Thrice-Greatest Hermes

by G. R. S. Mead

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Mead's translation and prolegomena to the Corpus Hermeticum and Hellenistic-Egyptian gnosis.

Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis

Being a Translation of the Extant Sermons and

Fragments of the Trismegistic Literature, with

Prolegomena, Commentaries, and Notes

The Theosophical Publishing Society

THESE volumes, complete in themselves as a series of studies in a definite body of tradition, are intended to serve ultimately as a small contribution to the prepara- tion of the way leading towards a solution of the vast problems involved in the scientific study of the Origins of the Christian Faith. They might thus perhaps be described as the preparation of materials to serve for the historic, mythic, and mystic consideration of the Origins of Christianity, — where the term " mythic " is used in its true sense of inner, typical, sacred and "logic," as opposed to the external processioning of physical events known as " historic, " and where the term "mystic" is used as that which pertains to initiation and the mysteries.

The serious consideration of the matter contained in these pages will, I hope, enable the attentive reader to outline in his mind, however vaguely, some small portion of the environment of infant Christianity, and allow him to move a few steps round the cradle of Christendom.

Though the material that we have collected, has, as to its externals, been tested, as far as our hands are capable of the work, by the methods of scholarship and criticism, it has nevertheless at the same time been allowed ungrudgingly to show itself the outward

expression of a truly vital endeavour of immense interest and value to all who are disposed to make friends with it. For along this ray of the Trismegistic tradition we may allow ourselves to be drawn back- wards in time towards the holy of holies of- the Wisdom of Ancient Egypt. The sympathetic study of this material may well prove an initiatory process towards an understanding of that Archaic Gnosis.

And, therefore, though these volumes are intended to show those competent to judge that all has been set forth in decency according to approved methods of modern research, they are also designed for those who are not qualified to give an opinion on such matters, but who are able to feel and think with the writers of these beautiful tractates.

The following abbreviations have been used for economy of space:

D. J, L. = Mead (G. E. S.), Did Jesus Live 100 B.C. ? An Enquiry into the Talmud Jesus Stories, the Toldoth Jeschu, and Some Curious Statements of Epiphanius : being a Contri- bution to the Study of Christian Origins (London, 1903).

F. F. F. = Mead (G. K. S.), Fragments of a Faith Forgotten. Some Short Sketches among the Gnostics, mainly of the First Two Centuries : a Contribution to the Study of Christian Origins based on the most recently recovered Materials (London, 1900 ; 2nd ed. 1906).

G.=Gaisford (T.), Joannis Stobai Florilegium (Oxford, 1822), 4 vols. ; lo. Stob. EC. Phys. et Ethic. Libri Duo (Oxford, 1850), 2 vols.

K. #. = " The Virgin of the World " (Kdpr> KoV/xow).

P.=Parthey (G.), Hermetis Trismegisti Pcemander ad Fidem Godi- cum Manu Scriptorum recognovit (Berlin, 1854).

Poi. = Patrizzi (F.), Nova de Universis Philosophia (Venice, 1593).

P. S. A. = "The Perfect Sermon, or Asclepius."

B. = Reitzenstein (R.), Poimandres : Studien zur griechisch-agyptis-

chen und fruchristlichen Literatur (Leipzig, 1904). Ri. = Richter (M. C. E.), Philonis Judcei Opera Omnia, in Biblio-

theca Sacra Patrum Ecclesice Groecwum (Leipzig, 1828-1830),

S. I. H. = " The Sermon of Isis to Horus." fr. = Wachsmuth (C.), lo. Stob. Anihologii Lib. Duo Priores . . .

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Name and fame in one, Like a stream, to which, converging,

Who shall call his dreams fallacious ?

Who has searched or sought All the unexplored and spacious

Shall with rule and line Mark the border-land dividing

Trismegistus ! Three times greatest !

How thy name sublime Has descended to this latest

1 This poem is dated January 1882. Chambers (p. 155, n.) says: " It is noteworthy that the last poem of Longfellow was a lyrical ode in celebration of Hermes Trismegistus. "

THE EEMAINS OF THE TEISMEGISTIC LITEEATUEE

LITTLE did I think when, years ago, I began to translate some of the Trismegistic tractates, that the undertaking would finally grow into these volumes. My sole object then was to render the more important of these beautiful theosophic treatises into an English that might, perhaps, be thought in some small way worthy of the Greek originals. I was then more attracted by the sermons themselves than by the manifold problems to which they gave rise; I found greater pleasure in the spiritual atmosphere they created, than in the critical considera- tions which insistently imposed themselves upon my mind, as I strove to realise their importance for the history of the development of religious ideas in the Western world.

And now, too, when I take pen in hand to grapple with the difficulties of "introduction" for those who will be good enough to follow my all-insufficient labours, it is to the tractates themselves that I turn again and again for refreshment in the task; and every time I turn to them I am persuaded that the best of them are worthy of all the labour a man can bestow upon them.

Though it is true that the form of these volumes, with their Prolegomena and Commentaries and numer- ous notes, is that of a technical treatise, it has never- theless been my aim to make them throughout

accessible to the general reader, even to the man of one language who, though no scholar himself, may yet be deeply interested in such studies. These volumes must, there- fore, naturally fall short of the precision enjoyed by the works of technical specialists which are filled with direct quotations from a number of ancient and modern tongues ; on the other hand, they have the advantage of appealing to a larger public, while at the same time the specialist is given every indication for controlling the statements and translations.

Nor should the general reader be deterred by an introductory volume under the imposing sub-title of Prolegomena, imagining that these chapters are neces- sarily of a dull, critical nature, for the subjects dealt with are of immense interest in themselves (at least they seem so to me), and are supplementary to the Trismegistic sermons, frequently adding material of a like nature to that in our tractates.

Some of these Prolegomena have grown out of the Commentaries, for I found that occasionally subjects lent themselves to such lengthy digressions that they could be removed to the Prolegomena to the great advantage of the Commentary. The arrangement of the material thus accumulated, however, has proved a very difficult task, and I have been able to preserve but little logical sequence in the chapters ; but this is owing mainly to the fact that the extant Trismegistic literature itself is preserved to us in a most chaotic fashion, and I as yet see no means of inducing any sure order into this chaos,

REMAINS OF THE TRISMEGISTIC LITERATURE

To distinguish our writings both from the Egyptian "Books of Thoth" and the Hermes Prayers of the popular Egyptian cult, as found in the Greek Magic Papyri, and also from the later Hermetic Alchemical literature, I have adopted the term Trismegistic litera- ture in place of the usual designation Hermetic.

Of this Greek Trismegistic literature proper, much is lost; that which remains to us, of which I have en- deavoured to gather together every fragment and scrap, falls under five heads :

B. The Perfect Sermon, or the Asclepius.

D. Eeferences and Fragments in the Fathers.

E. Eeferences and Fragments in the Philosophers.

A. The Corpus Hermeticum includes what has, pre- vious to Reitzenstein,1 been known as the "Poimandres" * collection of fourteen Sermons and the " Definitions of Asclepius."

B. The Perfect Sermon, or the Asclepius, is no longer extant in Greek, but only in an Old Latin version.

C. There are twenty-seven Excerpts, from otherwise lost Sermons, by John Stobseus, a Pagan scholar of the

1 Reitzenstein (R.), Poimandres: Studien «ur grieckisch- agyptischen und friihchristlichen Liter atur (Leipzig ; 1904).

2 Variously translated, or metamorphosed, as Pcemandres, Pcemander, Pcemandre, Pymandar, Pimander, Pimandre, Piman- dro. Already Patrizzi, in 1591, pointed out that only one treatise could be called by this title ; but, in spite of this, the bad habit inaugurated by the editio princeps (in Latin translation) of Marsiglio Ficino has persisted to the last edition of the text by Parthey (1854) and the last translation by Chambers (1882).

end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century, who was an immense reader and made a most valuable collection of extracts from Greek authors, though studiously avoiding every Christian writer. Some of these Excerpts are of great length, especially those from the Sermon entitled " The Virgin of the World " ; these twenty-seven Excerpts are exclusive of extracts from Sermons still preserved in our Corpus.

D. From the Church Fathers we obtain many refer- ences and twenty-five short Fragments, otherwise unknown to us, and considerably widening our ac- quaintance with the scope of the literature.

E. From Zosimus and Fulgentius we obtain three Fragments, and from the former and lamblichus, and Julian the Emperor-Philosopher, we obtain a number of valuable references.

Such are what at first sight may appear to be the comparatively scanty remains of what was once an exceedingly abundant literature. But when we re- member that this literature was largely reserved and kept secret, we cannot but congratulate ourselves that so much has been preserved ; indeed, as we shall see later on, but for the lucky chance of a Hermetic apolo- gist selecting some of the sermons to exemplify the loyal nature of the Trismegistic teaching with respect to kings and rulers, we should be without any Hermetic Corpus at all, and dependent solely on our extracts and fragments.

But even with our Hermetic Corpus before us we should never forget that we have only a fraction of the Trismegistic literature — the flotsam and jetsam, so to say, of a once most noble vessel that sailed the seas of human endeavour, and was an ark of refuge to many a pious and cultured soul.

References to lost writings of the School will meet

us abundantly in the course of our studies, and some attempt will be made later on to form a notion of the main types of the literature.

As for the rest of the so-called Hermetic works, medico-mathematical, astrological and medico-astro- logical, and alchemical, and for a list of the many inventions attributed to the Thrice-greatest — inven- tions as numerous as, and almost identical with, those attributed to Orpheus by fond posterity along the line of "pure" Hellenic tradition — I would refer the student to the Bibliotheca Grceca of Joannes Albertus Fabricius.1

For the Alchemical and Mediaeval literature the two magnificent works of Berthelot (M. P. E.) are indispens- able— namely, Collection des anciens Alchimistes grecs (Paris, 1888), and La Chimie au Moyen Age (Paris, 1893).

In close connection with the development of this form of " Hermetic " tradition must be taken the Hermes writings and traditions among the Arabs. See Beausobre's Histoire Critique de ManicMe et du Mani- cMisme (Amsterdam, 1734), i. 326 ; also Fleischer (H. L.), Hermes Trismegislus an die menschliche Seele, Ara- bisch und DeutscJi (Leipzig, 1870); Bardenhewer (0.), Hermetis Trismegisti gui apud Arabes fertur de Casti- gatione Animce Liber (Bonn, 1873) ; and especially R Pietschmann, the pupil of Georg Ebers, who devotes the fourth part of his treatise, entitled Hermes Trisme- gistus nach dgyptischen und orientalischen Uberlieferungen (Leipzig, 1875), to a consideration of the Hermes tradition, " Bei Syrern und Araben."

1 Vol. i., lib. i., cap. vii. See the fourth and last edition (Leipzig, 1790), with up to that time unedited supplements by Fabricius and G. C. Heumann, and very numerous and im- portant additions by Q. C. Harles.

Reitzenstein treats very briefly of the development of this later Hermetic literature on pp. 188-200 of his Poimandres.1

From the fragmentary nature of the remains of the Trismegistic literature that have come down to us, it will be at once seen that a critical text of them is a complicated undertaking; for, apart from the Corpus, the texts have to be collected from the works of many authors. This, however, has never yet been done in any critical fashion ; so that a translator has first of all to find the best existing critical texts of these authors from which to make his version. This, I hope, I have succeeded in doing ; but even so, numerous obscurities still remain in the texts of the excerpts, fragments, and quotations, and it is highly desirable that some scholar specially acquainted with our literature should collect all these together in one volume, and work over the labours of specialists on the texts of Stobseus and the Fathers, with the added equipment of his own special knowledge.

Even the text of our Corpus is still without a thoroughly critical edition ; for though Reitzenstein has done this work most admirably for G. H., i., xiii. (xiv.), and (xvi.)-(xviii.), basing himself on five MSS. and the printed texts of the earlier editions, he has not thought fit to give us a complete text.

A list of the then known MSS. is given in Harles' edition of Fabricius' Bibliotheca Grceca (pp. 51, 52); while Parthey gives notes on the only two MSS. he used in his edition of fourteen of the Sermons of

1 For the Hermetic writing in Pitra, Anakcta Sacra et Classica, pt. ii., see K., pp. 16, n. 4, and 259, n. 1 ; and for reference to the Arabic literature, pp. 23, n. 5, and 172, n. 3.

our Corpus. It is, however, generally believed that there may be other MSS. hidden away in Continental libraries.

All prior work on the MSS., however, is entirely superseded by Eeitzenstein in his illuminating " History of the Text" (pp. 319-327), in which we have the whole matter set forth with the thoroughness that characterises the best German scholarship.

From him we learn that we owe the preservation of our Hermetic Corpus to a single MS. that was found in the eleventh century in a sad condition. Whole quires and single leaves were missing, both at the beginning (after ch. i.) and the end (after ch. xvi.) ; even in the remaining pages, especially in the last third, the writing was in a number of places no longer legible.

In this condition the MS. came into the hands of Michael Psellus, the great reviver of Platonic studies at Byzantium, probably at the time when his orthodoxy was being called into question. Psellus thought he would put these writings into circulation again, but at the same time guard himself against the suspicion that their contents corresponded with his own conclusions. This accounts for the peculiar scholion to C. H., i. 18, which seems at first pure monkish denunciation of Pcemandres as the Devil in disguise to lead men from the truth, while the conclusion of it betrays so deep an interest in the contents that it must have been more than purely philological.

And that such an interest was aroused in the following centuries at Byzantium, may be concluded from the fact that the last three chapters, which directly justify polytheism or rather Heathendom, were omitted in a portion of the MSS., and only that part of the Corpus received a wider circulation which corresponded

with what might be regarded at first sight as a Neoplatonism assimilated to Christianity. The text was reproduced with thoughtless exactitude, so that though its tradition is extraordinarily bad, it is uniform, and we can recover with certainty the copy of Psellus from the texts of the fourteenth century.

These Trismegistic Sermons obtained a larger field of operation with the growth of Humanism in the West. Georgius Gemistus Pletho, in the latter part of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, brought Neoplatonism from Byzantium into Italy as a kind of religion and made a deep impression on Cosimo Medici ; and Marsiglio Ficino, who was early selected by the latter as the head of the future Academy, must have made his Latin translation of our Corpus, which appeared in 1463, to serve as the first groundwork of this undertaking. Cosimo had the Greek text brought from Bulgaria (Macedonia) by a monk, Fra Lionardo of Pistoja, and it is still in the Medicean Library.

It was not, however, till the middle of the sixteenth century that the Greek text was printed; and meantime, with the great interest taken in these writings by the Humanists, a large number of MSS. arose which sought to make the text more understandable or more elegant ; such MSS. are of no value for the tradition of the text.

We will now proceed to give some account of the texts and translations of the Trismegistic writings, a bibliographical labour which the general reader will most probably skip, but which the real student will appreciate at its proper value.1

1 This study was published in the Theosopfvical Review, May 1899, and is independent of Reitzenstein's work.

REMAINS OF THE TRISMEGISTIC LITERATURE 9

The best account of the texts and translations up to 1790 is that of Harles, who has entirely rewritten the account of Fabricius (op. dt., pp. 52 ff.).1

The editio princeps was not a text but a Latin trans- lation by Marsiglio Ficino (Marsilius Ficinus), published in quarto in 147 1.2 Both the name of the publisher and place of publication are lacking, but the British Museum catalogue inserts them in parenthesis as " G. de Lisa, Treviso," presumably on the authority of Harles. This translation consisted of the so-called " Pcemandres," in fourteen chapters, that is to say fourteen treatises, under the general title, Mercurii Trismegisti Liber de Potestaie et Sapientia Dei (or The Book of Mercury Trismegist coiwerning theJPower and Wisdom of God). The enormous popularity of this work is seen by the fact of the very numerous editions (for a book of that time) through which it ran. No less than twenty-two editions have appeared, the first eight of them in the short space of a quarter of a century.3

In 1548 there appeared an Italian translation of Ficinus' Latin version of the " Pcemandres " collection, entitled H Pimandro di Met -curio Trismegisto, done into Florentine by Tommaso Benci, printed at Florence in 12mo. A second edition was printed at Florence in 1549 in 8vo, with numerous improvements by Paitoni.

1 S. F. W. Hoffmann's Bibliographisches Lexicon der gesammten Litteratur der Griechen (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1839) simply copies Harles, while his appendix of " Erlauterungsschriften " is of no value.

2 K. (p. 320), as we have seen, gives the date as 1463, but I have found no trace of this edition.

The first Greek text was printed at Paris, in 1554, by Adr. Turnebus ; it included the " Poemandres " and "The Definitions of Asclepius," to which the Latin version of Ficino was appended. The title is, Mercurii Trismegisti Pcemander seu de Potestate ac Sapientia Divina: Aesculapii Definitions ad Ammonem Regem\ the Greek was edited by P. Angelo da Barga (Angelus Vergecius).

