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ARISTOTELIANISM AND NEO-PLATONISM IN MAIMONIDES' CONCEPT OF GOD

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* Several aspects of Maimonides' philosophy which might be relevant to the subject of this paper have not been dealt with due to the limitations of time and space.

** Those footnotes indicated in the text by arabic numerals point to textual and source-references which need not be read with the text. Those indicated by Roman numerals point to additions and side-lights best read with the text.

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper must be approached from several different directions. In order to discover the neo-Platonic constituents on the one hand and the Aristotelian constituents on the other in Maimonides' concept of God, it is primarily, of course, necessary to understand, present, analyse and discuss Maimonides' own concept as such. This is essentially a task in recreative philosophy. Secondly, the various faucets of the neo-Platonic and Aristotelian concepts of God must be similarly summarized, thus requiring another recreative philosophical job on earlier historical levels. This, however, is not the only difference between the two tasks: whereas Maimonides' philosophy represents one more or less systematic whole outside of historical change, neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism are philosophic schools which, at Maimonides' time had traversed approximately 900 and 1,400 years respectively, and had been kept alive by correspondingly many generations, and individual thinkers. It is ab initio clear that through such spans of time, despite the essential unity of the schools, many changes, modifications and, perhaps, advances of no little significance transpired within them. Large as this order is, it must therefore thirdly be the task of this paper to trace at least in outline, the history of neo-Platonic and Aristotelian thought. This, then, is a task in Ideengeschichte, a field so new and unexplored, so difficult because it must endeavor to follow the birth, growth and generation of ideas as biography describes the birth and life of human beings. So difficult, moreover, because, as modern scientific biography must include the psychological and psychoanalytical analysis of its subjects, so Ideengeschichte must not only describe the various historical levels of a philosophic concept but also their interrelationships,

their progressing causative unity, that it can here only be hinted at and sketched, and that flaws and inexactitudes will almost necessarily occur.

It might, finally, be considered one of the faucets of the task set by the subject to show how and in what way these neo-Platonic and Aristotelian trends of thought actually reached Maimonides and were absorbed into his system. Such a task would require a study of what philosophic authors and books, Greek, Roman, Christian, Mohammedan and Jewish Maimonides was acquainted with, who his teachers were and how much of the history of philosophy they knew; what ideas were in his age lying in the air, as it were, what Aristotelian works, for instance, were only known fragmentarily in the Middle Ages, what translations were accessible to the author and what versions, etc.

We know, for example, that the Aristotelian corpus increased tremendously in the 12th century, yet never even then reached its present day proportions. (I)

Such a task, however, is an exclusively historical one, to be fulfilled by investigators of texts and sources, and for this reason, in addition to the lack of qualifications of the author, excluded from the goals at which this paper will attempt to arrive.

The structure of this essay also requires some explanation, for, while it reproduces the sequence of concepts which Maimonides himself pursues in the Guide of the Perplexed, it differs in one important respect from the usual order of philosophic arguments in mediaeval scholasticism. The reason for this difference will, at the same time, lead us directly into the main consideration with which we are here concerned, namely the Aristotelian and neo-Platonic influences in Maimonides' concept of God.

The first great systematic exposition of a philosophy of Judaism was Saadia Gaon's "Kîtab al-Am-ânat", known in Hebrew as אמונות ודעות; as such, it set the tone for most subsequent Jewish philosophic works. Its first chapter, now, the longest of the book, deals extensively with the problem of Creation, i.e. the question whether the world was created or whether it has existed in all infinity, and if it was created, which of the many proofs offered in the history of philosophy for its creaturely character can be accepted as valid and cogent. As is to be expected of an exponent of Judaism, Saadia, of course, concludes that the world has been created. In the words of Malter: (1) "The discussion contained in the first chapter led to the conclusion that the world was created. Hence there must be a Creator."

Here, then, the existence of God is concluded from the fact that the world is created and therefore requires a Creator. This argument, reminiscent of many a strand of thought even in our own days, runs through most of mediaeval philosophy. In Maimonides' own concise summary of the system of the Mutakallimûn, (2) the same sequence is again followed, not only in form but also in substance. Chapter 74 presents the various proofs of the Kalam for Creation, and Chapter 75, on the basis of the preceding, endeavors to establish the existence of God and His nature.

Maimonides, on the other hand, reverses the procedure. In the first 13 chapters of the second part of the Guide of the Perplexed, he attempts to prove the existence of God on the grounds of the principles by which, in the introduction to the second book, he summarizes the system of the Aristotelian schools. In the introductory remark to these principles, however, (3) Maimonides states [illegible], i.e. "One (additional principle) we concede to them (the Aristotelians)..... and that is the Eternity of the World." Munk (4) correctly translates this "we concede" as "nous leur concédons provisoirement," because eventually, of course, as a Jew, Maimonides will profess his belief in Creation. (5) Why does he, nevertheless, concede the doctrine of the Eternity of the World even tentatively? He does so firstly because in an objective exposition of Aristotelian thought his own agreement or dissension has no place, and secondly because, as a Jew, though he will, of course, in case of conflict, tend to cling to Jewish belief, he is enough of an Aristotelian himself to state, with regard to the principles: (6) [illegible], i.e. "their correctness is beyond doubt" (7) and will, therefore, at most, retain a trace of doubt.

Thus, though eventually he will demonstrate Creation to his satisfaction, prejudiced by his Aristotelian schooling and affiliation which denies it, he will believe it only in these terms: "And since I.....consider either of the two theories, viz: the Eternity of the Universe, and the Creation - as admissible, I accept the latter on the authority of Prophecy.....(8). For the rationalist Maimonides, such belief based on authority is, however, in no manner as convincing and definitive as philosophical, logical proof. It is for this reason that he can even conceive of the possibility that "if, on the other hand, Aristotle had a proof for his theory, the whole teaching of Scrip-

tures would be rejected and we should be forced to other opinions."(9) It is for this reason, too, that Maimonides will not, as did his predecessors and many contemporaries, base the existence of God on the doctrine of Creation, for, in that case, should the possibility of which he can, at least, conceive, namely that the doctrine of the Eternity of the World ever be proved, be realized, the very existence of God would automatically be refuted. (II) Thus Aristotelianism affects even the very sequence of the structure of Maimonides' arguments.

GOD'S EXISTENCE

As we now begin to consider Maimonides' proofs for the existence of God and his conception of Him, two additional prefatory remarks remain to be made, the first again with regard to the nature of the question which is being asked and the light this sheds on Maimonides' entire philosophic outlook, the second again with regard to the sequence of arguments as they will be presented here.

In our days it is frequently claimed by adherents of religion who otherwise endeavor to stand on rational, undogmatic grounds, that belief in God is the one indispensible dogma of all religions. By this they mean to say that God's existence is essentially a dogma and belief in Him an act of faith, and that only once this belief is granted can all other religious knowledge be rationally deduced. Theirs, then, is a rationalism grounded in dogmatism, just as contrariwise manifold forms of modern scientific dogmatism are founded on methods of rationalism. It must not be thought that such an approach to religion is novel in our time. The sole fact that Thomas Aquinas who lived in the century immediately subsequent to Maimonides' and in an intellectual climate sufficiently similar to his to have learned much from him, (III) had to devote an entire article to the questions "Whether the Existence of God is self-evident" (10) and a second as to "Whether it can be demonstrated that God exists" (11) in his Summa Theologica, indicates the occurence of similar attitudes. The very attempt, therefore, to prove God's existence, the implicit assumption that it ought to and can be proved, is a characteristic of the rationalist scholastic Maimonides. Though he never states it himself, the formulation of the problem already seems to be distinctly an Aristotelian trait - or if not Aristotelian, at least non-neo-Platonic, for to

the latter school of thought applies what Heinemann (12) says of its founder Plotinus: "...(his philosophy is) eine Reaktion gegen die natürliche Weltansicht, die von Materie ausgeht and aus dieser....Gott entstehen lässt.... (thus) nach Plotinus Meinung, Gott zur Materie in einer bestimmten Verfassung macht." (13) In this fashion the essentially inductive, empirical Aristotelian parts from the essentially deductive, metaphysical neo-Platonist, a difference which will, in the course of this essay, crystallize increasingly, already in this primary problem.

Also the form of our presentation requires an explanation. The first seventy chapters of the Guide of the Perplexed revolves mainly around the concept of the homonym and the theory of attributes toward which it works. Even so systematic a work as Bambergers' "Das System des Maimonides, eine Analyse des More Newuchim von Gottes-begriff aus"(14), following the procedure of the book with which it deals, therefore, comes only in the second place to the proofs for the existence of God.(15) It may seem daring that we reverse this order. We derive sanction from David Kaufmann (16) who asks the very justified question, why Maimonides first discusses his conception of God, only later to establish His existence; his convincing answer is that Moses ben Maimon pursued primarily a pedagogical aim with respect to the "perplexed" who, in his time, were not so much in doubt as to God's being as rather to His nature. In our age, this situation is, to put it mildly, turned about, and since the more systematic order of arguments would seem to coincide with it, we here shall follow it.

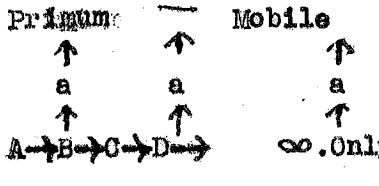
How, now, does Maimonides believe to have proved the existence of God? He offers four arguments:

1. The argument from motion: all reality, except for the cosmogonical hyle, consists for the Aristotelian, of form and matter. Matter is reality in potentia which is elicited into actuality by the bestowal of form. Becoming, the flux of the world, is thus the constant emergence of potentiality into actuality, and this process is the foremost kind of motion. (17) To deny the existence of motion would, therefore, mean to deny reality - a manifest absurdity. (18) But motion, being an accident of matter (19), requires a previous stimulating motion. This chain of causation might result in an infinite regress, which in the Aristotelian system and by virtue of principle 3 (20), is impossible; therefore there must be a first mover, a Primum Mobile. This movement can be no body, for then, being matter, it would itself be subject to the process of motion, which contradicts the previous conclusion; - it can be no force enclosed within a body, for then it would have to be finite and could not account for eternal motion in Aristotle's eternal universe, or, at any rate, it would be subject to the motion of the body in which it resides and whose instigator it had been. (The first of these two rebuttals Maimonides cannot accept himself, because it assumes the eternity of the world. He cites it only in the context of his exposition of the Aristotelian system with the reservation: כמו שנעשה, the principle of which he had said already in the Introduction to the Second Part: "we concede it to them tentatively" (21) and which he will refute in chapters 14-25. Therefore, only the second refutation is to be accepted. (22)) Neither can this first mover be a force spread throughout the world, for in that case, too, it would be limited and incapable of constant action. The only remaining logical alternative is that it be a גוף, a separate entity, "not a body, nor in

a body." Apart from matter, it is, therefore, indivisible, unmoved (for motion is an accident of matter) and untemporal (for time is an accident of motion).(23) This Unmoved Mover must, thus, by definition be God. (24)

About the origin of this proof which, by its very ontologico-epistemological assumption (IV), is deeply Aristotelian, there can be no doubt. In Aristotle's Physics (25) it is extensively put forward. It traveled down in Aristotelianism and Munk (26) mentions particularly Ibn-Sinā. How widespread its validity was acknowledged may be concluded from the fact that also Thomas Aquinas presents it as his first proof for the existence of God.(27)

Several observations need be made with regard to this proof: nowhere have we found it noticed that this orthodox Aristotelian proof may, and usually is, easily misunderstood, unless it is recognized that the chain of causation to which a stop is put by the belief in the impossibility of an infinite regress is a logical, not a chronological one. Aristotle could not have posited that today's effect cannot have been brought about by yesterday's cause which in turn was the effect of an infinite series of temporarily preceding causes, for certainly in his eternal, uncreated world there must be such an unending causation.(V) The necessity for a first movant is a logical necessity which in the temporal chain A--B--C--C-- ∞ is superimposed on each separate causative agent. Diagrammatically his world of causation must have looked something like this:



Only for Maimonides, the believer in Creation, may this also be considered a chronological argument (28) (VI). However,

this deviation from the meaning which the argument must have conveyed to the Jew must not be ascribed to neo-Platonism, for it, too, "objects to the doctrine of the creation of the world in time." (29) As we shall see later, Creation was a mediaeval doctrine distinguishing all Western religions from all Western philosophies. (30)

In another, less important but - to us - more pertinent respect, does Maimonides' first proof differ from its original formulation in Aristotle: "The motion of the fifth element (the fifth sphere) is the source of every force that moves and prepares any substance on earth for its combination with a certain form."(31) Here the terminology of neo-Platonism breaks through, where praeparatio of matter by means of the spheres, replaces matter's potentiae.(32) Not that the Aristotelian character of the proof is thereby in any way infringed upon, but the strange and almost inextricable fusion of Aristotelianism with neo-Platonism in the later Middle Ages is again put to proof. This inter-mixture is meant by Schneider (33) when he says: "..sowie durch aehnlich lautende Auusspruche Augustins, platonische Quellen also, war dieser Zeit bereits die peripatetische Auffassung Gottes als des unbewegten Bewegers gaenzlich gelaeufig."

