

## THE MITHRAIC LITURGY, CLERGY, AND DEVOTEES.<sup>1</sup>

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IN all the religions of classical antiquity there is one feature which, formerly very conspicuous and perhaps the most important of all for the faithful, has to-day almost totally disappeared from our view. It is the liturgy. The Mysteries of Mithra form no exception to this unfortunate rule. The sacred books which contain the prayers recited or chanted during the services, the ritual of the initiations, and the ceremonials of the feasts, have vanished and left scarce a trace behind. A verse borrowed from one unknown hymn is almost all that has come down to us from the collections which anciently were so abundant. The old Gâthas composed in honor of the Mazdean gods were translated into Greek during the Alexandrian epoch, and Greek remained for a long time the language of the Mithraic cult, even in the Occident. Barbaric words, incomprehensible to the profane, were interspersed throughout the sacred texts and augmented the veneration of the worshippers for the ancient formulary, as well as their confidence in its efficacy. Such were the epithets like *Nabarze*, "victorious," which has been applied to Mithra, or of the obscure invocations like *Nama*, *Nama Sebesio*, engraved on our bas-reliefs, which have never yet been interpreted. A scrupulous respect for the traditional practices of their sect characterised the Magi of Asia Minor, and continued to be cherished with unabated ardor among their Latin successors. On the downfall of paganism, the latter still took pride in worshipping the gods according to the ancient Persian rites which Zoroaster was said to have instituted. These rites sharply distinguished their religion from all the others that were practiced at the same time in Rome, and prevented its Persian origin from ever being forgotten.

<sup>1</sup> Extracted by the author from his *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Brussels: H. Lamertin). Translated by T. J. McCormack.

If some piece of good fortune should one day unearth for us a Mithraic missal, we should be able to study there these ancient usages and to participate in imagination in the celebration of the services. Deprived as we are of this indispensable guide, we are excluded utterly from the sanctuary and know the esoteric discipline of the Mysteries only from a few indiscretions. A text of St. Jerome, confirmed by a series of inscriptions, informs us that there were seven degrees of initiation and that the mystic (*μύστης*, *sacratus*) successively assumed the names of Raven (*corax*), Occult (*cryphius*), Soldier (*miles*), Lion (*leo*), Persian (*Perses*), Courier of the Sun (*heliodromus*), and Father (*pater*). These strange appellations were not empty epithets with no practical bearing. On certain occasions the celebrants donned garbs suited to the title that had been accorded them. On the bas-reliefs we see them carrying the counterfeit heads of animals, of soldiers, and of Persians (see Fig. 2, p. 675). "Some flap their wings like birds, imitating the cry of crows; others growl like lions," says a Christian writer of the fourth century;<sup>1</sup> "in such manner are they who are called wise shamefully travestied."

These sacred masks, of which the ecclesiastical writer exhibits the ridiculous side, were interpreted by pagan theologians as an allusion to the signs of the zodiac, and even to the doctrine of metempsychosis. Such divergences of interpretation simply prove that the real meaning of these animal disguises was no longer understood. They are in reality a survival of primitive practices which have left their traces in numerous cults. We find the titles of Bear, Ox, Colt, and other similar names borne by the initiates of the different Mysteries in Greece and Asia Minor. They go back to that prehistoric period where the divinities themselves were represented under the forms of animals; and when the worshipper, in taking the name and semblance of his god, believed that he identified himself with him. The lion-headed Kronos having become the incarnation of time, was substituted for the lions which the fore-runners of the Mithraists worshipped; and similarly the cloth and paper masks with which the Roman mystics covered their faces were substitutes for the animal skins with which their barbarous predecessors originally clothed themselves, be it that they believed they thus entered into communion with the monstrous idols which they worshipped, or that, enveloped in the pelts of their flayed victims, they attributed a purifying virtue to their bloody tunics.

To the primitive titles of Raven and Lion others were after-

<sup>1</sup>Ps. Augustine, *Quaest. vet. et novi Test.*, (T. et M., t. II, p. 8).

wards added for the purpose of attaining the sacred number seven. The seven degrees of initiation through which the mystic was forced to pass in order to acquire perfect wisdom and purity, answered to the seven planetary spheres which the soul was forced to traverse



Fig. 1. MITHRAIC KRONOS, OR PERSONIFICATION OF INFINITE TIME.

