

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

Himself, and so calls it out as a conviction. That He does above all else in Jesus Christ. By Him we can truly believe, because in Him God's infinite love and patience are so manifest, that only our manifold self-delusions can hinder us from trusting in them.

In that way alone the question of faith becomes a moral question. Directly it is no more a moral question than an intellectual. It no more depends on moral endeavour than on intellectual demonstration. But it is a moral question in the far deeper and more searching sense, that its only requisite is moral sincerity, just as it is an intellectual question in the deeper sense of utter loyalty to the whole truth.

JOHN OMAN.

### *ST. PAUL AND THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS.*

#### III. THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS.

WE know far less about the actual ritual and doctrines of the Mystery-Religions in the Graeco-Roman world than we do of their wide diffusion and potent influence. This is not surprising, for, on the one hand, their votaries were strictly enjoined to keep silent on their most sacred experiences, and, on the other, stern critics of Paganism like the early Christian Fathers must inevitably have been biassed in their casual representations of the facts. The literary remains of these communities are very scanty. Some mystic formulae, a few hymns and prayers, some narratives of initiations and allied ceremonial practically exhaust the list. To supplement them, there are vague allusions and isolated fragments of information which may be pieced together from Hellenistic and early Christian writers. Further, the extant material has to be used with

caution. For it is often impossible to fix dates with any certainty. Thus, e.g., the *Corpus* of Hermetic writings contains elements from widely separated periods. Of the character of the so-called Mithras-liturgy, so competent an authority as R. Wünsch can only say : " Before we are in a position to judge with certainty, we must have a much clearer view of the history of syncretism in Egypt." <sup>1</sup> Some chronological landmarks, however, can be discerned. The famous description of the initiation of Lucius into the Mysteries of Isis at Cenchreae dates from the middle of the second century, A.D., but the elaborate ritual and the remarkable prayers plainly presuppose a long history lying behind. The same thing is true of the mystic formulae. They bear the stamp of antiquity, and in some instances their actual relations with primitive thought can be demonstrated. Moreover, there are special strains of religious thought and feeling more or less common to all the Mystery-Religions, such as that of regeneration (in some sense) and union or communion with deity. These appear and reappear in documents far removed from each other, and belonging to different spheres of culture. No doubt there must have been much mutual interchange between the various types of mystic religion. But such phenomena demand time. And the time required will probably have to be measured by half-centuries rather than decades. It is perhaps true, as Schweitzer asserts, that Paul cannot have known the Mystery-Religions as we know them, because they did not yet exist in this elaborated form.<sup>2</sup> But the "elaborated form" which we can trace in the second and third centuries A.D. postulates a lengthy development, and it is hazardous to dogmatise as to what was or was not possible, say, in the period from 30 to 100

<sup>1</sup> *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, ed. 2, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte der Paulin. Forschung*, p 150.

A.D., or even earlier. Without discussing at present the extent to which Oriental mystic cults may have been influenced by the native Greek Mysteries, it is more than likely that their extraordinary sway in the opening years of the Imperial epoch was due to something deeper than their external pomp or the magical arts at their disposal.

We are bound to interpret in the light of parallel religious phenomena, present in every age, the meagre data which are available. There is good reason to believe, e.g., in the case of the State-Mysteries of Eleusis that the effect produced on the initiated was not merely that of an imposing ritual. In a former article we referred to the highly complex Orphic movement. Here, too, there is a danger of confining attention to the more obvious features. There is genuine truth in Monceaux' statement that Orphism "gathered an *élite* from among the worshippers of Dionysus."<sup>1</sup> But it is precarious, in view of the sporadic traces of Orphic beliefs and practices found throughout the Hellenistic world from the sixth century downwards, to restrict its *bona fide* influence to philosophers and poets, as he does, and to class all other alleged adherents with the notorious 'Ορφεοτελεσταί who traded on popular credulity.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the analogy of all similar "conventicles" in the history of religion admonishes us to leave room within them for varying shades of faith and earnestness.

A most important source of evidence for the diffusion and influence of the Mystery-Religions is to be found in the numerous inscriptions which give us glimpses into

<sup>1</sup> Art. *Orphici* in Daremberg et Saglio's *Dictionnaire*, Tome 4, partie 1, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. A. S. Taylor, in his brilliant essay on "The Impiety of Socrates," in which he shows Socrates to be "a firm believer in the faith according to Orpheus," seems inclined to make the same sharp twofold division (*Varia Socratica*, i. pp. 26, 27). Prof. Taylor has exhibited with convincing lucidity the Pythagorean affinities of these Orphics with whom Socrates was associated.

the life of religious *associations*. From the days of the Attic *ὄργεῶνες*, those private corporations of the worshippers of some local god or hero which we can trace as far back as the fourth century B.C., this phase of religious life becomes more and more prominent in the Hellenic world. As Kaerst has admirably shown, the religion of the Hellenistic period finds its characteristic type in the cult-brotherhood, the *θίασος*.<sup>1</sup> The old faith of the Greek *πόλις* had broken down. The new era inaugurated by the policy of Alexander the Great by its very expansiveness favoured individualism. Once the sanctions of the city-state had lost their validity, the individual saw the world lying open before him. In theory he became cosmopolitan, but in practice he was confronted by masses of new facts which disintegrated his traditional beliefs and threw him back upon himself. The successors of Alexander, more especially the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, attempted to replace the state-religion by worship of the ruler. The attempt succeeded as a political symbol. But the pressure of religious need banded men together in larger and smaller groups, dedicated to the worship and service of a deity or group of deities.