Finally a word about the Aristotelian principle which Maimonides enunciates in the following words: "The co-existence of an infinite number of finite magnitudes is impossible."(34) In our discussion of the negative theology, we shall see even more clearly than here, Maimonides' essentially realistic - in the scholastic sense - philosophy. Today, for example, science certainly does believe that our spatially infinite universe, con-

tains an infinite number of finite magnitudes, even though it, no more than Maimonides, can imagine such a cosmos. Only on the basis of the realistic assumption of the coincidence of thought and objective reality could it be claimed that because we cannot think an infinitely numbered aggregation can there be none. This consideration will be further enhanced in the discussion of negative theology, but already Munk's claim to the contrary becomes dubious: "Maïmonide, en vrai péripatéticien, se prononce sans reserve en faveur du nominalisme" (35) While it is true that the passage to which he comments, is an explicit statement of the nominalistic position, the reference which he gives to the "Treatise on Logic" (36) contains absolutely no clue as to Maimonides' own views (37), and furthermore, his explicit statement notwithstanding, Maimonides' implicit assumptions will increasingly be shown to have been realistic. Nevertheless, Munk is, of course, right in pointing out that the - even if only verbal - support of nominalism again shows Maimonides' ingrained Aristotelianism. (38) (VI)

2. We skip now to the fourth proof for the existence of God, because as the mediaeval commentary of מ"ם-ל"ם already remarks (39), it differs from the first only in that it generalizes from the chain of causative motions to the chain of causes as such. Just as the former could not, in the limited sense which we have previously explained (40), continue ad infinitum, neither can this. In principle all the things said about the first proof can be said about the fourth: based upon the same fundamental Aristotelian concepts, its locus classicus in the Aristotelian corpus proper is Metaphysics 12,6 ff. (41)

3. The second proof, finally, in contradistinction to the

previous two cosmological ones, may be considered a logical proof (VII): empirically we encounter moving bodies which move and moving bodies which do not move. If, of the complex unit AB, the constituent B also occurs separately, A must also exist separately. Since, as has been stated, of moved movers, i.e. intermediary bodies, also mere "moveds" occur, also the mere mover must occur.

With regard to its essential thought, here must be repeated what has been said with regard to the principle of the impossibility of the simultaneous existence of infinite bodies (42). This proof is based on a definitely realistic assumption! Whereas it is, of course, true that if the logical term AB,B occurs singly, also A can be thought singly, in nature, it is surely possible that only haired men and unhaired men may exist, without compelling us to believe that also hair exists separately. To be sure, they may - logically, but such a possibility is not enough for a proof of the existence of God! Thus here, too, only a belief in the identity of thought and being can establish the sought-after conclusion.

The Aristotelian source for this proof is generally believed(43) to be the following: (44) "Now we have the visual experience of the last term in this series, namely that which has the capacity of being in motion but does not contain a motive principle, and also of that which is in motion but is moved by itself and not by anything else: it is reasonable, therefore, not to say necessary, to suppose the existence of the third term also, that which causes motion but is itself unmoved." - Aristotle seems to have had an inkling of the fact that he was speaking in logics, not in "physics," indicated by his use of the word "term" and by the phrase here underlined, which, if anything, deprives the conclusion of its Maimonidean necessary character.....: "....ומחויב המציאות בעצמו", (45)

Aristotle, was, after all, a better Aristotelian than Maimonides.

That such realism, even when dovetailed into Aristotelian formulations, stems in principle from neo-Platonism, there can be little doubt. "The One", the "world-soul" and ever so many neo-Platonic existents are surely realistically hypostatized concepts. It needs not Heinemann's declaration (46) that the neo-Platonic rationalism is that of Parmenides' identity of thought and being.(VIII)

And yet, looking back in conclusion upon the three preceding proofs for the existence of God offered by Maimonides, their basic Aristotelian character cannot be denied. They all conclude from motion, Aristotelian motion, to the Mover. They all result in the concept of God as the last of many moving agencies and in this fashion point to an imminent Deity Who is as much part of nature as "die Pyramidenspitze gehört zur Pyramide." (47) The existence of this God is necessary, but only in the sense that He is uncaused and unconditioned,(IX) not in the sense that being and existence are identical in Him. Whatever there is of neo-Platonism in them is the result of the intimate association of the two schools in later mediaeval thought.

May one comparison end our consideration of Maimonides' second proof for the existence of God,a comparison which will turn out to be productive in the discussion of the relationship between the third proof and the so-called negative theology: in the Platonic tradition, the Aristotelian series of mover,moving and moved finds an analogy in John Scotus Erieugena's division into that which a. creates and is not created, b. creates and is created, c. is created and does not create, c. is not created and does not create (48), especially when it is remembered that d. and a. are the same, i.e. God. If d. is, therefore, part of a., contradictory as this may initially sound, it is absent in the Aristotelian scheme.

4. The third proof Maimonides offers (49) is conducted along visibly different lines: there is, as experience teaches, perishable reality, i.e. objects which at one point come into being and at another are deprived of it. Since this reality does not always exist, its existence does not partake of the nature of necessity, for something which may and may not be is only possible. The possible, then, did once not exist. If, on the other hand, possible existence were the only kind of existence, it could never have come to be, because before it was, there would have been nothing, and ex nihilo nihil - out of nothing, comes nothing. Therefore, there must be a necessary existence. (50) This may, thus, be called the proof of necessity from contingency. That this necessary existence is God, becomes clear in the light of principles 20 and 21 (51) which state respectively that necessary existence must be uncaused, for otherwise it would be contingent upon such a cause, and that it must be "one", for otherwise it would be contingent upon the composition of its part, the whole not being able to precede its parts.(X)

Visibly this proof for the existence of God differs in several aspects:1.Munk's statement to the contrary,(52) it does not, unlike the others, foot on the concept of motion. 2. It does not, unlike the others, integrate, literally "enchain" God into/a series of many terms, such as causes, movements, etc., which,though inferior, are essentially alike to His agencies. On the contrary, it constitutes a direct leap from the contingent, i.e. all but God, to the necessary, i.e. only God ,and in this manner posits Him entirely different from anything else. While the former placed God within nature (53), as befits Aristotelian empiricism, it places God transcendent to it.

At this point a summary history of platonizing thought concerning God may prove of value for purposes of comparison: in the Parmenides (54) Plato, though not in his own name, presents the formulation of the transcendent God-concept in these words: "And if God has this perfect authority and perfect knowledge, His authority cannot rule us nor His knowledge know us or any human thing, just as our authority does not extend to the gods, nor our knowledge know anything which is divine, so by parity of reason, they being gods, are not our masters, neither do they know the things of men." True, in the tenth book of the Laws, he sets out to refute this extreme transcendentalism, but his refutation is more rebuttal than refutation, for de facto he consents to this statement and relates God to man only through a new concept which is to represent the bridge: he skirts the problem of theodicy by arguing (55) that if God Himself had created man, he would have been created perfectly and thus be equal to God, and by having the intermediary star-gods create imperfect man, He cannot be held responsible for subsequent evils. Thus God is so transcendent that only intermediary agencies can build the bridge between His height and the lowliness of man's world.

What Plato's ardent Jewish disciple made of these hints has become the history of the Occident through the Gospel according to St. John. He so sublimated "l'idée abstraite du principe impersonel issu du Platonisme" (56) that he needed an entire hierarchy of logoi to bring Him into contact again with the world. "A consistent application of Philo's abstract

abstract conception of God would exclude the possibility of any active relation of God to the world....But there are divine forces, demons, angels, the Logos by means of which He communicates with the finite world." (57) As to God Himself, "it is His existence which we apprehend, and of what lies outside that existence nothing." (58) (59) His nature is so sublime that we cannot know it but in negative terms: "Wollten Ihm, lehrte erweiter, noch Eigenschaften beigelegt werden, so könnten es nur negative Bestimmungen sein, wie"Er ist der Unwandelbare", (60) "der Unvergängliche,"Er ist raum - und zeitlos." (61)

And so the tradition of the concept of the supra-mundane, transcendent God continues in the Platonic school until it is remolded in what came to be known as Plotinus' neo-Platonism. In him the originally Hellenic strain which, through Philo and his school, had infiltrated into Judaism and Christianity, made its last pagan stand, after Prophyry to be swallowed by the Western religions forever. Above the spirit which is still involved in the duality with matter exists the One. As Heinemann correctly analyzes it (62), this hypostatization grew out of several for Plotinus necessary postulates: 1. It alone satisfies the desire for an absolute amonism (63) in which yet the manifold may lie <u>in potentia</u>. (XI) 2. It is to satisfy the usual search for the ground of all things which,<u>ex hypothesi</u>, must be beyond them. 3. It is to so satisfy the demand for the real Absolute which is to be above all relations, "for it was before the things." (64) - And Plotinus is brought to the same negativism with regard to the nature of God as a consequence of this transcendentalism at which also Philo arrived. "Als oberhalb des Rationalen stehend ist das Eine irrational. Es steht daher auch jenseits der Erkenntnis, es ist unsagbar,unaussprechlich," (65) But of this, more later! (66)

We must not fail to notice that already at this earliest of mediaeval stages the traditions of Aristotelianism and Platonism had been sufficiently fused to carry constituents of both into the philosophy of Plotinus. His God-concept is filled with much of Aristotle's biological dynamism for example. Yet he was still a Platonist with Aristotelian admixtures. In the case of the much later Ibn-Sinā we meet an Aristotelian with the common Platonic admixtures. His proof for the existence of the necessary from the contingent is embedded in an otherwise strictly Aristotelian system, yet the transcendentalism toward which it strives, as we shall see also the tradition of a negative theology, consequent upon it, to have had strong roots in Arabic philosophy, is a distinct Platonic note in the light of the preceding discussion. He says(57): "Es ist...Eines in der Beziehung, dass seine Rangstufe seitens der Existenz, nämlich die Nothwendigkeit der Existenz, nur ihm allein zukommt....Was die Annahme des Nothwendig-Existierenden betrifft, so ist sie nicht anders möglich als durch einen Beweis des Wenn, und das ist die Beweisfuhrung durch das Mögliche auf das Notwendige."

Here then by means of a summary history of Platonic thought regarding the existence of God, we seem to have found the immediate precursor of Maimonides' third proof. Munk, indeed, seems to have felt this.(68) However, the Maimonidean proof still differs somewhat from that of Avicenna's, being conducted along even more strictly neo-Platonic lines. For Shahrastānī (69) actually states it in terms of mathematical considerations through an elaborate process of rationization: "Wir sagen also: jede Summe, insofern sie eine Summe ist, gleichviel ob sie eine endliche oder eine unendliche ist, wenn sie aus Möglichen zusammen-gesetzt ist, kann nur eine nothwendige durch ihr Wesen oder eine mögliche durch ihr Wesen sein; wenn sie eine nothwendig-existierende durch ihr Wesen ist und jedes

Einzelne von ihr Möglicherweise-Existierendes ist, so wäre das Notwendig-Existierent durch Teile, welche möglicherweise existieren, bestehend, und das is ein Widerspruch; wenn sie aber eine möglicherweise-existierende durch ihr Wesen ist, so bedarf die Summe beider Existenz eines Solchen, welches die Existenz verleiht (here he practically states Maimonides' point!) und des Verleihende kann nur entweder ausserhalb ihrer oder innerhalb ihrer dasein; wenn es innerhalb ihrer daist, so ist ein Teil von ihr nothwendig-existierend, und das ist ein Widerspruch; es ist also klar, dass das Verleihende nothwendigerweise ausserhalb ihrer dasei."

But as Bamberger points out (70), this identity of necessary existence and a causa sui is not yet the same as Maimonides' identity of God's being and existence, his existence being necessary and his being-productive existence. His is a real neo-Platonic, direct jump from the contingent to the necessary. Consequently, for Maimonides, the same ramifications of a negative theology grow out of this third proof as did for his platonic predecessors theirs. (71) This, then, is the one of his proofs for the existence of God which stands in systematic unity with the - as we shall see later - admittedly neo-Platonic strain of negative theology. (72)(73) (XII)

In conclusion it may be said, therefore, that the common belief that all of Maimonides' proofs for the existence of God were derived from strictly Aristotelian principles, is not all together correct. (74)

GOD'S NATURE

We know now that God exists. But when we are told that Mr. X exists, we have not yet satisfied our curiosity with regard to him. We also want to know what he is like, i.e. what his nature is.

Several things have already been told us about God beyond His mere existence by Maimonides. In connection with the first proof of His existence, (75) it already was proved that God cannot be either body or in a body, i.e. He is incorporeal. - In our days, this might be taken as self-evident. That it was not the case in Maimonides' times is perhaps, best demonstrated by the Rabad's violent attack against the former's statement that believers in God's corporeality are heretics to Judaism: "Better men than he have, upon the basis of their interpretation of Scriptural passages, affirmed God's corporeality."(76) It was to combat just such notions (77) that Maimonides devotes the largest part of the first book of the Guide of the Perplexed to his theory of homonyms, i.e. to show that corporeal terms referring to God in the Bible are used metaphorically and only due to a lack of better terms.