In 1557 appeared the first French translation by Gabriel du Preau, at Paris, with a lengthy title, Deux Livres de Mercure Trismegiste Hermes tres ancien Theologien, et excellant PhUozophe. L'un de la puissance et sapience de Dieu. L'autre de la volonte de Dieu. Auecq'un Dialogue de Loys Lazarel, poete Chrestien, intitule" le Bassin d' Hermes.

This seems to be simply a translation of an edition of Ficinus" Latin version published at Paris by Henr. Stephanus in 1505, to which a certain worthy, Loys Lazarel, who further rejoiced in the agnomen of Septempedanus, appended a lucubration of his own of absolutely no value,1 for the title of Estienne's edition runs : Pimander Mercurii Liber de Sapientia et Potestate Dei. Asclepius, ejusdem Mercurii Liber de Voluntate Divina. Item Crater Hermetis a Lazarelo Septempedano.

In 1574 Franciscus Flussas Candalle reprinted at Bourdeaux, in 4to, Turnebus' Greek text, which he emended, with the help of the younger Scaliger and other Humanists, together with a Latin translation, under the title, Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander sive Pcsmander. This text is still of critical service to-day.

This he followed with a French translation, printed in 1579, also at Bourdeaux in folio, and bearing the title, Le Pimandre de Mercure Trismegiste de la Philo-

1 The writer has painfully perused it, for, more fortunate than the British Museum, he possesses a copy of this rare work.

sophie Chrestienne, Cognoissance du Verb Divin, et de I'JExcellence des (Euvres de Dieu. This we are assured is translated " de I'exemplaire Grec, avec collation de tres-amples commentaires," l all of which is followed by the full name and titles of Flussas, to wit, " FranQois Monsieur de Foix, de la famille de Candalle, Captal de Buchs, etc., Evesque d'Ayre, etc.," the whole being dedicated to " Marguerite de France, Eoine de Navarre."

Twelve years later Franciscus Patricius (Cardinal Francesco Patrizzi) printed an edition of the text of the Sermons of the Corpus, of "The Asclepius," and also of most of the Extracts and of some of the Fragments ; he, however, has arranged them all in a quite arbitrary fashion, and has as arbitrarily altered the text, which generally followed that of Turnebus and Candalle, in innumerable places. To this he appended a Latin translation, in which he emended the versions of Ficino and de Foix, as he tells us, in no less than 1040 places. These were included in his Nova de Universis Philosophia, printed at Ferrara, in folio, 1591, and again at Venice by R Meiettus, in 1593, as an appendix to his Nov. de Un. PML, now increased to fifty books.

This Latin translation of Patrizzi was printed apart, together with the Chaldcean Oracles, at Hamburg in 12mo, also, in 1593, under the title Magia Philosophica. The latter edition bears the subscription on the title- page, "jam mmc primum ex Biblioteca Ranzoviana b tenebris eruta" which Harles explains as a reprint by plain Henr. Eanzou, who is, however, described in the volume itself as " prodiix." It seems to have been again reprinted at Hamburg in 1594 in 8vo.

Meantime the Carmelite, Hannibal Eossellus,2 had

1 These on perusal prove of little value.

been laboriously engaged for many years on an edition of the " Poemandres " with most elaborate commen- taries. This was printed at Cracow by Lazarus, in six volumes in folio, from 1585 to 1590. Eossel treats of philosophy, theology, the Pope, the scriptures, and all disciplines in his immanibus commentariis, inepte as some say, while others bestow on him great praise. His title is Pymander Mercurii Trismegisti. This was reprinted with the text and translation of de Foix in folio at Cologne in 1630, under the title Divinus Pimander Hermetis Mercurii Trismegisti.

Hitherto nothing had been done in England, but in 1611 an edition of Ficinus' translation was printed in London. This was followed by what purports to be a translation of the " Poemandres " from Arabic,1 " by that learned Divine, Doctor Everard," as the title-page sets forth. It was printed in London in 1650 in 8vo, with a preface by "J. F.," and bears the title The Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, in xvii. Books. Translated formerly out of the Ar abide into Greek [!] and thence into Latin, and Dutch, and now out of the Original into English. There was a second edition of Everard's version printed at London in 1657, in 12mo. There are also reprints of the 1650 edition by Fryar of Bath, with an introduction by Hargrave Jennings, in 1884 ; 2 by P. B. Randolph, Toledo, Ohio, 1889 ; and by the Theosophical Publishing Society, in the Collectanea Hermetica, edited by "W. Wynn Westcott, in 1893.

To what Dutch translation Everard refers I cannot discover, for the only one known to me is that printed

1 It is clear, however, that Everard translated from Ficinus' Latin version, and that the " Arabick " is a myth.

2 Of which only 200 copies were issued to subscribers, as though, forsooth, they were to come into great " occult " secrets thereby.

at Amsterdam in 1652 in 12mo. It is a translation of Patrizzi's text, and bears the title, Sestien Boecken van den Hermes Trismegistus. . . . uyt het G-riecx ghebracht . . . met eene . . . Voorede uyt het Latijn von F. PatriciiLs in de welcke Tiij bewijst dat desen . . . Philosoph heeft geUeoyt voor Moyses, etc. Harles says nothing of this edition, but speaks of one printed at Amsterdam in 1643 in4to, by Nicholas van Eauenstein, but I can find no other trace of it.

The first German translation was by a certain Aletho- philus, and was printed at Hamburg in 1706 (8vo) under the title Hermetis Trismegisti Erkdntnuss der Natur, etc., containing seventeen pieces ; this was reprinted at Stuttgart in 1855, in a curious collection by J. Schieble, entitled Kleiner Wunder-Schauplatz}- The title reads Hermetis Trismegisti Einleitung in's hochste Wissen von JErkentniss der Natur und der darin sich offeribarenden grossen Grottes, with an appendix concerning the person of Hermes, etc.

But why Schieble should have reprinted Aletho- philus' translation is not clear, when in 1781 a new translation into German, with critical notes and valuable suggestions for emending the text, had appeared by Dieterich Tiedemann (Berlin and Stettin, in 8vo), entitled Hermes Trismegists Pcemander, oder von der gottlichen Macht und Weisheit, a rare book which, already in 1827, Baumgarten-Crusius 2 laments

1 Part of the full title runs: K. W.-S. d. Wissenschaften, Mysterien, Theosophie, gottlichen und morgenlandischen Magie, Naturkrafte, hermet. u. inagnet. Phil., Kabbala, u. and. hohern Kentnissen, and much more in the same strain, but I have no doubt the reader has already had enough of it. From 1855 to 1857 fourteen parts appeared, mostly taken up with German translations of Hermes, of Agrippa's Philosophia Occulta from the Latin, and of The Telescope of Zoroaster from the French.

as almost unfindable in the republic of letters, and of which the British Museum possesses no copy.1

It is remarkable that of a work which exhausted so many editions in translation and was evidently received with such great enthusiasm, there have been so few editions of the text, and that for two centuries and a quarter2 no attempt was made to collate the different MSS. and editions, until in 1854 Gustav Parthey printed a critical text of the fourteen pieces of " Poemandres," at Berlin, under the title Sermetis Trismegisti Posmander, to which he appended a Latin translation based on the original version of Ficino successively revised by de Foix and Patrizzi. Parthey's promise to edit reliqua Hermetis scripta has not been fulfilled, and no one else has so far attempted this most necessary task.

Reitzenstein's (p. 322) opinion of Parthey's text, however, is very unfavourable. In the first place, Parthey took Patrizzi's arbitrary alterations as a true tradition of the text ; in the second, he himself saw neither of

the MSS. on which he says he relies. The first of these was very carelessly copied for him and carelessly used by him; while the second, which was copied by D. Hamm, is very corrupt owing to very numerous "corrections" and interpolations by a later hand — all of which Parthey has adopted as ancient readings. His text, therefore, concludes Eeitzenstein, is doubly falsified — a very discouraging judgment for lovers of accuracy.

In 1866 there appeared at Paris, in 8vo, a complete translation in French of the Trismegistic treatises and

1 I have, therefore, not been able to avail myself of Tiede- mann's labours. R. 322 speaks highly of them.

2 The last edition prior to Parthey's was the reprint of Flusaas" text, at Cologne in 1630, appended to Rossel's lucubrations.

fragments by Louis Me*nard, entitled Hermh Trisme'giste, preceded by an interesting study on the origin of the Hermetic books, of which a second edition was printed in 1867. This is beyond question the most sympathetic version that we at present possess.

Everard's version of the " Poemandres " being re- printed in 1884 by Fryar of Bath, the rest of the treatises were retranslated by Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland from Mdnard's French version (including his notes), and appeared in 1885 (in 4to), published by Fryar, but bearing a publisher's name in India, under the general title The Hermetic Works : The Virgin of the World of Hermes Mercurius Trisme- gistus. Meantime, in 1882, J. D. Chambers had pub lished (at Edinburgh, in 8vo) a crabbed and slavishly literal translation of the "Poemandres," together with the Excerpts from Stobeeus and the Notices of Hermes in the Fathers, with an introductory Preface, under the title, The Theological and Philosophical Works of Hermes Trismegistus, Christian Neoplatonist. Indeed, the loose and erroneous version of Everard is far more comprehensible than this fantastically literal translation.

For the last six years I have myself been publishing, in the pages of The Theosophical Review, translations of the Trisiuegistic Sermons and also a few of the studies now included in these Prolegomena ; all of the former, however, have been now carefully revised, and the latter have for the most part been greatly enlarged and improved.

Finally, in 1904, E. Eeitzenstein of Strassburg published at Leipzig his illuminating study, Poimandres, in which he gives the critical text of 0. JS., i., xiii. (xiv.), (xvi.)-(xviii.), based on five MSS. and the best early printed editions, with all that minute care, knowledge of palaeography, and enthusiasm for philology which

characterises the best textual-critical work of modern scholarship. Why, however, Eeitzenstein has not done the same good service for the whole of the Corpus as he has done for the selected sermons, is a mystery. He is the very man for the task, and the service he could render would be highly appreciated by many.

So much, then, for the existing partial texts and translations of the extant Trismegistic literature. Of the translations with which I am acquainted,1 Everard's (1650), the favourite in England, because of its dignified English, is full of errors, mistranslations, and obscurities ; it is hopeless to try to understand " Hermes " from this version. Chambers's translation (1882, from the text of Par they) is so slavishly literal that it ceases to be English in many places, in others goes wide of the sense, and, in general, is exasperating. Menard's French translation (1866, also from Parthey's text) is elegant and sympathetic, but very free in many places ; in fact, not infrequently quite emancipated from the text. The most literally accurate translation is Parthey's Latin version (based on the Latin translation of Ficino, as emended by Candalle and Patrizzi) ; but even in such literal rendering he is at fault at times, while in general no one can fully understand the Latin without the Greek. To translate " Hermes " requires not only a good knowledge of Greek, but also a know- ledge of that Gnosis which he has not infrequently so admirably handed on to us.

1 As already remarked, I have not been able to see a copy of the German of Tiedemann.

THE HISTORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF OPINION

WE have now to consider the following interesting points :

The early Church Fathers in general accepted the Trismegistic writings as exceedingly ancient and authoritative, and in their apologetic writings quote them in support of the main general positions of Christianity.

In the revival of learning, for upwards of a century and a half, all the Humanists welcomed them with open arms as a most valuable adjunct to Christianity, and as being in accord with its doctrines ; so much so that they laboured to substitute Trismegistus for Aristotle in the schools.

During the last two centuries and a half, however, a body of opinion was gradually evolved, infinitesimal in its beginnings but finally well-nigh shutting out every other view, that these writings were Neoplatonic forgeries and plagiarisms of Christianity.

Finally, with the dawn of the twentieth century, the subject has been rescued from the hands of opinion, and has begun to be established on the firm ground of historical and critical research, opening up problems of the greatest interest and importance for the history of Christian origins and their connection with Hellen-

istic theology and theosophy, and throwing a brilliant light on the development of Gnosticism.

The first point will be brought out in detail in the volume in which a translation of all the passages and references to Thrice-greatest Hermes in the writings of the Church Fathers will be given; while the last will be made abundantly apparent, we hope, in the general course of our studies. The second and third points will now demand our immediate attention, especially the third, for we have endeavoured with great labour to become acquainted with all the "arguments" which have tended to build up this opinion ; and unless we have to change all our ideas as to the time-frame of so-called Neoplatonism, we are entirely unconvinced ; for we find that it has been evolved from unsupported assertions, and that not one single work exists which ventures in any satisfactory fashion to argue the question (most writers merely reasserting or echoing prior

opinions), or in which the statements made may not as easily prove the priority of the Trismegistic school to the Neoplatonic as the reverse.

We will then proceed to give some account of this chaos of contradictory opinions, picking out the most salient points.

That the early scholars of the revival of learning were all unanimously delighted with the Trismegistic writings, is manifest from the bibliography we have already given, and that they should follow the judgment of the ancient Fathers in the matter is but natural to expect; for them not only were the books prior to Christianity, but they were ever assured that Hermes

had been a really existent personality, like any of the Biblical worthies, such as Enoch and Noah (as was unquestionably believed in those days), and further, that he was prior to, or a contemporary of, Moses.1

Thus in the editio princeps of Ficino we read : " Who- ever thou art who readest these things, whether grammarian, or rhetorician, or philosopher, or theo- logian, know thou that I am Hermes the Thrice-greatest, at whom wondered first the Egyptians and the other nations, and subsequently the ancient Christian theo- logians, in utter stupefaction at my doctrine rare of things divine."

The opinion of Ficino, that the "writer" of the " Poemandres " tractates was one who had a knowledge both of Egyptian and Greek, is of interest as being that of a man uncontaminated by the infinite doubts with which the atmosphere of modern criticism is filled, and thus able to get a clean contact with his subject.

Of the same mind were Loys Lazarel and du Preau, the first French translator ; while the Italian Cardinal Patrizzi appends to his labours the following beautiful words (attributed by some to Chalcidius 2), which he puts in the mouth of Hermes :

" Till now, my son, I, banished from my home, have lived expatriate in exile. Now safe and sound I seek my home once more. And when but yet a little while I shall have left thee, freed from these bonds of body, see that thou dost not mourn me as one dead. For I return to that supreme and happy state to which the universe's citizens will come when in the after-state.

1 For a list of those who thought Hermes was prior to Moses, and even identical with Joseph, or even Adam, see Harles, p. 49 ff. and notes.

2 A Platonic philosopher who lived probably in the 4th century A.D.

For there the Only God is supreme lord, and He will fill His citizens with wondrous joy, compared to which the state down here which is regarded by the multitude as life, should rather be called death." l

Patrizzi believed that Hermes was contemporary with Moses, basing himself upon the opinion of Eusebius in his Chronicum,2 and thought that it would be to the greatest advantage of the Christian world, if such admirable and pious philosophy as was contained in the Trismegistic writings were substituted in the public schools for Aristotle, whom he regarded as overflowing with impiety.

And that such opinions were the only ones as late as 1630, is evident from the favour still shown to the voluminous commentaries of de Foix and Eossel. Never- theless some fifty years previously, a hardy pioneer of scepticism had sturdily attacked the validity of the then universal Hermes tradition on one point at least — and that a fundamental one. For Patrizzi (p. la) declares that a certain Jo. Goropius Becanus was the first after so many centuries to dare to say that Hermes (as a single individual) never existed ! But the worthy Goropius, who appears to have flourished about 1580, judging by an antiquarian treatise of his on the race and language of the " Cimbri or Germani " published at Amsterdam, had no followers as yet in a belief that is now universally accepted by all critical scholarship. But this has to do with the Hermes-saga and not directly with the question of the Trismegistic works,

2 In which Patrizzi did but echo the opinion of his pre- decessors, such as Vergecius, the editor of the first edition of the Greek text, Candalle and many more.

and so we may omit for the present any reference to the host of contradictory opinions on " Hermes " which are found in all the writers to whom we are referring, and none of which, prior to the decipherment of the hieroglyphics, are of any particular value.

It was about the middle of the seventeenth century that the theory of plagiarism and forgery was started. Ursin (Joh. Henr. Ursinus), a pastor of the Evangelical Church at Ratisbon, published at Niirnberg in 1661, a work, in the second part of which he treated of " Hermes Trismegistus and his Writings,"1 and endeavoured to show that they were wholesale plagiarisms from Christianity, but his arguments were subjected to a severe criticism by Brucker some hundred years later.2

This extreme view of Ursin was subsequently modified into the subsidiary opinions that the Trismegistic works were composed by a half-Christian (semi-christiano) or interpolated by Christian overworking.

The most distinguished name among the early holders of the former opinion is that of Isaac Casaubon,3 who dates these writings at the beginning of the second

1 De Zoroastre Badriano Hermete Trismegisto Sanchoniathone Phcenicio eorumque Scriptis, et Aliis contra Mosaicce Scriptural Anti- quitatem ; Exercitationes Familiar es, pp. 73-180 — a book now very scarce.