Here represented without the head of a lion, which appears on the breast of the figure. This is a Roman beautification of the horrific features of the Oriental God. (Bas-Relief of Modena.)

in order to reach the abode of the blessed.<sup>1</sup> After having been Raven, the initiates were promoted to the rank of Occult (*κρύφιος*).

<sup>1</sup> See p. 608 of *The Open Court* for October, 1902.

The members of this class, hidden by some veil, probably remained invisible to the rest of the congregation. To exhibit them (*ostendere*) constituted a solemn act. The soldier (*miles*) formed part of the sacred militia of the invincible god and waged war under his directions on the powers of evil. The dignity of Persian recalled the first origin of the Mazdean religion, and he who obtained it assumed during the sacred ceremonies the Oriental custom of donning the Phrygian cap, which had also been bestowed on Mithra. The latter having been identified with the Sun, his servitors invested themselves with the name of Couriers of the Sun (Ἡλιοδρόμοι); lastly, the "Fathers" were borrowed from the Greek Thiasi, where this honorific appellation frequently designated the directors of the community.

In this septuple division of the deities, certain additional distinctions were established. We may conclude from a passage in Porphyry that the taking of the first three degrees did not authorise participation in the Mysteries. These initiates, comparable to the Christian catechumens, were the servants (ὑπηρετούντες). It was sufficient to enter this order to be admitted to the degree of Ravens, doubtless so called because mythology made the raven the servitor of the Sun. Only the mystics that had received the Leontics became Participants (μετέχοντες), and it is for this reason that the grade of *Leo* is mentioned more frequently in the inscriptions than any other. Finally, at the summit of the hierarchy were placed the Fathers, who appear to have presided over the sacred ceremonies (*pater sacrorum*) and to have commanded the other classes of the faithful. The head of the Fathers themselves bore the name of *Pater Patrum*, sometimes transformed into that of *Pater patratus*, for the purpose of introducing an official sacerdotal title into a naturalised Roman sect. These grand-masters of the adepts retained until their death the general direction of the cult. The reverence and affection which were entertained for these venerable dignitaries are indicated by their name of Father, and the mystics placed under their authority were called brethren among one another, because the fellow-initiates (*consacranei*) were expected to cherish mutual affection.<sup>1</sup>

Admission (*acceptio*) to the lower orders could be accorded even to children. We do not know whether the initiates were obliged to remain in any one of the grades for a fixed length of time. The Fathers probably decided when the novice was suffi-

<sup>1</sup> See the next *Open Court*.

ciently prepared to receive the higher initiation, which they conferred in person (*tradere*).

This ceremony of initiation appears to have borne the name of sacrament (*sacramentum*), doubtless because of the oath which the neophyte took and which was compared to that made by the conscripts enrolled in the army. The candidate engaged above all things not to divulge the doctrines and the rites revealed to him, but other and more special vows were exacted of him. Thus, the mystic that aspired to the title of *Miles* was presented with a crown on a sword. He thrust it back with his hand and caused it to fall on his shoulder, saying that Mithra was his only crown. Thereafter, he never wore one, neither at banquets nor when it was awarded to him as a military honor, replying to the person who conferred it: "It belongs to my god," that is to say, to the invincible god.

We are as poorly acquainted with the liturgy of the seven Mithraic sacraments as we are with the dogmatic instructions that accompanied them. We know, however, that conformably to the ancient Iranian rites, repeated ablutions were prescribed to neophytes as a kind of baptism designed to wash away their guilty stains. As with a certain class of Gnostics, this lustration doubtless had different effects at each stage of initiation, and it might consist according to circumstances either in a simple sprinkling of holy water, or in an actual immersion as in the cult of Isis.

Tertullian also compared the confirmation of his co-religionists to the ceremony in which they "signed" the forehead of the soldier. It appears, however, that the sign or seal impressed was not, as in the Christian liturgy, an unction, but a mark burned with a red-hot iron like that applied in the army to recruits before being admitted to the oath. This indelible imprint perpetuated the memory of the solemn engagement by which the person under vow contracted to serve in that order of chivalry which Mithraism constituted. On reception among the Lions, there were new purifications. But this animal being the emblem of the principle of fire, the use of water, the element hostile to fire, was renounced; and, in order to preserve the initiate from the blemish of sin, honey was poured on his hands and applied to his tongue, as was the custom with new-born children. It was honey also that was presented to the Persian because of its preservative virtue, as Porphyry tells us;<sup>1</sup> in fact, marvellous properties appear to have been associated with this substance, which was believed to have been pro-

<sup>1</sup> Porph., *De antro Nymph.*, c. 15 (*T. et M.*, t. II., p. 40).

duced under the influence of the moon. According to the ancient ideas, it was the food of the blessed, and its absorption by the neophyte made him a peer of the gods.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 2. MITHRAIC COMMUNION.