It is interesting to note that the earliest inscriptions in Attica which record these associations of *θιασῶται* reveal a largely preponderating element of foreigners among their members.<sup>2</sup> And they are found predominantly at busy seaports like Piræus. On the coasts of Asia Minor and in the islands of the Aegæan, *θίασοι* can be traced in considerable numbers before the Christian era. Poland thinks that the term still points to a connexion with Diony-

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte d. Hellenistischen Zeitalters*, II. i. p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> See Fr. Poland, *Geschichte d. Griechischen Vereinswesens*, 1909, p. 20. Few modern scholars would support Foucart's hypothesis that *all* the Attic cult-associations were of foreign origin.

siac worship. In the Imperial period associations of *μύσται*, initiates, emerge in the same regions as those in which the *θιασοί* flourished, especially in Asia Minor. Smyrna and Ephesus appear to have been important centres of these mystic brotherhoods.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that in the Imperial era Dionysus is constantly associated with cult-guilds either as chief deity or in combination with others. His designation of *βάρχης* seems to have a special relation to mystery-associations. The area of his influence is extraordinarily wide. Beginning with the *Διονυσιασταί* of Piraeus about 180 B.C., we find similar guilds prominently represented in important centres like Rhodes and Thera.<sup>2</sup> In Thracian territory, the original home of Dionysus, a considerable number of mystic associations flourished, e.g., at Philippi and in its neighbourhood (e.g., *μύσται Διονύσου*, *Bulletin de Corresp. Hellénique*, xxiv. p. 304 f.). Asia Minor supplies abundant material. There is little doubt that the cult of Dionysus had intimate affinities in these religious unions with those of the Phrygian deities, the Great Mother and Sabazius, although we do not possess sufficient data to elucidate the question. Here we are confronted by foreign cult-associations, which are of such crucial importance for our discussion.

As early as the fourth century B.C., we have evidence in Piraeus of an association of *ὀργεῶνες*, worshippers of the Great Mother, whom they style "the goddess." In Asia Minor she is a favourite brotherhood-deity, and Attis is associated with her. The traces of Sabazius-unions are often mixed up with those of worshippers of *θεὸς ὑψίστος*. Egyptian deities occupy a peculiarly pro-

<sup>1</sup> See Poland, *op. cit.*, p. 38, and the ref. to *Inscr.*, pp. 568, 569. The dates extend over a wide period.

<sup>2</sup> See the numerous *Inscr.* of first and second cent. B.C. in Poland, *op. cit.*, pp. 564, 565.

minent place. Serapis-associations abound in the islands of the Aegaeon, many of them earlier than the Christian era. They are found in Attica about 250 B.C. It is practically certain that Isis was revered along with her consort, but frequently she receives independent recognition. Associations of *Ἰσιασταί* are found, e.g., in Rhodes in the first century B.C. These phenomena are not merely due to the propaganda of a nation of enterprising traders like the Egyptians. The Ptolemaic dynasty stood in a special relation to the deities Serapis, Isis, and Osiris. They were conscious of the affinity between Isis and Demeter, between Osiris and Dionysus. Serapis seems to have been a syncretistic deity from the outset. In any case, by the shrewd policy of the reigning house, these deities became, as Kaerst says, "characteristic figures of religious syncretism and at the same time symbols of the power and unique dignity which belonged to the Ptolemaic rulers, the most successful representations of a syncretistic *Religionspolitik*."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the area over which Egyptian cult-brotherhoods extend corresponds roughly to the sphere of influence of the Ptolemaic dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

A word must be said as to the mystic deities of Samothrace. Possibly of Phoenician origin, they reveal Chthonian affinities, being closely allied with such Greek divinities as Hephaestus, Demeter, and Kore. They are worshipped in an influential mystery-cult. But their identification with a large variety of gods is proof of their syncretistic character. Their cult was peculiarly favoured by the monarchs who divided Alexander's dominions, especially by the Ptolemies,<sup>3</sup> and they also were honoured with the reverence of religious brotherhoods. A similar diffusion

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> See Poland's important discussion, *op. cit.*, pp. 522-524.

<sup>3</sup> See Kaerst, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

of religious associations is discernible in the Roman world. Livy describes guilds of Bacchus-worshippers, who engaged in mystic ritual, as far back as 186 B.C. In the days of Sulla († 78 B.C.), *collegia* devoted to the worship of Egyptian deities such as Osiris and Isis can be vouched for in Italy (Apul. *Metamorph.* xi. 30). Isiac guilds were already notorious in the Rome of the first century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

One or two features of the religious situation just delineated deserve emphasis. The favourite deities of the associations are foreign. The Hellenic gods who appear among them have already been connected with a mystic worship, or are noted for their saving energies, as, e.g., Aesculapius. The members of the guilds are predominantly foreigners, and a single association frequently contains representatives of many lands. Sometimes a number of deities share in the common worship of the "brethren." The most eager religious life of these brotherhoods belongs to great commercial centres like Athens, Delos, and Rhodes, where foreigners might be expected to congregate. Such cosmopolitan communities would present unusual facilities for religious propaganda. It is needless to call attention to the effect of the brotherhoods in producing a spirit of equality among their members. But recent research has shown that Foucart<sup>2</sup> and others have exaggerated the position assigned in them to women and slaves, at least in the non-Latin area.<sup>3</sup> The ethical tone of Graeco-Roman religious associations has been severely criticised, largely on the basis of statements found in the early Fathers. No doubt the moral standard was often low enough. But there is little unprejudiced evidence available. And we

<sup>1</sup> See Kornemann, art. *Collegium* in Pauly-Wissowa, vol. iv. sp. 386 f.; Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 581.

<sup>2</sup> *Les associations religieuses*, p. 5 f.

<sup>3</sup> See Poland, *loc. cit.*, pp. 298, 329. In Roman *collegia* the circumstances were evidently much more favourable.



have hints here and there of a higher ideal, as, e.g., in an Inscr. of Ephesus (c. 83 A.D.), in which purity is laid down as indispensable for guilds of initiates. It would be generally admitted that a large part of the fascination of these brotherhoods lay in the halo of mystery which surrounded them, and the esoteric ritual through which admission was gained. But there can be no doubt that under the influence of popular philosophy the various mystic cults became gradually purified. Whatever name they bear, their ultimate aim was identical—to raise the soul above the transiency of perishable matter to an immortal life through actual union with the Divine.<sup>1</sup>

These associations of initiates formed an integral part of St. Paul's environment as he laboured in great centres of population like Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome. There is nothing far-fetched in the hypothesis that many of the Pagans who were attracted to his preaching, many even of those who were already God-fearers (*σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν*), had belonged to mystic brotherhoods. When a new group of travelling preachers from the East proclaimed the promise of *σωτηρία* and the assurance of life eternal their message was bound to appeal to such an audience. Inevitably, therefore, the great missionary would be brought into personal touch with inquirers of this type. And as he sought to instruct them in "the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Coloss. ii. 2), he must have gained a first-hand acquaintance with those religious conceptions by which they had attempted to reach spiritual peace. Heinrich has tried to establish a detailed parallel between Pagan religious guilds and early Christian communities, e.g., at Corinth. He has adduced many remarkable resemblances

<sup>1</sup> See an admirable statement in Jacoby, *Die antiken Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 12, 13.

and shown some real points of contact. But we know too little about the organisation either of Pagan or early Christian societies to be able to accept his conclusion that the Christian community at Corinth was nothing else than a heathen religious guild transformed.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the material which he has collected is very impressive as indicating the importance of these brotherhoods for the background of the Christian Church in the Apostolic age.