2 Jacob! Bruckeri, Historia Critica Philosophies (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1767), i. 252 ff. Lib. ii., cap. vii., " De Philosophia JSgyptiorum." See also Meiners' Versuch iiber die Religionsgeschichte der altesten Volker besonders der Egyptier (Gottingen, 1775).

3 De Rebus Sacris . . . Exercitationes ad Card. Baronii Prole- gomena, i., n. 10 (London, 1614). Casaubon concludes that the whole book, i.e. the " Pcemandres," is a pseudepigraph, the pure invention of some Christian or other, or perhaps better, of some semi-Christian (p. 56).

century ; Casaubon's opinions, however, were promptly refuted by Cudworth in his famous work The True Intellectual System of the Universe, the first edition of which was printed at London, in folio, 1678.1 Cud-

worth would have it, however, that Casaubon was right as far as the treatises entitled " The Shepherd of Men " and " The Secret Sermon on the Mountain " are con- cerned, and that these treatises were counterfeited by Christians since the time of lamblichus — a very curious position to assume, since a number of the treatises themselves look back to this very " Shepherd " as the original document of the whole " Pcemandres " cycle.

But, indeed, so far we have no arguments, no really critical investigation,2 so that we need not detain the reader among these warring opinions, on which the cap was set by the violent outburst of Colberg in defence of orthodoxy against the Alchemists, Rosicrucians, Quakers, Anabaptists, Quietists, etc., of which fanatici, as he calls them, Hermes, he declares, was the Patriarch.3

One might almost believe that Colberg was an incarna- tion of a Church Father continuing his ancient polemic against heresy ; in any case the whole question of heresy

1 See his dissertation on Hermes and the Hermetic writings in the edition of 1820, vol. ii., pp. 128-155.

2 Though Reitzenstein (p. 1) speaks of the " schneidende Kritik" of Casaubon.

3 Vol. i., p. 89, of the following amply entitled work, Das Platonisch-Hermetisches [st'c] Christenthum, begriffend die historische Erzehlung vom Ursprung und vielerley Secten der heutigen Fanatischen Theologie, unterm Namen der Paracelsisten, Weigelianer, Rosen- creutzer, Quaker, Bohmisten, Wiedertauffer, Bourignisten, Labadisten und Quietisten, by M. Ehre Gott Daniel Colberg, 2 vols. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1690, 1691).

was now revived, and the eighteenth and nineteenth century criticism of the Trismegistic works almost invari- ably starts with this prejudice in mind and seeks (almost without exception) to father the Trismegistic writings on Neoplatonism, which it regards as the most powerful opponent of orthodoxy from the third century onwards. Harles (1790) gives the references to all the main factors in the evolution of this opinion during the eighteenth century ; 1 but the only argument that the century produced — indeed, the only argument that has ever been adduced — is that the doctrines of the Trismegistic writings are clearly Platonic, and that too of that type of mystical Platonism which was especially the characteristic of the teaching of lamblichus at the end of the third century A.D., and which is generally called Neoplatonism ; therefore, these writings were forged by the Neoplatonists to prop up dying Paganism against the ever more and more vigorous Christianity. We admit the premisses, but we absolutely deny the conclusion. But before pointing out the weakness of this conclusion of apologetic scholarship, we must deal with the literature on the subject in the last century. The eighteenth century produced no arguments in support of this conclusion beyond the main premisses which we have admitted.2 Has the nineteenth century

1 Op. supr. rit. ; the most " advanced " writer on the subject being Tiedemann, to whose work we have already referred ; but unfortunately we have not been able to procure a copy, and the British Museum is without it. Tiedemann thinks that none of the Trismegistic writings existed before the fourth century, while Fabricius himself, whose summary of prior opinion is overworked by Harles, assigns them to the time of

Porphyry and lamblichus, though Harles dates the earliest of them from the end of the first to the middle of the second century (p. 48, n.).

2 It may be worth while here to record the opinion of Gibbon, who would ascribe a Christian origin to some of the Trismegistic

produced any others so as to justify the position taken up by the echoes of opinion in all the popular encyclo- paedias with regard to these most valuable and beautiful treatises ? l

If our encyclopaedias deign to rest their assertions on authority, they refer us to Fabricius (Harles) and Baumgarten-Crusius. We have already seen that Harles will not help us much ; will the latter authority throw any more light on the subject ? We are afraid not ; for, instead of a bulky volume, we have before us a thin academical exercise of only 19 pp.,2 in which the author puts forward the bare opinion that these books were invented by Porphyry and his school, and this mainly because he thinks that Orelli3 had proved the year before that the Cosmogony of Sanchoniathon was invented by the "Platonici." Moreover, was not Porphyry an enemy of Christ, for did he not write XV. Books against the Christians? All of which can scarcely be dignified with the name of argument, far less with that of proof.

writings, and impatiently dismisses the subject by classing Hermes with Orpheus and the Sibyls as a cloak for Christian forgery (vol. ii. p. 69, Bury's ed.).

1 How the public is catered for may be seen from any popular " knowledge "-digest. The following will serve as a specimen, taken from the article " Hermes Trismegistus," in The American Encyclopedia : a Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge, edited by Eipley and Dana (New York, 1874) : " In the conflict between Neoplatonism and Christianity, the former sought to give a profounder and more spiritual meaning to the pagan philosophy, by combining the wisdom of the Egyptians and the Greeks, and representing it as a very ancient, divine revelation."

2 Delivered before the University of Jena at Pentecost, 1827, by Lud. Frid. Otto Baumgarten-Crusius.

3 Orelli (J. C.), Sanchoniathonis Fragmenta de Cosmogonia et Theologia Phcenicorum (Leipzig, 1826).

The same may be said of the short academical thesis of Hilgers,1 who first shows the weakness of Mohler's strange opinion 2 that the author was a Christian who pretended to be a Pagan and inserted "errors" on purpose. Hilgers finally ends up with the lame con- clusion that Christian doctrine was known to the author of the " Pcemandres " cycle, especially the Gospel of " John " and Letters of Paul ; but how it is possible to conjecture anything besides, he does not know. Of the possibility of the priority of the " Pcemandres " to the writings of "John" and Paul, Hilgers does not seem to dream ; nevertheless this is as logical a de- duction as the one he draws from the points of contact between the two groups of literature. But Hilgers has got an axe of his own to grind, and a very blunt one at that; he thinks that "The Shepherd of Men" was written at the same time as " The Shepherd of Hermas," that simple product of what is called the sub-apostolic age — a document held in great respect by the early outer communities of General Christianity, and used for purposes of edification. Our " Shepherd," Hilgers thinks, was written in

opposition to the Hermas document, but he can do nothing but point to the similarity of name as a proof of his hypothesis. This topsyturvy opinion we shall seek to reverse in a subsequent chapter on " ' Hermes ' and ' Hermas.' "

As to the author of our " Shepherd," Hilgers thinks he has shown that "he was not a follower of the

1 Hilgers (B. J.), De Hermetis Trismegisti Poimandro Commen- tatio (Bonn, 1855), suggested by the appearance of Parthey's text in 1854.

2 Mobler (J. A.), Patrologie, pp. 950-951 — a brief note on Hermes. Ed. by F. X. Reithmayr (Regensberg, 1840).

doctrines of the Christ, but of the so-called Neoplaton- ists, and among these especially of Philo Judaeus " ; in fact he seems, says Hilgers, to have been a Therapeut.1

THE GERMAN THEORY OF NEOPLATONIC " SYNCRETISMUS "

Here we have the first appearance of another ten- dency ; the more attention is bestowed upon the Trismegistic writings, the more it is apparent that they cannot be ascribed to Neoplatonism, if, as generally held, Neoplatonism begins with Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, and Porphyry in the third century. There- fore, in this subject, and in this subject alone, we find a tendency in later writers to push back the Neoplatonists so as to include Philo Judacus, who flourished in the first half of the first century ! On these lines we should soon get JVgo-platonism back to Plato and Pythagoras, and so be forced to drop the " Neo " and return to the old honoured name of simple " Platonici."

But already by this time in Germany the theory of Neoplatonic Syncretismus to prop up sinking Heathen- dom against rising Christianity had become crystallised, as may be seen from the article on "Hermes, Hermetische Schriften" in Pauly's famous Real En- cyclopddie der classischen Alterthumswissenshaft (Stutt- gart, 1844), where this position is assumed from the start.

Parthey, however, in 1854, in his preface, ventures on no such opinion, but expresses a belief that we may even yet discover in Egypt a demotic text of the " Pcemandres," which shows that he considered the original to have been written in Egyptian, and there- fore not by a Neoplatonist.

THE FRENCH THEORY OF EGYPTIAN ORIGIN

In France, moreover, the Egyptian paternity of the Trismegistic writings, and that too on very sensible lines, was asserted about the same time, namely, in 1858, by Artaud in his article on "Hermes Trisme'- giste," in Hoeffer's Nouvelle Biographic Gfdndrale, published at Paris by Messrs Firmin Didot. Artaud writes :

" In the mystic sense Thoth or the Egyptian Hermes was the symbol of the Divine Mind ; he was the incar- nated Thought, the living Word — the primitive type of the Logos of Plato and the Word of the Christians. . . .

" We have heard Champollion, the younger, giving ex- pression to the formal opinion that the books of Hermes Trismegistus really contained the ancient Egyptian doctrine of which traces can be discovered from the hieroglyphics which cover the monuments of Egypt. Moreover, if these fragments themselves are examined, we find in them a theology sufficiently in accord with the doctrines set forth by Plato in his Timceus — doctrines which are entirely apart from those of the other schools of Greece, and which were therefore held to have been derived by Plato from the temples of Egypt, when he went thither to hold converse with its priests." l

Artaud is also of the opinion that these Trismegistic treatises are translations from the Egyptian.

Nowadays, with our improved knowledge of Egypt- ology, this hypothesis has to be stated in far more

1 The whole of this article has been lifted, without acknowledg- ment, by M'Clintock and Strong in their Cyclopcedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literaiwre (New York, 1872).

careful terms before it can find acceptance among the learned ; nevertheless it was evidently the conviction of Deveria, who in a work of which he only succeeded in writing the first two pages, proposed to comment on the entire text of the Trismegistic Books from the point of view of an Egyptologist. For these Books, he declared, offered an almost complete exposition of the esoteric philosophy of ancient Egypt.1

But by far the most sympathetic and really intelligent account of the subject is that of Menard,2 who gives us a pleasant respite from the chorus of the German Neoplatonic syncretism theory. And though we do not by any means agree with all that he writes, it will be a relief to let in a breath of fresh air upon the general stuffiness of our present summary of opinions.

The fragments of the Trismegistic literature which have reached us are the sole surviving remains of that " Egyptian philosophy " which arose from the congress of the religious doctrines of Egypt with the philo- sophical doctrines of Greece. In other words, what the works of Philo were to the sacred literature of the Jews, the Hermaica were to the Egyptian sacred writings. Legend and myth were allegorised and philosophised and replaced by vision and instruction. But who were the authors of this theosophic method ? This question is of the greatest interest to us, for it is one of the factors in the solution of the problem of the literary evolution of Christianity, seeing that there are intimate points of contact of ideas between several of the Hermetic documents and certain Jewish and Christian writings, especially the opening verses of Genesis, the treatises of Philo, the fourth Gospel

1 Pierret, Melanges cCArcheologie egyptienne et assyrienne, i. (1873), p. 112; R 1, n. 1.

(especially the Prologue), and beyond all the writings of the great Gnostic doctors Basilides and Valentinus.

Such and similar considerations lead Mdnard to glance at the environment of infant Christianity and the various phenomena connected with its growth, and this he does from the point of view of an enlightened independent historical scholar.

" Christianity," he writes, " did not fall like a thunder- bolt into the midst of a surprised and startled world. It had its period of incubation, and while it was en- gaged in evolving the positive form of its dogmas, the problems of which it was seeking the solution were the subject of thought in Greece, Asia, and Egypt. Similar ideas were in the air and shaped themselves into all sorts of propositions.

" The multiplicity of sects which have arisen in our own times under the name of socialism, can give but a faint idea of the marvellous intellectual chemistry which had established its principal laboratory at Alex- andria. Humanity had set in the arena mighty philo- sophical and moral problems : the origin of evil, the destiny of the soul, its fall and redemption ; the prize to be given was the government of the conscience. The Christian solution l won, and caused the rest to be forgotten, sunk for the most part in the shipwreck of the past. Let us then, when we come across a scrap of the flotsam and jetsam, recognise in it the work of a beaten competitor and not of a plagiarist. Indeed, the triumph of Christianity was prepared by those very men who thought themselves its rivals, but who were only its forerunners. The title suits them, though many were contemporaries of the Christian era, while others were a little later ; for the succession of a religion only dates from the day when it is accepted by the

1 The popular Christian solution, M^nard should have said.

nations, just as the reign of a claimant to the throne dates from his victory " (pp. ix., x.).

Me"nard distinguishes three principal groups in the Trismegistic treatises, which he assigns to Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian influences. In them also he finds a link between Philo and the Gnostics.

"Between the first Gnostic sects and the Hellenic Jews represented by Philo, a link is missing ; this can be found in several of the Hermetic works, especially 'The Shepherd of Men' and 'The Sermon on the Mountain.' In them also will perhaps be found the reason of the differences, so often remarked upon, between the first three Gospels and the fourth" (p. xliv.).

Next, the direction in which that " link " is to be looked for is more clearly shown, though here Me"nard is, I think, too precise when writing:

"It seems certain that 'The Shepherd' came from that school of Therapeuts of Egypt, who have been often erroneously confounded with the Essenians of Syria and Palestine " (p. Ivi).

But "instead of the physical discipline of the Essenians, who, according to Philo, practised manual labour, put the product of their toil into the common fund, and reduced philosophy to ethics, and ethics to charity, the 'monasteries' of the Therapeuts contri- buted to Christian propaganda a far more Hellenised population, trained in abstract speculations and mystic allegories. From these tendencies, combined with the dogma of the incarnation, arose the Gnostic sects. ' The Shepherd ' should be earlier than these schools " (p. Iviii.).

As to "The Sermon on the Mountain," "it can be placed, in order of ideas and date, between 'The Shepherd ' and the first Gnostic schools ; it should be

a little earlier than the founders of Gnosticism, Basilides, and Valentinus " (p. Ixv.).

If Gnosticism be taken with Me"nard to mean the Christianised theosophy of Basilides and Valentinus from the first quarter of the second century onwards, the oldest Trismegistic treatises are demonstrably earlier, for their Gnosticism is plainly a far simpler form ; in fact, so much more simple that, if we could proceed on so crude an hypothesis as that of a straight-lined evolution, we should be forced to find room for inter- mediate forms of Gnosticism between them and the Basilidian and the Valentinian Gnosis. And of this Me"nard seems to be partly conscious when writing: " We can follow in the Hermetic books the destiny of this Judseo-Egyptian Gnosis, which, during the first century, existed side by side with Christianity without allowing itself to be absorbed by it, passing insensibly from the Jewish school of Philo to the Greek school of Plotinus" (p. Ixvii.).

Me'nard here used the term Christianity for that tendency which afterwards was called Catholic or General Christianity, the body to which these very same Gnostics gave the principal dogmas of its sub- sequent theology.

But if the Gnostics were Therapeuts, and the Tris- megistic writers Therapeuts, why should Me'uard call them Jews, as he appears to do in his interesting question, "Where are the Jewish Therapeuts at the end of the second century ? " Certainly Philo laboured to give his readers the impression that the Therapeuts were principally Jews, perhaps to win respect for his compatriots in his apology for his nation ; but the Thera- peuts were, evidently, on his own showing, drawn from all the nations and scattered abroad in very numerous communities, though many Jews were doubtless in

their ranks — indeed, Philo probably knew little about their communities other than the Mareotic. If, then, the term "Therapeut" will explain some of the phenomena presented by these writings, the combination "Jewish Therapeuts" will certainly not do so. The very answer of Me'nard himself to his question shows that even these Mareotic Therapeuts could not have been orthodox Jews, for the French scholar proceeds to surmise not only that, " some, converted to Christianity, became monks or Gnostics of the Basilidian or Valen- tinian school," but that " others more and more assimi- lated themselves to Paganism."

And by "Paganism" our author says he does not mean "polytheism," for "at this period all admitted into the divine order of things a well-defined hierarchy with a supreme God at the head ; only for some this supreme Deity was in the world, for others outside it " (p. Ixxiv.).

Menard's introduction meets with the general approval of Reitzenstein (p. 1), who characterises it as feinsinnige, and agrees that he has rightly appreciated many of the factors, especially from the theological side; he, however (p. 116, n. 2), dissents, and rightly dissents, from Me'nard as to any direct Jewish influence on the Trismegistic literature, and refuses to admit that the " Poamandres " can in any way be characterised as a Jewish-Gnostic writing.

