of cause and effect. Among them there must have been one who was productive of ideas. This was the world-spirit, or "productive reason." The next series consisted of those ethereal essences, the heavens and the stars, which were regarded as instigant with life and intelligence. They were arranged in four successive spheres -- sun and moon being the lowest -- which determined, ruled and influenced all beneath them in the lower visible world of elements, which again consisted of four successive spheres. In truth, all changes observable in the world were due to these intelligent bodies, and the Deity was not in any direct communication with it, but far separate and in absolute and eternal rest. The questions of prophecy and inspiration were not what was generally supposed, but, the influence of productive reason upon the imagination when properly developed. What we read in Scripture about the prophets represented not outward facts, but inward states of the mind. Prophecies were always a kind of dreams. The only exception to this was in the case of Moses. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were only an accommodation to the then standpoint of the Jews, to their weakness. The Levitical laws intended to inculcate proper reverence; the laws concerning food chiefly sanitary. Nor did Maimonides hold the absolute immortality of the soul. The soul was merely the capacity of rising up to God. If it had fulfilled its purpose, it would win for itself immortality; otherwise the soul would

perish with the body. Manifestly, there was no room here for the doctrine of the resurrection. Yet from ^{his} ~~the~~ Jewish standpoint Maimonides was obliged not only to maintain, but also specially defend it against those of his opponents who urged against him what undoubtedly were the logical consequences of his system. For similar reasons, he had to defend the doctrine of a personal Messiah, to whom he assigned however, only the character of a national deliverer.

We cannot enter here into more than this bare indication of some of the leading ideas intended to "Guide the perplexed." The system was not novel. Maimonides had had a number of immediate predecessors in the Jewish world. But what distinguished him from all others was the attempt to combine systematically all this with that Talmudism which seemed so absolutely antagonistic to it. In view of his immense Jewish learning and of his works, we can understand the common Jewish saying: מלך משה עד משה מיימוני "From Moses (the law-giver) to Moses (Maimonides) there was none like him." (Paraphrase of Deut. 34:10.)

Platonic View of Philosophy.

1. The Absolute Science.

Plato's system is generally admitted to be an eminent example of transcendental metaphysics. That is, his system assumes certain real, eternal existences as the proper objects of our intellect, and assigns to this eternal principle of things a range beyond the sphere of all extant phenomena. Absolute science, Plato's starting point, is the pure self-consciousness of the reason -- the conviction it has of itself -- which assures to every special science its value and right import, and is at the same time versed in them all and combines into a whole their various branches. It is that which first ~~gives~~ gives to life its intellectual energy, by affording a definite end to whatever the soul enters upon and accomplishes with a consciousness of its import, while it contemplates the supreme truth, -- the true good of the soul and of all things.

This perfect science, however, is hard to find; and even if it were found, it would be difficult to impart it to others. (Timaeus Page 612-- All references to Platonic dialogues found in this essay are made to B. Jowett's "Dialogues of Plato.") This eternal and unchangeable being we call God. Now this complete and perfect insight is possible ^{to} one alone -- the Deity himself; Wisdom belongs exclusively to God -- philosophy is the highest portion of humanity, (Phaed. Page 158,) for human science is ever imperfect; man has always something still to learn, and as all else in man is in continual change, alternately beginning and ending, and nothing is permanent except so far as it is continually renewed -- the body as well as that which is in the soul, so ^{too} man's science is never the same, but is ever produced anew, whereas true and eternal persistency is the attribute solely of the Divine.

No mental tendency or development was admitted by Plato to be legitimate and right, which did not contain a germ of, or a tendency to philosophy: and looking at all in this light he might justly consider them to belong to philosophy in its widest acceptation. Considering this to be the highest development of human consciousness, he regarded all other efforts of the soul, however sound and healthy, merely as so many preparatory exercises, or means of philosophical education.

Plato illustrates this progressive development of philosophy by describing the course of an individual gradually advancing from a state in which the sensual predominates, as follows:- Beginning with the love and contemplation of beauty in particular forms, it rises to a conception of corporeal beauty in general, from which, gradually impressed with a feeling of its little worth, it advances to that of the soul. And even when directed to the intellectual, the sense of beauty attaches itself first to the contemplation of individual minds, in communion with whom it creates thoughts and images of beauty; afterwards it proceeds to examine the pursuits and inventions of man, the laws and institutions of humanity, from which it rises to the beauty of the sciences, and contemplating them both in their collectivity and unity, the soul is at last absorbed in the science of the one eternal beauty. "For he would proceed aright in this matter should begin in youth to visit beautiful forms ----- until on that shore he grows and waxes strong, and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere." (Sympos. Page 61) Thus would Plato lead from the sensible and the individual to the intellectual and universal.

2. Metaphysics -- the Object-matter of all Genuine Knowledge.

The basis of the Platonic notion of philosophy then, is the reference of all to the universal, eternal, unchangeable science of things -- Metaphysics -- which, when complete, embraces the truth of all thoughts, and indeed of all self-conscious life. Undoubtedly he does at times make the object of philosophy to be special; e.g., the effort to discover man's nature, and his peculiar faculties, affections, and duties, as distinct from all other species; but these occasional remarks may be easily reduced to their legitimate sense, by observing that the soul, being, with Plato, the most important element in man, he says that a right knowledge of it is impossible without that of universal nature. (Phaedr. Page 149.) It appeared then to Plato that metaphysics is the basis of all philosophy, since, generally, he insists upon the necessity of commencing inquiry with establishing the idea of that which is to be its object, and in particular, he rejects all investigations as untenable which commence with a physical assumption. (Phaedo. Page 478.)