At the left the Raven and the Persian ; at the right, the Soldier and the Lion.  
(Fragment of a bas-relief recently discovered in Konjiga, Bosnia.)

In the Mazdean service, the celebrant consecrated the bread and the water which he mingled with the intoxicating juice of the Haoma prepared by him, and he consumed these foods during the performance of his sacrifice. These ancient usages were preserved

<sup>1</sup>The liturgic use of honey has recently been elucidated by Usener, "Milch und Honig" (*Hermes*, LVII), 1902, p. 177 ff.

in the Mithraic initiations, save that for the Haoma, a plant unknown in the Occident, was substituted the juice of the vine. A loaf of bread and a goblet of water were placed before the mystic, over which the priest pronounced the sacred formula. This oblation of bread and water, with which undoubtedly wine was afterwards mixed, is compared by the apologists to the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Like the latter, it was not granted until after a long novitiate. It is probable that only those initiates who had attained the degree of Lions were admitted to it, and that this is the reason that the name of "Participants" was given to them. A curious bas-relief recently published shows us the spectacle of this sacred repast (Fig. 2). Before two persons stretched upon a couch covered with pillows is placed a tripod bearing four tiny loaves of bread, each marked with a cross. Around them are grouped the initiates of the different orders, and one of them, the Persian, presents to the two a drinking-horn; whilst a second vessel is held in the hands of one of the participants. These love feasts are evidently the ritual commemoration of the banquet which Mithra celebrated with the Sun before his ascension.<sup>1</sup> From this mystical banquet, and especially from the imbibing of the sacred wine, supernatural effects were expected. The intoxicating liquor gave not only vigor of body and material prosperity, but wisdom of mind; it communicated to the neophyte the power to combat the malignant spirits, and what is more, conferred upon him as upon his god, a glorious immortality.

The sacramental collation was accompanied, or rather preceded, by other rites of a different character. These were genuine trials imposed upon the candidate. To receive the sacred ablutions and the consecrated food, the participant was obliged to prepare for them by prolonged abstinence and numerous austerities; he played the rôle of sufferer in certain dramatic expiations of strange character and of which we know neither the number nor the succession. If we can believe a Christian writer of the fourth century,<sup>2</sup> the eyes of the neophyte were bandaged, his hands were bound with the entrails of chickens, and he was compelled to leap over a ditch filled with water; finally, a liberator approached with a sword and sundered his loathsome bonds. Sometimes, the terrified mystic took part, if not as an actor, at least as a spectator, in a simulated murder, which in its origin was undoubtedly real. In late periods, the officiants were contented with producing a sword dipped in the blood of a man who had met a violent death. The

<sup>1</sup> See *The Open Court* for October, 1902, p. 606.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 671.

cruelty of these ceremonies, which among the warlike tribes of the Taurus must have been downright savage orgies, was softened by contact with Western civilisation. In any event, they had become more fear-inspiring than fearful, and it was the moral courage of the initiate that was tried rather than his physical endurance. The idea which was sought to be attained was the stoic "apathy," the absence of every sensitive emotion. The atrocious tortures, the impossible emasculations, to which some too credulous or inventive authors have condemned the adepts of the Mysteries, must be relegated to the realm of fable, as must likewise the pretended human sacrifices which were said to have been perpetrated in the shades of the sacred crypts.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that Mithraism exhibited nothing more than the benignant phantasmagoria of a species

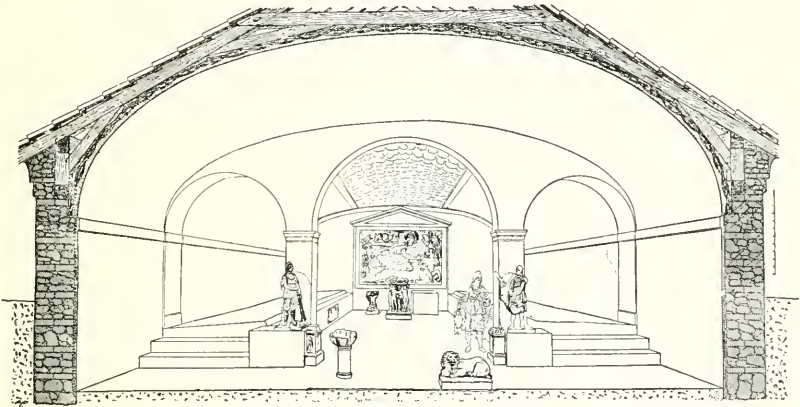


Fig. 3. MITHRÆUM OF CARNUNTUM, THE MODERN PETRONELL, NEAR VIENNA TO THE EAST.<sup>1</sup> (Restored by Mr. Tragau.)