He has also proved God's absolute unity (78) by an argument common in mediaeval Jewish philosophic schools and originally borrowed by Gaon Saadia from the Mutakallimun whom Maimonides fought so energetically. (79)

In order to make doubly certain of the conceptual unity of God, Maimonides now devotes an entire chapter (80) to the Aristotelian view of the intellectual God, the God Who thinks. He there refers to his statement in the Mishneh Torah (81) that this principle is יסוד היסודות והעמוד. It is the famous statement of the identity of Intellectus, Ens Intelligens and Ens Intelligibile (השכל, המשכיל, והמושכל) in God derived directly from Aristotle's Metaphysics XII, Chapts 7, 9, which can be traced universally through

mediaeval Aristotelianism (82) and which even had its precipitation in platonizing thought.(83)

Maimonides argues like this: man is endowed with the hylic intellect (84), i.e. the potential capacity to extricate the universals out of the individuals; this is the potential שכל . The object of cognition contains within it potentially (in rēs) the universal by which it is understood; this is the potential שכל . When, through the conjunction of the hylic, or passive intellect with the divine Active Intellect, the former is activated and actually arrives at the universal, then only has it been educed from potentiality into actuality; in Aristotelian terminology, only then has it really come into existence, and it exists only insofar as it acts. Therefore, in the act of cognition the intellect actually is, and is identical with, the intellected. - In God, now, there can never be any potentiality; He is always active.(XIII) Therefore in Him the identity of השכל, שכל, שכל always exists. Thus there is no multiplicity in Him. Thus also can Maimonides stress the fact that such an identity of השכל, שכל, שכל in God is not of a miraculous nature but that it is only constantly what in nature, in man, occurs intermittently.

How did the concept of the thinking God arise in the first place? It is a typically Aristotelian line of thinking: morality is characteristically human, distinguishing man from all other animals; thinking is even more than human, - it is the divine in him, and could he engage in it un-

ceasingly, he would indeed be God (85). When, therefore, Aristotelianism always tends to range thinking above action, when Maimonides believes that salvation, immortality, is attained not so much by the moral than rather by the right speculative life, it grows out of this same root: the Aristotelian thinking God.

Despite the deep Aristotelian character of this concept in Maimonides, however, a certain divergency from what might be considered orthodoxy need be observed: Aristotle had said: (86) "Therefore, it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things) and its thinking is a thinking on thinking." Still Ibn-Sinā said: (87).... dass das Nothwendig-Existierende Denken, Denkendes und Gedachtes sei, und das es sein Wesen denke .....". God's thinking, then, is completely self-enclosed and does not refer to anything outside of him; He is a God who, having set the world moving, retires from it almost as much as the deity of the Epicureans. - These considerations Maimonides studiously avoids, because they would obviously conflict with his Judaism. From Neo-Platonism, Maimonides must differ also just as radically as from Aristotelianism, for Heinemann (op.cit.p.273) opposes Christianity to Plotinus' view on this question on the same grounds. The Christian God, he says, loves men. The neo-Platonic God loves himself only (Eneads VI, 8,21). Here romantic neo-Platonism has merely substituted "love" for the "knowledge" of intellectualistic Aristotelianism.

In discussing Maimonides' concept of Providence, we shall have to

ask ourselves whether the above positive statements concerning God's thinking do not somehow contradict his solution there. Although not even mentioning his omission of this consequence of the concept of the thinking God here, he does seem to realize the implication when he says there: (88) "They have indeed come to very evil conclusions, and some of them assumed that God only knows the species, not the individual beings, whilst others went as far as to content that God knows nothing beside Himself." (89) Whatever his own answer will be, for him, as a believer in Creation, unlike the strict Aristotelian, ideas, though being in rem, can be created by Him into them: (90) "those who hold, in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, that God knows things before they come into existence." It is not definite from statements such as these, but the hypothesis may be permitted that there is something reminiscent of the Platonic Ideas in them, which would be not too surprising in the light of the traces of scholastic realism which we have already discovered in him. (91) His view of the content of God's thinking, then, would be closer to that of the platonizing St. Augustine for whom, too, the ideas, though cognizable only in the objects of sensual perception, are direct creatures of God and form the content of His thought. (92)

2. Negative Theology.

In our preceding discussion of the history of the God concept in the platonic, neo-Platonic tradition, in connection with Philo and Plotinus, a systematic relationship was established beyond the mere his-

torical continuity of the school, between the concept of the transcendent God and the theory of the negative divine attributes, i.e. those predicates which are to express our knowledge of the nature of God. (93)

As perhaps the most important aspect of the philosophic system of Moses ben Maimon, we shall at this point outline what has come to be known as his "negative theology":

In the third proof for the existence of God (94), the identity of His essence and existence has been demonstrated. (95) The question which bothered philosophy through the ages until Kant finally eliminated it, whether real existence is a predicate to be learned only by means of empirical observation, to be expressed by a synthetic proposition, therefore, and never deducible merely logically, or whether its knowledge may be arrived at purely dialectically, was answered, there, by Maimonides thus: "the existence of everything contingent, - and that is everything but God, - is a predicate beyond its essence; only with respect to God Who is the only necessary existence, is it identical with His essence." Thus in this regard as with reference to the concept of the self-thinking Thinker the conceptual unity of God has been preserved by the demonstration that two human terms ascribing something or some activity to Him, have for their object one and the same thing in Him. (96)

Can we say anything else about God's nature besides His existence and thinking?

To say something about something means logically to predicate something of a subject. What possible predicate, or attributes, are there and can there be ascribed to God, Maimonides now asks.

As to the first point, he distinguishes between five possible predicates, viz. 1. analytic attributes discovered as belonging to the subject by definition. By means of them to learn anything new about the nature of God, however, is impossible, for a definition, according to the old Aristotelian analysis (97), consists of the genus to which the defined individual belongs and the differentiae by which it is specified and separated from its fellow-participants in the genus. If we were to speak of God in such terms, we would be forgetting that He is the highest existent, uncaused and unconditioned, and therefore, is member of no genus - that He is unique, and that having no co-participants, He can also have no differentiae.

An object may, secondly, be described by a partial definition which, equally analytical as the first but constituting an incomplete analysis, ascribes to it only either its genus or its differentiae. In addition to the difficulties involved in such a positive description of God as they were pointed out with regard to the complete definition, however, a partial definition of God implies that His essence is of a composite nature, because were He absolutely simple and one, not containing within Himself parts or compounds, His essence, too, would not be accessible to a partial exposition; He altogether or He not at all could be defined.

These two attributive methods, based on the standard Aristotelian terms of a definition (98), differ somewhat in their non-applicability to God. Whereas, the first is shown by Maimonides to be unreferrable to the Deity mainly due to His uniqueness, the second, though essentially the same, is re-

jected on the grounds of His unity.

The third method of attribution, finally, is, as the following, no longer analytical but synthetic. It ascribes certain qualities to the subject, such as color, density, extension, etc. Aristotle (99) had defined a "quality" as that "which may or may not be present with anyone and the self-same thing;" in the language of early Cartesianism, it is a secondary quality, in contrast to a "property." For the purposes of the concept of God, however, both are equally to be rejected as means of knowing Him, because in the case of "qualities," He would be a substance, carrying certain accidents, - an impossibility firstly because He would be subject to change and secondly because He would no longer be complete unity -, and in the case of "properties" the latter consequence alone would follow. Therefore, all the various forms of attribution by qualification are inadmissible with respect to God as detracting from His unity.

The fourth method is that of relation. Within the history of the Attributenlehre, i.e. the doctrine that positive judgments cannot be formed about God, - the Jewish predecessors, viz. Yehudah Ha-Levy, etc., of Maimonides had declared this method as valid (100), because they argued that a relationship does not express anything about the substance of one of its terms. Thus, to say that a man is the father of such-and-such a son in no way qualifies that man in his essence. Similarly, they argued, also of God can relationships be enunciated without disturbing His unity. Indeed Maimonides for this very reason, admits that "at first thought, it would seem that they may be employed in reference to God." (101)

Were it true, as has been claimed, that the negative theology merely seeks to avoid the ascription to God of any plurality, and as the philosopher himself seems to have believed,(XIV) then indeed there would have been no need to exclude also this method. The Aristotelian concept of the Oneness of God, however, is transcended here by the more neo-Platonic concept of God's uniqueness, and Maimonides knows it: "Similarity is based on a certain relationship between two things; if between two things no relation can be found, there can be no similarity between them, and there is no relationship between two things that have no similarity to each other;.....since the existence of a relationship between God and man, or between Him and other beings, has been denied, similarity must likewise be denied," (102) - just as any relationship must be rejected since all similarity between the כשרים and אחד כשרים is impossible. Bamberger, therefore, is right in saying that "der Existenzunterschied als Begruendung der Leugnung von Relationsattributen ist wesentlich und neu, obwohl auch Einheitsbeeintraechtigung angefuehrt wird." (103)

Application of an analagous judgment to God like the human "X is a carpenter" has thus been refused. To say, finally, however, "X carpents" (as it were) is different from "X is a carpenter", for while the latter by means of the copula does express something about X's being, the former, without at all concerning itself with the subject, restricts itself to describing his action. This form of attributions is therefore by Maimonides designated as belonging to the class of attributes of action. They are the only legitimate, positive attributes of God, expressing His creative, active mani-

festations in the world; they limit man's knowledge of God exclusively to His ethical modality. (104) (105) (XV).

What, then, asks Maimonides, (106) can we say of God? We can and should negate all the conceivable attributes of Him and thus increasingly glorify Him. By denying that He is human, that He is limited, corporeal, temporal, compound, etc., we ever more express His incomparability with anything not divine. For this very end the philosopher had devoted most of the first 59 chapters of the first book of his philosophic magnus opus to the concept of the homonymity of terms, demonstrating that all positive attributes of God occurring in the Bible are merely used figuratively of Him and transferred from human observations, on the basis of which he can now advocate their denial as a negative means of approaching the knowledge of God. Wherever positive attributes are expressed other than attributes of action, they are but the enunciation of the following train of thought: "wise" being a human trait, we should deny this quality of God, thus saying: God is not wise. In this manner, however, the impression may be conveyed that God is not complete nor perfect. Therefore, this judgment is in turn denied to the effect of saying: God is not not-wise. The former is a negative, the latter a negation of privation.

The advantage of such a formulation, it is claimed against those who might object that, two negatives being equal to a positive, "not not-wise" is synonymous with "wise", is that no such positive statement is made about God, that rather judgment is filled on things - not - God as not being He." "It has thus been shown that every attribute predicated of God either denotes the quality of an action, or - when the attribute is intend-

tended to convey some idea of the Divine Being itself, and not of His actions - the negation of the attribute. Even these negative attributes must not be formed and applied to God except in the way in which, as you know, sometimes an attribute is negatived in reference to a thing, although that attribute can naturally never be applied to it is the same, as, e.g. we say, 'This wall does not see !" (107)

Zevi Diesendruck (108) expounds a most interesting, slightly modernized interpretation of this doctrine which, whatever its unhistoricity may be, clarifies it somewhat: "A is not B"(A being God and B any possible predicate) is a negative proposition which still assumes the opposite, i.e. a positive attribution of B, as possible. "A is non-B"is an infinite,privative proposition which eliminates this possibility in conformity with Maimonides' own comparison with the judgment about the wall (109). Both propositions merely negate one, in the course of time many, attributes from the infinity of conceivable predicates and thus leaves the original infinity of possibilities unaffected. "A is not non-B," a negative infinite proposition, restores this one predicate to the class of possible ones without actually predicating it of the subject; it is to be translated, therefore: B is a possible predicate of A. "A is non-non-B," a double privative proposition, finally is to be translated as: B must be a possible predicate of A, or else: We must be able to say of God that he may be wise, for example. Such a judgment, says Diesendruck, is not an assertoric, but an apodictically necessary judgment of possibility, an apodictic infinite judgment a priori in Kant's terminology, and requiring us to understand Maimonides' own term: אפשר המציאות as "the negation of the possibility of an elimination."

It is an ingenious logical thesis which Diesendruck offers and certainly one which tends toward the aim for which Maimonides himself strove, i.e. by negation to arrive at some sort of knowledge which, in the very nature of knowledge for the purposes of religion, must bear some positive meaning. In addition to the modern terminology necessary for such a logical theory, however, also all the steps beyond that of the negative infinitive proposition do not seem actually to have been conscious to Maimonides.