We must now attempt to estimate as concisely as possible the most typical Mystery-Religions of the Graeco-Roman world, endeavouring above all else to bring out their main characteristics in the light of recent research. These characteristics will be found to blend more or less in a common complex of ideas, which cannot be explained from mere processes of mutual borrowing. We shall examine in turn the State-Mysteries of Eleusis, the Mystery-Cults of the Great Mother (with Attis) and of Isis (with Serapis), and the typically Hellenistic religious phenomena connected with the Hermetic mystery-literature. This will provide an atmosphere for the detailed comparison of their conceptions with Pauline ideas.

Many scholars are still accustomed to draw a sharp line of cleavage between the state-regulated Mysteries of Eleusis and the more private and individualistic mystery-cults which proved to be such formidable rivals. Certain crucial differences, of course, lie on the surface. In the hey-day of Athenian prosperity, the Mysteries of Eleusis were little less than a national Hellenic festival. As far back as the time of Herodotus, all Greeks were eligible for initiation. The accompaniments of the festival were on a public scale. Such an institution was peculiarly exposed to the risk of externalism and formality. And there is sufficient evidence that the risk was not avoided. To the multitudes which

<sup>1</sup> *Zeitschr. f. Wiss. Theol.*, 1876, pp. 455-526, see esp. 484-490, 503-510.

thronged the sacred precincts the whole ceremonial must often have appeared no more than an imposing religious demonstration. In contrast, the private *θιάσσοι* offered something more personal and intimate. There was the bond of a human fellowship in communion with the special deity. There was the call to a brotherhood which ignored distinctions of race or status. There was the demand for self-denial. There was the constraint of a life-long obligation.<sup>1</sup> Now, no doubt, the influence of private associations must have reacted on the national mysteries in the way of deepening their religious significance. But we are almost compelled to believe, on the strength of the meagre data still extant, that the initiation at Eleusis already contained the germs of a higher religious outlook, admitting, of course, that these had often to be quickened into a more vigorous life. In a region where so much is matter of controversy, let us, first, briefly summarise some facts on which there is more or less general agreement.

Most modern scholars have rejected Foucart's hypothesis that the aim of the Eleusinian Mysteries was to furnish the initiated with a stock of magic formulæ for escaping the dangers which attended the soul on its journey to the world of the departed. The intention was to create an overpowering impression rather than to communicate esoteric doctrines. Synesius<sup>2</sup> quotes the judgment of Aristotle: *οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖν ἀλλὰ παθεῖν*. There was an elaborate ceremonial of preparation which included as perhaps its most important element rites of purification (*καθαρμοὺς*), and a long interval had to elapse between admission to the Lesser Mysteries at Athens and the complete initiation at Eleusis. There was a sacred exhortation, possibly an explanation of the mystic actions performed

<sup>1</sup> See Eisele, *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Altertum*, xxiii. p. 627.

<sup>2</sup> *De Dione*, 10.

(τελετῆς παράδοσις). The climax consisted in the ἐποπτεία,<sup>1</sup> the vision of the sacred scenes, accompanied by the handling of certain holy things.<sup>2</sup> The final rites must have been performed in an atmosphere of highly intensified feeling.

Extreme divergence of opinion prevails as to the full significance and effect of the ritual and its accompaniments. While it is universally admitted that with the secret ceremonies was associated, in some sense, the assurance of immortality, some scholars, e.g., Rohde, hold that this was no new conviction, reached through the mystic experience. It already existed as the basis of the widely-diffused soul-cult. It was the blissful content of the future life which was impressed on the initiates, probably (as the Homeric Hymn to Demeter would suggest) by a series of *tableaux* which glorified the goddesses of the Mysteries, and made their votaries conscious of the joy to be attained by passing under their sway.<sup>3</sup> Rohde will not hear of any mystical experience reached in the initiation, or of any sense of communion with the divine. Hence he rules out the idea of a moral effect on the life of the worshipper.<sup>4</sup> But an important passage, whose obvious meaning he tries to evade, Aristoph., *Frogs*, 456 f., seems to us decisive as against his view: "All we who have been initiated and lived in pious wise" (εὐσεβῆ τε διήγομεν τρόπον). The uninitiated, whom Dionysus beholds lying in thick slime, are those who wronged strangers, maltreated parents, swore false oaths (*ibid.* 148 f.).<sup>5</sup> These lines reflect the current

<sup>1</sup> See Theon Smyrnæus, *De Util. Mathem.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the mystic formula found in Clem. Alex. and Arnobius: ἐνήστευσα, ἔπιον τὸν κυκεῶνα, ἔλαβον ἐκ κίστης, ἐργασάμενος ἀπεθέμην εἰς κάλαθον καὶ ἐκ καλάθου εἰς κίστην.

<sup>3</sup> See Rohde, *Psyche*<sup>3</sup>, i. pp. 294-298.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 298-300.

<sup>5</sup> We are glad to find that Wobbermin, in his valuable *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, p. 36 f., takes our standpoint. He shows that θεῖος, which is almost a technical term for the initiated, cannot be taken in a merely ritual sense, but has an ethico-religious basis, see *op. cit.*, p. 38.

opinion. The very fact that the secret of Eleusis was so inviolably kept testifies to the genuine influence of the Mysteries. We cannot help believing, with Farnell,<sup>1</sup> that the drinking of the *κυκεών* points to the notion of a sacramental communion with the goddess-mother in her sorrow. And, whatever may have been the precise nature of the "passion-play," we can scarcely separate the prominence of the conception of immortality from the recovery from the under-world of the lost Kore, the triumph of life over death.<sup>2</sup> Suggestive light is shed upon this phase of the Mysteries by the association with them of the mystic deity Iacchos. In spite of Rohde's arguments, he must be identified with Dionysus, whose cult at Athens was no doubt a much later growth than that of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis, but probably came to be fused, in some sense, with it, after the union of Eleusis and Athens.<sup>3</sup> There are various facts which seem to indicate that Iacchos was, in the Mysteries, identified with the son of Kore. This connexion with Dionysus leads us into the heart of conceptions typical for mystery-religion, the conception of union with the Divine and attainment of undying life. We have no evidence as to the extent to which such ideas found expression. If Orphic religion with its intimate relation to the Dionysus-cult exercised any influence on the Eleusinian Mysteries,<sup>4</sup> the strain of thought and feeling which we have been discussing must have had a prominent place. On this problem any verdict must be hesitating. But we believe enough has been said to indicate that there is some justification for Sir W. M. Ramsay's position, that the Eleusinian Mysteries constituted "the one great attempt