of ancient free masonry. There had subsisted in its liturgic drama vestiges of its original barbarism, of the time when in the forests, in the depths of some dark cave, corybantes, enveloped in the skins of beasts, sprinkled the altars with their blood. In the Roman towns, the secluded caverns of the mountains were replaced by subterranean vaults (*spelæa*) of far less imposing aspect (Fig. 3). But even in these artificial grottos the scenes of initiation were

<sup>1</sup> This Mithræum, like all others of the same style, is underground. Before the great bas-relief of Mithras slaying the bull are two altars, the one large and square in form, the other smaller and richly ornamented. The small statue on the left is Mithras being born from the rocks. At the entrance we see on the right the lion of Mithras and on the left a font for holy water. The two torch-bearers have their stand at the pillars which separate the aisles. The Mithræum is approached by a stairway and through a square hall (or pronaos), which is considerably larger than the sanctum itself.



calculated to produce on the neophyte a profound sensation. When, after having traversed the approaches of the temple, he descended the stairs of the crypt, he perceived before him in the brilliantly decorated and illuminated sanctuary the venerated image of the tauroctonous Mithra erected in the apse, then the monstrous statues of the leontocephalous Kronos, laden with attributes and mystic symbols, the meaning of which was still unknown to him. At the two sides, partly in the shadow, the assistants, kneeling on stone benches, were seen praying. Lamps ranged about the choir threw their bright rays on the images of the gods and the officiants, who, robed in strange costumes, received the new convert. Fitful flashes of light skilfully manipulated impressed his eyes and his mind. The sacred emotion with which he was seized lent to images which were really puerile a most formidable appearance; the vain allurements with which he was confronted appeared to him serious dangers over which his courage triumphed. The fermented beverage which he imbibed excited his senses and disturbed his reason to the utmost pitch; he murmured his efficient formulas, and they evoked before his distracted imagination divine apparitions. In his ecstasy, he believed himself transported beyond the limits of the world, and having issued from his trance he repeated, as did the mystic of Apuleius:<sup>1</sup> "I have transcended the boundaries of death, I have trodden the threshold of Proserpine, and having traversed all the elements I am returned to the earth. In the middle of the night I have seen the Sun scintillating with a pure light; I have approached the gods below and the gods above, and have worshipped them face to face."

The tradition of all this occult ceremonial was scrupulously observed by a priesthood instructed in the divine science and distinct from all classes of initiates. Its first founders were certainly the Oriental Magi, but we are almost entirely ignorant of the manner in which its ranks were later recruited and organised. Was it hereditary, named for life, or chosen for a fixed term? In the latter event, who had the right of choosing and what conditions did the candidates have to fulfil? None of these points is sufficiently elucidated. We can only state that the priest, who bore indifferently, as it seems, the title of *sacerdos* or that of *antistes*, was often, but not always, a member of the Fathers. We find one vicar, and sometimes several, in each temple. There is every ground for believing that a certain hierarchy existed in this "sacerdotal order."

<sup>1</sup> Apuleius, *Metam.*, XI, 23, à propos of the mystics of Isis.

Tertullian tells us that the chief pontiff (*summus pontifex*)<sup>1</sup> could marry but once; he doubtless designated by this Roman name the "Father of the Fathers," who appears to have exercised general jurisdiction over all the initiates residing in the city.<sup>2</sup> This is the only indication we possess regarding an organisation which was perhaps as solidly constituted as that of the Magi in the Sassanian kingdom, or that of the Manicheans of the Roman empire. The same apologist adds that the sectarians of the Persian god also had, like the Christians, their "virgins and their continents." The existence of this kind of Mithraic monachism appears to be all the more remarkable as the merit attached to celibacy is contrary to the spirit of Zoroastrianism.