Thus, in the development of Plato's philosophy, the whole system is dominated by metaphysical conceptions. And in this, his "method simply conforms to the Greek assumption, that while it might be a necessity with the beginner to feel his way upwards from sense to thought by the steps of the *πρῶτον πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, - (first in relation to us), it was the function of the theoretic teacher to transport us to the opposite extremity, and tell the story downwards along the path of the *πρῶτον τῇ φύσει*, - (first in the order of nature.)" (James Martineau "Types of Ethical Theory" Volume 1, in his preface to the second edition, page XXVI.) According to Plato, the soul's need of pure truth can never be satisfied by the mental arts which depend upon sensible experience, viz.,

those which are concerned with matters of human opinion or with natural phenomena, past, present, or future. The object-matter of all genuine knowledge must be sought in the eternal and unchangeable and universal realities in the metaphysical conceptions which subsist in all particular things. To these principles, all else must stand in a posterior and secondary line. "The stable and true and unalloyed, has to do with the things which are eternal and unchangeable and unmixed --- all other things are to be placed in a second or inferior class. (Philebus, page 108.)

In the next chapter we shall endeavor to cull some of Plato's "eternal and unchangeable and unmixed" concepts out of the labyrinthian structure of his dialogues. This done, we shall then, enter upon a comparison of the intellectual relation of Maimonides to Plato. In view of this, we shall omit all matter in Plato which has no direct bearing on Maimonides' theology, however interesting it may otherwise be, and also endeavor to make due allowance for the age and theologico-philosophical language in which our authors wrote.

Plato and Maimonides.

1. The Ideal Theory of Plato.

First of all, let us enter upon an examination of Plato's opinions upon the permanent, or what he calls 'the being' or eternal essence of things, -- the Ideas -- which, form the foundation of his metaphysical system.

In the Republic, Plato calls the investigation, which sets out from the idea, the customary method. "We shall begin by assuming that whenever a number of individuals have a common name, they have also a corresponding idea or form." (Republic, Book X, page 490.) He usually commences with the noun or name which is attributed to a plurality of objects, and seeks an explanation of this name by which we may arrive at its idea. To the same effect exactly is the precept to open every investigation by settling the nature of the object of dispute; for this question cannot be completely answered except by a statement of its essence, and the essence of an entity is expressed in the definition of its idea. When, we further call to mind, that with Plato the essence of things is that which in them is permanent and fixed, it appears quite natural that he should set out from this point in his attempt to arrive at a knowledge of the real and the true.

From this it is clear that according to Plato the scientific method must invariably attach itself to ideas. And here we reach the centre and the difficulty of the Platonic system -- his theory of ideas. In view of the fact that a discussion of this intricate involved and elusive subject would lead us far out of the field of our immediate investigation, without

any direct bearing on the subject at hand, and in view of the fact that we have already referred to this vague and much disputed theory and shall have recourse to it again in the course of this paper, we shall content ourselves only with a bare statement as to the origin, the content and the significance of the Ideal Theory.

The origin of the Ideal Theory of Plato is found in the Socratic Idea. According to Socrates, ideas are universal notions underlying the thought which directs man's doing. These are subjective and therefore wholly psychological. With Plato, however, the ideas are things in the objective world, being independent of the mind. As such, they are objective and therefore wholly ontological. According to Plato, ideas are not gotten immediately but must be sought after. Every concept that is universal in its reality is an idea to which your general notion refers. The Universal is real to Plato. The Idea of a thing to us to-day, is merely an abstraction; to him, it was a real object.

There are degrees of reality, said Plato. A particular man or a tree is real, just in so far as they give form, space and time to them. A shoe-maker or a soldier has his profession, but, besides, he has his aim as a man, as man. Things in their very essence are teleological, and not mechanical as the Atomists claimed. The reality of anything is to be discovered in its conduct. It is real in so far as its conduct fulfills the idea of its existence. The tree that is good and hence fulfills its function in every respect is more real than the defective tree. It is clear that immortality is implied in this. Life is immortal in so far as your life achieved its idea -- otherwise, you are

mortal.

In this hierarchy of ideas, the idea of ideas, namely, the idea of the Good is at the top. The "Good" is the highest degree of all reality. It cannot be doubted that Plato wished, thru the cognition of the lower ideas, to rise to a knowledge of this highest, which represents the principle of all things, --- the idea of the Good which is the idea of God, in order thereby to establish the truth and reality of the lower. With Plato, this knowledge of the Good is the highest possession, indeed the only true knowledge, since without it all knowledge is worthless. Plato delights in painting God as the Good, and calls the idea of good, the ultimate limit of all knowledge. "My opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is ~~seen~~ only with an effort; and when seen it is inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right ---." (Rep. Book VII, page 403.) Therefore, God embraces the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things, (Laws, Book IV, page 288), and therefore, the universe is not merely a type of the ideas, but also a type and a resemblance of God, because the idea of God comprises all others. Accordingly, with Plato the idea of God was the supreme idea, which, as the highest, both is and contains in itself all others, and that consequently God is the unity which in itself comprises the true essence of all things.