<sup>1</sup> Art. *Mystery*, *Encyc. Brit.*, ed. 11., vol. xix. p. 120 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Isocr. *Panegy.* 28 : τὴν τελετὴν, ἧς οἱ μετασχόντες περὶ τῆς τοῦ βίου τελευτῆς καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος αἰῶνος ἡδύων τὰς ἐλπίδας ἔχουσιν.

<sup>3</sup> See Sir W. M. Ramsay in *Encyc. Brit.*, ed. 9, vol. xvii., p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> So, e.g., Sir W. M. Ramsay, Dieterich, and others,

made by Hellenic genius to construct a religion that should keep pace with the growth of thought and civilisation in Greece." <sup>1</sup>

The theory has been put forward that Eleusis was influenced by Egyptian cults, either directly at a very early date, or indirectly through the medium of the Orphic movement.<sup>2</sup> This is by no means impossible. But Thracian influence is more easily understood, and there were many affinities between the Thracian Dionysus and strictly Oriental deities like the Egyptian Osiris and the Phrygian Attis. These affinities would have some effect in opening a path for Oriental cults into the Graeco-Roman world. Considerable caution must be employed in attempting to define with any certainty the beliefs or ritual of these cults at special moments in their history. For that history remains exceedingly dim, especially for the period when Oriental faiths were confronted with Greek culture in Asia. Certain facts, however, stand out clearly. These religions, having no official prestige, could only be propagated by their appeal to the individual. The appeal consisted above all in the promise of raising men above the dreary pressure of bodily existence into a divine ecstasy, for the production of which they supplied the means. These means were often crass enough. For ignorant minds they became the channels of all manner of magical beliefs. For the cultivated they often served as far-reaching symbols of a high religious experience for which their souls were yearning.<sup>3</sup> It is clear, in the light of such phenomena, why Oriental cults appear in the Hellenistic area as Mystery-Religions. The sway they thus attained is strikingly illus-

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> See De Jong, *Das antike Mysterienwesen*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>3</sup> See Jacoby, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11: a luminous description of the Dionysiac ecstacy in Rohde, *Psyche*<sup>3</sup>, ii., pp. 11-21.

trated by the fact that gradually the only Hellenic gods who retained their influence beside their rivals were the mystery-deities *par excellence*, Dionysus and Hecate.<sup>1</sup>

We have already referred to a cult-association in honour of the Great Mother, Cybele, in Piraeus, as early as the fourth century B.C. At the instigation of a special embassy her worship was introduced into Rome from Pessinus in Galatia, in 204 B.C., when the war with Carthage was a deadly menace to the Republic. For long that worship remained an exotic, but by the time of Augustus, Romans had been admitted to the religious associations of the goddess and had served as her priests. In her Phrygian home, and indeed throughout Asia Minor, the cult of Cybele seems often to have been fused with that of Dionysus to which it bore a remarkable resemblance. Each was an orgiastic worship, in which the votaries wrought themselves into a sacred frenzy and thereby believed they were united with the deity.<sup>2</sup> Rohde and others identify with Dionysus the Phrygian god Sabazius, whose worship came to be blended with that of Cybele and Dionysus in the syncretism of Hellenistic religion.<sup>3</sup> Possibly, however, his origin was Phrygian.<sup>4</sup> Eisele holds that his cult was non-orgiastic, and symbolised in crude but quiet ritual the most intimate union conceivable of the initiate with the deity. A suggestive feature, found, of course, in other cults, was the designation of the divinely-possessed worshippers by the name of the god, Sabos or Sabazius.<sup>5</sup> Central for the

<sup>1</sup> See Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales*, p. 410, note 12.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the remarkable expressions in Livy's savage account of the Bacchic Mysteries at Rome in 187 B.C.; e.g. 39. 13: *viros, velut mente capta, cum jactatione fanatici corporis vaticinari . . . Raptos a diis homines*, etc.

<sup>3</sup> See Rohde, *op. cit.*, ii., pp. 7 (note 3), 14 f.

<sup>4</sup> So Eisele, *loc. cit.*, p. 625.

<sup>5</sup> So ὁ κατεχόμενος τῇ μητρὶ τῶν θεῶν was named Κύβητος, after Κυβήθη (= Cybele). See Photius, *s. Κύβητος*. The parallel usage in the Isis-Serapis cult is significant. See *infra*.

Phrygian cult of the Great Mother was the Attis-ritual. For it is probable that the two deities were never separated.<sup>1</sup> The myth of the beloved youth who, in penitence for his unfaithfulness to the goddess, mutilated himself beneath the pine-tree : the mourning of Cybele for her lover, and his restoration to undying life, formed the basis of the drama which was annually celebrated at the spring-festival of the goddess. In this was embodied the mystic revelation. The process of initiation remains in obscurity, but the unmistakable analogy of the celebration to other mystery-cults dispels all doubts as to its real character. That its mystic significance was of no recent growth<sup>2</sup> is obvious from the ancient formulae which tradition has handed down. The ritual began with the felling of the sacred pine-tree. When the tree, bound like a corpse, and adorned with garlands and religious symbols, among them a statue of the god, was escorted into the sanctuary, the mourning for Attis broke forth. A time of abstinence followed, and then came the day of blood, when the tree was solemnly buried, and the participants in the ritual abandoned themselves to delirious dances. In a state of semi-unconsciousness they gashed themselves with knives and sprinkled the altar with their blood. On the succeeding night they met in the temple to celebrate the restoration of Attis to life. The grave was opened : a light was brought in : and the priest, as he anointed the lips of the worshippers with holy oil, uttered the consoling words : *θαρρεῖτε μύσται τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου, ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν τῶν πόνων σωτηρία* : "Be of good cheer, initiates, the god has been saved : thus for you also shall there be salvation from your troubles."<sup>3</sup> The joy of the *mystae* now found expression in a kind of carnival.