But the sensible views of Me'nard were impotent to check the crystallisation of the German theory, which was practically repeated by Zeller,1 and once more by

1 Qesch. d. griech. Philos., III., ii., 225 S. Zeller, while recognising the Gnostic nature of C. H. i. and C. H. xiii. (xiv.), treats the rest of our Corpus as an expression of declining Paganism. So also Erdmann (Hist. Philos., i. 113, 2, Tr.), who deals with our Corpus only, and assigns its sermons to different authors and times.

Pietschmann in his learned essay,1 based in part on A. G. Hoffmann's article " Hermes " in Ersch and Gruber's Allgemeine Encyclopiidie der Wissenschaften und Kunste? An exception to this tendency, however, is to be found in the opinion of Aall ; 3 who, though he adduces no proof, would on general grounds place the composition of the Hermetic literature (though whether or not by this he means our extant Trismegistic sermons is not clear) as far back as the second century B.C., and would see in it an offshoot from the same stem which later on supplied the ground - conceptions of the Johannine theology.4

In England, as we have seen, the subject, like BO many others of a similar nature, has been almost entirely neglected, but with the encyclopaedic activity of the past generation we find it touched upon, and in the usual encyclopaedic fashion. The German position is assumed, without one word of proof or reference to any, as an " acquired fact of science " ! The " last effort of expiring Heathendom " theory is trotted out with complacency and with that impressive air of official knowledge which makes the pronouncements of the family physician a law unto all its members, from baby to father — until the specialist is called in. And

He contends that G. H. xiii. (xiv.) shows a Neo-pythagorean tendency, — a term far vaguer than Neo-platonic even.

1 Hermes Trismegistos n. agyp., griech. u. oriental. Uberlieferungen (Leipzig, 1875).

2 A laborious article replete with references, but dealing solely with the Hermes-saga and not with our writings.

3 Aall (A.), Geschichte der Logosidee in der Philosophic (Leipzig, vol. i. 1896, vol. ii. 1899), ii. 78, n. 4.

4 Cf. Reitzenstein, Zwei religionsgeschichtliche Fragen (Strassburg, 1901), p. 93, n. 3.

unfortunately these ex cathedrd encyclopaedic pronounce- ments are all the general reader will ever hear. This is the case with all those three indifferent articles in our current dictionaries of reference.1 We are assured that, "as all are generally agreed," the writings are Neo- platonic, and this without any qualification or definition of the term, and that too in dictionaries where the term " Neoplatonic," in articles on the subject, is applied solely to the " Chain " from Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus onwards. The presumption is plain that by Neoplatonic forgeries we are to understand a date of at earliest from the middle of the third century onwards.

And this although Justin Martyr (dr. 150 A.D.) bestows emphatic praise on these very same writings and classes their writer, "Hermes," among the "most ancient philosophers," a point which the German theorists and their English copiers have all discreetly shirked, but which, together with other considerations, has forced Chambers, in the preface to his translation (London, 1882), to give quite a new meaning to the term

Neoplatonist, which he uses of Hermes in his title,2 and to declare that our Hermes is entitled " to

1 Art. " Hermes and Hermes Trismegistus," by L. Schmitz, in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology (London, 1870), a work which is now entirely out of date ; Jowett's art., " Hermes Trismegistus," in the Encyclopedia Britannica (9th ed., London, 1880), repeated in the recent reprint without alteration ; and Mozley's art., " Hermes Trismegistus," in Smith and Wace's Dictionary of Christian Biography (London, 1882) ; to both of which articles, if not to the works themselves, the above remark also applies.

2 The Theological and Philosophical Works of Hermes Trismegistus, Christian Neoplatonist.

be considered the real founder of Neoplatonism." * Chambers would still, in spite of Justin's clear testimony, wedge in the earliest deposit of Trismegistic literature immediately between the time of composition of the new canonical books and Justin, and devotes nearly all his notes to fishing out every verse of the New Testament he can which bears the slightest resemblance to the Trismegistic text.2 But if we closely compare these so-called parallels, we are compelled to acknowledge that if there be any plagiarism it is not on the side of Hermes ; nay, more, it is as plain as it can be that there is no verbal plagiarism at all, and that the similarity of ideas therefore pertains to quite another problem, for the distinctive dogmas of Common Christianity are entirely wanting ; there is not a single word breathed of the historical Jesus, not a syllable concern- ing the nativity, the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension or coming of Christ to judgment, as Chambers admits.

Let us now turn to the pronouncements of German encyclopsedism on the subject. F. A. Brockhaus' Conversations-Lexikon (Leipzig, 1884) does but repeat the old hypothesis. The Trismegistic writings are "the last monuments of Heathendom"; the writer, however, grudgingly takes in the date of Justin Martyr in the sentence, "presumably the majority of these writings belong to the second century," but not a word is breathed of how this conclusion is arrived at.

A most valuable article, in fact far and away the

1 In this repeating de Foix, who attempted the same task more than three hundred years before.

very best that has yet been done, containing innumerable references to all the articles in the most recent trans- actions of learned societies and to the papers in scien- tific periodicals, is that of Chr. Scherer on " Hermes," in W. H. Koscher's Aufuhrliches Lexikon der griechischen u. romischen Mythologie (Leipzig, 1884, etc.). Un- fortunately this article deals solely with the Hermes of the Greeks, while for " Hermes Trismegistos " we are referred to " Thoth," an article which has not yet appeared. This brings our summary of opinions down to the close of the last century; we have probably omitted reference to some minor opinions, for no up- to-date bibliography exists on the subject, but we doubt that any work of importance has escaped our notice.

The most recent work done in England on the subject, in the present century, is an article by Frank Granger,1 who, in spite of some useful criticisms and suggestions on some points, is nevertheless in the

main reactionary, and contends for a Christian origin of our most important tractates. The scope of his enquiry may be seen from his preliminary statement when he writes:

" We shall have little difficulty in showing, as against Zeller, that the book [? our Corpus, or the first Sermon only] is in the main homogeneous and of Christian origin. Not only so, our discussion will bring us into contact with the later Greek culture as it developed amid Egyptian surroundings, and will raise several problems of considerable importance. Among other

1 " The Poemandres of Hermes Trismegistus," in The Journal of Theological Studies, vol. v. No. 19, April 1904 (London).

things we shall have to trace the way in which Hermes passes over into Christian tradition, and how the Greek representations of Hermes furnished Christian art with one of its earliest motives.1 We shall further find in it a bridge by which we may pass over from Greek philosophy and science to modes of thought which are properly Christian. And yet the writer retains so much of the antique spirit that he can hardly be mistaken for an apologist of Paganism."

When, however, Granger attempts to prove his case, he breaks down utterly, being able to point to little besides the popular phrase "increase and multiply." Towards the end of his enquiry, however, he sees that the traditional values of many factors will have to be altered by a study of our literature, as, for instance, when he writes :

"The traditional estimate of Gnosticism, then, re- quires to be reconsidered, in the light of the Poemandres. It belongs to a time when religious definitions were still in the making — a time, therefore, when the limits of free discussion were not yet straitly drawn. Hence the various permutations of religious belief which we find in Irenseus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, would not be admitted by their exponents to be in conflict with the Christian faith, but would rather be regarded as exhibiting new and fruitful applications of principles common to all. Ecclesiastical opinion ulti- mately settled down in one direction rather than another. But until this process was complete, each living system of belief might count upon a possible victory,2 and so, among others, the system which may be traced in the Poemandres. And the Poemandres is so far from being a merely heretical production, that

1 Namely, that of the Good Shepherd.

a This is a reflection of Me'nard's sensible view.

its relation to orthodox belief may fairly be indicated by saying that it answers to the earlier intellectual position of Clement of Alexandria." l

We should say rather that the difficulties in which our essayist is evidently involved by his hypothesis of Christian origin, would be considerably lessened by accepting the evidence on all hands which a more extended study of the Trismegistic and allied literatures affords, and by treating what he refers to as Gnosticism without qualification as the Christianised Gnosis, and not as Gnosticised Christianity.

We thus find Granger compelled, in keeping with the above, to guess the date of the "Poemandres" as towards the end of the second century ; but even so, he feels dissatisfied with himself, for he has to add: " Nor does this date preclude us from finding occasional traces of even earlier material."

However we may dissent from Granger's conclusions as to the " Pcemandres," we agree with him in the importance he ascribes to the Gospel according to the •Egyptians, in connection with which he writes 2 :-

" It is instructive to note that Salome, who plays so prominent a part in the Gospel according to the Egyptians, is the mother of St John,3 and that the same Gnostic circles in which this gospel is current were also those in which we hear for the first time of the Fourth Gospel. That is to say, the Fourth Gospel comes to us from the hands of the Alexandrine Gnostics. The system of Valentinus is really a somewhat fanci-

3 I have never come across this statement before, and so regret that G. has not given his authority. If such were the tradition, it would be exceedingly instructive. Salome, however, in the fragments of this Gospel preserved to us, says categorically that she has never " brought forth."

f ul commentary upon the opening chapters of St John's Gospel1 Heracleon, the first great commentator 2 upon St John, was both a Gnostic and at the same time was really the master of Origen, and through him helped to determine the development of the orthodox theology. Now, the key to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel is to be found in the Gnostic ideas which underlie the Poemandres, ideas to which Heracleon furnishes the clue. But the commentators have refused the help which the Gnostics could give, and the Fourth Gospel has been consistently misunderstood owing to the exaggerated stress which has been laid upon the doctrine of the Xo'yo?."

I am not quite clear what the last sentence is intended to mean. Too great stress cannot be laid upon the doctrine of the Logos, for it is, as we shall show, the fundamental concept of Hellenistic theology ; but too great stress can and has been laid upon the illegitimate claim that the Proem of the Fourth Gospel embodies a peculiarly Christian doctrine.

Moreover, if the Fourth Gospel emerges in Alexan- drine circles and is so essentially Gnostic, how can it be ascribed, as Granger appears to ascribe it, to "St John " ? A very different conclusion seems to follow from Granger's premisses.

The conclusion of the most recent study by English scholarship on our " Poemandres " is as follows :

" The Poemandres, then, is a very striking exponent of the religious and philosophical ideas amid which

1 It is not, even if the " opening chapters " be reduced to the Proem. Heracleon, one of the disciples of Valentinus, comments directly on this Proem, but from the point of view of a quite independent tradition.

2 The first commentator of any kind of which we have any knowledge, rather.

Alexandrine theology arose. On the one hand it is in touch with Greek mythology and science; on the other, with Jewish and Christian literature. The author is more sober than most of Ms Gnostic con-

temporaries; he is a more consistent reasoner than Clement." 1

But if, as we shall show, the date of the " Poemandres " must be pushed back demonstrably at least a hundred years, and if, as is exceedingly probable, it must go back still further, the whole problem is changed, and the relationship of all the factors alters proportionately.

KBITZENSTEIN AND THE DAWN OF RIGHT VIEWS

But in the present century, by the publication of Reitzenstein's Poimandres, the whole subject has been placed on a different footing and brought into a clearer light. Reitzenstein attacks the problem of the Trismegistic writings from an entirely objective, his- torical, philological, and literary standpoint. Being entirely emancipated from any theological preconcep- tions, he is always careful to point out that his conclusions are based solely on critical research in the domain of philology proper ; he cannot, however, refrain at times from adding (somewhat slily) that these results are of the deepest interest to the theo- logian— indeed, we might say highly embarrassing if the theologian happens to be a traditionalist.

The general scope of Reitzenstein's essay may be gathered from his sub-title, " Studies in Greek-Egyptian and Early Christian Literature." Our Trismegistic writings form part of a large number of Greek written texts, the remains of a once exceedingly extensive Hellenistic theological literature; and by Hellenistic 1 Ibid., p. 412.

theology is meant the blending of Greek and Oriental religious thought and experience. This Hellenistic theology was most strongly influenced by Egyptian conceptions and traditions. The Egyptian religion is known to have spread itself over the Hellenistic world, and every scholar will at once recall to mind how many Greek writers have treated expressly of the Egyptian religion, and how many passages in Greek literature refer to Egyptian beliefs, as compared with the very few which treat of Babylonian, Persian, or even Syrian.

Nevertheless, the remains of this Hellenistic theo- logical literature have never been treated as a whole from the point of view of philology ; the cause of this has been the entire disregard of the subject by Chris- tian theologians, coupled with the grotesque grounds on which the consideration of the Hellenistic-Egyptian religion is usually set aside — one famous theologian lately going so far as to assert that the Egyptian worship was despised on all sides, both by Jews and Greeks, as the lowest depth of human superstition.

As then Egypt had a provably dominant position in Hellenistic literature, so also must she have had in some sort a correspondingly strong influence on Hellenistic culture, and consequently on the develop- ment of Hellenistic religious experience. The evidence of this is afforded by the Early Christian literature.

We have, therefore, here in these Greek-Egyptian and Early Christian documents the possibility of methodical work, seeing that it is a question of the comparative study of two contemporaneous literatures ; moreover, the language and typology of the Christian literature is bound to betray traces of the general Hellenistic theology of the time (pp. v., vi.).

The study of Eeitzenstein is thus a consideration of

our Trismegistic literature as a whole, and the analysis and comparison of two of the most typical sermons with other Hellenistic documents and with Early Christian writings.

This he does with praiseworthy and painstaking industry, with great acumen and admirable scholarly equipment; but his work is of no service to any but scholars, and that, too, to scholars who are specialists. It is a work bristling with technicalities of every description, and crammed with untranslated texts. Indeed, Reitzenstein belongs to that school of philological purists who think it a loss of dignity to translate anything ; this is a very convenient convention, and I myself have often wished that I could have availed myself of it when face to face with innumerable diffi- culties of translation.

Eeitzenstein, then, translates nothing, but busies himself with texts and the higher criticism of the subject. He, however, does not give us the text of our literature as a whole, or even of the Corpus Hermeticum, but only of four chapters and the frag- ments of a fifth. Moreover, the results of bis in- vestigations are very difficult to summarise ; indeed, he nowhere summarises them himself in any certain fashion, his chapters being on the whole of the nature of studies in the Trismegistic literature rather than a complete exposition.

Nevertheless these studies are, beyond comparison, the most important and suggestive work that has yet been done on the subject ; and as I shall avail myself of his labours on so many occasions in the sequel, I cannot refrain from acknowledging here the special debt of gratitude which all lovers of our sermons must feel to him, for compelling the attention of scholars to the first importance of the Trismegistic literature in the

domain of the history of the development of religious thought in the first centuries.

The general scope of his studies will be seen from the titles of the main chapters : — I. Age of the " Poimandres " ; by " Poimandres " R means G. H., i. only. II. Analysis of the "Poimandres"; III. Fundamental Conception of the " Poimandres " ; IV. " Poimandres ' and the Egyptian Apocalyptic Literature ; V. Expansion of the Hermetic Literature ; VI. The Hermetic Corpus ; VII. The Later " Poimandres" Document (The Prophet- Initiation).

The theory of plagiarism from Christianity must for ever be abandoned. The whole literature is based on the "Po3mandres" as its original gospel, and the original form of this scripture must be placed at least prior to the second century A.D. How much earlier it goes back we cannot at present say with any exactitude ; before the beginning of the second century is the terminus ad quern — that is to say it cannot possibly be later than this; to seek, therefore, for traditional Christian thoughts in this document is henceforth deprived of any prospect of success (p. 36).

Reitzenstein tells us (p. 2) that these writings in the first place interested him solely through their literary form, but that this interest became deepened as he gradually learned to value them as important records of that powerful religious movement which, like a flood, overflowed the West from the East, and, after preparing the way for Christianity, subsequently bore it along with it ; the best and surest evidence of this

religious revival is to be found in the literary form of Hellenistic theology.

This in itself is of interest enough and to spare ; and at a time when every scrap of contemporary literature is being so eagerly scanned for the smallest side-light it

can throw on the environment and development of Christian origins, it is amazing that the Trismegistic writings should have been hitherto so studiously neglected.

But there is another and still more profoundly interesting side of the subject which we cannot expect to find treated in a purely philological, technical, and critical treatise. The more one studies the best of these mystical sermons, casting aside all prejudice, and trying to feel and think with the writers, the nearer one is conscious of approaching the threshold of what may well be believed to have been the true Adytum of the best in the mystery-traditions of antiquity. In- numerable are the hints of the greatnesses and immensities lying beyond that threshold — among other precious things the vision of the key to Egypt's wisdom, the interpretation of apocalypsis by the light of the sun-clear epopteia of the intelligible cosmos.

Such greatnesses and such mysteries have a power and beauty which the most disreputable tradition of the texts through unknowing hands cannot wholly disguise, and they are still recognisable, even though thus clad in the rags of their once fair garments, by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

But to return to the points we raised in the opening of this chapter.