This notion that man's highest perfection is his striving to attain the Idea of the Good or God, is enthusiastically endorsed by Maimonides in his "Moreh Nebuchim" (Part III, Chapter 54.) After enumerating the three kinds of perfection that man should acquire, Maimonides continues: "The fourth kind of perfec-

tion is the true perfection of man -- the possession of the highest intellectual faculties; the possession of such notions which lead to true metaphysical opinions as regards God. With this perfection man has obtained his final object." (Note: All translations of passages occurring in the "Moreh" are taken from M. Friedlander's "Guide for the Perplexed.")

2. Proofs for Existence of God.

As to the proofs of the existence of God Plato proceeds to the task, and observes that such a demonstration would be unnecessary, except for certain prejudices which are extensively diffused among mankind. He therefore proceeds to a refutation of these false opinions, which are in direct contradiction to the true philosophical conviction. This refutation rests upon two points: that the origin of things must not be looked for in the corporeal but in the intellectual; and that the power which actuates and governs the universe reduces all to perfection and harmony, and in conformity to ideas of order and beauty. In support of the first, he appeals to the idea or the essence of soul, which alone has a faculty of self-movement, whereas the bodily is without this power, and cannot, except when impelled by some other body, set another in motion. For whatever has the property of self-impulsion, must necessarily be the source of motion; whereas that, which requires something else to set it in motion, must derive its motion from the self-impelling. "And what is the definition of that which is named 'soul'? Can we conceive of any other than that which has been already given -- the motion which is self-moved?" ---- "And is not that motion which takes place in another, or by reason of another, but never has any self-moving

power at all, being in truth the change of an inanimate body, to be reckoned in the second degree which you may prefer?" (Laws, Book X, page 466.) On this account, those who look to the material and bodily for the causes of whatever is effected, are unable to distinguish the true first cause from the secondary causes or the means.

If we compare the above with the following citation from Maimonides, the thought-resemblance is quite apparent. "The enunciation that the heavenly sphere is endowed with a soul will appear reasonable to all who sufficiently reflect on it; --- people wrongly assume that when we ascribe a soul to the heavenly spheres we mean something like the soul of man, or that of an ass, or ox. We merely intend to say that the locomotion of the sphere undoubtedly leads us to assume some inherent principle by which it moves; and this principle is certainly a soul." ("Moreh" 11, Chapter 1V -- these spheres, of course, derive their existence from God.)

Let us note another, perhaps, more potent proof for the existence of God employed by both our authors. According to Plato in the philosopher who trusts to the reason alone, it is certainly an incongruous thing to suppose that all had its origin in matter and chance, for, in support of his own dignity, he ought to maintain the supremacy and unlimited power of reason, and to derive all things from the operation of a divine and intellectual cause. All in the world is for the sake of the rest, and the place of the single parts is so ordered as to subserve to the preservation and excellence of the whole. Now the entire world of things, sensible and bodily, is generate~~d~~ and produced, and consequently must have a source and cause of its production. "The

ruler of the universe has ordered all things with a view to the preservation and perfection of the whole, and each part has an appointed state of action and passion." (Laws, Book X, page 474.) Compare this with the following from Maimonides. "On considering the Divine acts, or the processes of Nature, we get an insight into the prudence and wisdom of God as displayed in the creation of animals, with the gradual development of the movements of their limbs and the relative positions of the latter, and we perceive also His wisdom and plan in the successive and gradual development of the whole condition of each individual." ("Moreh", part III, Chapter 32.)

Since the corporeal cannot be produced out of itself, but has its motion from the intellectual, it is only the spiritual, with Plato, that can be regarded as the formative cause. This may, however, be of two kinds, either beneficent or malevolent, according as the motion of the universe be, or not, regulated by reason. But the difference between the rational and irrational, is that the latter, by not invariably moving in the same direction, but continually changing, reduces all to disorder, and by confusing all things, brings about destruction and decay; whereas the rational looking to the invariably constant and uniform, which is immortal and indissoluble, forms all things in agreement with an unalterable type. If, then, an irrational spirit should attempt to regulate production, then would all move without order, and nothing be permanent; if, on the contrary, a rational spirit regulate all the motions of the universe, all will proceed aright, motion and order will be constant and invariable. Now the latter is the case, the universe being the perfection of beauty, ~~and the~~

all mundane things tend. He may, therefore, in this respect be represented by those conceptions which indicate the ideal of human efforts, for which purpose the beautiful and good are usually employed by Plato. In this light, human life appears as a pursuit or desire of what is agreeable to the soul, or what is good; and this desire or love is the bond which unites the mortal nature with the divine. "For there is nothing which men love but the good." -- "For God mingles not with man; but thru Love all the intercourse and speech of God with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on." (Sympos, pages 57 and 54 respectively.) There are two species of desire and love, of which one proceeds from the unlike to the unlike, from that which is needy and empty, to that which satisfies and fills, in which case the gratification produces sensual pleasure; the other is directed from like to like and being ever in due measure, tends to the good and the godlike, the true measure of all things. (Laws, Book VIII, page 405.) The first is not truly love, but merely a sensual longing, whose only object is the pleasure of the lover; the latter, on the contrary, invariably seeks and tends to produce the beautiful and the good in the soul of the lover, and thereby operates in it a true immortality; for the mortal can only maintain itself by a continual renovation, and this is impossible, except by means of the befitting, which is the beautiful alone. (Sympos., page 58.)