The rôle of the clergy was certainly more extensive than in the ancient Greek and Roman religions. The priest was the intermediary between God and man. His functions evidently included the administration of the sacraments and the celebration of the services. The inscriptions tell us that in addition he presided at the formal dedications, or at least represented the faithful one on such an occasion along with the Fathers; but this was the least portion only of the duties he had to perform; the religious service which fell to his lot appears to have been very exacting. He doubtless was compelled to see that a perpetual fire burned upon the altars. Three times a day, at dawn, at noon, and at dusk, he addressed a prayer to the Sun, turning in the morning toward the East, at noon toward the South, at evening toward the West. The daily liturgy frequently embraced special sacrifices. The celebrant, garbed in sacerdotal robes resembling those of the Magi, sacrificed to the higher and lower gods divers victims, the blood of which was collected in a trench; or offered them libations, holding in his hands the bundle of sacred twigs which we know from the Avesta. Long psalmodies and chants accompanied with music, were interspersed among the ritual acts. A solemn moment in the service, —one very probably marked by the sounding of a bell,—was that in which the image of the tauroctonous Mithra, hitherto kept veiled, was uncovered before the eyes of the initiates. In some temples, the sculptured slab, like our tabernacles, revolved on a pivot, and alternately concealed and exposed the figures that adorned its two faces.

Every day in the week, the Planet to which it was sacred was

<sup>1</sup> Tertull., *De praescr. haeret.*, XL.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 130. I adopt here the suggestion of M. Wissowa, *Religion der Römer*, 1902, p. 309.

invoked in a fixed spot in the crypt; and Sunday, over which the Sun presided, was especially holy. Further, the liturgic calendar solemnised certain dates by festivals concerning which we are unfortunately very poorly informed. Possibly the sixteenth or middle day of the month continued (as in Persia) to have Mithra for its patron. On the other hand, there is never a word in the Occident concerning the celebration of the Mithrakana, which were so popular in Asia.<sup>1</sup> They were doubtless merged in the celebration of the 25th of December, for a very wide-spread custom required that the new birth of the Sun (*Natalis invicti*), which began to wax great again on the termination of the winter solstice, should be celebrated by sacred festivals. We have good reasons for believing that equinoxes were also days of rejoicing, the return of the deified seasons being inaugurated by some religious salutation. The initiations took place preferably at the beginning of spring, in March or in April, at the Paschal period, when Christians likewise admitted their catechumens to the rites of baptism. But concerning all these solemnities, as generally with everything connected with the heortology<sup>2</sup> of the Mysteries, our ignorance is almost absolute.

The Mithraic communities were not only brotherhoods united by spiritual bonds; they were also associations possessing juridic existence and enjoying the right of holding property. For the management of their affairs and the care of their temporal interests, they elected officers, who must not be confounded either with the initiates or the priests. The titles borne in the descriptions by the members of these boards of trustees prove to us that the organisation of the colleges of the worshippers of Mithra did not differ from that of the other religious *sodalicia*, which was based upon the constitutions of the municipalities or towns. These corporations published an official list of their members, an *album sacratorum*, in which the latter were ranked according to the importance of their office. They had at their head a council of decurions, a directing committee named most likely in a general assembly, a sort of miniature senate, of which the first ten (*decem primi*) possessed, as in the cities, special privileges. They had their masters (*magistri*) or presidents, elected annually, their curators (*curatores*), upon whom fell the task of managing the finances, their attorneys (*defensores*), charged with presenting their cause before the courts or public bureaux; and finally, their patrons (*patroni*), persons of consider-

<sup>1</sup> See *The Open Court*, for March, 1902, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> The science of festivals. From ἑορτή, festival, holiday.—Tr.

ation, from whom they expected not only efficient protection but also pecuniary aid in replenishing their budget.

As the state granted them no subsidies, their well-being depended exclusively on private generosity. Voluntary contributions, the regular revenues of the college, scarcely covered the expenses of worship, and the least extraordinary expenditure was a heavy burden for the common purse. These associations of unmoneyed people could not, with their slender resources, construct sumptuous temples; ordinarily they acquired from some land-holder a piece of ground favorably situated, on which they erected, or rather dug, their chapel, some other benefactor defraying the cost of the construction. Or, some wealthy burgher placed at the disposal of the mystics a cellar, where they installed themselves as best they could. If the original donor had not the means to pay for the interior decoration of the crypt and the modelling of the sacred images, other Brothers supplied the necessary sum, and a honorific inscription perpetuated the memory of their munificence. Three dedicatory inscriptions found in Rome enable us to witness the founding of one of these Mithraic congregations.<sup>1</sup> A freedman and a freeman contributed a marble altar, two other initiates consecrated a second one, and a slave likewise made his modest offering. The generous protectors obtained in return for their liberality the highest dignities in the little church. Through their efforts it was gradually furnished, and in the end could allow itself certain luxuries. Marble succeeded common stone, sculpture replaced plaster, and mosaic was substituted for painting. Finally, when the first temple fell into decay, the enriched community frequently rebuilt it with new splendor.