If we now re-state the problems we are considering in the interrogative form, we shall have to find answers to the following questions :

Why did the early Church Fathers accept the Tris-

megistic writings as exceedingly ancient and authorita- tive, and in their apologetic writings quote them in support of the main impersonal dogmas of Christianity ?

Why, in the revival of learning, for upwards of a century and a half did all the Humanists welcome them with open arms as a most valuable adjunct to Chris- tianity, and as being in accord with its main doctrines, so much so that they laboured to substitute Trismegistus for Aristotle in the schools ?

Finally, why during the last two centuries and a half has a body of opinion been gradually evolved, infinitesimal in its beginnings, but well-nigh shutting out every other view, that these writings are Neo-platonic forgeries?

The answers to these questions are simple: — The Church Fathers appealed to the authority of antiquity and to a tradition that had never been called in question, in order to show that they taught nothing funda-mentally new — that, in brief, they taught on main points what Hermes had taught. They lived in days too proximate to that tradition to have ventured on bring- ing any charge of plagiarism and forgery against it without exposing themselves to a crushing rejoinder from men who were still the hearers of its "living voice" and possessors of its "written word."

The scholars of the Kenaissance naturally followed the unvarying tradition of antiquity, confirmed by the Fathers of the Church.

Gradually, however, it was perceived that, if the old tradition were accepted, the fundamental originality of general Christian doctrines — that is to say, the philosophical basis of the Faith, as apart from the historical dogmas peculiar to it — could no longer be maintained. It, therefore, became imperatively necessary to discredit the ancient tradition by every possible

means. With what success this policy has been attended we have already seen ; we have also reviewed this growth of opinion, and shown its baseless character and the straits to which its defenders have been put.

From the clouds of this obscurantism the sun of Thrice-greatest Hermes and the radiance of his Gnosis have once more shone forth in the skies of humanistic enquiry and unprejudiced research. He is no longer to be called bastard, and plagiarist, and thief of other people's property, but must be regarded as a genuine teacher of men, handing on his own, and giving freely of his substance to all who will receive the gift.

THB present chapter will be devoted to a brief considera- tion of the nature, powers, and attributes of the divine personification Thoth (Tehuti), the Master of Wisdom and Truth, on the ground of pure Egyptian tradition. As I have unfortunately no sufficient knowledge of Egyptian, I am not in a position to control by the texts the information which will be set before the reader ; it will, however, be derived from the works of specialists, and mainly from the most recent study on the subject, the two sumptuous volumes of Dr E. A. Wallis Budge, the keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum.

First of all, however, let us see what the German scholar Pietschmann has had to say on Thoth in his monograph specially devoted to Thrice-greatest Hermes according to Egyptian, Greek, and Oriental traditions.1

The first part of Pietschmann's treatise, in which he seems to be content, as far as his own taste and feeling are concerned, to trace the original of the grandiose concept of the Thrice-greatest to the naive conception of an "ibis-headed moon-god," is devoted to the con- sideration of what he calls the god Te^-Tehuti among

1 Hermes Trismegistos, nach agyptischen, griechischen und oriental- ischen Uberlieferungen (Leipzig, 1875).

the Egyptians. Why Pietschmann should have chosen this double form of the name for his sub-title is not very clear. The variants appear to be Tefr, Teb,u, Tefrut, and Teb^uti — of which it would seem that the Greek form Thoth is an attempt to transliterate Tehut. There are, however, it may be remarked, no less than eighteen variants of the name found in Greek and Latin. I should thus myself be inclined to use the form Tefcut if it were permissible ; but of this I am not quite sure, as the weak-sounding though undoubtedly more common form Tehuti, is usually employed by scholars. As, however, Tehuti, to my ears at any rate, is not a very dignified sounding cognomen, I shall use the Greek form Thoth as being the more familiar to English readers.

Horapollo tells us that the ibis was the symbol of Thoth as the "master of the heart and reason in all men,"1 though why this was so must remain hidden in the mystery of the " sacred animals," which has not "N yet

to my knowledge been in any way explained.

And as Thoth, the Logos, was in the hearts of all, [so was he the heart of the world whose life directed ^nd permeated all things.2

Thus the temple, as the dwelling of the God, was regarded as a model of the world, and its building as a copy of the world-building. And just as Thoth had ordained measure, number, and order in the universe, so was he the master-architect of temple-building and of all the mystic monuments. Thus, as the or- dering world-mind, a text addresses Thoth as follows :

1 irdffris KapSias Kal \oytfffov SeerirJTTjj, p. 40, ed. Leemans.

2 Der Gott, "der in pantheistischer Anschauungsweise die game Welt belehrend durchdrang," writes Pietschmann, p. 14.

" Thou art the great, the only God, the Soul of the Becoming." l

To aid him in the world Thoth has a spouse, or syzygy, Nehe-maut. She is, among the Gnostics, the Sophia-aspect of the Logos. She is presumably the Nature of our Trismegistic treatises. Together Thoth and Nehe-maut are the initiators of all order, rule, and law in the universe.

Thus Thoth is especially the representative of the Spirit, the Inner Reason of all things ; he is the Protector of all earthly laws, and every regulation of human society.2 Says a text :

" His law is firmly established, like that of Thoth." s

As representative of the Season immanent in the world, Thoth is the mediator through whom the world is brought into manifestation. He is the Tongue of Ra, the Herald of the Will of Ra,4 and the Lord of Sacred Speech.6

"What emanates from the opening of his mouth, that cometh to pass ; he speaks, and it is his command ; he is the Source of Speech, the Vehicle of Knowledge, the Revealer of the Hidden." 6

1 Pleyte, Zeitschrift fur agyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde, 1 867, 10. The text is taken from a papyrus in the Leyden Museum.

3 From an ostrakon in the Louvre, De Horrack, Zeitschrift fwr a S. u. A., 1868, 2. And again at Denderah, the King is said to "establish the laws like Thoth the twice-great one." See Diimichen, ibid., 1867, 74.

4 Lepsius, Erster Gotterkreis, Taf. 1, 2. Text S. 181.

6 Brugsch, Worterbuch, 803, and many other references.

6 For a long list of references, see Pietschmann in loco. I have so far cited some of these references to show that the statements of Pietschmann are based upon very ample authority. In what follows, however, these references may be omitted as they are not owing to my own industry, and the scholar can obtain them from Pietschmann's book for himself.

Thoth is thus the God of writing and all the arts and sciences. On a monument of Seti I. he is called " Scribe of the nine Gods." He writes " the truth of the nine Gods," and is called " Scribe of the King of Gods and men."

Hence he is naturally inventor of the hieroglyphics, and patron and protector of all temple-archives and libraries, and of all scribes. At the entrance of one of the halls of the Memnonium at Thebes, the famous " Library of Osymandias," called " The great House of Life," we find Thoth as " Lord in the Hall of Books." l

In the Ebers papyrus we read : " His guide is Thoth, who bestows on him the gifts of his speech, who makes the books, and illumines those who are learned therein, and the physicians who follow him, that they may work cures."

We shall see that one of the classes of priests was devoted to the healing of the body, just as another was devoted to the healing of the soul.

These books are also called " The Great Gnoses of Thoth." 2 Thoth was thus God of medicine, but not so much by drugs as by means of mesmeric methods and certain " magic formulae." Thus he is addressed as " Thoth, Lord of Heaven, who givest all life, all health." 3

THE THREE GRADES OF THE EGYPTIAN MYSTERIES

Moreover, Thoth was also Lord of Rebirth : 4 " Thou hast given life in the Land of the Living ; Thou hast

2 Compare this title, die grossen Erkentnisse des Tehuti* with the Coptic Codex Brucianus — Void le livre des gnoses de V Invis- ible divin." Amelineau, Notice sur le Papyrus gnostique Bruce, p. 83 (Paris, 1891). See also Carl Schmidt, Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus (Leipzig, 1892).

* Herr der Metempsychose (Lord of Palingenesis), says Pietschmann, p. 23.

made them live in the Region of Flames; Thou hast given respect of thy counsels in the breasts and in the hearts of men — mortals, intelligences, creatures of light."

The Land of the Living was the Invisible World, a glorious Land of Light and Life for the seers of ancient Egypt. Mortals, Intelligences, Creatures of Light, were, says Pietschmann, the " three grades of the Egyptian mysteries."1 These grades were, one may assume from our treatises: (1) Mortals — probationary pupils who were instructed in the doctrine, but who had not yet realised the inner vision ; (2) Intelligences — those who had done so and had become " men," that is to say who had received the " Mind " ; (3) Beings (or Sons) of Light — those who had become one with the Light, that is to say those who had reached the nirvdnic consciousness.

So much for what Pietschmann can be made to tell us of Thoth as Wisdom-God among the Egyptians.

To the information in Pietschmann may be added that which is given by Reitzenstein in the second of his two important studies, Zwei religionsgeschichtliche Fragen nach ungedruckten Texten der Strassburger

Bibliothek (Strassburg, 1901). This second study deals with " Creation-myths and the Logos-doctrine," the special Creation-myths treated of being found in a hitherto unpublished Greek text, which hands on purely Egyptian ideas in Greek dress and with Greek god- names, and which is of great interest and importance for the general subject of which our present studies form part.

The writer of this cosmogonical fragment was a priest or prophet of Hermes, and Hermes plays the most important part in the creation-story. Eeitzenstein then proceeds to show that in the oldest Egyptian cosmogony the cosmos is brought into being through the Divine Word, which Thoth, who seems to have origi- nally been equated with the Sun-god, speaks forth. This gives him the opportunity of setting down the attributes ascribed to Thoth in Egypt in pre-Greek times.1 As, however, the same ground is covered more fully by Budge, we will now turn to his Gods of the Egyptians, or Studies in Egyptian Mythology (London, 1904), vol. i. pp. 400 ff., and lay under contribution the chapter entitled "Thoth (Tehuti) and Maat, and the other Goddesses who were associated with him," as the most recent work on the subject by a specialist in Egyptological studies, whose opinions, it is true, may doubtless on many points be called into question by other specialists, but whose data must be accepted by the layman as based on prolonged first-hand study of the original texts. In using the material supplied by Dr Budge, however, I shall venture on setting it forth as it appears to me — that is to say, with the ideas awakened in my own mind by the study of his facts.

In the Hymns to Ea in the Eitual or Book of the Dead, and in works of a similar nature, we find that Thoth and Maat stand one on either side of the Great God in his Boat, and that their existence was believed to be coeval with his own. Maat is thus seen to be the feminine counterpart, syzygy or shakti, of Thoth, and her name is associated with the idea of Truth and 1 Op. tit., pp. 71 ff.

Kighteousness — that which is right, true, real, genuine, upright, righteous, just, steadfast, unalterable.

From the inscriptions of the later dynastic period, moreover, we learn that Thoth was called "Lord of Khemennu (Hermopolis), Self-created, to whom none hath given birth, God One." He is the great Measurer, the Logos, " He who reckons in Heaven, the Counter of the Stars, the Enumerator of the Earth and of what is therein, and the Measurer of the Earth."

He is the " Heart of Ra which cometh forth in the form of the God Thoth."

As Lord of Hermopolis, where was his chief shrine, and of his temples in other cities, he was called " Lord of Divine Words," " Lord of Maat," " Judge of the two Combatant Gods " — that is, of Horus and Set. Among other titles we find him called " Twice-great," and " Thrice-great." " From this last," says Budge, " were derived the epithets ' Trismegistus ' and ' Termaximus ' of the classical writers." We, however, doubt if this is so, and prefer the explanation of Griffith, as we shall see later on.

In addition to these deific titles, which identify him with the Logos in the highest meaning of the term, he was also regarded as the Inventor and God of all arts and sciences ; he was " Lord of Books," " Scribe of the Gods," and " Mighty in speech " — that is to say, " his words took effect," says Budge ; his was the power of the " Spoken Word," the Word whose language is action and realisation. He was said to be the author of many of the so-called " funeral works " by means of which the " deceased " gained everlasting

life. These books were, however, rather in their origin sermons of

initiation for living men, setting forth the "death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness." Thus in the Book of the Dead he plays a part to which are assigned powers greater than those of Osiris or even of Ea himself.

He is usually depicted in human form with the head of an ibis, or sometimes as an ibis ; but why he is so symbolised remains a mystery even unto this day. It is also of little purpose to set down the emblems he carries, or the various crowns he wears, without some notion of what these hidden symbols of a lost wisdom may purport. The meanings of these sacred signs were clear enough, we may believe, to those who were initiated into the " Language of the Word " ; to them they revealed the mystery, while for the profane they veiled and still veil their true significance.

Tehuti, the Egyptian name of Thoth, it has been suggested, is to be derived from tehu, the supposed oldest name of the ibis in Egypt; the termination ti thus signifying that he who was thus called possessed the powers and qualities of the ibis.

But if this is the true derivation, seeing that Tehuti in his highest aspect is a synonym for the Logos of our system at the very least, I would suggest that we should rather exalt the " ibis " to the heavens than drag down the sublime concept of that Logos to considera- tions connected with a degenerate fowl of earth, and believe that the Egyptians chose it in wisdom rather than folly, as being some far-off reflection of a certain Great Bird of the Cosmic Depths, a member of that circle of Sacred Animals of which the now conventional Signs of the Zodiac are but faint sky-glyphs.

But the derivation of the name Tehuti which seems

to have been favoured by the Egyptians themselves was from tekh, which usually means a " weight," but is also found as the name of Thoth himself. Now the determina- tive for the word tekh is the sign for the "heart"; moreover, Horapollo (i. 36) tells us that when the Egyptians wish to write "heart" they draw an ibis, adding, " for this bird was dedicated to Hermes (Thoth) as Lord of all Knowledge and Understanding." Is it possible, however, that in this Horapollo was either mistaken or has said less than he knew ; and that the Egyptians once wrote simply " heart " for Thoth, who presided over the " weighing of the heart," but subse- quently, in their love of mystery, and owing to the name-play, substituted the bird tekh or teknu, which we know closely resembled the ibis, for the more sacred symbol ?

The now commonest name for Thoth, however, is Egy. hob, Copt, hiboi, Gk. ibis ; and it is the white ibis (AbUL Hannes) which is the Jbis religiosa, so say Liddell and Scott. Another of the commonest symbolic forms of Thoth is the dog-headed ape. Thus among birds he is glyphed as the ibis, among animals as the cynocephalus. The main apparent reason for this, as we shall see later on, is because the ibis was regarded as the wisest of birds, and the ape of animals.1

In the Judgment Scene of the Book of the Dead the dog-headed ape (Aan) is seated on the top of the beam of the Balance in which the heart of the deceased is weighed ; his duty apparently is to watch the pointer and tell his master Thoth when the beam is level. Brugsch has suggested that this ape is a form of Thoth

1 And this is the case with the latter even to-day, where in the Sudan the natives " believe that its intelligence is of the highest order, and that its cunning is far superior to that of man." (Op. at., i. 21.)

as God of " equilibrium," and that it elsewhere sym- bolises the equinoxes; but this does not explain the ape. Thoth is indeed, as we have seen, the Balancer — " Judge of the two Combatant Gods," l Horus and Set ; he it is who stands at the meeting of the Two Ways, at the junction of Order and Chaos; but this by no means explains the puzzling cynocephalus. It was in one sense presumably connected with a certain state of consciousness, a reflection of the true Mind, just as were the lion and the eagle (or hawk) ; it " mimicked " that Mind better than the rest of the " animals."

Horapollo (i. 16), basing himself on some Hellenistic sources, tells us that the Egyptians symbolised the equinoxes by a sitting cynocephalus. One of the reasons which he gives for this is delightfully " Physiologic " ; he tells us that at the equinoxes once every two hours, or twelve times a day, the cynocephalus micturates.2 From this as from so many of such tales we learn what the " sacred animal " did in heaven, rather than what the physical ape performed on earth. (Of. R 265, n. 3.)

" The principal seat of the Thoth-cult was Khemennu, or Hermopolis, a city famous in Egyptian mythology as the place containing the "high ground on which Ra rested when he rose for the first time."

Dare I here speculate that in this we have the mountain of our " Secret Sermon on the Mountain,"

1 This is one of the most interesting of his titles : " Judge of the Rehehui, the Pacifier of the Gods, who dwelleth in Unnu " (Hermopolis). (Op. cit., i. 405.)

2 This must have been the mystery folk-tale circulated by the priests, for Marius Victorinus repeats it (Halm, Ehet. Lai. Min., p. 223), and it is preserved in the Physiologos (xlv. p. 275 — Lauchert).

and that it was in the Thoth mystery-tradition of Hermopolis that the candidates for initiation were taught to ascend the mountain of their own inner natures, on the top of which the Spiritual Sun would rise and rest upon their heads " for the first time," as Isis says in our " Virgin of the World " treatise ?