Accordingly, the resemblance of the desired object is a part of love, and every true love is closely allied with the resemblance to the ideal. Its proper aliment is the contemplation of the beautiful; "for beauty is the brightest copy of whatever in the world of ideas we formerly contemplated, such as it appears to us thru the clearest of our senses, the sight, in

order, that, reminded of earlier wisdom and incorrupt existence, we may, by the contemplation of it, call to mind the thoughts of absolute beauty, of which we here behold a likenamed copy." God, therefore, is the really beautiful and good, in short, the true aim and pattern, by striving after which the mortal may participate in the beautiful and the real, and so become good. "Thus far, I have been speaking of the fourth and last kind of madness, which is imputed to him who, when he sees the beauty of earth, is transported with the recollection of the true beauty; he would like to fly away, but he cannot; he is like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below; and he is therefore esteemed mad. And I have shown this of all inspirations to be the noblest and highest and the offspring of the highest, and that he who loves the beautiful is called a lover because he partakes of it." (Phaedr., page 126-127.) Thus, God is the pattern of the sensible world, and Love, i.e. Intellectual Love, is the bond between the Divine and the mortal.

Maimonides' conception of the relation of God to man bears close resemblance to Plato's views. Understanding the work of God is "an opening to the intelligent man to love God," writes Maimonides. (*וְהוּא, יְדַבְּרִים בְּאֵלָיו אֱנוֹשׁ מֵאֵלֶּיךָ בְּלִילִים, גְּדוּלָּתוֹ, וְהוּא*

מֵאֵלֶיךָ בְּיוֹן מִלִּשְׁתִּיכָה, כִּי, לִיבִי שֶׁתִּתֵּן לְמַדְבַּח אֱלֹהִים אֶת-נִשְׁמָתִי, וְהוּא
שֶׁנִּי "מֵאֵלֶיךָ, בְּלִילִים, וְהוּא, בְּתוֹרָה, בְּרִיךְ, לְעַד, וְעַד."

Further, "a man however can love the Holy One, blessed be He! only by the knowledge which he has of Him; so that his love will be in proportion to his knowledge; if this latter be slight the former will also be slight; but if the latter be great the former also will be great. And therefore

a man ought solely and entirely to devote himself to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, by applying to those sciences and doctrines which are calculated to give such an idea of his Creator, as it is in the power of the intellect of man to conceive." [אין אדם רק"ה ז"ל צדק לזרועו וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']

והוא אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה' [אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']
 [אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']
 [אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']

(Note:- The English translations of passages contained in the Yad Hachazakah are taken from Elias Soloweyczik's translation of parts of Maimonides' "Yad". (Part 1, London, 1863.). This intellectual love of God is for Maimonides the highest good; the bliss of the world to come will consist in the knowledge of the truth of the Shechinah; the greatest worldly happiness is to have time and opportunity to learn wisdom (i.e. knowledge of God), and this maximum of earthly peace will be reached when the Messiah comes, whose government will give the required opportunities. (ומשנ' ד' נתיאון ב')

והוא אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה' [אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']
 [אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה']

Furthermore, the intensity of this intellectual love of God, this pursuit of wisdom, is insisted upon: the whole soul of man must be absorbed in it --- "it cannot be made fast in the heart of a man unless he be constantly and duly absorbed in the same and unless he renounce everything in the world except this love." --

[אדם אשר ממש וזוהי ע"י עבודת ה'] - It will be seen at once how closely all this resembles what we have just quoted from Plato on the same topic. At the same time we must not overlook the important deviation of Maimonides from Plato. With the latter, God is complete-

ly removed from earth. He is altogether transcendental. With Maimonides, however, God is the transcendental and the imminent, although not personal being. *יבשר מן הבשר, יבשר מן האדם, יבשר מן העולם*

although not personal being. (הוא אינו איש, אלא אישיות)
 הנחמד באיכותו הפנימית לא אלוהי העצום, כלפינו, אלא בדת החברה, אלא לאיש
 כגון אל עזר ארבע מאות במחלוקת, ונאמם לא אפילו לא אלוהי עצום אלא דמיון
 הפשוט, — לשאת "הבחינה" של ח"י וצ"ח. — 300-303 וצ"ח וצ"ח —

4. "Renunciation", or "Re-birth."

4. "Renunciation", or "Re-birth."

There is in Plato's system, as is well known, a strong notion of a 'renunciation', or 're-birth', by means of which a man becomes free, thenceforth to be led by the Idea of God which alone is capable of making man free. This notion is peculiarly strong in the theosophy of Maimonides. Having stated that profound meditation on abstract and metaphysical subjects is figuratively termed by the Rabbis, "Walking in the Garden", Maimonides proceeds:

"The man who is replete with such virtues, and whose bodily constitution too is in a perfect state, on his entering into the garden, and on his being carried away by those great and extensive matters, if he have a correct knowledge so as to understand and to comprehend them -- if he continue to keep himself in holiness -- if he depart from the general manner of the people who walk in the darkness of temporary things (*مبتدئين*) -- if he continue to be solicitous about himself, and to train his mind so that it should not think at all of any of those perishable things, or of the vanity of time and its devices, but that it should have its thoughts constantly turned on high, and fastened to the Throne of Glory, so as