<sup>1</sup> See Hepding, *Attis*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Schweitzer apparently regards it as a late development, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De Errore Profan. Relig.* (ed. Ziegler), p. 57, 14.



Various ritual actions were performed. A mystic formula has been preserved both by Firmicus Maternus (*op. cit.* p. 43, 13) and Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* ii. 15), which reminds us forcibly of the Eleusinian formula already quoted: ἐκ τυμπάνου βέβρωκα, ἐκ κυμβάλου πέπωκα, γέγονα μύστης Ἄττειος: "I have eaten out of the tympanum, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have become an initiate of Attis."<sup>1</sup> This certainly seems to point to some sacred meal in which the participant entered into communion with the god. We have no means of dating the formula, but it has all the appearance of a high antiquity.<sup>2</sup> The mystic words are put by Firmicus into the lips of a man whom he describes as *moriturus*, "about to die." Dieterich interprets this in a sacramental sense, and finds confirmation for his opinion in an extremely compressed account of the Attis-festival given by Sallustius, an official under the Emperor Julian, in his *περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου*. There (ch. 4) the initiates are described, at a certain point, as "cut off from the further progress of their natural life," and, at the next stage of the cult, they are fed with milk, "as being born again" (*ὡσπερ ἀναγεννωμένων*).<sup>3</sup> Here again we are left in obscurity as to the age of the ritual. Plainly the conception points to a somewhat advanced step in the religious evolution of the cult. But if, as appears probable, these Phrygian rites sprang from a primitive nature-worship,<sup>4</sup> it only required the purification of the crude, primal instinct of sympathy with the fresh life of returning spring, by more spiritual aspirations which told

<sup>1</sup> In Clement the formula is more elaborate: ἐκ τυμπάνου ἔφαγον, ἐκ κυμβάλου ἔκερνοφόρησα, ὑπὸ τὸν παστὸν ὑπέθην. It is needless to discuss the additional details.

<sup>2</sup> For a full description of the Attis-festival, see Eisele, *loc. cit.*, pp. 634-637.

<sup>3</sup> See Dieterich, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*<sup>2</sup>, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., the felling of the pine-tree.

of man's kinship with a higher order of being, to reach the notion, still dim and anthropomorphic, of a divine life which the grave could not quench. Eisele believes that the Cybele-Attis religion had undergone a process of this kind long before it spread over the Hellenic world. Many scholars, including Cumont and Dill, find the chief stimulus to purer and more profound religious ideas much later, in the contact of this Phrygian worship with the rapidly extending movement of Mithraism.<sup>1</sup> To such contact they would assign the extraordinary ceremony of *taurobolium*, the bath of blood, which, from the middle of the second century A.D., constituted, perhaps, the most impressive rite in the worship of the Great Mother. Here the notion of regeneration stands in the forefront. Various inscriptions describe the "baptized" as *in aeternum renatus*.<sup>2</sup> The rite seems originally to have belonged to the worship of a Persian goddess, Anâhita, closely associated with Mithra in the old religion of the Achaemenidae, and apparently assimilated to Cybele in Asia Minor, especially in Cappadocia.<sup>3</sup> How far the savage ritual had shaken off its grosser associations before its late emergence in the Cybele-cult of the Western world, it is impossible to say. But it would be rash to use it as evidence for a mystic doctrine of immortality within the first century of our era. The brief sketch we have given of the Cybele-Attis cult reveals with sufficient clearness the barbaric ritual by which its votaries sought to satisfy their religious needs. The picture could be heightened on its ruder side. And yet no unbiassed mind can fail to read between the lines almost pathetic suggestions of a craving for fulness of life, for a real and enduring *σωτηρία*. We may believe that some

<sup>1</sup> See Cumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-103; Dill, *op. cit.*, pp. 554-559.

<sup>2</sup> See Dill, *op. cit.*, p. 547, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> See Cumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 99, 332; Dill, p. 556.

at least of the initiates could testify to a genuine experience in their ancient liturgical utterance: ἔφυγον κακόν, εὖρον ἄμεινον.<sup>1</sup>

In his famous treatise, *De Iside et Osir.*, 27, p. 45 (ed. Parthey), Plutarch tells how Isis, unwilling that all the hardships she had endured and the heroic deeds she had done in avenging her brother and consort Osiris should be forgotten, wove them into a mystic ritual, "and established a doctrine of piety and a consolation for men and women who should fall into like misfortunes." His words reveal the influence of Isis-Mysteries at the close of the first century A.D. We have no definite evidence, indeed, for these mysteries earlier than the Imperial age, but so cautious an investigator as Cumont considers that "all the probabilities are in favour of a more ancient origin," and that "the Mysteries no doubt were linked to early Egyptian esoteric doctrine."<sup>2</sup> The circumstances in which the cult of Isis (and Osiris-Serapis) was brought into direct touch with the Greek world certainly favour this hypothesis. It was part of the far-seeing political outlook of the first Ptolemy to make religion one of his instruments in fusing together his Greek and Egyptian subjects. For this purpose he introduced into Alexandria the cult of Serapis. The origin of the god is still an unsolved problem. Many scholars have derived his name from the Egyptian Osiris-Apis (i.e., Apis of Memphis transformed into Osiris). Wilcken believes that it is non-Egyptian, and that the god was brought in from outside. In any case he was immediately identified with Osiris (-Apis).<sup>3</sup> An old tradition

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a formula of the Sabazius-cult: referred to in Demosth. *De Cor.* 259. Used early in Attic marriage festivities, see Dieterich, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 335, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Thus bilingual texts have in the Greek section Σαράπις, in the Egyptian Osiris-Apis. See Wilcken, *Grundzüge d. Papyruskunde*, I. i. pp. 101, 102.