Herman Cohen (110) also seems to have shared this rather common feeling that Maimonides' negative theology is too negative for a positive religion as Judaism, concisely expressed by Husik (111): "This is decidedly not a Jewish mode of conceiving of God....The idea of making God transcendent appealed to Maimonides (sic!) and he carried it to the limit. How he could combine such transcendence with Jewish prayer and ceremony it is hard to tell."(XVI) Cohen consequently endeavors to see some direct positive sense in the negative attributes by, after all, interpreting "God is not unwise" as "God is wise". That this, too, is to be rejected has been shown previously (112). The psychological dissatisfaction of religion remains, however, until the following thought of Bamberger (113) has been absorbed: if, as has been indicated before (114) and as will further be shown below, the concept of the transcendent and therefore negatively known God is essentially neo-Platonic and the concept of the immanent God essentially Aristotelian, the acting, ethical God is essentially Jewish; the ethical attributes blend the neo-Platonic and the Aristotelian concepts of God into the Holy One, praised be He.

Before we now enter into a short historical and systematic analysis of this negative theology of Maimonides, one more ramification of his position need be reported: it might, and apparently was argued (115) that, if admission that we cannot know God is the only knowledge humanly attainable, there can be no increase in piety, God-pleasingness, learning, that all men, from the worst to the best, cannot differ in this most important aspect of their lives. If others, now, felt compelled to deny any theology which would entail such a consequence, Maimonides must have felt doubtly so, for, as we shall see later, he was even condemned for his implicit teaching that such were the differences which resulted in immortality for some and complete perdition for others. He answers this argument thus: Just as he who knows that man is neither a stone nor a tree, knows more than he who merely knows that man is not a stone, so he who knows more negative attributes of God is better than he who knows fewer. (116)

Wolfson, with his usual great technical knowledge, makes out a good case for the thesis that the various classes of attributes are a heritage of the mediaeval Aristotelian tradition. Definition, partial definition, quality and relation he finds easily in Aristotle's Topics I, 4. With respect to the attributes of action, a classification rarely found as such in this literature and by Ibn-Daud and Yehudah Ha-Levy, for example, still incorporated in the attributes of relationship, he has to exert more and gratifying efforts: In De Interpretatione, chapts. 5 and 10, the Peripatetic did indeed distinguish between such propositions which contain a copula in addition to subject and predicate and those in which copula and predicate are merged into one. Ammonius, an early Aristotelian, called the

former a proposition of the third, the latter propositions of the second adjacent, a description which certainly applies to the difference between the forms "A is B" on one hand and "A does" on the other. But even Wolfson must admit (118) that, for instance, the integration of spatial and temporal attributes within the class of attributes of relationships and that the five-fold division of attributes (119) as such, stem respectively from Plotinus and Porphyry, the founders of neo-Platonism. And on the whole, of course, Wolfson does not claim that the negative theology which by far surpasses these tax-ological considerations, but merely that the strictly logical, classificatory schemes are products of Aristotelian thinking.

Rather we have seen in the tracing of the history of Maimonides' third proof for the existence of God, that proof which establishes the concept of the transcendent God, that the neo-Platonic God is the one with Whom the negative theology stands not only in historical but also systematic unity, (120) and that the neo-Platonic philosophers actually drew the necessary consequences out of their specific belief in God. Already in Plato we had seen (121) how, not yet the problem of God's transcendence but that of theodicy resulted in the germinal concept of divine intermediaries. These demons or star-gods then became <u>logoi</u> and powers, the Talmudic <u>מימרא</u>, the "Word" of St. John Capt. 1, in Philo for whom, Jew and fervent Platonizer simultaneously, the contrast of the concepts of the transcendent and immanent God grew to urgent and demanding size.(122) The really transcendent God, it is clear, cannot be known but for His transcendence, and transcendence may be defined as out-of-this-worldliness and complete otherness (we find the mystic tradition in Talmud and Kabbalah refer to Him on occasion as אחר, The Other); in other words, it lies within the very na-

ture of the consistent concept of the transcendent God that all propositions having Him as subject can but negate all possible, i.e. worldly, not-other predicates, except for the tautological propositions: God is God, or:God is godly, God is divine, etc. Thus we find Philo at times wallowing in negative attributes with almost as much ecstacy as later mystics:(123) "He is not contained, He is nowhere; He can only be conceived of as a pure being; divine nature is indivisible, incomprehensible and nowhere." "God is actually without qualities." (124)

Whatever, now, may be the historical connections between Philo and Plotinus,(125) this tradition of negative theology continues and is elaborated in the system of the latter who, strictly speaking, is considered the founder of the neo-Platonic school.(126) We have already quoted Heinemann's basic statement (127) that, for Plotinus, God being transcendent even to reason, He is unknowable and ineffable. In the Enneads (128) Plotinus also, as is already tradition, heaps negation upon negation: He is nothing, His being is unknowable, He can only be said not to be - anything; and remembering Maimonides' theory of homonymes, the remark is particularly striking that "all designations of God are but transplantations from the human sphere." (129)

In the subsequent history of neo-Platonism, this entire complex of concepts slowly infiltrated into Christianity - this time to stay, after its tentative intrusions from Philo through St. John and the earliest patristics.(130)

The afore-mentioned 8th Century Christian John Scotus Erieugena (131) finally arrives at a real unfolded negative theology. He, with Plotinus, can exlaim (132) "Deus est nihil." With Philo he will say (133) that God

is better known by not being known and (134) "deus itaque nescit se quid est qua non est quid." But, like Maimonides and some moderns (135), he is unsatisfied by such complete negativism. Where the Jewish philosopher, therefore, could advance beyond pure negation through the concept of the negation of privation, he sought to surpass it similarly by means of the attributes eminenter, i.e. God is not wise - in the human sense, He is "super-wise," His essence is super-essence, His truth super-truth, etc. (136)

This, then, is the first formulation of the negative theology in scholasticism in general. As we have seen, in Judaism it never went much further and thus had the fortune of remaining within the confines of Maimonides' Aristotelian rationalism. Christianity was less fortunate: there the negative theology soon became the mystical doctra ignorantia among the Victorians, Albigensians, in Nicola Cusa found its poetical expression, in Angelius Sibelius and Scheffel, and, its climax in the sermons of the German Meister Eckehart: "Gott ist nichts." (137) How neo-Platonic this great mystic still was, how the negative theology even in the form of its most extreme refinement remaind within the spirit of Plotinus, may be derived from the explanation given by Büttner (138) in this exclamation: "Vom Mittelpunkt der reinen Einheit breitet er (God) sich wie die Ringe auf dem Teich aus bis in die Sphaere des aeusseren Daseins: "Alle Dinge sind Gott;" und zieht sich ebenso wieder bis zum ausdehnungslosen Punkt zusammen: "Gott ist Nichts."

Compare with this Whittaker's statement of Plotinus' position based on Enneads III, 8, 3 (139): "The Primal One from which all things are is everywhere and nowhere. As being the cause of all things, it is everywhere. As being other than all things, it is nowhere. If it were only "everywhere" and not also "nowhere",

it would be all things!" Yet how much further Eckehart had gone than the intellectualist Maimonides in his anti-intellectualist doctra ignorantia;(140)

"Moechtest Du doch aller Dinge auf einmal unwissend werden, ja, moechtest Du geraten in ein Unwissen Deines eigenen Lebens." !

It should not be thought, however, that Maimonides must necessarily have derived his doctrine of the negative theology directly or exclusively from neo-Platonic sources. By his time it had spread sufficiently and, as the philosophic school-traditions in general (141), became fused with Aristotelian thought that it may not for him have constituted a real deviation from Aristotelianism. Ibn-Sinā, whom we have previously seen to be one of the exponents of such a merger (142) and who, more than Christian philosophers normally, was concerned as a Mohammedan with the establishment of the absolute unity of God, (143) raised the attributes of God to a higher level by declaring them to be as they are "durch sein (God's) Wesen," (144) just as Eriugena had sublimated them into super-attributes and Maimonides was to raise them to negations of privations. And in the Islamic schools in general the possession of positive attributes on the part of God was frequently denied for just the two reasons which also motivated the Jewish philosopher, namely in order to preserve the unity and uniquenss of God, for example Shabrastūni reports of the Wāszilija, a Mu'tazilite sect, (145) that

"sie an der Laeugnung der Eigenschaften Gottes, naemlich des Wissens, der Macht, des Willens und des Lebens halten...Er sagte: wer einen Begriff und eine Eigenschaft als ewig setzt, der setzt zwei Goetter."

How such ideas entered into Islamic religious philosophy is a point worthy of separate investigation. That they did, however, is to be remembered, for

Maimonides was heir not to three but to four traditions: Jerusalem, The Academy, The Lyceum, and the Mohammedans.

Before we can now conclude our considerations of Maimonides' negative theology, three additional observations need be made, one with respect to the general nature of the doctrine and two in criticism of it.

We have previously found some factors which initially inclined us to see some traces of scholastic realism in Maimonides' philosophy.(146) It would seem, now, that the philosopher's entire and fanatical concern for even the conceptual, not only the ontological, unity of God must be premised on equally realistic assumption. Nominalistically speaking, what difference would it make, after all, whether man thinks of God in one or multifarious concepts, once it has been granted that He is, as such, one? In the nominalistic approach, whether man thought of God in terms of many attributes or not would certainly in no way affect either God's ontological unity, or, for that matter, his own theoretical belief in the divine unity. When Maimonides is so afraid of the status of the God-concept, when he fears for monotheism because of an Attributen-lehre, he must somehow believe that man's thought about God in one way or another affects God. And this would be a definite realistic strain winding through the negative theology. The fact that this doctrine flows, as has been shown, from largely neo-Platonic wells, only increases the likelihood of this conclusion.

Wolfson, (147) tries to avoid such a deduction by means of the following argument: belief is defined by Maimonides (148) as "that conception of the soul which is attended by the belief that it corresponds to

reality." A merely verbal proposition, on the other hand, lacks this attending attitude. The negative theology, therefore, is not expostulated in order to avoid a detraction of God but so as to prevent man from possessing an incorrect view of God and thus missing communication with Him; it is, Wolfson implies, a doctrine concerning man's religiosity, not God's essence.- What Wolfson says seems true - as far as it goes. Nevertheless, it does not seem to exhaust the religious motivation for the doctrine in the philosophic system of Maimonides. The Guide Of the Perplexed is not a catechism but an exposition of what he believes to be truth.

This discussion about the point of application, as it were, of one of Maimonides' speculations, whether the negative theology is concerned with man or with God, leads directly to an unavoidable criticism that must be made, for the very same question must be raised with regard to the attributes of action.(149) It is hard to see how these merely ethical attributes can long refrain from becoming ontological attributes! If God acts, He must be the actor; if He works, He must somehow be the worker; if He is a God who acts ethically, it is hard to see how He cannot but somehow be an ethical God, i.e. how God's ethics can keep from becoming an ontology of God. What Bamberger (150) says with regard to this problem is certainly true, namely, that Maimonides expects man to limit himself, to look upon God's manifestations, never to the source of these manifestations. But that does not resolve our problem, for we are asking how he can refrain from so doing.

Finally, mention must be made of one practical difficulty in regard to the exhortation only to posit negative, never positive predicates of God.

Positively religious spirit will almost necessarily violate this theoretical imperative of their own. Already Philo had an occasion burst out into exclamations such as "God-being is all goodness and beauty" (151). Whittaker (152) cites similar transgressions of his own principle on the part of Plotinus. When, therefore, Maimonides makes quite positive statements about God, he stands even there, within honorable neo-Platonic tradition, although they all would, no doubt, have denied this charge. It is to be asked, for example, whether the knowledge of God, whose nature must remain unknowable for us in order to be compatible with a theory of individual Providence, of which he says: (153) וכו' כי יודע

ממין יודעים לנקוד שלו אומר סוף שעל כל נמצא

is the same knowledge of which can be said quite dogmatically that

וכו' כי הוא יודע ומשיג ויודע (154)

In conclusion, then, of God and His nature, Maimonides has said these things: God is the cause of the world and a necessary existent, He is the self-thinking thinker, the Being Who acts in His Creation, Who, but for this, can be known only by means of ever more negations. By and large we have found that the causes-concept, and the thinker-concept are based on Aristotelian trains of thought, and that the concept of the necessary existence of God and the negative knowledge of Him stems from predominantly neo-Platonic sources.

CREATION

After having concluded our considerations of Maimonides' views concerning the concept of God and His nature, we now enter into the discussion of the relationship between God and the world. The most important and extensive aspect of this complex of questions may be summarized as the problem of Creation. Its significance for the Maimonidean philosophy has already been pointed out.(155) In it the issue will not be so much a tension between Aristotelianism on the one hand and neo-Platonism on the other, for both maintained the doctrine of the Eternity of the World, as rather the tension between the classic philosophic schools in general and philosophy of religion, in this case, Judaism.

The importance of the question from the point of view of religion was quite conscious to Maimonides. He realized that upon the answer to the problem of cosmogony depended several religious beliefs of a fundamental nature: if Aristotle was right in believing "that the universe is the result of the First Cause and must be eternal as that Cause is eternal" (156) and that, therefore, "the nature of everything remains constant, that nothing changes its nature in any way and that such a change is impossible in any existing thing," (157) - the opposite conclusions would necessarily be engendered from those resulting from the acceptation of the doctrine of Creation: "Accepting the doctrine of Creation, we find that miracles are possible, that Revelation is possible and that every difficulty in this question is removed. We might be asked: Why has God inspired a certain person and not another? Why has He revealed the Law to one

particular nation and not to another? And why He has not made the prohibitions and commandments part of our nature, if it was His will that we should live in accordance with them?" (158) The issue, thus, has been clearly drawn not between philosophic schools but between religion and philosophy. For the rational philosopher Maimonides, of course, even his acceptance of the doctrine of Creation as a Jew must be based on the premise of its compatibility with his particular philosophic system.