Maimonides expresses a similar thought in his "Moreh": "Some persons constantly strive to choose that which is noble, and to seek perpetuation in accordance with the direction of their nobler part, -- their form; their thoughts are engaged in the formation of ideas, the acquisition of true knowledge about everything, and the union with the divine intellect which flows down upon them, and which is the source of man's form" (i.e. his soul in contradistinction to his body.) ("Moreh", Part III, Chapter VIII.) Plato expresses the same thought in somewhat different words: As long as the soul has a body, and is united with such evil, it is unable to attain to a complete possession of the truth. For the body is the occasion of many obstacles to investigation: in the first place, the necessity of providing the means of its subsistence, and secondly, its liability to sickness and disease, then its passions and desires, its hopes and fears, and all its strange delusions, its frivolity and trifling, render it utterly impossible for man to gain any insight into truth. Accordingly, the body is represented as a real hindrance to knowledge, and the sensuous impressions thru the body as perfectly worthless; for even the sight and hearing do not furnish any accurate and certain information, but on the contrary, are weak and deceptive; and if these are not serviceable in the investigation of truth, still less so are the still more imperfect senses. Hence, then, the longing of the philosopher for death, in the hope that it will free him from the hindrances of the body; in the present life, his first object must be to limit, as much as possible, his relation to and dependence upon the body, in order to approximate the nearer to certainty. "In the present

life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible communion or fellowship with the body, and are not infected with the bodily nature, but remain pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us." / (Phaedo, pages 439-40.) While it is true, Maimonides accepts Plato's view as to what constitutes man's highest ^{position} and perfection in life, yet, it does seem, that both differ as to the means of attaining it. Plato would effect a complete rejection of the sensible world. He would turn aside from the phenomenal and seek refuge in the Divine. He would purify the soul from the debasing influences of its association with the body. Maimonides, on the other hand, takes fuller cognizance of and assigns proper proportion to man's physical nature. He would not completely reject the validity of the sense organs, but rather curb their sphere of influence. In so doing, Maimonides would make room for a possibility of rising gradually from the three lower grades of perfection to the fourth and highest plane of complete spiritual perfection, as he describes in the "Moreh" (Part III, Chapter 54.) The obvious logical outcome of two such diverging views is manifest. The Platonic view of absolute indifference to and faithlessness of our sense organs and our earthly existence has influenced later Christianity in its doctrine of Total Depravity. This earth is so corrupt, our bodies are so sin-laden, that the sooner we rid ourselves of our mortal frame and enter upon the life eternal, the better off we are. "For now we see through a glass darkly," (1 Cor. XIII: 12) contains the exact Platonic notion. According to Maimonides, however, which is the distinctively Jewish viewpoint, the only way

without matter, and it is only the understanding of man (פְּנֵי אָדָם literally: the heart of man), which abstractedly (בְּעֵינַי אֵלֹהִים literally: by the eye of the heart) parts the existing body and knows that it is composed of matter and quality." (שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר - *Sh'moneh Esrei*) - This coexistence of matter and quality is carried even, as in Plato's case, throughout all being. Even "all the planets and orbs are beings possessed of soul, mind and understanding." (Ibid. Chapter, 3, paragraph XI.)

It will be seen, at once, how Plato coincides on this point with Maimonides, (or, shall we say, vice versa) who wished to explain how it is that all things in their degree know the wisdom of the Creator and glorify Him. Each intelligence, according to Maimonides, in its degree can know God; yet none know God as He knows himself. From this it follows that the measure of Man's knowledge of God is his Intelligence. With regard to this Intelligence it may be remarked that Maimonides identifies it --- that "more excellent knowledge which is found in the soul of man" -- with the quality of man, and that this 'quality' of man is for him identical with the soul itself (Ibid. Chapter 4, paragraph 13.)

The bearing of all this on Plato's conceptions must be apparent. For, according to Plato, in order that the world might be good, and similar to its artificer, God reflected and found that no visible and irrational thing, as a whole, is better than another, which has intelligence, considered as a whole; and at the same time that without a soul the possession of reason is impossible; he therefore, made the universe, placing intelligence in the soul, and the soul in the body, because body is indis-

pensable to all generated things. This idea is very clearly set forth in his Timaeus. "And the creator reflecting upon the visible work of nature, found that no unintelligent creature taken as a whole was fairer than the intelligent taken as a whole; and that intelligence could not exist in anything which was devoid of soul. For these reasons he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body, and framed the universe to be the best and fairest work in the order of nature. And therefore using the language of probability, we may say that the world became a living soul and truly rational through the providence of God." (Timaeus, page 614)

7. Conception of God.

Let us now consider the conception of God according to both our authors. Maimonides, to start with, sweeps away all human attributes and affections from the Godhead. God has neither body nor frame, nor limit of any kind; He has none of the accidental qualities of bodies -- "neither composition nor decomposition; neither place nor measure; neither ascent nor descent; neither right nor left; neither before nor behind; neither sitting nor standing; neither does He exist in time, so that, He should have a beginning or an end or a number of years; nor is He liable to change, since in Him there is nothing which can cause a change in Him." ("Yesode Hatorah," Chapter 1, part 12.) "All that we may know of God is the mere fact of this absolutely necessary existence -- this proposition constitutes the beginning and end of Maimonides' theology. The immediate consequence of this principle offers him the basis of his entire theory of attributes, the conviction of the impossibility of any composition in God.--- Any assertion concerning the essence of God is positively impos-