found in Plutarch reports that Ptolemy summoned one of the hierarchical aristocracy of Eleusis, the Eumolpid, Timotheus, to consult with him as to the character of the new divinity. Whether the tradition be genuine or not, it is true to the situation. The cult of Serapis was syncretistic. Osiris, the Lord of life and death, the final arbiter of human destiny, was surrounded with the halo of the Greek mysteries. But his fitness to be a mystery-divinity had long since been recognised. Greeks had discerned in him an intimate affinity with their own Dionysus. Thus no serious obstacles had to be overcome to commend the new syncretistic mystery-cult to the Hellenistic world. From this time onward the Isis-Serapis worship had an extraordinarily wide range of diffusion. It is found at Athens at least as early as the third century B.C. ; at Pompeii about the end of the second ; in Rome by the time of Sulla.<sup>1</sup> Thence it spread wherever Roman influence penetrated. The fascination of the cult is not difficult to understand. There was, of course, the imposing ritual, distinguished by its "contemplative devotion," which had all the splendid precision and order characteristic of Egyptian liturgical tradition. Still more appealing were the eschatological doctrines promulgated. Here Egyptian theology remained true to itself. There is a famous passage in an ancient Egyptian text relating to the worship of Osiris, which speaks of the loyal votary of the god after death : "As truly as Osiris lives, shall he live : as truly as Osiris is not dead, shall he not die : as truly as Osiris is not annihilated, shall he not be annihilated."<sup>2</sup> In the reshaped Isis-Serapis-cult this doctrine remains fundamental. The ini-

<sup>1</sup> See Drexler's masterly article, *Isis*, in Roacher's *Lexikon*, vol ii. spp. 383-386, 399, 401. Drexler gives a remarkable survey of the area of influence which belonged to the Isis-cult.

<sup>2</sup> Qu. by Cumont from Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 96-97.

tiate is to share eternally in the divine life; nay, he does already share it. He becomes Osiris. Here is expressed with clearness the more dimly adumbrated hope of the Dionysiac-Orphic mysteries. The Isis Mystery-Religion exercised a peculiar attraction just because of its syncretism. Isis could be identified with innumerable deities. As queen of heaven, as Selene, as goddess of the cultivated earth, as Demeter, as giver of crops, as mistress of the underworld and also of the sea, as goddess of women and beauty and love, as queen of the gods assimilated to Hera and Juno, as goddess of salvation, and also of magical arts,<sup>1</sup> she will claim the adoration of a motley throng of worshippers. Thus "the great power of Isis 'of myriad names' was that, transfigured by Greek influences, she appealed to many orders of intellect, and satisfied many religious needs or fancies."<sup>2</sup>

A unique opportunity of understanding the significance of the Isis-Mystery-Religion is afforded by the famous description in Apuleius of the initiation of Lucius at Cenchreae.<sup>3</sup> The candidate for initiation had to remain within the precincts of the temple, until he was summoned (*vocatus*) by the goddess. Otherwise, he might pay the penalty of sacrilege by death. "For," says the high-priest, "the portals of the nether world and the guardianship of salvation are placed in the hand of the goddess, and the initiation itself is solemnised as the symbol of a voluntary death (*ad instar voluntariae mortis*) and a salvation given in answer to prayer, for the goddess is wont to choose such as, having

<sup>1</sup> See Drexler, *loc. cit.*, *passim*; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 162-164; and the notable passage in Apuleius, *Metamorph.* xi. 5, where, in her revelation to Lucius, Isis says: *cujus numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine multijugo totus veneratur orbis*, and then recounts her various names.

<sup>2</sup> Dill, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

<sup>3</sup> *Metamorph.* xi. chap. 18-25. A graphic summary in Dill, pp. 96, 97.

fulfilled a course of life, stand at the very threshold of the departing light, to whom nevertheless the great mysteries of religion can be safely entrusted ; and after they have been, by her providence, in a sense born again (*quodam modo renatos*), she places them again on the course of a new life in salvation.”<sup>1</sup> Lucius awaited the will of the goddess, giving himself up to prayer and fasting. When, at length, the wished-for day arrived, he was escorted by a band of Isis-worshippers and bathed by the high-priest in the sacred laver. Thereafter, in presence of the goddess, he receives mystic communications. Ten days of ascetic preparation follow, and then he is led into the innermost sanctuary. A mystic delineation is given of his culminating experience : “ I penetrated to the boundaries of death : I trod the threshold of Proserpine, and after being borne through all the elements I returned to earth : at midnight I beheld the sun radiating white light : I came into the presence of the gods below and the gods above, and did them reverence close at hand.”<sup>2</sup>

The whole picture is of extraordinary significance both for the outer and inner aspects of Hellenistic Mystery-Religion. On the one hand there are the prescribed abstinences, the solemn baptism, the communication of mystic formulae, and the overpowering scenes which formed the climax of initiation.<sup>3</sup> On the other, there is presented to us the preparation of heart, the symbol of cleansing, the conception of regeneration, and finally, identification with

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *op. cit.* xi. 21 (ed. van der Vliet).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, xi. 23.

<sup>3</sup> The description in Apuleius certainly implies something more than an ecstatic vision (so also Cumont as against De Jong), although, of course, a condition of ecstasy is implied in the ascent of the soul through the elements. This ascent typifies his assimilation to the deity, for next day he appears *duodecim sacratus stolis*, the *stolae* symbolising the 12 spheres through which he has passed. See Reitzenstein, *Archiv f. Religionswiss.*, 1904, pp. 407, 408.

the deity. The effect of the experience, as genuinely religious, is disclosed by the impressive prayer of thanksgiving offered by Lucius to the goddess, after initiation, a prayer no doubt taken from an actual liturgy: "Thou who art the holy and eternal Saviour of mankind, ever bountiful to the mortals who cherish Thee, Thou bestowest thy gracious mother-love upon the wretched in their misfortunes. No day . . . no brief moment ever passes without Thy benefits. On land and sea Thou watchest over men and holdest out to them Thy saving right hand, dispelling the storms of life. Thou dost undo the hopelessly ravelled threads of Fate and dost alleviate the tempests of Fortune and restrainest the hurtful courses of the stars. . . . As for me, my spirit is too feeble to render Thee worthy praise, and my possessions too small to bring thee fitting sacrifices. I have no fluency of speech to put in words that which I feel of Thy majesty. . . . Therefore will I essay to do that which alone a poor but pious worshipper can: Thy divine countenance and Thy most holy Presence will I hide within the shrine of my heart: there will I guard Thee and continually keep Thee before my spirit."<sup>1</sup>

When we pass to the Hermetic Mystery-literature, we are confronted with many complex problems. To begin with, the *Corpus<sup>1</sup> Hermeticum* is composed of various strata, some of which are by no means congruous with the rest. Even when we examine these strata separately, we discover a highly syncretistic blend of doctrine and ritual. It seems, therefore, illegitimate to speak of a Hermetic Mystery-Religion. Rather is this phase of religious thought valuable as embodying conceptions of Greek philosophy of the religious Stoic-Peripatetic type, relics of early Egyptian ideas, elements of the magical and alchemistic doctrines so prevalent in Egypt, and liturgic fragments which may belong to

<sup>1</sup> Apul., *op. cit.*, xi. 25.