The number of the gifts mentioned in the epigraphic texts bears witness to the attachment of the faithful to the brotherhoods into which they had been admitted. It was owing to the constant devotion of the thousands of zealous disciples that these societies, the organic cells of the great religious body, could live and flourish. The order was divided into a multitude of little circles, strongly knit together and practising the same rites in the same sanctuaries. The size of the temples in which they worshipped is proof that the number of members was always very limited. Even supposing that the participants only were allowed to enter the subterranean crypt and that the initiates of inferior rank were admitted only to the vestibule (*pronaos*), it is impossible that these societies should have counted more than one hundred members. When the

<sup>1</sup>CIL, VI, 556, 717, 734 = 30822 (*T. et M.*, t. II, p. 101, nos 47-48bis).

number increased beyond measure, a new chapel was constructed and the group separated. In these compact churches, where every one knew and aided every one else, prevailed the intimacy of a large family. The clear-cut distinctions of an aristocratic society were here effaced; the adoption of the same faith had made the slave the equal, and sometimes the superior, of the decurion and the *clarissimus*. All bowed to the same rules, all were equally honored guests at the same festivals, and after their death they all doubtless reposed in one common sepulchre. Although no Mithraic cemetery has been discovered up to the present day, the special belief of the sect regarding the future life and its very definite rites render it quite probable that like the majority of the Roman *sodalicia* it formed not only religious colleges but also funerary associations. It certainly practised inhumation, and the liveliest and most ardent desire of its adepts must have been that of obtaining an interment that was at once honorable and religious, a "mansion eternal," where they could await in peace the day of the resurrection. If the name of brothers which the initiates gave themselves was not an empty term, they were bound to render to one another at least this last duty.

The very imperfect image that we can frame of the interior life of the Mithraic conventicles aids us nevertheless in fathoming the reasons of their rapid multiplication. The humble plebeians who first entered its vaults in great numbers found in the fraternity of these congregations succor and solace. In joining them, they passed from their isolation and abandonment to become part of a powerful organisation with a fully developed hierarchy and having ramifications that spread like a dense net over the entire empire. Besides, the titles which were conferred upon them satisfied the natural desire that dwells in every man of playing some part in the world and of enjoying some consideration in the eyes of his fellows.

With these purely secular reasons were associated the more powerful motives of faith. The members of these little societies imagined themselves in the privileged possession of a body of ancient wisdom derived from the far Orient. The secrecy with which these unfathomable arcana were surrounded increased the veneration that they inspired: *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*. The gradual initiations kept alive in the heart of the neophyte the hopes of truth still more sublime, and the strange rites which accompanied them left in his ingenuous soul an ineffaceable impression. The converts believed they found, and, the suggestion being transformed into reality, actually did find, in the mystic ceremonies a

stimulant and a consolation. They believed themselves purified of their guilt by the ritual ablutions, and this baptism lightened their conscience of the weight of their heavy responsibility. They came forth strengthened from these sacred banquets, which contained the promise of a better life, where the sufferings of this world would find their full compensation. The astonishing spread of Mithraism is due in large measure to these stupendous illusions, which would appear ludicrous were they not so profoundly and thoroughly human.

Nevertheless, in the competition between the rival churches that disputed under the Cæsars the empire of human souls, one cause of inferiority rendered the struggle unequal for the Persian sect. Whilst the majority of the Oriental cults accorded to women a considerable rôle in their churches, and sometimes even a preponderating one, finding in them ardent supporters of the faith, Mithra forbade their participation in his Mysteries and so deprived himself of the incalculable assistance of these propagandists. The rude discipline of the order did not permit them to take the degrees in the sacred cohorts, and, as among the Mazdeans of the Orient, they occupied only a secondary place in the society of the faithful. Among the hundred of inscriptions that have come down to us, not one mentions either a priestess, a woman initiate, or even a donatress. But a religion which aspired to become universal could not deny a knowledge of divine things to one half of the human race, and in order to afford some opportunity for feminine devotion it contracted at Rome an alliance which certainly contributed to its success. The history of Mithraism in the Occident would not be intelligible if we neglected to consider its policy toward the rest of paganism.