sible. --- Only those attributes may be employed by which the essence of God is wholly untouched, as those of activity. --- We can know only what God is not." (Kaufmann: "Attributenlehre," pages 471-473.) God is One, but this unity is not that of an individual or a material body. "What is really intended by us is just this much, that God is not multiplex. This cannot be expressed positively unless we call Him One. We therefore awakened the most correct conception and come nearest the truth by saying of God that He is One, but not through oneness." ("Moreh" Part 1, Chapter 57.) That God has similitude or form in the Scripture is due only to an "apparition of prophecy" (נִחְיָא דְּנִחְיָא); while the assertion that God created man in His own image refers only to the soul or intellectual element in man. It has no reference to shape as to manner of life but to that knowledge which constitutes the "quality" of the soul. לֵב נִחְיָא (Ibid. Chapter 14, Part XLV.) The "pillar of wisdom" is to know that this first Being exists, and "that He has called all other beings into existence, so that if we were to suppose that He did not exist, no other thing could exist." (Ibid. Chapter 1, Part 1.)

We have seen that according to Plato human life appears as a pursuit after what is agreeable to the soul, and that this desire or love is the bond which unites the mortal nature with the Divine. Now, in the same manner as the idea of good represents the objects of desire generally which the human mind strives to attain, the idea of good usually stands for God; God alone is good, all that is permitted to human nature is to become good. For absolutely the Deity alone is invariably the same. (Sympos. page 59.) And however clearly this unchangeableness of the di-

vine nature may follow from the view which regards him as the object of pure science, and as the sum of ideas, nevertheless Plato gives a special proof of it drawn from the idea of good. The more beautiful and perfect anything is, the less liable is it to be changed by another; and God, as the best and most beautiful absolutely, ~~cannot~~ cannot absolutely be changed by aught else. Still less can he be changed by Himself, for being perfect in goodness and beauty, He could only transform Himself / into something worse and more ugly; and since nothing good voluntarily becomes worse, He consequently must remain forever in His own form. " -----But if we suppose a change in anything, that change must be effected either by the thing itself, or by some other thing ---- and things which are at their best are also least liable to be altered or decomposed ----then God too cannot be willing to change; being, as is supposed, the fairest and best that is conceivable, every God remains absolutely and forever in his own form." (Rep. Book 11, page 254. -- That Plato should here speak of gods, and not of a god, is easily accounted for by the popular character of the investigation.) Since, then, the good is not in production, therefore the pleasure or pain which arises from the preservation or destruction of animal life are alien from the Deity. It is unnecessary here to detail at length the grounds on which Plato proves that all sensuous conditions of space and time are inapplicable to the Deity; which, of course, is a necessary consequence of his views of the ideal world. There are many other negative determinations of the divine nature which result from this idea, and are presented in the course of his controversy against all

humanizing conceptions of the Deity. It is this which constitutes the essential point in his attack upon the poets, especially Homer and the Epic writers; for he clearly saw that their poems had at least nurtured and fostered the polytheistic conception of the human sentiments and actions of the gods. In all this, the influence of Plato on Maimonides is manifest. Yet, Maimonides makes a bold departure from Plato in the problem of attributes. Maimonides consistently upholds the negative attributes of God, arguing that God is above any positive description or attribute. God cannot be known in Himself, but only in some type or manifestation. While this can also be said of Plato's conception of God, yet he does not uphold it with the same logical consistency as does Maimonides. For at times Plato assumes that the knowledge of God, in Himself, is not absolutely impossible. (Timaeus, page 612.)

8. God's Knowledge.

We now pass to a subject which, in the case of both philosophers, is beset with grave difficulties --- namely, God's knowledge. According to Maimonides, God, because He knows Himself, knows everything. This assertion is brought into close connection with another :- All existing things from the first degree of intelligence to the smallest insect which may be found

See. H. II / in the centre of the earth exist by the power of God's truth. These propositions become especially clarified when we keep in mind Maimonides' conception of the Deity as an intellectual cause or law. According to both Plato and Maimonides, behind the succession of material phenomena is a succession of ideas following logically the one on the other. This thought-logic is the

only 'form' wherein the mind can co-ordinate phenomena because it is itself a thinking entity, and so subject to the logic of thought. The 'pure thought' which has a logic of its own inner necessity is thus the cause, and an intellectual one, of all phenomena. Such a passage as the following, now becomes replete with meaning and deep truth:- "The Holy One --- perceives His own truth and knows it just as it really is. And he does 'not know with a knowledge distinct from Himself' (*לֹא יָדַע בְּדַעַת אֲחֵרָה*) as we know; but ---- His knowledge and His life are one in every possible respect, (*וְיָדְעוֹתָיו וְחַיּוֹתָיו בְּרִצְפוֹתָם*), and in every mode of unity; hence you may say that He is the knower, the known and knowledge itself, all at once." (*וְהָיָה כִּי יִדְעֶנּוּ וְיִחְיֶנּוּ וְיִכְוֹנֶנּוּ וְיִשְׁמְעֶנּוּ וְיִשְׂמְעֶנּוּ וְיִשְׁמְעֶנּוּ*)

§ 10

Again, "therefore he does not perceive creatures and know them by means of the creatures as we know them; but He knows them by means of Himself; so that, by dint of His knowing Himself, He knows everything; because everything is (supported by its existing through Him)." (Ibid. ~~Chapter 15~~ *וְכָל הַבְּרִיּוֹת נִשְׁמָעִים בְּיָדוֹ וְנִכְוֶנִים בְּיָדוֹ וְנִשְׁמָעִים בְּיָדוֹ*)

Any number of passages might be quoted here from the "Moreh" which expound and elaborate fully this Maimonidean conception of God's knowledge. It will suffice however, merely to make mention of Chapters 16, 20, and 21 of Part III of the 'Moreh', as being prominent references on this subject.