Hellenised Egyptian communities, but which at any rate reflect the syncretistic Mystery-cults between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. It is not surprising to find such a product in Egypt, which might almost be called the religious clearing-house of the Hellenistic world. But the nature of the situation puts us on our guard against constructing any hard and fast theories as to the influence of Hermetic conceptions on non-Egyptian structures of thought. Even Reitzenstein himself, who argues strenuously for the essentially Egyptian character of Hermetic religion, admits that in many sections of the literature it is scarcely possible to distinguish between Egyptian and Greek conceptions.<sup>1</sup>

A few words must be said as to the origin and character of Hermetic literature : then we shall emphasise some of its leading ideas from the standpoint of Mystery-Religion, including in our survey the so-called Liturgy of Mithra : and, finally, we shall indicate the conflicting theories which prevail regarding it.

Reitzenstein believes that in the reign of Diocletian, somewhere c. 300 A.D., an Egyptian priest made a compilation of 18 sacred documents intended to show that the Hellenised religion of Egypt was not different from that of the Empire as a whole. These documents belonged to different dates and to different religious communities, and they were arranged entirely to suit the various figures introduced into the dialogue. "Hermes, the herald of Egyptian religion, is summoned by the god *Noûs*, the Shepherd of men (*Poimandres*), to become Saviour for the whole world. He proclaims the new religion to his two disciples, *Asclepios*, son of the god *Ptah*, and his own son *Tat* : consecrates them at the close to be prophets, causing them to be born

<sup>1</sup> See his article, *Hellenistische Theologie in Ägypten*, *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Alt.*, 1904, pp. 183, 184. This article is an indispensable introduction to his *Poimandres*, 1904, and *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 1910.



of God and united with Him, and then ascends again to heaven. The two prophets preach the new doctrine to King Ammon who adopts it, and thus the Egyptian religion is founded."<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Hermetic *Corpus*, various other fragments preserved in ancient authors may be assigned to this type of religion. It is important to note that the whole group of documents professes to be a revelation. Reitzenstein points out that this revelation is of two fundamental types. In the first, to which most of the purely theological documents belong, a god, Hermes or Aesculapius or Tat, describes what he has seen (e.g., the Creation), or what has been communicated to him by his divine Father and Teacher. In the second type, a man, who is of course a prophet, proclaims the revelation he has received either through drawing down by prayer a god who now dwells within him or by ascending to heaven with the help of a deity.<sup>2</sup> Reitzenstein would place the documents incorporated in this literature (whose dates cannot be accurately determined), roughly speaking, between the beginning of the first century A.D. and the end of the third.<sup>3</sup> But even if we did not possess impressive parallels in other Hellenistic religions, it would be reasonable to assume that many of the conceptions embodied belong to a much earlier date.

Perhaps the most interesting document in the group, from the point of view of the Mystery-Religions, is the dialogue between Hermes and his son Tat on regeneration.<sup>4</sup> Tat reminds his father that he had told him that no one

<sup>1</sup> Reitzenstein, *loc. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> See Reitzenstein, *ib.* pp. 179-181. The term *vous*, so frequent in these writings, does not usually mean "understanding" but "the revealing God."

<sup>3</sup> *Die Hellenist. Mysterienreligionen*, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> The Greek text printed in the appendix to Reitzenstein's *Poimandres*, pp. 339-348.

could be saved (*σωθῆναι*) without regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία*). Regeneration was only possible to one who had cut himself loose from the world. Tat has renounced the world and entreats his father, who has himself been regenerated, to communicate the secret. Hermes replies that this must be a revelation to the heart by the Divine Will. He had seen an immaterial vision (*ἄπλαστον θέαν*) inwardly by the mercy of God, and had passed out through his own body into an immortal body. He is no longer what he was. Tat cannot discern his real being with bodily eyes. While Hermes speaks, Tat becomes conscious of a transformation. He is set free from the twelve evil propensities, which are replaced by the ten powers of God. He is now able by the Divine energy to have spiritual vision, and he feels himself one with all the elements. He only needs now to ascend into the Ogdoas, the abode of God. He asks to be taught the hymn of praise sung by the Divine powers in the regenerate man when he reaches the Ogdoas. His father repeats the hymn, which is itself a very important document for Hermetic religion.<sup>1</sup> Tat can now declare: "My spirit is illumined . . . to Thee, O God, author of my new creation, I Tat offer spiritual sacrifices (*λογικὰς θυσίας*). O God and Father, Thou art the Lord, Thou art the Spirit (*ὁ νοῦς*). Accept from me the spiritual [sacrifices] which Thou desirest." Hermes sums up the whole meaning of the experience in the suggestive words: *νοερώς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον*: "in the spirit thou hast come to know thyself and our Father." It ought to be said that a large part of the dialogue is occupied with a blend of physical and ethical speculation of the

<sup>1</sup> A good translation in Jaoby, *Die antiken Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 33, 34. With this should be compared the closing hymn of the Mithras-Liturgy, which also celebrates the regeneration of him who sings it. See *Eine Mithrasliturgie*<sup>2</sup>, p. 14.

later Stoic type. Various points of importance for Hermetic religion emerge from this dialogue. There is no external ritual in this mystery of regeneration. Tat experiences the psychical transformation as he listens to the revelation. Hence, the revelation itself, the λόγος, may be said to constitute the mystery: it produces the παλιγγενεσία. The chief result of the mystic experience is the true "knowledge" (γνώσις) of God. This conception is prominent throughout Hermetic literature. Reitzenstein quotes a remarkable instance from the closing prayer of the Λόγος Τέλειος: <sup>1</sup> "We give thanks to Thee, Most High, for by Thy grace we received this light of knowledge. . . . Having been saved by Thee, we rejoice that thou didst show Thyself to us wholly, that Thou didst deify (ἀπεθέωσας) us in our mortal bodies by the vision of Thyself." <sup>2</sup> Here is a further idea of importance. The knowledge of God attained through the mystery of regeneration deifies. In *Poimandres* (*Hermetic Corpus*, i. § 26 <sup>3</sup>) occur the words: "This is the blessed end for those who have attained knowledge, to be deified" (θεωθῆναι). We may compare the prayer in the Mithra-Liturgy (p. 12, 2 ff.): "Having been regenerated by Thee to-day, out of so many thousands called to be immortal (ἀπαθανάτισθεις) in this hour, according to the purpose of the most gracious God." In the Mithra-Liturgy, it may be noted, the prayers are mingled with prosaic directions as to breathing, bellowing loudly, taking up prescribed postures, and with uncouth magical incantations. The

<sup>1</sup> The Latin text found at the close of the *Asclepius* of Pseudo-Apuleius, proved by Bernays to be identical with the λόγος τέλειος of Hermes to Asclepius, mentioned by Lactantius. See Reitzenstein, *Archiv. f. Religionswiss.*, 1904, p. 393, note 1. Reitzenstein discovered the Greek text in the magical Papyrus Mimaut (c. 3rd cent. A.D.).