With the perhaps greatest talent possessed by Maimonides, namely the concise and all-embracing summarization of entire systems of philosophy into a few short and poignant principles, and ability which he had already demonstrated in the exposition of Aristotelianism, (159) the philosopher states the views concerning the problem of Creation of the three great traditions with which he was familiar and which therefore presented a challenge to him.

The first is that of the Kalam. (160) In this context its views are irrelevant except to the degree to which it must later be shown that the position which Maimonides takes, despite their superficial similarity, differ. They may be summarized as denying all natural law and making every single phenomenon, at each atomic instant, the product of a direct creative intervention of God. The Kalam, unlike both Aristotelianism and neo-Platonism, certainly did believe in Creation but only on the basis of a mediaeval occasionalism.

To us only those views are important which were expounded by Aristotelianism and Platonism, a circumstance which happily coincides with Maimonides' own evaluation, for he, as a self-professed Aristotelian, was most con-

cerned with justifying his deviation from the former. The reasons, now, which induce the Aristotelian to believe in the eternity of the world, (161) may be divided into two classes, the first, concerned with the character of nature which, in his opinion, makes Creation impossible, and the second with the nature of God. From scientific considerations four proofs result: 1. The famous first proof for the existence of God (162) is here used for another purpose: motion, being the transition from potentiality to actuality, can never have begun, for in that case it would never have come to begin; i.e. the impetus for this transition, being motion, would have to come from itself, but it does not yet exist; it would not come at all. Therefore, motion must be eternal; but since it has been shown that motion is but an accident of the moving object, objects can never have begun to exist. Therefore, the world must exist eternally. 2. The First Substance must be eternal, for being by definition formless, its coming-into-existence, which, in Aristotelian terminology, means receiving form, would have meant receiving form - which is impossible ex hypothesi. Therefore, the First Substance must exist eternally. 3. By the mere fact that something does not exist eternally, it is shown not to exist necessarily. Therefore every thing that has a beginning is destructible. But destructibility being nothing but the composition of opposite elements for Aristotle, since the spheres' circular motion is a sign of their lack of opposite elements, they are indestructible, and, therefore, can have no beginning. (Maimonides, of course, endeavors to show that the world has had a beginning; it might, therefore, be assumed that he, as a good Aristotelian, also believes in its destructibility. Eventually, however, he will also here deviate from the consequences

of strict Aristotelianism and try to demonstrate (163) "the permanent existence of the universe;" i.e. he believes in a world with beginning but without end, strongly reminiscent of Herrman Cohen's synthesis of the concept of God as the creator of a "world without end.") 4. "When the world was not yet in existence, its existence was either possible, or necessary, or impossible. If it was necessary, it could never have been non-existent; if impossible, it could never have been in existence; if possible, the questions arises: what was the substratum of that possibility? For there must be in existence something of which that possibility can be predicated." (164) The last clause is, of course, taken from the Categories and has always been a thorn in the eyes of the Church. The Articles of Paris of 1277 (it would be interesting to learn whether Maimonides had knowledge of them when he wrote this part of the Guide) specifically prohibited the belief that every accident needs the substratum of a substance, for it demolished the belief in the Transsubstantiation.

All these arguments from the observations of nature are refuted by one Maimonidean assertion: (165) "We hold that the properties of the universe as it exists at present, prove nothing as regards the forces at work before its existence." In other words, everything stated in these four arguments is correct as a description of the processes of nature. But before there was a nature, no necessity exists that these self-same properties functioned. What Maimonides thus criticizes in Aristotle is that he raises an empirical judgment to the level of a logical one, generalizing an historical observation also for pre-history.

This conclusion coincides with the result of an investigation

into the nature of time and its relevance to the problem of creation.(166) When it is said that God "existed" before the creation of the world, it seems to be implied that He existed in time, for such is the common use of the term; when it is said that God created the world "in the Beginning," it seems to be implied that time existed before the creation of the world; i.e. both phrases assume the existence of time as an independent dimension, similar to the concept of space as an existant without necessary dependence upon the objects which fill it, space which would be a vacuum. But Maimonides, following Aristotle's analysis of time as an "accident of motion,"(167) i.e. the form of motion, an "Anschauungsform," replies that time itself is but the form of the moving object; thus time is an "accident of an accident" and cannot exist without objects to which it is attached. Therefore, "if you admit the existence of time before the Creation, you will be compelled to accept the theory of the Eternity of the Universe."

Thus, as time has been shown to be dependent upon phenomena, so also the so-called laws of nature: they cannot exist without objects. When there are no objects, therefore, these concepts are meaningless. To be sure, this refutation by no means proves Creation, but it at least disproves its impossibility.

The second class of reasons which induce the Aristotelians to embrace the doctrine of the Eternity of the Universe and not its creaturelines are derived from the nature of God. Maimonides cites three specifically:(168) 1. If God produced the world at any given time, thereby becoming an active agent, previous to this time He must have beem a passive agent, a potential agent. In order to transform a potential agent into an active one, however, the initial impetus referred to in the first argument from

nature (169) must have existed previous to Him. Thus He could not have been the First Cause - which is impossible ex definitione. 2. The will to act is inhibited only by external impediments, accidents, which obstruct the execution of the intention. In the first place, however, no such externals can have existed when there was nought but God, and in the second place, even if they had, they could not have impeded God who is defined as unaffected and unaffectable. 3. If God at one time desired to create the universe and at another did not, He has undergone change, which again contradicts the definition of God as unchangeable. (170)

Here again, as in the case of the arguments from nature, Maimonides accepts on the whole everything said of the nature of God by the Aristotelians; he merely denies the validity of the conclusion derived from it with reference to the cosmogonical discussion. (171) It is true that no change can occur in God; it is true that God contains nothing merely possible or potential; it is true that no externals or accidents can affect God. But, Maimonides claims, an incorporeal being can act manifestly at one time and not at another without being involved in change. Exactly how he attempts to prove this statement is not understood equally by his commentators and does, indeed, contain much that is obscure. Atlas, on one hand, with some systematic likelihood, claims that: (172) "Maimonides' repudiation of these proofs for the Eternity of the World is bound up with his theory of the negative attributes of God, since the distinctness of divine and human will, precluding the possibility of inferring the nature of the former from the latter, has its roots in the thesis that the divine attributes cannot be de-

fined positively." (XVIII) Bamberger says contrariwise: "Es liegt im Wesen des Willens (as such) bald zu wollen, bald nicht zu wollen, sagt Maimonides." Epstein gives a still different explanation: he says that, according to Maimonides, God indeed does always and unchangeably will, but does not always execute His will, because for His purposes one moment of eternity is just as serviceable as another:"...weil jeder Augenblick Seinem Zweck ebenso geeignet ist." (174)

Actually Maimonides compares this strange action-non-action to the Active Intellect: (175)"wenn auch sichtbare Aktualisierung aus diesem oder jenem Grunde nicht immer zum Vorschein kommt, - beim Aktiven Intellekt, weil eine geeignete Substanz, auf die er einzuwirken haette, fehlt; - bei Gott darum, weil Sein Wille zu dieser und keiner anderen Zeit sich aeussert." (Why?) - The statement of Thomas Aquinas with regard to this specific point seems somewhat more clear: (176) "In agents acting by will, what is conceived and ordained is considered as the form which is the principle of action. Therefore, from the eternal action of God an eternal effect does not follow; there follows only such an effect as God has willed, an effect, namely which has being after non-being." Thomas also puts it somewhat differently(177) in a formulation which, it is true, is nowhere to be found in Maimonides himself but, in effect, so conforms to the latter's refutation of the Aristotelian arguments from nature that it may well be in his spirit; it is, at any rate, the clearest and most convincing: before God has created the world, there was no time. (178) Change, however, even change falsely conceived and predicated to God, occurs only in time. Therefore, it is

meaningless to speak of a change in God before there even was time.- And yet Crescas could remark to this entire exposition: "It contradicts itself." (179)

With respect to Platonism and neo-Platonism, the situation was somewhat different for the Jewish philosopher: certainly also Plato and Plotinus, possibly even the Jewish Philo of Alexandria, did not believe in Creation in the sense of creatio ex nihilo. They did, indeed, on occasion speak of "creation," but only in the sense of the everlasting re-creation of the world through the eternal emanations from the Deity. Vossler (180), dubiously attributing this view also to Thomas, states their position quite clearly: "He distinguishes a creation "out of nothing" (ex nihilo) from one "after nothing" (post-nihilum); that is, translated into modern terminology, a metaphysical and an empirical creation. The latter is....an irrational conception. Motion and matter have been in existence as long as time and space, for time and space proceed only solely from motion and matter, which are therefore as endless as they. But...there is a beyond to time and space. The transition from that beyond to the here of time and space is metaphysical creation, or, as the unfortunate expression goes, creatio ex nihilo. This is outside of all time and all sequences, or speaking metaphysically, it goes on constantly; speaking empirically, it never occurs. It can only be thought, indeed it must be thought; but it cannot really be imagined....."

Epstein (181) points out and explains an interesting distinction which Maimonides makes in his polemics: in Chapter 21, he distinguishes

Aristotle's original argument for the Eternity of the World from that of his mediaeval followers: he says: "it is the same thing whether we say in accordance with the view of Aristotle that the universe is the result of the Prime Cause and must be eternal as that Cause is eternal, or in accordance with these philosophers (some recent ones) that the universe is the result of the act, design, will, selection and determination of God, but it has always been so and always will be so." Aristotle's view, thus, would be that the universe is eternal due to the necessary relationship existing between a cause and its effect, logically, a relationship with which the will of God can in no way interfere, while "these recent philosophers," obviously in an attempt to harmonize the teachings of their Church with those of the Lyceum, believe that the world is eternal due to the eternal will of God and His design. Epstein now argues that Maimonides' statement that the concept of the Eternity of the World "opposses our very religion and endangers the entire Torah" (182) applies only to the former, while of the latter he merely says: "until now, you have no proof for your theory"- implying thus that proof is at least conceivable: "if on the other hand, Aristotle had a proof for his theory, the whole teaching of Scripture would be rejected and we should be forced to other opinions" (183) Maimonides, then, is not so much interested in refuting the doctrine of the Eternity of the Universe, as in proving that the world is not a result of the necessary laww of nature but rather of the will of God. From there on, it becomes a secondary question whether the world is eternal or not, because once the first has been established, though the Creation of the World may not yet be accepted, the religious doctrines which have been

shown involved as consequences in this problem (184) are made possible.

The Platonic view that ex nihilo nihil fit, and that God, the Creator, can therefore have been but the demiurge, the Former of the Chomer Kadmon, the hyle, the primaeval matter which is co-eval with God, though, of course, detracting from pure monotheism, has historically proved to be at least compatible with Judaism: David Neumarck sees an entire strain of Jewish thought in Talmudic and mediaeval times as an expression of this doctrine, and Maimonides himself cites one example: (185) despite his reinterpretation of Rabbi Eliezer's famous sentence so as to fit it into his own neo-Platonic cosmology, it is clear that it entails the belief in primaeval matter which in this form occurs again and again in connection with the Ma'aseh Merkabah in kabbalistic speculations. It is, therefore, not too surprising that Maimonides never returns to Plato after chapter 18 at length, because so long as the will of God and not the necessities of nature and logic are considered the causative agent for the existence of the world he is primarily satisfied.

What then is the Jewish belief? "Those who follow the Law of Moses, our teacher, hold that the whole universe, i.e. everything except God, has been brought by Him into existence out of non-existence. In the beginning, God existed and nothing else....He then produced from nothing (creatio ex nihilo) all existing things such as they are, by His will and desire." (186) By refuting to his satisfaction the arguments of the Aristotelians, Platonists and neo-Platonists, Maimonides has established the possibility of Creation, a situation in which it is philosophically conceivable that Creation might

have been the beginning of the world. He has not proved Creation and will not try to do so; for this he remains too much burdened with his Aristotelian affiliation. (187) All that he will try to do, according to his own claim, is to establish some probability for it beyond its possibility. For the rest, he will trust upon "the authority of prophecy." Just as Kant's antinomies of pure reason are dissolved by the postulates of practical reason, so the uncertainty of Maimonides' rational arguments, endowed, however, with a certain amount of preferability, will be finally and definitively decided by Revelation. Substituting the word "practical reason" by "Revelation" and "reason" by "pure reason", Gruell's sentence (188) could have been said of Kant when the latter deals exactly with these questions, the problems of creation, freedom of the will, etc.: "Die Offenbarung ist nicht zur Bequemlichkeit geschehen, sondern sie war notwendig, weil sie eben Fragen beantwortet, welche die Vernunft nicht beantworten kann." (189) And when one considers that for Maimonides the Torah was ethics externally demanded, i.e. by written law, the dissimilitude between the methods employed respectively by Kant and Maimonides decreases even more: here the problem is solved by the ethics from within, "das moralische Gesetz in mir," - there it is solved by the ethics from without, "das moralische Gesetz ausser mir."

