



The Writings of Tatian and Theophilus: And the Clementine Recognitions, Vol. 3 (Classic Reprint)

Tatian Tatian

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Tatian was an Assyrian, but know nothing very definite either as to the time or place of his birth. Epiphanius (H cer. xlvi.) declares that he was a native of Mesopotamia; and we infer from other ascertained facts regarding him, that he flourished about the middle of the second century. He was at first an eager student of heathen literature, and seems to have been especially devoted to researches in philosophy. But he found no satisfaction in the bewildering mazes of Greek speculation, while he became utterly disgusted with what heathenism presented to him under the name of religion. In these circumstances, he happily met with the sacred books of the Christians, and was powerfully attracted by the purity of morals which these inculcated, and by the means of deliverance from the bondage of sin which they revealed. He seems to have embraced Christianity at Rome, where he became acquainted with Justin Martyr, and enjoyed the instructions of that eminent teacher of the gospel. After the death of Justin, Tatian unfortunately fell under the influence of the Gnostic heresy, and founded an ascetic sect, which, from the rigid principles it professed, was called that of the Encratites, that is, The self-controlled or, The masters of themselves Tatian latterly established himself at Antioch, and acquired a considerable number of disciples, who continued after his death to be distinguished by the practice of those austerities which he had enjoined. The sect of the Encratites is supposed to have been established about A.D. 166, and Tatian appears to have died some few years afterwards.

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