<sup>2</sup> See the whole prayer in Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenist. Mysterienrelig.*, pp. 113, 114.

<sup>3</sup> See Reitzenstein, *Poimandres*, pp. 328-338.

observance of these instructions produces strange supernatural visions. In the genuine Hermetic writings, however, it is plain that there has been a certain spiritualising of mystic cult, although the *λόγος τέλειος*, the "revelation which initiates," has marked affinities with the Egyptian conception of ritual, according to which the man who acquires a full knowledge of the liturgy can exercise immense influence upon the spiritual world.<sup>1</sup>

It is exceedingly difficult to estimate this highly syncretistic literature. Reitzenstein, as is well known, regards its fundamental strain to be due to the evolution of ancient Egyptian ideas, and specifies the Hellenised doctrine of the priests of Ptah at Memphis. With this have been blended various constituents, such as the Stoic deification of the elements, a Hellenised non-Egyptian doctrine closely connected with astrology and the yearning for deliverance from *εἰμαρμένη*, and certain widely-diffused Hellenistic myths.<sup>2</sup> Cumont and W. Otto entirely dissent from Reitzenstein's belief that the Hermetic literature is a typical expression of general piety in the second and third centuries A.D. Cumont regards "Hermetic" as the result of a long process whose aim was "to reconcile Egyptians, at first with Chaldaean astrology, then with Greek philosophy, and it shared in the transformation of this philosophy."<sup>3</sup> Zielinski, in his searching investigation of *Hermetic*, irrefutably demonstrates the enormous preponderance of Greek philosophical elements in the syncretistic compound. He regards Peripatetic (-Stoic) cosmogonical speculations, which can be traced back to Arcadia and the Arcadian

<sup>1</sup> Cumont refers to an article of Maspero, *Sur le toute-puissance de la parole* (Recueil de travaux, xxiv., 1902, pp. 163-175).

<sup>2</sup> See especially *Poimandres*, pp. 62-68, 71, 109, 110, 114.

<sup>3</sup> See Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales*, p. 341; W. Otto, *Priester u. Tempel im Hellenistischen Aegypten*, ii, pp. 218-220.

myth of Hermes (= *Noûs*) and his son Pan (= *Λόγος*), as the groundwork of the system, a system which certainly took shape in Egypt. Upon this foundation was built up a structure, in which markedly Platonising and Pantheistic materials found a place. This he designates the *higher* Hermetic, and he regards the main error in Reitzenstein's theory to be his failure in distinguishing between the higher and lower types. The higher he considers to be purely Greek, the lower, which has attached itself, is a blend of Egyptian alchemy and magic.<sup>1</sup>

Probably each of these theories is partially true. To us it appears that Reitzenstein exaggerates the purely Egyptian character of this hybrid phase of religious thought and feeling. For Greek cosmogony is everywhere apparent. And yet the mystical conceptions of Hermetic literature can by no means be regarded merely as the outcome of these philosophical influences.<sup>2</sup> Rather do they appear as remarkable parallels to the doctrines we have examined in the other Mystery-Religions. They have been exposed, no doubt, to the influence of Greek religion in its Orphic-Dionysiac developments. But these developments themselves have been affected by Oriental beliefs. To find the Egyptian features of Hermetic only in what is magical, as Zielinski does, is to ignore the significance of Egypt in the history of Hellenistic Mystery-Religion. We believe that Reitzenstein is justified by the prayers which appear in the extant documents in speaking of definite religious communities in Egypt, gathered around devout, prophetic leaders.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See his elaborate articles on *Hermes und die Hermetik* in *Archiv. f. Religionswiss.*, 1905, 1906; esp. the latter, pp. 25-27, 35-41, 56, 60.

<sup>2</sup> We are not forgetting that later Stoic cosmogony could be the medium of a mysticism like that of Posidonius: see the first article in this series.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Neue Jahrb. f. d. klass. Alt.*, 1904, p. 182, and compare his estimate of the Mithra-Liturgy as revealing the *individual* expression

In this sketch we have attempted to describe the leading ideas embodied in the Mystery-Religions and to indicate the range of their diffusion, giving instances, as occasion offered, of the religious terminology which they employed. We must next endeavour to estimate in detail the relation of St. Paul to their terminology and their ideas.<sup>1</sup>

H. A. A. KENNEDY.

### THE TEACHING OF PAUL IN TERMS OF THE PRESENT DAY.

#### XX. THE MEASURE AND ESTIMATE OF FAITH.

IN the Pastoral Epistles, as has been commonly held, "faith loses its unique significance and is almost reduced to a place side by side with other virtues," so that "the gift of eternal life appears almost as a reward of good living." At the present moment we are not concerned with defending the authenticity of those Epistles, but simply with the question whether this is a doctrinal position different from that of Paul's earlier letters, and likely to be non-Pauline and characteristic rather of Paulinism as conceived by a pupil of the Apostle.

That in the earlier letters salvation is said to come through faith and the gift of God, not through works, is of course admitted. From that we start. That is emphasised over and over again in the letters; and no quotations are needed to prove that this is the true Pauline teaching. But is that inconsistent with the statement that salvation is the result of the work and intense effort of the individual?

of ancient and widely-propagated religious ideas: "The main thing in the Mithra-Liturgy is that one man from an approximately definable period had these ideas" (*Zeitschr. f. N. T. Wissensch.*, 1912, i. pp. 13, 14).

<sup>1</sup> We have omitted consideration of the Mithra-Mysteries, as these fall outside the scope of our discussion: see Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.