By two arguments essentially does Maimonides attempt to establish a probbility for the theory of Creation, the first one from teleology, the second couched in the terminology of the age-old Platonic problem of the One and the Many:

1. The teleological argument: this argument, in turn, consists of two parts: a/ the first rests upon the atronomico-philosophical beliefs of Maimonides' time: in his astronomy, certain stellar movements have either been

postulated or actually observed which violate the cosmological axioms of Ptolemaean Aristotelianism. Therefore, concludes Maimonides, they must have been specially designed to move in these irregular courses, since the laws of nature do not apply to them, though the purposes of the design may be unknown. (190) "The variety of things in the sublunary world, though their substance is one and the same, can be explained as the influence of the spheres...But who has determined the variety in the spheres and the stars if not the will of God?" - When Husik (191) labels this argument of the philosopher "obscurantism" and calls it a restraint upon scientific investigation, he misses the point: it is true that Maimonides says: "The answer to this question is that all this has been made for a certain purpose, though we do not know it, " (192) but this is not to eliminate scientific observation and further interest; it merely declares that above and beyond the "how" of science may always stand validly the "why" of "theology."

Also Epstein seems to misunderstand the real import of the argument in saying that, according to Maimonides, design contradicts Creation, (193) because "Zweck waere aeusserlicher Zwang, waehrend der Mensch will um..., Gott will." "On the contrary, this design, not imposed upon God from the outside but equally willed by Himself, is proof of the fact that God's will is the Prime Cause, not the necessities of the laws of nature. Whether, of course, a teleological argument can at all be based upon ignorance of the purpose is another question; perhaps N.K. Smith is right when he says that "argument to design must precede argument from design."

2. The argument on the basis of the problem of the One and the Many: (194) in one short question Maimonides gives the death-blow to the

transcendental emanationalism of neo-Platonism, the impersonal Deity of Plotinus: "How, then, can the compound form of existing things come from such an Intellect (a simple Intellect) by fixed laws of nature, as Aristotle assumes? (195) On the other hand, "a single agent that acts with will and design, and not merely by the force of the laws of nature, can produce different objects." (196) I.E. will, like the human, for example, is able of wanting and intending more than one object, but the abstract One of neo-Platonic demiurgy can rationally only produce one completely identical with itself and, thus, not account for the multiplicity of the real world. - Herewith Maimonides has accomplished the task he set for himself: an initial probability for the theory of creatio ex nihilo has been established; now the teachings of Revelation set in: "The miracles are evidence for the correctness of our view." (197)

In essence thus, Maimonides does not deny natural law as the Kalam felt obliged to do in order to be able to continue to uphold the religious doctrine of Creation. Nor, however, does he declare natural law to be the sole force in and outside of the world as severe Aristotelianism maintains. Rationalist and mediaeval scientist that he is, he recognizes natural law to be the law of the world, but considers just this natural law to be the expression of the will of God. Natural law thus rules the world up to "the fifth sphere" in the neo-Platonic world-picture, from where on up the divine will reigns. Natural necessity is thus anchored in divine freedom. This final conclusion of the Maimonidean philosophy regarding the problem of Creation co-incides, as Bamberger recognized (198), with the final conclusion of the discussion of the concept of God as such, in which, too,

the necessity of the "natural," immanent, Aristotelian God is anchored in the freedom of the supernatural, transcendent, unknown God of neo-Platonism, which in turn is bridged to the real world by the attributes of action. God is not the pure form which needs matter in order to be realized but the pure form without which matter cannot exist: "the whole universe, i.e. everything except God, has been brought by Him into existence from non-existence." (199) Just so the effect of his teachings about Creation results in the ethical concept of the world as did his theology, negative but for the attributes of action. (200)

If there had been no Creation in the Beginning, if, that is to say, the creative principle of freedom had been repudiated ~~in principle~~ in favor of Aristotelian necessity, also the freedom which is a necessary pre-requisite for the Maimonidean, nay Jewish conception of morality would have fallen by the wayside. "There is thus a correspondence between the concept of God and the idea of man, and both find expression in the same attitude toward the problem of Creation." (201)

In summary, and with specific regard to the source-problem of this essay, it is clear from the exposition that Maimonides stand can neither be attributed to a neo-Platonic nor an Aristotelian influence. Even while embracing the religious principle of Creation without going to the extreme occasionalism of the Kalam, Maimonides accepts the concept of natural law and necessity for the real world of Aristotle. For a proximity to neo-Platonism in this complex of question may speak only the following consideration: if, in the rabbinic exegetical discussion, the view that God created the world out of His attribute of love confronts that view which holds that He created it out of the attribute of justice, (202) as the principle of divine freedom

versus necessity, then also the greater emphasis of neo-Platonism on the identification of goodness and love with the Deity, the One and His causative, emanational activity as resulting from love, approximates more closely the philosopher's belief of God's freedom in the creation of the world. Indeed, we have seen (203) that implicitly Maimonides does not seem to oppose the Platonic view of the origin of the world as strenuously as the of the Aristotelian tradition. In essence, however, philosophically speaking, Maimonides takes an agnostic stand with regard to the problem of Creation and answers it positively only on the religious level. From the point of view of the considerations of this essay, it may, therefore, be said that the answer given by the philosopher is neither to be classified as within the Aristotelian nor in the neo-Platonic traditions, for both of them differed fundamentally with the religious conception of Judaism. From this a conclusion may be permitted concerning the Rambam's predilection when placed in the position of a dilemma of loyalties.

PROVIDENCE.

Whether the problem of Providence would structurally more properly belong with considerations about the God-Man Relationship than with those about the God-World Relationship, is a legitimate question whose answer will lead straight into Maimonides' answer to this problem. If Providence is conceived as the principle of the actual conduct of the entire cosmos, naturally inclusive of the human race and all its members, then its discussion belongs at the place in which it is here actually offered. If, on the other hand, a formulation of a concept of Providence is suggested and maintained by an author, which extends God's knowledge and compensatory justice only over rational beings, i.e. in effect human beings, then it might be more correct in the exposition of the system of that particular philosopher to integrate his discussion of Providence within the narrower discussion of the relationship between God and man. This will, indeed, turn out to be Maimonides' conception of Providence. Why, then, do we persist in viewing it as a part of the issue of the relationship between God and the world at large? - For two reasons, mainly: 1. Regardless of what Maimonides' eventual answer to the problem may be, it remains true that he will have to deal in his polemical differentiation with other philosophers also in their terms, and those terms are usually covering of all the natural world, not only its human constituents. 2. As orthodox Aristotelians in general do, there is a second faucet to the Jewish philosopher's answer to the problem of Providence, and that will turn out to be that in addition to human individuals also all species, human or otherwise, are objects of divine knowledge and prescience. It is to be assumed, therefore, that the world as a whole constitutes such a super-species under the eyes of God. In fact, we can defin-

itely state that it is, for although Maimonides confesses not to know, even not to be able to know the purpose of the world, he certainly believes that it has such a purpose." (204) As such, therefore, the world as a whole in addition to the human individuals inhabiting it stands under the direct Providence of God. For this reason, too, it is apprently justified to view the problem of Providence as a part of the problem of the relationship between God and the cosmos in general.

In regard to his position on the problem of Providence, Maimonides can perhaps best be shown to pursue a systematic, consistent line of thinking connected with his answers to the other problems with which he deals. At the beginning of his discussion of prophecy (205) he states that the three view of it correspond to the three views of Creation. There now (206) he presents the view of Aristotle which embraces the doctrine of the Eternity of the Universe and the consequent supreme and exclusive rule of necessary, natural law, - that of Plato which upholds the same principle but premised on the existence of the primaeval hyle, from which, however, essentially the same results as to the present nature of the world would follow, -and lastly his own, the religious doctrine of Creation from which the existence of freedom in the world can be concluded. That the theory of Aristotelian nedessity, now, corresponds to that conception of prophecy which would make it a completely natural phenomenon, achievable by any man through his own efforts, is clear.

Diesendruck then claims (207) that the conception of prophecy as entirely depending upon the grace of God and independent of all man's intellectual and moral strivings toward it corresponds to Maimonides' own belief in Creation. He is clearly wrong, however, for the denial of all natural law

as implied in this view of prophecy is not a characteristic mark of Maimonidean Creation.(208) Munk, on the other hand (809) harmonizes this view with Platonism, an equally fallacious interpretation, for it, too overlooks the essential difference between Platonic natural causation and this prophetic grace stemming from the omnipotence of God. Rather the denial of all natural law in prophecy corresponds to the view of the Kalam with regard to Creation;(210) although this position is, indeed, not stated in the pertinent chapter 13 of the second book of The Guide Of The Perplexed, Maimonides must undoubtedly have taken reference to his exposition of that view in chapter 74 of the first book. Consequently, therefore, that conception which holds that prophecy can indeed be striven for with man's natural means and is anchored in God's will only to the extent that God may then yet use His freedom to deprive him of it synchronizes with the view of the nature of the world as bound by necessity but anchored in original divine freedom,(211) both maintained by Maimonides.(XIX) (cf. Weiss, Führer der Verirrten, ad locum)

This position of the Jewish philosopher, half-way between Aristotelian necessitarianism and Mutakallimun occasionalism, he again takes with regard to the problem of Providence.(212) In order to maintain the omnipotence of God, the Kalam must again deny all natural law and submit every phenomenon, good and bad, to the will and Providence of God. "According to this theory, there is nothing in the whole Universe, neither a class nor an individual being, that is due to chance; everything is the result of will, intention, and rule." This position, leading, as it does, as much to a denial of free human will as Aristotelian natural law, must of course, be rejected by Maimonides: "The Ashariyah were therefore compelled to assume.....

that it is not in the power of man to do a certain thing or leave it undone."(213)

Aristotelianism, on the other hand, in order to maintain the "omnipotence" and exclusive sovereignty of nature in which it observes the birth and death of individual existences regardless of their moral status," and that everything different from the existing order of things in nature is impossible," (214) must hold this opinion: "Everything is the result of management which is constant, which does not come to an end and does not change any of its properties, as e.g. the heavenly beings and everything which continues according to a certain rule and deviates from it only rarely and exceptionally, as in the case in objects of Nature. All these are the result of management, i.e. in a close relation to Divine Providence. But that which is not constant and does not follow a certain rule, as e.g. incidents in the existence of the individual beings in each species of plants or animals, whether rational or irrational (215) is due to chance and not to management; it is in no relation to Divine Providence."(216) Maimonides realizes that "this view is closely connected with his (Aristotle's) theory of the Eternity of the universe," (217) because, Aristotelian natural law only covering the constant species, also Providence, which is synonymous with it and not a religious conception of the will of God, will be limited to this.

In Chapter 16 Maimonides states the reasons which induce such beliefs: one is derived from the problem of theodicy, namely that there can be no divine Providence where good men live in misery and misfortune while the evil spend their days in joy and luxury. The other group of reasons of an epistemological nature, are pertinent to the above view: 1. It is impossible that God should have knowledge of earthly things, for the individual members of a species can only be perceived by the senses and not by reason; but God

does not perceive by means of any of the senses. 2. The individuals are infinite but knowledge comprehends and circumscribes the object of its action, and the infinite cannot be comprehended or circumscribed. 3. Knowledge of individual beings, that are subject to change, necessitates some change in him who possesses it, because this knowledge itself changes constantly. 4. The opposite view would imply the impossible opinion "that there can be knowledge of a thing that does not exist at all," and 5. it leads to the conclusion that the knowledge of an object in potentia is identical with the knowledge of that same object in reality." (218) The similarity of these arguments with those against Creation from the nature of God (219) is unmistakable.

Religiously speaking, Maimonides must uphold human freedom against the Kalam, (220) Divine Providence against Aristotle, divine justice against the doubters of theodicy, and philosophically natural law with Aristotle.

The evil that befalls men, therefore, does not detract from God's justice but is the result of man's wrong use of his full will. In order to prove this doctrine, he must subscribe to two theories which are religiously and philosophically of a dubious stature in his system: 1. the exact correspondence of man's fate on earth with his merits. (221) This ancient, naïve belief against which already Job revolted, he buttresses with the Talmudic quotation אין מיתה בלא חטא ואין "סורין בלאו יסורין". Already the commentator לפ"ט objects to this argument on justified Jewish grounds: (222)

In order to maintain this view he must even deny the על ידוע"

מציאות, the concept of ידוע etc. All this is the more amazing as he might well have evaded the dilemma by an answer pointing to our ignorance of God's will and intentions in accordance with His negative attributes for which he could have found ample scriptural support in the Book of Job which, after all, comes to this very conclusion. 2. His answer, however, contains a second part without further elaboration at that point: (223) "The evils of man originate in himself (224) or form part of his material nature."

