



ANCIENT FRAGMENTS

ISAAC PRESTON CORY

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**BY
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But Hesiod, when he affirms that Chaos was the first produced, appears to me to regard Chaos as the incomprehensible and perfectly united nature of the Intelligible. From thence he deduces Earth⁶² as the first principle of all the generation of the gods, unless, perhaps, he may regard Chaos as the second subsistence of the two principles: in which case Earth and Tartarus, and Eros (Love), compose the three-fold Intelligible, Eros being put for the third subsistence, considered according to its convertive nature. Orpheus also in his rhapsodies has adopted a very similar disposition, for he places the Earth for the first, being the first that was conglomerated into a compact and essential substance, while he places Tartarus as the middle, as having already, in a manner, a tendency towards disunion.

But Acusilaus appears to me to regard Chaos as the first principle and altogether unknown, and after this one to place the duad, Erebus as the male and Night as the female, the latter being substituted for infinity, and the former for bound; and from a connexion between these were generated Ether and Eros (Love), and Metis (Counsel), these three being the Intelligible hypostases, of which he places Ether as the summit, Eros as the middle in compliance with the natural intervention of love, and Metis as the third, inasmuch as it is already highly-venerable Intellect. And from these, according to the relation of Eudemus, he deduces the vast multitude of the other gods.

Epimenides affirms that the two first principles are Air and Night: whence it is evident that he reverences in silence the one principle which is prior to the two: from which, I conceive, he holds that Tartarus is generated regarding it as a nature in a manner compounded of the two; for some, indeed, regard the principle which is derived from these two as a kind of Intelligible intermediate subsistence or mediety, properly so called, inasmuch as it extends, itself to both extremities, the summit and the boundary; for by their connexion with one another, an egg is generated which is properly the very Intelligible animal from which again proceeds another progeny.

But Pherecydes Syrius considers the three first principles to be an Ever-vital subsistence, Chronus⁶³, and an Earthly subsistence; placing, as I conceive, the One prior to the Two, and the Two posterior to the One: and that Chronus generated from himself Fire, and Spirit, and Water, representing, I presume, the threefold nature of the Intelligible: from which, when they became distributed into five recesses, were constituted a numerous race of gods, called the five-times animated order, equivalent to what he might call a five-fold world. But another opportunity may perhaps occur for the discussion of this part of the subject. Such and of a similar description are the hypotheses which are received by us relative to the Greek mythological fables, which are numerous and very various.

⁶² The emendation of γῆν for τῆν is proposed by Mr. Taylor, and though I find no authority in the different texts for it, it is evidently requisite not only for the sense but to accord with Hesiod's Theogony.

⁶³ Χρόνον Mon. and Tay. which the following passage evidently requires.