At Khemennu l Thoth was regarded as the head of a Company of Eight — four pairs of divinities or divine powers, each a syzygy of male and female powers, positive and negative, active and passive, the oldest example of the Gnostic Ogdoad.

This was long ago the view of Brugsch, and it is now strongly supported by Budge, on the evidence of the texts, as against the opinion of Maspero, who would make the Hermopolitan a copy of the Heliopolitan Paut, or Company, which included Osiris and Isis. Budge, however, squarely declares that "the four pairs of gods of Hermopolis belong to a far older conception of the theogony than that of the company of gods of Heliopolis."

If this judgment is well founded, we have here a most interesting parallel in the Osirian type of our Trismegistic literature, in which Osiris and Isis look to Hermes (Thoth) as their teacher, as being far older and wiser than themselves.

The great struggle between Light and Darkness, of the God of Light and the God of Darkness, goes back to the earliest Egyptian tradition, and the fights of Ha and Apep, Heru-Behutet and Set, and Horus, son of Isis, and Set, are "in reality only different versions of one and the same story, though belonging

to different periods." The Horus and Set version is apparently the most recent. The names of the Light God and Dark God thus change, but what does not change is the name of the Arbiter, the Mediator, " whose duty it was to prevent either God from gaining a decisive victory, and from destroying one another." This Balancer was Thoth, who had to keep the opposites in equilibrium.

The name of the Temple of Thoth at Khemennu, or the City of Eight, was Het Abtit, or "House of the Net" — a very curious expression. From Ch. cliii. of the Kitual, however, we learn that there was a mysterious Net which, as Budge says, " was supposed to exist in the Under World and that the deceased regarded it with horror and detestation. Every part of it — its poles, and ropes, and weights, and small cords, and hooks — had names which he was obliged to learn if he wished to escape from it, and make use of it to catch food for himself, instead of being caught by 'those who laid snares.' "

Interpreting this from the mystical standpoint of the doctrine of Eebirth, or the rising from the dead — that is to say, of the spiritual resurrection of those who had died to the darkness of their lower natures and had become alive to the light of the spiritual life, and this too while alive in the body and not after the death of this physical frame — I would venture to suggest that this Net was the symbol of a certain condition of the inner nature which shut in the man into the limitations of the conventional life of the world, and shut him off from the memory of his true self. The poles, ropes, weights, small cords, and hooks

were symbols of the anatomy and physiology, so to say, of the invisible "body" or "carapace" or "egg" or " envelope " of the soul. The normal man was emeshed in this engine of Fate; the man who received the Mind inverted this Net, so to speak, transmuted and transformed it, so that he could catch food for himself. " Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men." The food with which the " Christ " nourishes his " body " is supplied by men.

Thus in a prayer in this chapter of the Eitual we read: "Hail, thou 'God who lookest behind thee,'1 thou 'God who hast gained the mastery over thine heart,' 2 I go a-fishing with the cordage [? net] of the ' Uniter of the earth,' and of him that maketh a way through the earth.3 Hail ye Fishers who have given birth to your own fathers,4 who lay snares with your nets, and who go round about in the chambers of the waters, take ye not me in the net wherewith ye ensnare the helpless fiends, and rope me not in with the rope wherewith ye roped in the abominable fiends of earth, which had a frame which reached unto heaven, and weighted parts that rested upon earth." 5

1 Perhaps suggesting two-faced or Janus-like — before and be- hind, without and within. With this, however, may be compared the symbolic headdress or mask worn by the virgin Kore (Proserpina) in the Eleusinian Mysteries ; she had, Athena- goras (xx. 292) tells us, " two ordinary eyes, and two in her fore- head, with her face at the back of her neck."

3 Suggesting the power of him who can either wrap the Net round the man or open it in a new direction, so that the man can "pass right through his body," as Hermes says to Tat in one of our Sermons.

* Suggesting " Christs " who have given birth to their Father, the Mind, in their hearts.

5 The fiends of a once mighty frame suggest beings of a dai- monic nature. Perhaps there is a formal distinction intended

And in another chapter (cxxxiii.) the little man says to the Great Man within him : " Lift thyself up, O thou Ra, who dwellest in this divine shrine ; draw thou unto thyself the winds, inhale the North wind, and swallow thou the beqesu of thy net on the day wherein thou breathest Maat."

" On the day wherein thou breathest Maat " suggests the inbreathing or inspiration of Truth and Righteous- ness, the Holy Ghost, or Holy Breath or Life, the Spouse of the Ordering Mind or Logos. The winds are presumably the four great cosmic currents of the Divine Breath, the North wind being the "down- breath " of the Great Sphere.

The term beqesu has not yet been deciphered (can it mean knots ?) ; but the swallowing of the Net seems to suggest the transformation of it, inwardly digesting of it, in such a fashion that the lower is set free and becomes one with the higher.

And that this idea of a net is very ancient, especially in its macrocosmic significance, is evidenced by the parallel of the Assyrian and Babylonian versions of the great fight between the Sun-god Mar- duk and the Chaotic Mother Tiamat and her titanic and daimonic powers of disordered motion and in- stability— both Egyptian and Babylonian traditions probably being derived from some primitive common source.

"He (Marduk) set lightning in front of him, with burning fire he filled his body. He made a net to en- close the inward parts of Tiamat, the Four Winds he set so that nothing of her might escape ; the South wind and the North wind, and the East wind and the West

by the epithet " helpless " and " abominable," corresponding with the rational and irrational aspects of the soul as set forth in our sermons.

wind, he brought near to the net which his father Ann had given him." 1

Now in the Hymns of the popular Hermes-cult found in the Greek Magic Papyri, one of the most favourite forms of address to Hermes is "0 thou of the four winds." Moreover, we may compare with the rope with which the Fishers " rope the abominable fiends of earth," the passage of Athenagoras to which we have already referred, and in which he tells us concerning the Mysteries that the mythos ran that Zeus, after dismembering his father, and taking the kingdom, pur- sued his mother Rhea who refused his nuptials. " But she having assumed a serpent form, he also assumed the same form, and having bound her with what is called the 'Noose of Hercules' (TW /taAoi^ei/ft) fH/oa/cAeiamK&> dp/mart), was joined with her. And the symbol of this transformation is the Rod of Hermes."

Here again it is the symbolic Caducous that repre- sents the equilibrium between the opposed forces; it is the power of Thoth that binds and loosens ; he holds the keys of heaven and hell, of life and death. It is further quite evident that Atheuagoras is referring to a Hellenistic form of the Mysteries, in which the influence of Egypt is dominant. The " Noose of Her- cules " is thus presumably the " Noose of Ptah." Now

Ptah is the creator and generator, and his " Noose " or " Tie " is probably the Ankh-tie or symbol of life, the familiar crux ansata, of which the older form is a twisted rope, probably representing the binding together of male and female life in generation. Ptah is also the God of Fire, and we should not forget that it is Hephaistos in Greek myth who catches Aphrodite and Ares in a Net which he has cunningly contrived — at which the gods laughed in High Olympus.

1 King (L. W.), Babylonian Religion, p.^71.

In the list of titles of the numerous works belonging to the cycle of Orphic literature, one is called The Veil (IleVXo?) and another The Net (At'/cri/ov).1

In the Panathenaea the famous Peplum, Veil, Web, or Robe of Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, was borne aloft like the sail of a galley ; but this was the symbol only of the Mysteries. Mystically it signified the Veil of the Universe, studded with stars, the many- coloured Veil of Nature,2 the famous Veil or Robe of Isis, that no " mortal " or " dead man " has raised, for that Veil was the spiritual nature of the man himself, and to raise it he had to transcend the limits of individuality, break the bonds of death, and so become consciously immortal.

Eschenbach 3 is thus quite correct when, in another of its aspects, he refers this Veil to the famous Net of Vulcan. Moreover Aristotle, quoting the Orphic writ- ings, speaks of the " living creature born in the webs of the Net " ; 4 while Photius tells us that the book of Dionysius ^Egeensis, entitled Netting, or Concerning Nets (At/cTfa/ca), treated of the generation of mortals.5 And Plato himself likens the intertwining of the nerves, veins, and arteries to the " network of a basket " or a bird-cage.6

All of which, I think, shows that Thoth's Temple of the Net must have had some more profound significance in its name than that it was a building in which "the emblem of a net, or perhaps a net itself, was venerated," as Budge lamely surmises.

2 Of. Philo, De /Som., i. (v. 92— Pfeiff) — rb tt^icoiKiKov Saturn*

3 Eschenbach (A. C.), Epigenes de Poesi Orphica (Nurnberg, 1702), p. 51.

But to resume. We have seen that Thoth was con- sidered to be the " heart " and " tongue " of Ea the Supreme — that is, not only the reason and mental powers of the god Ea, and the means whereby they were translated into speech, but rather the Controller of the life and Instrument of the utterance of the Supreme Will ; He was the Logos in the fullest sense of that mysterious name, the Creative Word. He it is who utters the " words" whereby the Will of the Supreme is carried into effect, and his utterance is that of Necessity and Law ; his " words " are not the words of feeble human speech, but the compelling orders of the Creative Will.

" He spoke the words which resulted in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and he taught Isis the words which enabled her to revivify the dead body of Osiris, in suchwise that Osiris could beget a child by her ; and he gave her the formulae which brought back her son Horus to life after he had been stung to death by a scorpion."

All of which, I believe, refers microcosmically to the mystery of the resurrection from the dead, by the power of the Logos. " Osiris " must die before he can be raised, and beget a son, who is himself, by immaculate conception within his own spiritual nature. " Horus " must be poisoned to death by the scorpion of " Typhon " before he can be raised by the baptism of the pure waters of Life.

Thoth's "knowledge and powers of calculation measured out the heavens and planned the earth, and

everything which is in them ; his will and power kept the forces in heaven and earth in equilibrium ; it was his skill in celestial mathematics which made proper use of the laws (madt) upon which the foundation and main- tenance of the universe rested ; it was he who directed the motions of the heavenly bodies and their times and seasons ; and without his words the gods, whose exist- ence depended upon them, could not have kept their place among the followers of Ra" — but would presum- ably have disappeared into another universe.

Thoth is the Judge of the dead, the Eecorder and Balancer of all " words," the Recording Angel ; for the testing of the soul in the Balance of the Hall of Osiris is called the " weighing of words " and not of " actions." But these "words" were not the words a man uttered, nor even the " reasons " he thought he had for his deeds, but the innermost intentions of his soul, the ways of the will of his being.

This doctrine of "words" as expressions of will, however, had, in addition to its moral significance, a magical application. "The whole efficacy of prayer appears to have depended upon the manner and tone of voice in which the words were spoken."

It was Thoth who taught these words-of-power and how to utter them; he was the Master of what the Hindus would call mantra-vidya, or the science of in- vocation or sacred chanting. These mantrdh were held in ancient Egypt, as they were and are to-day in India, and elsewhere among knowers of such matters, of special efficacy in affecting the "bodies" and con- ditions of that fluid nature which exists midway between the comparative solidity of normal physical nature and the fixed nature of the mind.

These " words " were connected with vital " breath " and the knowing use of it ; that is to say, they were

only really efficacious when the spoken words of physical sound corresponded naturally in their vowels and consonants, or their fluid and fixed elements, with the permutations and combinations of the inner elements of Nature; they then and only then were mad or true or authentic or real — that is to say, they were " words-of -power " in that they compelled matter to shape itself according to true cosmic notions.

Thus in a book called The Book of Breathings, it is said : " Thoth, the most mighty God, the Lord of Khemennu, cometh to thee, and he writeth for thee The Book of Breathings with his own fingers.1 Thus thy soul shall breathe for ever and ever, and thy form shall be endowed with life upon earth, and thou shalt be made a God, along with the souls of the Gods, and they shall be the heart of Ea [for thee], and thy members shall be the members of the Great God."

In the Ritual we learn of the services which Thoth performs for " Osiris," that is for the Osirified, for he repeats them for every man who has been acquitted in the Judgment. Of three striking passages quoted by Budge, we will give the following as the most compre- hensible, and therefore the seemingly most

important for us. It is to be found in Ch. clxxxiii. and runs as follows, in the words placed in the mouth of the one who is being resurrected into an Osiris.

" I have come unto thee, 0 son of Nut, Osiris, Prince of everlastingness ; I am in the following of God Thoth, and I have rejoiced at everything which he hath done for thee. He hath brought unto thee sweet air for thy nose, and life and strength for thy beautiful face, and

1 The symbol of his actualising power. VOL. I. 5

the North wind which cometh forth from Tern for thy nostrils. ... He hath made God Shu to shine upon thy body ; he hath illumined thy path with rays of splendour ; he hath destroyed for thee [all] the evil defects which belong to thy members by the magical power of the words of his utterance. He hath made the two Horus brethren to be at peace for thee ; l he hath destroyed the storm wind and the hurricane ; he hath made the Two Combatants to be gracious unto thee, and the two lands 2 to be at peace before thee ; he hath put away the wrath which was in their hearts, and each hath become reconciled unto his brother."

Budge then proceeds to give the attributes of Thoth as connected with time-periods and the instruments of time, the sun and moon. As Aah-Tehuti, he is the Measurer and Regulator of times and seasons, and is clearly not the Moon-god simply — though Budge says that he clearly is — for Thoth as Aah is the " Great Lord, the Lord of Heaven, the King of the Gods " ; he is the "Maker of Eternity and Creator of Everlastingness." He is, therefore, not only the JEon, but its creator; and that is something vastly different from the Moon- god.

On p. 401 our authority has already told us that one of the titles of Thoth is " Thrice-great, " and that the Greeks derived the honorific title Trismegistus from this; but on p. 415 he adds: "The title given to him in some inscriptions, ' three times great, great '

1 Showing that Set is Horus in his form of darkness. 1 Mystically, the upper and lower kingdoms in man.

[that is, greatest], from which the Greeks derived their appellation of the god o Tpio-/ue'yto'To?, or 'ter maximus,' has not yet been satisfactorily explained, and at present the exact meaning which the Egyptians assigned to it is unknown."

If this title is found in the texts, it will settle a point of long controversy, for it has been strenuously denied that it ever occurs in the hieroglyphics; unfortunately, however, Dr Budge gives us no references. To the above sentence our distinguished Egyptologist appends a note to the effect that a number of valuable facts on the subject have been collected by Pietschmann in the book we have already made known to our readers. We have, however, not been able to find any valuable facts in Pietschmann which are in any way an elucidation of the term Thrice- greatest; but to this point we will return in another chapter.

The peculiar supremacy ascribed to Thoth by the Egyptians, however, has been amply demonstrated, and, as the great authority to whom we are so deeply indebted, says in his concluding words : " It is quite clear that Thoth held in their minds a position which was quite different from that of any other god, and that the attributes which they ascribed to him were unlike the greater number of those of any member of their companies of gods. The character of Thoth is a lofty and a beautiful conception, and is, perhaps, the highest

idea of deity ever fashioned in the Egyptian mind, which, as we have already seen, was somewhat prone to dwell on the material side of divine matters. Thoth, how- ever, as the personification of the Mind of God, and as the all-pervading, and governing, and directing power

of heaven and earth, forms a feature of the Egyptian religion which is as sublime as the belief in the resurrection of the dead in a spiritual body, and as the doctrine of everlasting life."

Thoth is then the Logos of God, who in his relation to mankind becomes the Supreme Master of Wisdom,1 the Mind of all masterhood.

We will now turn to one whose views are considered heterodox by conservative and unimaginative critics,2 who confine themselves solely to externals, and to the lowest and most physical meanings of the hiero- glyphics— to one who has, I believe, come nearer to the truth than any of his critics, and whose labours are most highly appreciated by all lovers of Egyptian mystic lore.

The last work of W. Marsham Adams 3 deserves the closest attention of every theosophical student. Not, however, that we think the author's views with regard to a number of points of detail, and especially with regard to the make-up of the Great Pyramid, are to be accepted in any but the most provisional manner, for as yet we in all probability do not know what the full contents of that pyramid are, only a portion of them being known to us according to some seers. The chief merit of the book before us is the intuitional grasp of

1 " Thoth the Wise " of the « Inscription of London " § 4 (R. 64), to which we shall refer later on.

2 See the reviews on the below-mentioned work in The Athenceum of 31st December 1898, and The Academy of 31st December 1898 and 7th January 1899.

3 The Book of the Master, or The Egyptian Doctrine of the Light born of the Virgin Mother (London, 1898) — a sequel to his study entitled The House of the Hidden Places, a Clue to the Creed of Early Egypt from Egyptian Sources (London, 1895).

its author on the general nature of the mystery-cultus, as derived from the texts, and especially those of the Eitual or the so-called Book of the Dead, as Lepsius named it, setting a bad fashion which is not yet out of fashion. The Egyptian priests themselves, according to our author, called it The Book of the Master of the Secret House, the Secret House being, according to Adams, the Great Pyramid, otherwise called the " Light."

THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE INNER TRADITION OF EGYPTIAN WISDOM

In his Preface the author gives us clearly to understand that he regards the Wisdom of Egypt as forming the main background of some of the principal teachings of Early Christianity; and that this view is strongly confirmed by a careful study of the Trismegistic literature and its sources, will be made apparent in the course of our own labours. But before we proceed to quote from the former Fellow of New College, Oxford, whose recent death is regretted by all lovers of Egypt's Wisdom, we must enter a protest.

Mr Adams has severely handicapped his work; indeed, he has destroyed nine-tenths of its value for scholars, by neglecting to append the necessary references to the texts which he cites. Such an omission is suicidal, and, indeed, it would be impossible for us to quote Mr Adams were it not that our Trismegistic literature permits us — we might almost say compels us — to take his view of the spiritual nature of the inner tradition of Egyptian Wisdom. Not, however, by any means that our author has traversed the same ground ; he has not even mentioned the name of the Thrice- greatest one, and seems to have been ignorant of our treatises. Mr Adams claims to have arrived at his

conclusions solely from the Egyptian texts themselves, and to have been confirmed in his ideas by personal inspection of the monuments. In fact, he considers it a waste of time to pay attention to anything written in Greek about Egyptian ideas, and speaks of " the distor- tion and misrepresentation wherein those ideas were involved, when filtered through the highly imaginative but singularly unobservant intellect of Greece." l Thus we have a writer attacking the same problem from a totally different standpoint — for we ourselves regard the Greek tradition of the Egyptian Gnosis as a most valuable adjunct to our means of knowledge of the Mind of Egypt — and yet reaching very similar con- clusions.

THE HOLY LAND OF EGYPT AND ITS INITIATES

The Holy Land of those who had gone out from the body, watered by the Celestial Nile, the Eiver of Heaven, of which the earthly river was a symbol and parallel, was divided into three regions, or states: (1) Eusta, the Territory of Initiation ; (2) Aahlu, the Territory of Illumination ; and (3) Amenti, the Place of Union with the Unseen Father.2

" In the religion of Egypt, the deepest and most fascinating mystery of antiquity, the visible creation, was conceived as the counterpart of the unseen world.3 And the substance consisted not of a mere vague belief in the life beyond the grave, but in tracing out the Path whereby the Just, when the portal of the tomb is lifted up,4 passes through the successive stages of

2 Op. tit., 13. Compare with this the three grades of Initia- tion given by Pietschmann (p. 24 n.), as cited above, p. 51.

3 The image-doctrine of our treatises.

4 This is an error ; true initiation consisted in the fact that

Initiation, of Illumination, and of Perfection, necessary to fit him for an endless union with Light, the Great Creator." 1

Thus we are told that at a certain point in Aahlu, the Territory of Illumination, the Osirified, the purified soul, has achieved the " Passage of the Sun " — that is to say, has passed beyond the mortal mind-plane ; he opens the Gates of the Celestial Nile and receives the Atf -crown of Illumination, " fashioned after the form of the Zodiacal light, the glory of the supreme heaven." This is presumably the " crown of lives " referred to in our sermons, which he receives in the sphere called "Eight," and with which he goes to the Father.

The Guide and Conductor through all these grades was Thoth the Eternal Wisdom ; * and we are told that:

" Thoth the Divine Wisdom, clothes the spirit of the Justified 3 a million times in a garment of true linen,4 of

cosmic consciousness was realised in the body, while a man still lived. This consciousness naturally included the after-death consciousness as part of its content.

3 That is, he who has the " balanced " nature.

4 In my Did Jesus Live 100 B.C. ? — in treating of the Elxai tradition and the wild statements of the puzzled and puzzling Epiphanius, I asked : " May there not have been a mystery-teaching behind the beautiful historicised story of the sisters Mary and Martha, and of Lazarus, their brother, who was ' raised from the dead ' after being ' three days ' in the grave ? Was not Lazarus raised as a ' mummy ' swathed in grave-clothes ? " In this connection it is interesting to find Tertullian (De Corona, viii. ; Oehler, i. 436) referring to the " linen cloth " with which Jesus girt himself in John xiii. 4, 5, as the " proper garment of Osiris." The proper garment of Osiris at one stage consisted most probably of the symbolic linen wrappings of the " mummy."

that substance, that is to say, which by its purity and its brilliancy reminds us of the mantles, woven out of rays of light, wherewith the sun enwraps the earth afresh each day as she rotates before him ; just as the soul of man is invested with new radiance each time that he turns to tbe presence of his Creator." Again, "in the harmonious proportion of the universe," the Egyptians saw " the Eternal Wisdom, Thoth, ' the Mind and Will of God.'"1

We have seen that Pietschmann considers the original of Thoth, the God of Wisdom, to be nothing more than the ibis-headed moon-god, thus intentionally deriving the origin of the Great Initiator from what he considers to be the crude beginnings of primitive ideas. But Thoth was the Great Reckoner, the Eecorder of the Balance of Justice, the Teller of the Karmic Scales. Now the mortal time-recorder for the Egyptians was the moon, " for if we consider the motion of the moon relatively to the sun, we shall find that the time that it takes in covering a space equal to its own disc is just an hour. . . . Now, that measure of the ' Hour ' was peculiarly sacred in Egypt; each of the twenty-four which elapse during a single rotation of the earth being consecrated to its own particular deity, twelve of light and twelve of darkness. ' Explain the God in the hour,' is the demand made of the adept in the Ritual when standing in the Hall of Truth. And that God in the hour, we learn, was Thoth, the ' Lord of the Moon and the Reckoner of the Universe.' " 2

Again, with regard to the moon-phases, the first day of the lunar month was called " the conception of the moon," the second its ' ' birth," and so on step by step till it was full. Now the time of all lower initiations was the full moon. Thus " in the lunar representations 1 Op. tit., p. 23. 2 Op. dt., p. 30.

on the walls of the temple of Denderah we have fourteen steps leading up to the fifteenth or highest, whereon was enthroned Thoth, the Lord of the Moon." l

For some such reasons was Thoth called Lord of the Moon, not that the moon gave birth to the idea of Thoth. We must not seek for the origin of the Wisdom-tradition in its lower symbols. For in the inscription

on the coffin of Ankhnes-Ra-Neferab — that is of her "whose life was the Sacred Heart of Ra " — we read : " Thy name is the Moon, the Heart of Silence, the Lord of the Unseen World " 2 — of the space "as far as the moon," or the "sublunary region," as the old books say, the first after-death state, where souls are purified from earthly stains.

SOME OF THE DOCTRINES OF INITIATION

The end set before the neophyte was illumination, and the whole cult and discipline and doctrines insisted on this one way to Wisdom. The religion of Egypt was essentially the Religion of the Light.

But " most characteristic of all was the omnipotent and all-dominating sense of the fatherhood of God, producing the familiar and in some respects even joyous aspect which the Egyptians imparted to the idea of death." And " to the sense which the priests at least possessed, both of the divine personality and of their own ultimate union with the personal deity [the Logos], far more probably than to any artificial pretension to a supposed exclusiveness, may be ascribed the mystery enshrouding their religion."3

And as Light was the Father of the Religion of Illumination, so was Life, his consort or syzygy, the Mother of the Religion of Joy. " Life was the centre,

the circumference, the totality of Good. Life was the sceptre in the hand of Amen ; life was the richest ' gift of Osiris.' ' Be not ungrateful to thy Creator,' says the sage Ptah-Hotep, in what is perhaps the oldest document in existence, 'for he has given thee life.' 'I am the Fount of Light,' says the Creator in the Eitual. ' I pierce the Darkness. I make clear the Path for all ; the Lord of Joy.' " * Or again, as the postulant prays to the setting sun : " 0 height of Love, thou openest the double gate of the Horizon." 2

Here we have the full doctrine of the Light and Life which is the keynote of our treatises. Again, the doctrine of the endless turning of the spheres, which " end where they begin," in the words of "The Shepherd," is shown in the great fourth year festival of Hep-Tep or " Completion-Beginning," when " the revolution and the rotation of our planet were simultaneously completed and begun afresh." 8

That the ancient temples of initiation in Egypt were models of the Sophia Above, or of the " Heavenly Jerusalem," to use a Jewish Gnostic term, or, in other words, of the Type of the world-building, we may well believe. Thus it is with interest that we read the re- marks of Adams on the temple of Denderah (or Annu), rebuilt several times according to the ancient plans, and an important centre of the mystery-cultus. The temple was dedicated to Hat-Hor, whose ancient title was the Virgin- Mother.

" In the centre of the temple is the Hall of the Altar, with entrances opening east and west ; and beyond it lies the great hall of the temple entitled the Hall of

the Child in his Cradle, from whence access is obtained to the secret and sealed shrine entered once a year by the high priest, on the night of mid-summer." l

There were also various other halls and chambers each having a distinctive name, " bearing reference, for the most part, to the Mysteries of the light and of a divine Birth." We have such names as : Hall of the Golden Rays, Chamber of Gold, Chamber of Birth, Dwelling of the Golden One, Chamber of Flames.

Now as the famous planisphere of Denderah — a wall- painting transferred bodily from the temple to Paris, early in the last century — " contains the northern and southern points, we are enabled to correlate the parts of that picture with the various parts of the temple, and thereby to discover a striking correspondence between the different parts of the inscription and the titles of the chambers and halls occupying relative positions." 2

Thus we have in the planisphere corresponding to the halls and chambers such names as : Horus, the Entrance of the Golden Heavens, the Golden Heaven of Isis, Horizon of Light, Palace Chamber of Supreme Light, Heavenly Flame of Burning Gold. "And as the chief hall of the temple was the Hall of the Child in his Cradle, so the chief representation on the plani- sphere is the holy Mother with the divine Child in her arms. "

Now the great mystery of Egypt was the second birth, the " Birth of Horus." In " The Virgin of the World," a long fragment of the lost Trismegistic treatise, "The Sacred Book," preserved by Stobaeus, Isis says to Horus: I will not tell of this birth; I 1 Op. cit., p. 71. 8 Op. tit., p. 75.

must not, mighty Horus, reveal the origin of thy race, lest men should in the future know the generation of the Gods. Of the nature of this rebirth we are familiar from our treatises. But in spite of such clear indications the mystery of the Golden Horus has not yet been revealed.

In another passage from the same book Isis declares that the sovereignty or kingship of philosophy is in the hands of Harnebeschenis. This transliterated Egyptian name is given by Pietschmann1 as originally either HOT neb en ^ennu (Horus the Lord of Xennu), or as Hor nub en -^ennu (the Golden Horus of Xennu). His hieroglyph was the golden hawk, who flies nearest the sun, and gazes upon it with unwinking eyes, a fit symbol for the new-born, the " man " illuminate.

Indeed, says Adams, " throughout the sacred writings of Egypt, there is no doctrine of which more frequent mention is made than that of a divine birth." z

In what circle of ideas to place the Birth of Horus the theosophical student may perhaps glean by reversing the stages given in the following interesting passage of our author :

" In the Teaching of Egypt, around the radiant being, which in its regenerate life could assimilate itself to the glory of the Godhead, was formed the ' khaibit,' or luminous atmosphere, consisting of a series of ethereal envelopes, at once shading and diffusing its flaming lustre, as the earth's atmosphere shades and diffuses the solar rays. And at each successive transformation (Eitual, IxxviL-lxxxvii.) it descended nearer to the moral [? normal] conditions of humanity. From the form of the golden hawk, the semblance of the absolute divine substance of the one eternal self-existent being, it passes to the ' Lord of Time,' the image of the Creator, 1 Op. tit., p. 44. * Op. tit., p. 89.

since with the creation time began. Presently it assumes the form of a lily, the vignette in the Ritual representing the head of Osiris enshrined in that flower ; the Godhead manifested in the flesh coming forth from immaculate purity. ' I am the pure lily,' we read, ' coming forth from the lily of light. I am the source of illumination and the channel of the breath of immortal beauty. I bring the messages; Horus

accomplishes them.' Later the soul passes into the form of the urceiis, ' the soul of the earth.' . . . And finally it assumes the semblance of a crocodile ; becoming subject, that is, to the passions of humanity. For the human passions, being part of the nature wherein man was originally created, are not intrinsically evil but only become evil when insubordinate to the soul."1

And not only was the Deity worshipped as the Source of Light and Life, but also as the Fount of Love. " I am the Fount of Joy," says the Creator in the Ritual, and when the Atf-crown of illumination is set upon the head of the triumphant candidate after accomplishing the " Passage of the Sun," as referred to above, the hynm proclaims that " north and south of that crown is Love." 2 Into this Love the catechumen was initiated from the Secret Scroll, whose name is thus given in one of the copies : " This Book is the Greatest of Mysteries. Do not let the eye of anyone look upon it — that were an abomination. ' The Book of the Master of the Secret House ' is its name." 3

3 Op. cit., p. 96. The title seems to be found only in the latest recension of the twenty-sixth Saite dynasty — the time of our King Ammon — but certainly no better one can be suggested.

The whole conception of the doctrine exposed in its chapters is instruction in Light and Life.

But are we to suppose that the majority were really instructed in this wisdom ? — for we find it customary to wrap up some chapters of this Secret Scroll with almost every mummy. By no means. It seems to me that there are at least three phases in the use of this scrip- ture, and in the process of degeneration from knowledge to superstition which can be so clearly traced in the history of Egypt. First there was the real instruction, followed by initiation while living ; secondly, there was the recitation of the instruction over the uninitiated dead to aid the soul of the departed in the middle passage ; and thirdly, there was the burying a chapter or series of chapters of the Book of the Master as a talisman to protect the defunct, when in far later times the true meaning of the words written in the sacred characters had been lost, though they were still " superstitiously " regarded as magical "words of power."

The recitation of some of the chapters over the dead body of the uninitiated, however, is not to be set down as a useless " superstition," but was a very efficacious form of " prayers for the dead." After a man's decease he was in conscious contact with the unseen world, even though he may have been sceptical of its existence, or at any rate unfit to be taught its real nature, prior to his decease. But after the soul was freed from the prison of the body, even the uninitiated was in a con- dition to be instructed on the nature of the path he then perforce must travel. But as he could not even then properly pronounce the " words " of the sacred tongue, the initiated priest recited or chanted the passages.

" For the doctrine contained in those mystic writings was nothing else than an account of the Path pursued by the Just when, the bonds of the flesh being loosed, he passed through stage after stage of spiritual growth — the Entrance on Light, the Instruction in Wisdom, the Second Birth of the Soul, the Instruction in the Well of Life, the Ordeal of Fire, and the Justification in Judgment ; until, illumined in the secret Truth and adorned with the jewels of Immortality, he became indissolubly united with Him whose name, says the Egyptian Ritual, is Light, Great Creator." l

It should, however, be remembered that this must not be taken in its absolute sense even for the initiate, much less for the uninitiated. For even in the mystic schools themselves, as we may see from our treatises, there were three modes in which knowledge could be communicated — " By simple instruction, by distant vision, or by personal participation." 2 For indeed there were many phases of being, many steps of the great ladder, each in ever greater fullness embracing the stages mentioned, each a reflection or copy of a higher phase.

Thus, for example, " the solemn address, described in the Sai-an-Sinsin, of the ' Gods in the House of Osiris,' followed by the response of the ' Gods in the House of Glory' — the joyous song of the holy departed who stand victorious before the judgment-seat, echoed triumph- antly by the inner chorus of their beloved who have gone before them into the fullness of life " 3 — must be taken as indicative of several stages. Such, for instance, as the normal union of the man's consciousness with that

of his higher ego, after exhausting his spiritual aspira- tions in the intermediate heaven-world — this is the joining the " those-that-are " of " The Shepherd " treatise, in other words, the harvest of those past lives of his that are worthy of immortality; or again the still higher union of the initiated with the " pure mind " ; or again the still sublimer union of the Master with the nirvanic consciousness; and so on perchance to still greater Glories.

Thus we are told that the new twice-born, on his initiation, "clothed in power and crowned with light, traverses the abodes or scenes of his former weakness, there to discern, by his own enlightened perception, how it is ' Osiris who satisfies the balance of Him who rules the heavens'; to exert in its supernal freedom his creative will, now the lord, not the slave of the senses; and to rejoice in the just suffering which wrought his Illumination and Mastery." x

But higher and still higher he has yet to soar beyond earth and planets and even beyond the sun, " across the awful chasms of the unfathomable depths to far-off Sothis, the Land of Eternal Dawn, to the Ante-chamber of the Infinite Morning." 2

Many other passages of great beauty and deep interest could we quote from the pages of Marsh am Adams' illuminative study, but enough has been said for our purpose. The Wisdom of Egypt was the main source of our treatises without a doubt. Even if only one-hundredth part of what our author writes were the truth, our case would be established ; and if Egypt did not teach this Wisdom, then we must perforce bow 1 Op. tit., p. 185. 2 Op. tit., p. 186.

down before Mr Adams as the inventor of one of the most grandiose religions of the universe. But the student of inner nature knows that it is not an inven- tion, and though, if he be a scholar at the same time, he cannot but regret that Mr Adams has omitted his references, he must leave the critics to one or other of the horns of the dilemma; they must either declare that our author has invented it all and pay homage to what in that case would be his sublime genius, or admit that the ancient texts themselves have inspired Mr Adams with these ideas. And if this be a foretaste of what Egypt has preserved for us, what may not the future reveal to continued study and sympathetic interpretation !