We receive a more extensive impression of this phrase in the statement of his cosmological beliefs.(225) There he elaborates his view of the universe as a macrocosm; one of the exceptions to this scheme to which he admits is that certain phenomena arise not for a certain teleological function of purpose but out of the nature of matter: (226) "There are also parts which in themselves are not intended for any purpose but are mere accessories and adjuncts to the constitution of other parts....Other species do not serve any purpose, they are the mere result of the general nature of transient things, as e.g. the various insects which are generated in dunghills, the animals generated in rotten fruit...."(XX). Here then, we have additionally the independent, purposeless matter:) (חומר חמרי אותי. Purposeless now is synonymous with evil, just as uncreated by God is, and so we have the neo-Platonic evil matter which Heinemann describes in Plotinus' language as "Was das Denken übriglässt" ,"Lüge" , "Geschmückter Leichnam," etc. (227)

With regard to the other, epistemological strain of argument against Providence, Maimonides first states his own position: (228) "In the lower or sublumary portion of the Universe, Divine Providence does not extend to the

individual members of species (so for strictly Aristotelian naturalism) except in the case of mankind....but the idea that irrational living beings should receive a reward (i.e. stand under Divine Providence) has never been heard of in our nation (against the Kalam)."

That God knows the individual, if anything, he bases (229) on an explicit statement of nominalism: universals being only creatures of the mind, not real existents, are not real in the full sense of the world. If, therefore, God knows anything, He surely must know the real individuals.(230) (XXI) Against the objection that an infinity of objects cannot be known and that the knowledge of changing objects would imply change in God, the Knower, Maimonides brings up two arguments:(231) 1. for a posteriori knowledge of the human sort it is, indeed, impossible to "circumscribe" an infinity of objects, but for the knowledge of God which is a priori and creative of its objects, this task by no means represents an impossibility. (XXII) (232) It is again true that human knowledge changes with the change in its objects, but when we ascribe knowledge to God, we do so only by way of a homonym. His knowledge is incomprehensible to us, and how He can know changing objects without changing Himself, indeed how He can know an infinite number of objects and objects in potentia, we can, therefore, not know. Thus the theory of negative attributes and homonymity saves the philosopher out of this dilemma.(XXIII)

How now is it that השגחה פרטית Providence over the individual, applies only to individuals? (233) "I hold that Divine Providence is related and closely connected with the intellect, because Providence can only proceed from an intelligent being, from a being that is itself the most perfect in-

tellect. Those creatures, therefore, which receive part of that intellectual influence, will become subject to the action of Providence in the same proportion as they are acted upon by the Intellect." Just as greater attachment to the Active Intellect results in a greater chance of immortality for the individual, so also the wise stands more under divine Providence than the foolish. This intellectualistic train of thought stems directly from a long Aristotelian discussion throughout the Christian and Arabic Middle Ages as to the function and nature of the Active Intellect. (234) Suffice it to say that the "acquired intellect"(שכל נקנה)is conceived as attached to man by the Active Intellect and thus, almost in itself separated from the body by the hypostatic שכל הפועל, in a state of spiritual immortality as well as "providenced."

At the end of the discussion of this entire concept stands, as at its beginning, the problem of teleology. The problem of theodicy and the problem of Purpose connected with it, inaugurated it; it must end it. As Atlas points out (235), in the Aristotelian world-picture no purpose was necessary because everything is naturally necessitated and motivated; there, in other words, the principle of causality makes the principle of teleology superfluous. In Maimonides' world-picture, on the other hand, where freedom and necessity both find their place under the primacy of the former, Purpose must supplement causality. Its actual content, however, vanishes in the fog of man's incomprehension of God's ways and intentions, אין ערוך לדרכי (236), and thus leads back into the neo-Platonic "doctra ignorantia".

CONCLUSION

As between Aristotelianism and neo-Platonism, we have seen (237) that Maimonides in general takes a medium position. In the problems of Creation, Prophecy and Providence this was particularly conspicuous. Law as conceived by the Aristotelian tradition is retained, thus making science and nature possible; freedom, or at any rate, absence of law as conceived by the Kalam, is accepted to the extent to which it may be considered the origin and condition of law, thus making ethics and religion possible; mysticism, or at any rate, the more-than-rational as conceived by the neo-Platonic tradition is integrated into this sytem in order to make the God-concept what it had to be in religious conception.

Specifically, in the proofs for the existence of God, His immanence was guaranteed by Aristotelian, His transcendence by essentially neo-Platonic arguments; in the nature of God, the negative theology in concordance with God's transcendence was of neo-Platonic origins, and in the remaining discussions this negative theology again and again demonstrated its systematic functional value.

But the eclectic constituents of Maimonides' systems should not be regarded as undigested fragments of an indiscriminatorily collecting mind. Moses ben Maimon's genius is partly described by his ability to find truth wherever he seemed to discover it, to harmonize and systematize it with his own conceptual additions such as the elaboration of the notion of the attributes of action, the refutation of Aristotle's argument against Creation, etc. Not what he learned from others but how he used and supplemented it marks his place in the history of philosophy in general; in Jewish thought his place

stands undisputed. "The hall-mark of a thinker consists not in what he has in common with others but what is unique to himself." (238)

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

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1. Henry Malter, "Saadia Gaon, His Life and Works," Philadelphia 1942, p. 204 f.
2. "Guide Of The Perplexed," Chapts 71-75
3. (i.b.)
4. "Guide des Egarés," Paris, 1861, Vol II, p. 3 note 2
5. Guide Of the Perplexed, II, Chaps. 14-24
6. cf. supra
7. "Guide Of the Perplexed," transl by M. Friedlander, London 1904, p. 145.
8. " " " " , II, ch. 16
9. ib. Ch. 25
10. Question II, art. 1
11. ib. art. 2
12. "Plotin," Leipzig, 1921, p. 249
13. cf. Enneads, VI 1, 27
14. Berlin, 1935
15. cf. pp. 11-20 and 20-56
16. "Geschichte der Attributenlehre," Gotha 1877, p. 366
17. cf. Aristotle's Physics, III, ~~1521~~ 1 and 2.
18. cf. ib. VIII, 1, 5, 256b, 13 f.
19. ib. VI, 4, 235a 13 f-f.
20. Guide Of the Perplexed II, Introduction
21. cf. p. ~~4~~ 4
22. cf. Munk, ad locum, II, p. 33
23. cf. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 13; Aristotle, Physics III, 2
24. Guide Of the Perplexed, II, 1
25. VIII, 5 f.; also Metaphysics III, 6 f.

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26. ad locum

27. cf. Summa, Quest. II, art. 3

28. cf. p. 40

29. W.R. Inge, "The Philosophy of Plotinus," London 1923, Vol. I, p. 65

30. Cf. p. 38ff

31. ib. supra

32. cf. e.g. Munk, "Mélange de Philosophie Juive et Arabe", Paris, 1857, on Ibn-Roshd, p. 446, etc.

33. "Abendländische Spekulation des 12. Jahrhunderts in ihrem Verhältnis zur arist. & Jüdisch-Arabischen Philosophie," BZ G P D M, Band XVII, Heft 4, p. 33ff.

34. Introd., II Part, Guide of the Perplexed, Principle 3

35. III, p. 137

36. I, p. 185

37. Cf. transl. by I. Efros, in "Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research", Vol VIII, 1937-1938, N.Y. pp. 51-54

38. Cf. Guide Of the Perplexed, III ch. 18

39. ad locum

40. cf. p. 9

41. ib. supra 'ס"ד ס"א

42. cf. p. 44

43. cf. Munk, ad locum

44. Physics 8,5,256 b 20 ff.

45. ib. supra

46. op. cit. p 246

47. Bamberger, op. cit, p. 24

48. cf. De Divisione Naturae, Ritter ed., p. 1

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49. ib. ח"ל שלי"ן

50. יסודי התורה, ch. 1

51. cf. Guide Of the Perplexed, Introd.

52. ib.

53. cf. p. 13

54. 134 E

55. Timaeus 35 ff.

56. E. Bréhier, "Les Idées Philosophiques et Religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie", Paris 1908, p. 70

57. "Philo" by Emil Schuerer in Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. 1911

58. Quod Deus Immutabilis sit, # 62)

59. These two important thoughts we shall find again literally in the Guide of the Perplexed.

60. De Somn. I, # 232

61 Ludw. Treitel, "Gesammte Theologie und Philosophie Philo's von Alexandria", p. 9)

62. op. cit., pp. 250 ff.

63. cf. above

64. Enneads VI, 8, 8

65. Heinemann, op. cit., p. 253

66. cf. especially p. 32 f.

67. Shahrastani, "Religious-partheien and Philosophenschulen", transl by Haarbrücker, Vol II, p. 253 f.

68. cf. p. 14

69. loc. cit.

70. op. cit., pp. 31, 33

71. cf. our discussion of this subject

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72. cf. Bamberger, loc. cit; A. Schmiedl, "Studien über Jüdische insonders Jüdisch-Arabische Religionsphilosophie", Vienna 1869 p.

73. It may be noted incidentally that Maimonides in all probability was not acquainted with the refutation of Ibn-Sinā's proof by his contemporary Arerroes, despite the fancy legend that the latter's Islamic heresy was due to the teachings he absorbed from the Jew. The Talmud, after all, also claims Aristotle as a convert. cf. David Kaufmann, op. cit. p. 422 f.

74. cf. Samuel Atlas, "The Philosophy of Maimonides", etc, in "Philosophy Vol XI no. 41, p. 61. He seems to have felt this himself when he says (ib. p. 66) "The idea of the absolute unity of God with the consequent exclusion of every positive definite (as the above should have demonstrated, the negative theology is not only the result of the concept of God's absolute unity but also of His absolute uniqueness) is a neo-Platonic one.")

75. cf. p. 8 f.

76. In fact, even today there are still responsible Jewish leaders who sanction such concepts, cf. Gordis, Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly 193, p.

77. cf. p. 7

78. cf. Guide Of the Perplexed, II ch 1 end

79. cf. [illegible], I, 26; II, 43; Maimonides' refutation: Guide of the Perplexed, I, 75, and his own use of it; cf. supra)

80. Guide Of the Perplexed, I., ch 68

81. [illegible], ch. I, 6

82. cf. Ibn Sinā in Schahrastani, op. cit., p. 258 etc.)

83. cf. Pico de Mirandola, Dialogo d'Amore: amans, amantiem etc.

84. cf. also Eight Chapters, chapt 2

85. cf. Nichomachean Ethics, book X, Chapt 7

86. Metaphysics, XII, 9, 1074b, 32 ff.

87. op. cit. p. 255, Shahrastani.

88. Guide of the Perplexed, III, Ch. 16

89. cf. also p. 56 f.

90. i.b.

91. cf. pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

92. cf. Etienne Gilson, "Introduction à l'Etude de St.Augustin," Paris 1929, Chapts. "Le Maître Interieure" and "La Lumière de l'Ame"; cf. also p. 5 ff.

93. pp. 15-18

94. pp. 15 f.

95. cf. also p. 44

96. cf. Schmiedl, Studien über.....p.

97. cf. Arist. Topics I, 4

98. cf. supra

99. cf. supra

100. cf. H.A. Wolfson, "The Aristotelian Predicables & Maimonides' Division of Attributes", in "Essays & Studies in Memory of Linda R. Miller," p. 227

101. Friedlander, p. 71

102. Guide of the Perplexed, Chapt. 56

103. op. cit. p. 19

104. cf. Herrman Cohen, "Charakteristik der Ethik Maimunis", "Jüdische Schriften", Vol 3.

105. All of above; Guide of the Perplexed, I, ch. 52 f

106. i.b. Chapt. 57.

107. ib. Friedlander, p. 83

108. "Maimonides 'Theory of the Negation of Privation", N.Y. 1935

109. cf. supra

110. op. cit.

111. op. cit. p. 266

112. cf. p. 27 f.

113. op. cit. p. 42 f.

114. cf. pp. 15, 18 ff.

115. Guide Of the Perplexed I., Chapt. 59

116. ib.

117. H.A. Wolfson, "The Aristotelian Predicables and Maimonides' Division of Attributes", in "Essays & Studies in Memory of Linda R. Miller," J.T.S., N.Y. 1938, pp. 201, 234

118. ib. p. 219

119. p. 217

120. cf. pp. 15-18

121. p. 15

122. cf. p. 15 f.

123. De Somn. I #136 ff

124. Leg. Alleg. I 30

125. cf. p. 11, note I, References

126. cf. p. 16 f.

127. p. 16

128. V, 3, 13 A

129. Ib. VI, 8, 18

130. cf. Theologica, IV Chapt 4; Kaufmann, op. cit. p. 431, cites some references

131. cf. p. 18 f.

132. op. cit. 867 b

133. ib. 684, 508

134. ib. 589 b

135. cf. p. 21 f.

136. ib. 880 ff.

137. "Meister Eckeharts Schriften und Predigten", ed. & transl. by Hermann Büttner, Jena 1919, Vol 1, p. 41

138. ib.