As to Plato's views of God's knowledge, it seems that they do not revolve about God's knowledge of Himself (as do those of Maimonides), but rather hinge on God's intellectual love of Himself. However, remarkably similar views are expressed by both as was shown in our discussion on "The Relation of God

to Man", where it was seen that in both systems the knowledge of God is always accompanied by a corresponding love of God. Although Plato did not concern himself much, as it seems, with this particular form of the problem (i.e. God's knowledge), yet his inferences on the subject bear close resemblance to Maimonides. For with Plato, as shown, God is the keystone of all rational investigation. He embraces whatever subsists without difference, in time or space, -- all truth and science, all substances, and all reason, being neither reason nor essence, but being superior to, unites both within itself.

9. Immortality of the Soul.

We have seen that Maimonides identifies the soul with the 'quality', i.e. the thought-attribute in man. This quality not being composed of material elements cannot be decomposed with them; it stands in no need of the breath of life, of the body, but it proceeds from God (the infinite intellect). This 'quality' is not destroyed with the body but continues to know and comprehend those Intelligences that are distinct from all matter (i.e. it no longer has knowledge of material things and therefore must lose all trace of its former individuality), and it lasts forever. (Hilchoth Yesode Hatorah, Chapter 4, paragraph 15). Since Maimonides holds the 'soul' to be a 'thought-attribute' in man, it is only natural that, accordingly, all men do not have equal share in the future life. For Maimonides, goodness and wisdom, wickedness and ignorance are synonymous terms. He classifies all beings from the supreme intelligence down to the smallest insect according to their wisdom, the degree of "quality" in them. The wise man who has renounced all

clogging passions and received the Holy Spirit, is classed even with a peculiar rank of angel -- "the man-angel." On the other hand the fool, the evil man, may be in possession of no "quality" and therefore incapable of immortality. The future life of the soul is a purely intellectual one. It consists of increased knowledge of the "Shechinah" (cf. Bab. Talmud, Treatise Berachoth, 17a).

section 2 :- (מתיא בראשית פיר לא מאלס נידע אלס רבנן- אלס יבא און)
מאלס אכילת לא לתורה וק' --- אלס צדיקים ולמים ולחיותיים
ונרנים מצול הלכות).

On the other hand, the reward of the evil man is, that his soul is cut off from this life; it is that destruction after which there is no existence; *הנפשו נכרת מן החיים ונשחטת*

That this is similar to Plato's conception xxxxxxxxxx of immortality is readily apparent. In fact this view of immortality has been shown to be the logical outcome of Plato's Ideal Theory in our discussion on "Hierarchy of Ideas". There we saw that the end and object of human existence is to realize in man as pure a knowledge of the good, and to effect as much pure good as possible. He is immortal in proportion to his realization of this knowledge of the good. The soul, with Plato, as the self-moving, can neither be produced nor decay, for otherwise all motion must eventually cease. "The soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable." Again, "Only he who is a philosopher or lover of learning, and is entirely pure at departing, is alone permitted to the divine nature." (Phaedo, pages 456,459). That Maimonides was consciously following Plato in

being punished; but that those who are punished are miserable, and that God is the author of their misery -- the poet is not to be permitted to say; though he may say that the wicked are miserable because they require to be punished, and are benefitted by receiving punishment from God; but that God being good is the author of evil to any one, is to be strenuously denied --- let this, then, be one of the rules of recitation and invention, -- that God is not the author of evil, but of good only." (Rep. Book, 2, page 253). In this respect, physical ill appears as a consequence of the moral, and the latter as a mere result of the action of the body on the soul; the one species of evil is, therefore, a consequence of another, and so we come back upon the question of the origin of evil generally. Thus we find ourselves involved in that obscurity which prevails throughout the Platonic theory, upon the relation subsisting between God and the sensible world.

Maimonides agrees with Plato that desire for evil arises from an infirm soul. "Now what remedy is there for those that have infirm souls? (*אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*) --- They must apply to the ~~wise~~ wise, who are the physicians of souls" (Hilchoth Deoth, Chapter 11, Part 111). Here evil is brought into close connection with ignorance as its cause. The characteristic of the wise man (like the philosopher with Plato) is that he avoids all opposite extremes, and takes that middle state which is found in all the dispositions of man. (Ibid. I, 4 *אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*)
 As to the origin and nature of evil, Maimonides is much clearer and not so confusing as Plato. Maimonides upholds the idea of the non-existence of matter upon which he bases his conception of

the "negative-reality" of evil. It seems, Plato, does not ask and strive consistently to answer the question, of the ultimate reality of evil. Maimonides discusses, quite at length, the ontological nature of evil. "So-called Evils", says Maimonides, "are evils only in relation to a certain thing, and ^{THAT} which is evil in reference to a certain existing thing, either includes the non-existence of that thing or the non-existence of some of its good conditions, the proposition has, therefore, been laid down in most general terms, "all evils are negations" (*לפיכך נאמר* -- "Moreh", Part III, Chapter X). Accordingly, Maimonides argues, since God's works are all perfectly good, it must be admitted that God cannot be said to directly create evil, or that He has the direct intention to produce it. He only produces existence, and all existence is good. Evil, however, is of a negative character, and cannot be acted upon. Evil can be attributed to God only in so far as He produces the corporeal element as it is; it is always connected with negatives, and is, therefore, the source of all destruction and all evil.