139. op. cit. p. 57

140. ib. p. 60

141. cf. e.g. p. 16 etc.

142. cf. p. 1

143. cf. Shahrastani, op cit. Vo. II p. 253

144. ib. p. 251

145. p. 45 f.

146. cf. pp. 6, 10f.

147. op. cit. p. 206f.

148. Guide of the Perplexed, I, chap 50.

149. cf. p. 26 f.

150. op. cit. p. 51

151. De Opit. 8.

152. op. cit. p. 58.

153. Guide of the Perplexed III, ch. 20

154. Mishneh Torah , יסודי התורה , II, 10

155. cf. p. 3f.

156. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 21

157. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 19

158. " " " " II, ch. 25

159 " " " " I, chps. 71-74-75

160. " " " " I, Ch 74

161. " " " " II, ch. 14

162. cf. page 8-11 *

163. Guide of the Perplexed, II chapts. 28ff.

164. Loc. cit.

165. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch 22.

166. " " " " II, ch. 13

167. Physics, IV C, ch. 11

168. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 14

169. cf. p. 45 9-11

170. c. p. 8f.

171. Guide of the Perplexed, II, ch 18.

172. "The Philosophy of Maimonides and its Systematic place in the History of Philosophy", in "Philosophy", Vol XI no. 41, January 1936, p.63

173. op. cit. p. 95

174. Isidore Epstein, "Das Problem des Goettlichen Willens," p. 346

175. Ib. p. 342

176. Summa Theologica, quest. 46, art. 1, reply to obj. 10

177. loc. cit., reply to obj. 6.

178. cf. p. 45 41 f.

179. Or Adon, III 1,4: [illegible]

180. Die Goettliche Komoedie, p. 142f

181. op. cit. p. 336

182. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 21

183. " " " " II, ch. 25

184. cf. p. 41 38 f.

185. Guide of the Perplexed II, Chap. 26

186. " " " " II, Chap. 13

187. cf. p. 3 f.

188. Die Lehre vom Kosmos, p. 14 f

189. cf. also p. 3f

190. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 19

191. op. cit. p. 276

192. loc. cit.

193. op. cit. p. 343

194. Guide of the Perplexed II, Chap. 22

195. ib.

196. ib.

197. ib. ch. 25

198. op. cit. p. 81

199. cf. p. 50

200. cf. p. 26 f.

201. Atlas, op. cit. p 64

202. cf. Rashi to Gen. 1:1

203. cf. p. 46 f.

204. cf. also p. 55 f infra.

205. Guide of the Perplexed II, ch. 32

206. ib. ch. 13

207. "Prophecy in Maimonides"

208. cf. p. 50 f.

209. op. cit., ad locum

210. cf. p. 38 39

211. cf. p. 50

212. Guide of the Perplexed III, ch. 17

213. " " " " , Friedlander, p. 283.f.

214. ib.

215. cf. p. 57

216. supra.

217. ib.

218. ib. Friedlander, p. 281

219. cf. p. 42 f.

220. cf. p. 39

221. ib. ch. 17 "Fifth Theory."

222. ad locum

223. ib. ch. 16

224. cf. supra

225. Guide of the Perplexed I, Chap 72

226. Friedlander p. 116

227. op. cit. p. 260 ff.

228. Guide of the Perplexed III, Chap 17

229. ib. ch. 18

230. For how Maimonides can and does violate this nominalism, cf. [illegible]

231. ib. chap. 21

232. ibi chapt. 20

233. Guide for the Perplexed III, ch. 17

234. cf. Munk, op. cit, I pp. 304-308

235. op. cit p. 67

236. Guide for the Perplexed III, Chapt 25

237. Atlas, op. cit, p 64

Foot Notes

I. cf. "Geschichte der Aristotelesübersetzungen"; Richard McKeon, "Aristotelianism in Western Christianity", in "Environmental Factors in Christian History", Chicago 1939, pp. 206-231, p. 203: "Aristotle's works, slight until the 13th Century, at which time the concentrated labors of one hundred years of translation had rendered the major part of the writings of Aristotle into intelligible Latin"; Nirenstein, "The Problem of the Existence of God", Philadelphia 1924: "It was in 1190 that Maimonides first became acquainted with the work of Averroes", and contrary-wise other authors; David Kaufmann, "Geschichte der Attributenlehre," Gotha 1877 p. 368": "Die Theologie (a pseudo-Aristotelian, actually profoundly neo-Platonic work which (cf. Munk, "Mélange de Philosophie Juive et Arabe", Paris 1927, p. 249 ff.) seems to have sprung from Jewish circles) mag von Maimonides benutzt worden sein"; "The Guide of the Perplexed", transl. by Friedlaender, London 1904, p. 412: "References to Works on Science and Philosophy" in the Guide; etc. etc.; or in the case of neo-Platonism, while it is beyond doubt that Philo was not only the great antecedent but also the predecessor of Plotinus, Whittaker ("The Neo-Platonists," Cambridge 1928, page 33) can claim that "Philo was pretty certainly unknown to Plotinus." And this problem, whether this neo-Platonic historical tradition was at all conscious to the self-confessed Aristotelian Maimonides, arises equally when we ask whether the thoughts of Scotus Erieugena (cf. p. 13, 32), for example, were at all known in mediaeval Jewish Spain.)

II. Dr. Samuel Atlas points out orally that whether Maimonides really believed in the possibility that the doctrine of the Eternity of the World, might be proved, is not quite as simple a question as that. (Of course, Aristotle and others after him had proved it to their satisfaction, but Maimonides, with

the exegetical tradition of the rabbis and that of the often similarly forced reinterpretations of the scholastics, behind him, not only disagrees with them but, consequently, also doubts whether they themselves meant what they said. cf. ib. ch. 15) That the doctrine has not been proved would normally not mean that it will not be proved; in other words, the historical absence of proof is not identical with the logical antinomy, such as those of Kant for example. In the closed universe of discourse of the mediaevals, on the other hand, in which all truth was believed contained in the classic philosophic writings, which only needed eliciting in form of scholastic commentary and super-commentary, just as all religious truth was believed to have already been revealed and only needed discovery by a correct understanding of the Bible, an historical antinomy might conceivably be equivalent to a logical one. Perhaps, therefore, Maimonides did not, after all, believe that the world's eternity could still be proved.)

III. cf. "Basic Writings Of St. Thomas Aquinas", ~~who lived in the century immediately subsequent to Maimonides! and in an intellectual climate sufficiently similar to his to have learned much from him,~~ ed. by Pegis, New York 1944, Index of Authors, "Maimonides", Vol. II, pg.1174.

IV. cf. Supra

V. cf. Supra: Proof that the Primum Mobile cannot be a body!

VI. That Husic ("The History of Medaeival Jewish Philosophy", New York 1930 pg. 253) completely and disastrously misses this point, is proved by the following: "whereas Maimonides frankly bases his entire argument from motion (provisionally to be sure) upon the Aristotelian theory, including eternity of motion....."

Are we to understand that Maimonides offers his first, and therefore, also his fourth (cf. p. 11), proof only provisionally? Where does he say that?

VII. Munk, II, p. 29, n. 1, therefore, seems to be wrong in saying categorically that "ses démonstrations sont de celles qu'on a appelées "physiques" ou "cosmologiques")

VIII. Bäumker, in "Witelo, Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII. Jahrhunderts", p.325, Anm. 2, traces the proof to Themistius, and Munk (a.d. locum) to Alexander of Aphrodisias, - both later, and thus not altogether unadulterated Aristotelians; Nirenstein, in "The Problem of the Existence of God" in Maimonides, Alanus and Averroes", Philadelphia 1924, p. 24, brings it down to Alfarabi and Avicenna.

IX. cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics XII, 7, 1072 b 9 f.: "the first mover produces circular motion. The first mover, then, exists of necessity," which Ross (The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by R. McKeon, New York 1924) explains correctly by commenting (ad locum): "But it (the first mover) produces this (circular motion) and therefore cannot share in it; for if it did, we should have to look for something that is prior to the first mover, and imparts this motion to it."

X. That, at this point, Munk (ad locum) does not notice Maimonides' realistic assumption (cf. also p. 10) is ~~common~~, indeed, astonishing, since he almost says it himself. " Par conséquent, toute existence qui se présente, dans notre pensée, comme un composé de deux idées, comme par example matière et forme, ne saurait être, telle qu'elle se présente, nécessaire en elle - même, puisqu'elle est, tout au moins pour la pensée, le résultat d'une composition." He even

(ib. p. 29, note 1 end) recognizes the special status of this third proof by an indirect hint! - This very same disguise of scholastic realism we shall re-encounter in our discussion of the negative theology.

XI. That this was Plotinus' goal is doubted by none. But whether he succeeded in constructing a completely monistic system, just as the certain failure of the neo-Platonic tradition in the area of negative theology will perforce be pointed out in its proper place, constitutes the subject matter of an interesting divergency of opinion between Heinemann and Dean Inge: the former argues (op. cit. pp. 244-247) that an emenational system that purports to embrace all levels of reality cannot derive from one source, but that in fact the ray of emenations streams out of the One and, when arrived at its lowest step, is reflected by the second source, primordial matter, so as to create a descent from above, i.e. metaphysics, and an ascent from below, i.e. ethics; but this involves that the "ursprünglicher griechischer Dualismus zwischen Geist und Materie ist nieh ganz aufgehoben." (p. 245) Inge, on the other hand, categorically, and also rather dogmatically states (op. cit. vol 1, p. 112), that "it was the Stoics who taught him (Plotinus) that "Matter", so far as it exists, is the creation of God. (?) Perhaps, as De Faye says, the Stoa helped him to reject Gnostic dualism and pessimism," - it certainly seems as if Dean Inge's Christian creationism played him a trick in his understanding of his much revered Plotinus!

XII The sixth proof for Creation runs along somewhat similar lines (Guide Of the Perplexed, I, ch. 74): the world can be conceived as non-existent, i.e. it could not-be; but it is; therefore, it must have been caused to be. Maimonides rejects this argument on very poignant grounds, yet it is apparently the

superficial similitude to the neo-Platonic jump from contingency to necessity involved in his third proof for the existence of God which causes him to say of it, unlike all others: "Voilà une méthode (qui peut paraître) très satisfaisante, mais....." (Munk, ad locum)

XIII. It is for this reason that some among the scholastic philosophers, e.g. Averroes and some Christians, came to identify God Himself with the Active Intellect, and that the Counsel of Paris 1277 had to ban such theories.

XIV. "What we have explainéd in this chapter is this: that God is one in every respect, containing no plurality or any element superadded to His essence.....", Friedlander p. 72

XV. David Kaufmann, "Geschichte der Attributenlehre," Gotha 1877, p.465 raises the ridiculous claim, and repeats it on p. 472, that Maimonides really rejected also this form of attribution and only accepted it as a compromise with the Orthodox Jewish "masses."

XVI. To be fair to Husik, the following additional, though vague statements must be quoted: "His negative theology was only a means to a positive.....If we cannot understand how, it is because the matter is beyond our limited intellect."

XVIII Orally Dr. Atlas has applied this same method also to the problem of God's prescience; a problem he says, arises only when there are two conflicting truths, in this case, for example, the doctrine of Creation, and the unchangeable Divine Will. If, now, one of these two conflicting claims is eliminated or at least, as in Maimonides, so sublimated, befogged, that nothing can or is known about it, then automatically the other claim gains incredibility.

So also with regard to the dilemma as between the doctrine of Providence on the one and knowledge which normally cannot know the as-yet-not-existent on the other hand.

XIX. Prophecy as such finds no place in the investigations of this paper because it is of a psychological nature in Maimonides' view (cf. Guide of the Perplexed II chs.32-45), whereas the concept with which we are dealing is of a theological, logical nature, i.e. the concept of God is not involved except to the degree which has been indicated in the text. Only so much may be said of systematic importance: the ecstacy of Plotinus' "Schau" of God as above rational thinking is necessitated systematically by the irrational nature of the One. The trascendence of the neo-Platonic God requires that, in order to be known at all, an irrational, mystic act of cognition must transpire. Similarly Maimonides' supra-natural God would be known only negatively if prophecy did not exist. Prophecy as a more-than-natural process of cognition, therefore, is intimately connected with the neo-Platonic constituents in Maimonides' system.

XX. cf. Aristotle, Historia Animalium, Book V 539 a 21ff: "So with animals, some spring from parent animals according to their kind, whilst others grow spontaneously and not from kindred stock; and of these instances of spontaneous generation some come from putrifying earth or vegetable matter, as is the case with a number of insects....." This belief in spontaneous generation persisted universally up to Louis Pasteur.

XXI. It might be asked, then, how God can know on these premises the animal-species.

XXII. For the neo-Platonic nature of this argument cf. p.21f.

XXIII. For the neo-Platonic also of these arguments cf. ch. on Negative Theology; also Atlas' Description in Reference XVIII.

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This is not intended to be an exhaustive bibliography of all the literature existing on the subject but merely lists those writings studied and used either in full or in part for the purpose of this paper:

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