Thus, while Maimonides betrays thought-resemblances to Plato, he is, however, on the whole, much more positive in his views and meets the problem squarely. Plato, on this problem, is rather vague, confusing, and evanescent.

11. Free Will and God's Knowledge.

The problem of the ~~autonomy~~ autonomy of the Divine Providence (i.e. Omniscience) and Free Will occupied the attention of medieval Jewish philosophers from the time of Saadia. In the "Moreh", we find several chapters devoted to the subject. ("Moreh"

Part III, Chapter XVI ff. see also Bernfeld's exposition in his book "Daath Elohim", l. 289 ff.) Maimonides tells us distinctly that free will is granted to every man; that there is no predestination; everyman can choose whether he will be righteous or wicked, a wise man or a fool. It is therefore intelligible that the Law contains commands and prohibitions, rewards and punishments. "The theory of man's perfectly free will is one of the fundamental principles of the Law of our teacher Moses --- According to this principle man does what is in his power to do, by his nature, his choice (*לדבר ודבר*), and his will.---- All species of irrational animals likewise move by their own free will. This is the will of God; that is to say, it is due to the eternal Divine will that all living beings should move freely, and that man should have power to act according to his will or choice within the limits of his capacity ----- An equally fundamental principle is that wrong cannot be ascribed to God in any way whatever; all evils and afflictions as well as all kinds of happiness of man ----- are the results of strict judgment that admits no wrong whatever " ("Moreh" Part III, chapter 17). Maimuni's theory is that "in the lower or sublunary portion of the Universe, Divine Providence (*הנהגה אלהית*) does not extend to the individual members of species except in the case of mankind --- Divine Providence is connected with Divine intellectual influence, and the same beings which are benefitted by the latter so as to become intellectual, and to comprehend things comprehensible to rational beings, are also under the control of Divine Providence, which examines all their deeds with a view of **rewarding** or punishing them." (Ibid.) From the premise

that Divine Providence manifests itself to intellectual beings as an intellectual influence, Maimuni concludes that "the greater the proportion which a person has obtained of this Divine influence, on account of both his physical predisposition and his training, the greater must also be the effect of Divine Providence upon him, for the action of Divine Providence is proportional to the endowment of intellect ." ("Moreh", part III, chapter 18.)

But how is human freedom to be reconciled with the absolute foreknowledge and omniscience of the Deity? The answer is : "The fact that God knows things while in a state of possibility, when their existence belongs to the future, does not change the nature of the possible in any way.---- The knowledge of the realization of one of several possibilities does not yet affect that realization ---The great doubt that presents itself to our mind is the result of the insufficiency of our intellect." ("Moreh", part III, chapter 20). The Divine knowledge is totally different from human knowledge. God's knowledge is not distinct from Himself. He and His knowledge are one, "the knower, the known and the knowledge itself are identical." (Ibid.) Thus, while granting pre-knowledge to God, Maimonides cautiously adds that it is impossible for man fully to grasp the truth regarding the nature of His knowledge.

In this whole question, Plato confronts us with contradictory views. But the mass of evidence is in favor of human freedom. The work of the created gods (i.e. the stars), according to Plato, possess power over the rational soul, and therefore, must exercise no inconsiderable influence upon the

lot of all mortal creatures. He, accordingly, believed that man's fate is determined by the constellation at the time of his birth. (Timaeus, page 622). To this Maimonides strenuously objects and argues against "the absurd ideas of astrologers, who falsely assert that the constellation at the time of one's birth determines whether one is to be virtuous or vicious, the individual thus being compelled to follow out a certain line of conduct." ("Eight Chapters", by Joseph I, Gorfinkle, page 86).

There is but one thing in mortality which is not subject to the might of these powerful agents. Virtue alone knows no master. Hence, with Plato, the fate of everyone is in his own hands; each may choose the lot he will; if he choose the evil, the fault is his own; God is not responsible. (Rep. Book X, page 515). With this view Maimonides thoroughly accords. "We, on the contrary are convinced that our Law (cf. "Moreh", part III, 17, fifth theory) agrees with Greek philosophy, which substantiates with convincing proofs the contention that man's conduct is entirely in his own hands, that no compulsion is exerted, and that no external influence is brought to bear upon him that constrains him to be either virtuous or vicious, except inasmuch as, according to what we have said above, he may be by nature so constituted as to find it easy or hard, as the case may be, to do a certain thing; but that he must necessarily do, or refrain from doing a certain thing is absolutely untrue." ("Eight Chapters" by J. I, Gorfinkle, page 86.)

Concluding Remarks.

This study has not pretended to give the total influence of Plato on Maimonides. We have only attempted to

produce the more immediate and apparent traces of Plato found in Maimonides' theology. Throughout our discussion, we were keenly mindful that the measure of the philosophical systems of both our authors "is longer than the earth and broader ~~than~~ than the sea". For this reason we have omitted all those Platonisms which have no direct bearing in the determination of the configuration of some of the theories contained in the vast theological system of Maimonides. We have endeavored to cull theological gems from two gigantic thinkers and set forth the extent to which the one was dependent upon the other. In all this, our aim was to show significant thought-resemblances of Maimonides to and, frequently, his conscious deviations from, Plato. How far we have succeeded, the reader will judge.

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