THE POPULAK THEURGIC HEEMES-CULT IN THE GEEEK MAGIC PAPYEI

THAT at one period the " Eeligion of Hermes " was not only widely spread, but practically supreme, in popular Hellenistic circles, may be seen from a study of the texts of the numerous magic papyri which have been preserved, and made accessible to us by the industry of such immensely laborious scholars as Leemans, Dieterich, Wessely, and Kenyon.

The Greek Hermes prayers, as with many others of a similar nature, are manifestly overworkings of more ancient types, and, as we might expect, are of a strongly syncretistic nature. In them we can distinguish in popular forms, based on the ancient traditions of Egyptian magic, most interesting shadows of the philosophic and theosophic ideas which our Trismegistic literature has set forth for us in the clear light of dignified simplicity.

But just as we now know that the once so-called " Gnostic," Abraxas and Abraxoid amulets, gems, and rings pertained to the general popular magical religion and had nothing to do with the Gnosis proper, so we may be sure that the circles of high mysticism, who refused to offer to God even so pure a sacrifice as

the burnt offering of incense, and deemed naught worthy of Him, short of the " prayers and praises of the mind," had nothing directly to do with the popular Hermes prayers, least of all with the invoca- tory rites of popular theurgy, and phylactery or amulet consecration.

Nevertheless, there is much of interest for us in these invocations, and much that can throw side-lights on the higher teaching and practice which transformed all external rites into the discipline of inner spiritual experience.

The following prayers, which, as far as I know, have not been previously translated, are rendered from the most recently revised texts of Reitzenstein, who has omitted the magic names, and emended the previous editions. I cannot but think, however, that these texts might be submitted to a more searching analysis than has yet been accorded them. They seem to present somewhat similar phenomena to the recensions of the Book of the Dead; that is to say, fragments of material from the tradition of a greater past have been adapted and overworked for the needs of a lesser age. Indeed, the whole effort of the Trismegistic schools seems to have been to restore the memory of that greater past ; it had been forgotten, and its dim record had become a superstition instead of a living faith, a degenerate magic instead of a potent theurgy. The theurgy of our prayers is that of dwarfs ; the theurgy of the past was believed to have been that of giants.

I. AN INVOCATION TO HERMES AS THE GOOD MIND l

1. Come unto me, O thou of the four winds,2 al- mighty one,3 who breathest spirit into men to give them life;

2. Whose name is hidden, and beyond the power of men to speak ; 4 no prophet [even] can pronounce it ; yea, even daimons, when they hear thy name, are fearful !

3. O thou, whose tireless eyes are sun and moon,6 — [eyes] that shine in the pupils 6 of the eyes of men !

4. 0 thou. who hast the heaven for head, aether for body, [and] earth for feet, and for the water round thee ocean's deep ! 7 Thou the Good Daimon art, who art the sire of all things good, and nurse of the whole world.8

5. Thy everlasting revelling-place 9 is set above.

6. Thine the good emanations 10 of the stars, — those daimons, fortunes, and those fates by whom are given

2 Perhaps originally spirits or breaths.

3 •KwroicpdTwp, used of Hermes, Anth. P., append., 282.

4 Compare Lactantius, i. 6 (Frag. II.) ; and especially iv. 7 (Frag. VI.).

5 The " eyes and light of Horus," according to Plutarch, De Is. et Os., lii. ; mystically, the higher and lower " ego " and much else.

6 iv rats n6pius — compare the dissertation on the meaning of the title of our treatise generally translated "Virgin (K&PII) of the World," in the commentary thereto.

7 Sc. the Ocean of Space, the " Great Green " of the Ritual.

8 That is, father-mother of the universe.

9 Kufjiaa-T^piov — that is, heaven. See vn. 3 below.

10 hirtppoiat — or personified influences. See Plutarch, De Is. et Os., xxxviii., liii., Iviii. ; and especially Pistis Sophia, where it occurs over and over again. Compare also K. K., 1 ; Stob., p. 405, 17 (W.).

wealth, good blend [of nature],1 and good children, good fortune, and good burial. For thou art lord of life, —

7. Thou who art king of heavens and earth and all that dwell in them ;

8. Whose Righteousness is never put away ; whose Muses hymn thy glorious name ; whom the eight Wardens guard, — thou the possessor of the Truth 2 pure of all lie !

9. Thy Name and Spirit rest upon the good.3

10. O mayst thou come into my mind and heart for all the length of my life's days, and bring unto accomplishment all things my soul desires!

11. For thou art I, and I am thou.* Whate'er I speak, may it for ever be ; for that I have thy Name 5 to guard me in my heart.6

— referring apparently to the composition of "body" and "soul."

3 That is, the Pleroma or Mon (see vi. 9 below). Reitzen- stein (p. 18) says rightly, as we have seen, that Egyptologists have long recognised that the God here identified with Agatho- daimon was originally the Hermes or Thoth of Hermopolis Magna, Lord of the Eight Wardens (the Ogdoad), symbolised by apes, hymned by the Muses (? the Nine or Ennead), and spouse of Isis-Righteousness (cf. Plut., De Is. ei Os., iii.).

4 Compare the extra-canonical logos : " I stood on a lofty mountain and saw a gigantic man, and another, a dwarf ; and I heard as it were a voice of thunder, and drew nigh for to hear ; and He spake unto me and said : I am thou, and thou art I ; and wheresoever thou mayest be I am there. In all am I scattered [that is, the Logos as seed or " members "], and whencesoever thou wiliest, thou gatherest Me ; and gathering Me, thou gatherest Thyself." (From the Gospel of Eve, quoted by Epiphanius, Haeres., xxvi. 3.) Of. n. 7.

6 In the Egyptian sense — that is, thy true "person" or "presence." See R. 17, n. 6, for many references to this funda- mental concept of Egyptian religion.

6 <pv\a.>tri\piov — lit., as a phylactery or amulet. See R. 18, n. 8, for Egyptian origin of Jewish phylacteries.

12. Aud every serpent l roused shall have no power o'er me, nor shall I be opposed by any spirit, or daimonial power, or any plague, or any of the evils in the Unseen World ; 2 for that I have thy Name within my soul.

13. Thee I invoke ; come unto me, Good, altogether good, [come] to the good,3 — thou whom no magic can enchant, no magic can control,* who givest me good health, security,6 good store, good fame, victory, [and] strength, and cheerful countenance ! 6

14. Cast down the eyes of all who are against me, and give me grace on all my deeds ! 7

[Revised and restored text, stripped of later overworkings, R. 20, 21. Wessely (C.), Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, "Neue griechische Zauberpapyri " (Vienna, 1893), vol. xiii. p. 55 ; Kenyon (F. G.), Greek Papyri in the British Museum (London, 1893), i. 116.]

1. Come unto me, Lord Hermes, even as into women's wombs [corne] babes ! 8

2. Come unto me, Lord Hermes, who dost collect the food of gods and men ! 9

3. Lord Hermes, come to me, and give me grace,

1 Spd£ — here the symbol of any hostile elemental force. Compare K. K.,— Stob., 402, 22 (W.). * KaO' "AtSov.

7 Compare with this prayer for the descent of the Mind into the heart, the ascent of the man into the Mind of G. H., xiii. (xiii.) 3.

8 This is an echo of spiritual rebirth or regeneration.

9 In its highest sense the heavenly food, or wisdom, the " super- substantial bread," or " bread of life."

[and] food, [and] victory, [and] health and happiness, and cheerful countenance,1 beauty and powers in sight of all!

4. I know thy Name that shineth forth in heaven; I know thy forms 2 as well ; I know thy tree ; 3 I know thy wood 4 as well.

5. I know thee, Hermes, who thou art, and whence thou art, and what thy city is.

6. I know thy names in the Egyptian tongue,5 and thy true name as it is written on the holy tablet in the holy place at Hermes' city, where thou dost have thy birth.

7. I know thee, Hermes, and thou [knowest] me; [and] I am thou, and thou art I.6

8. Come unto me ; fulfil all that I crave ; be favour- able to me together with good fortune and the blessing of the Good.7

[Revised and restored text, B. 21. It is worked in with the preceding, but is of later date.]

1. Come unto me, Lord Hermes, 0 thou of many names, who know'st the secrets hidden both beneath the poles [of heaven] and underneath the earth !

1 2Tra<f>po$iff(a,v irpoar&irov. See I. 13 above.

2 The symbols of which are : the ibis in the east, ape in the west, the serpent in the north, the wolf (or jackal) in the south. So says the overworking of the text ; but perhaps wolf should rather be dog.

3 The terebinth, or turpentine palm. Compare this with the story of Terebinthus, from whose four Books Manes is said, in the A eta Archelai, to have derived his system.

4 The ebony ; perhaps symbolic of the " dark " wisdom, the initiation " in the black " of the K. K. Fragments.

5 TO. ftapfiapiKo, bv6na.ro. — lit., barbarous, that is, non-Greek.

7 Lit., with Agathodaimon ; compare <ri>v Ot$ — "with God's blessing."

2. Come unto me, Lord Hermes, thou benefactor, who doest good to all the world !

3. Give ear to me, [and] give me grace with all that are on earth ; open for me the hands of all that give like thee ; l [and] make them give me what their hands contain !

4. Even as Horus,2 if e'er he called on thee, 0 greatest of all gods, in every trial, in every space, 'gainst gods, and men, and daimones, and things that live in water and on earth, — had grace and riches with gods, and men, and every living thing beneath the earth ; — so let me, too, who call on thee ! So give me grace, form, beauty !

6. Hear me, 0 Hermes, doer of good deeds, thou the inventor of [all] incantations,3 speak me good words ! *

7. Hear me, 0 Hermes, for I have done all things [that I should do] for thy black dog-ape,5 lord of the nether ones !

8. 0, soften all [towards me], and give me might

1 <rvv$<i>K<ii'Tuv — a 3ira| \eydfi.(vov — SUKU (5i5a>/xi) may be com- pared with OT^KOJ ("(TTTj/u). The image may be taken from the well-known symbolical representation of the sun sending forth rays, each furnished with a hand for giving and blessing, especially in the frescoes of the Atem-cult period. Cf. K. K., 11 and 31.

* tv5ia\(Kros yevov — a unique and inelegant expression in Greek, and of uncertain translation into English.

6 This appears here to refer to Anubis, the " dog " of Hades, or the "death-genius," the attendant on Thoth. "Black" is lit. "Ethiopian." But compare in Pistis Sophia, 367, "^Ethiopia Ariouth," a ruler among the infernal daimonials, who is " entirely black." The Ethiopians were famous for their sorcery and black magic. They were the traditional opponents of the "white magicians " of Egypt. Compare " Hor, son of the Negress" in the " Second Story of Khamuas," in Griffith's (F. LI.) Stories of the High Priests of Memphis (Oxford, 1900), pp. 51 ff.

[and] form,1 and let them give me gold, and silver [too], and food of every kind continually.

9. Preserve me evermore for the eternity from spells, deceits, and witchery of every kind, from evil tongues, from every check and every enmity of gods and men!

10. Give unto me grace, victory, success, and satis- faction !

11. For thou art I, and I am thou ; thy Name is mine, and mine is thine; for that I am thy likeness.2

12. Whatever shall befall me in this year, or month, or day, or hour, — it shall befall the Mighty God, whose symbol is upon the holy vessel's prow.3

1 This is not necessarily a prayer for physical form and the rest, but a prayer that the subtle ka of the man, the plastic soul- substance, may take a form of power and beauty, in the unseen world.

2 f15ca\ov, or image or double. The theurgist is endeavouring to identify his ka with that of the god. It was with his ka also, presumably, that the consecrated statue of the god was "animated." Compare the exposition of this theory as given in P. S. A., and the " image " or "likeness of God " in Lactantius, ii. 10. Accord- ing to the Egyptians, man possessed : (1) a physical body (khat) ; (2) a soul (6a) ; (3) a heart (ab) ; (4) a double (ka) ; (5) an intelligence (khu) ; (6) a power (sekhem) ; (7) a shadow (khaibif) • (8) a spiritual body (sdh [stc]) ; (9) a name (reri). See Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, ii. 299, 300. These are, of course,

not arranged in any natural order or in a scientific distribution. The precise meaning of most of these terms is not known. Budge (op. tit., i. 163, 164), however, writes : " Related intimately to the body, but with undefined functions, as far as we can discover, was the sekhem, a word which has been translated ' power,' and ' form,' and even ' vital force ' ; finally the glorified body, to which had been united the soul, and spirit and power, and name of the deceased, had its abode in heaven. This new body of the deceased in heaven was called sdhu."

3 Thoth and Maat are represented as sitting on either side of Ra in his boat.

IV. AN INVOCATION TO THOTH AS LOGOS

1. Thee I invoke alone, thou who alone in all the world imposest order upon gods and men,1 who dost transform thyself in holy forms,2 making to be from things that are not, and from the things that are making the not to be.

2. O holy Thoth,3 the true sight of whose face none of the gods endures !

3. Make me to be in every creature's name4 — wolf, dog, [or] lion, fire, tree, [or] vulture,5 wall,6 [or] water,7 or what thou will'st, for thou art able [so to do].

V. AN INVOCATION TO HERMES AS THE SPIRITUAL LIGHT

1. Thee I invoke who hast created all, who dost transcend the whole, the self-begotten God, who seest all and hearest all, but who art seen by none.

2. For thou didst give the sun his glory and all might, the moon her increase and her decrease, and [unto both] their ordained course. Though thou didst not diminish aught the [powers of] darkness, the still

1 That is, Hermes as the cosmic Logos.

2 Thoth changes his form in every heaven-space or sphere. Compare G. H., i. 13 ; and also the same idea in the descent of the Christos in a number of Gnostic systems, where the Saviour and King conceals himself in the forms of his servants in every phase of his descent. Cf. also 0. H., xi. (xii.) 16.

4 That is, essence, or may be type.

more ancient [than the sun and moon], thou mad'st them equal [with it].1

3. For when thou didst shine forth, Cosmos came into being, and light appeared, and all things were dispensed through thee ; wherefore they all are under thee.

4. 0 thou, whose actual form none of the gods can see, who dost transform thyself into them all in visions [that men see], 0 thou Eternity of the eternity.2

5. Thee I invoke, 0 Lord, that thy true form may manifest to me, for that I am in servitude below thy world,3 slave to thy angel and unto thy fear.4

6. Through thee the pole and earth are fixed.

7. Thee I invoke, O Lord, e'en as the gods whom thou hast made to shine, that they may have their power.

The above prayers afford us some striking examples of the popular Hellenistic form of the Hermes religion,5

1 With the Egyptians, Darkness was the mystery of all mysteries. As Damascius (On First Principles) says : " Of the first principle the Egyptians said nothing ; but characterised it as a darkness beyond all intellectual conception, a thrice unknown Darkness " (oWi-os &yvo>ffrov rpls TOVTO eiri<f>ri[i.i£ovTfs). See my Orpheus (London, 1896), p. 93, and for "Night," pp. 154 and 170 if. Perhaps this may again give some clue to the initiation " in the black " of the K. K. excerpt. The " dark wisdom " was the hidden of the hidden.

2 al&v aluvos. In another hymn, Hermes, as Logos, is called "Cosmos of cosmos" (R. 23, n. 1) — that is, the spiritual world or order.

3 That is the spiritual cosmos, or cosmos of Mind.

4 Compare Isaiah xlv. 7 : " I form the light and create dark- ness : I make peace and create evil : I the Lord do all these things." Cf. G. H.,\. 23, "the avenging daimon" ; and ibid., 15, "Within the Harmony he hath become a slave."

5 Called in the Trismegistic literature the " Religion of the Mind " (Mentis religio). See P. S. A., xxv.

in its theurgic phase. In it Hermes is regarded as the Mind1 or Logos. The Mind is invoked to enter the mind and heart (I. 10).2 With the shining out of the Mind, the Spiritual or Intelligible Light shines forth in the world and man (v. 3). The Mind is thus the guide of souls.3 He is also identified with the Good Daimon (of whom Chnuphis or Horus are variants), with the Great Ocean, the Heaven-Space or Celestial Nile, the Great Green, the Light, the JE>on.

In connection with the above invocations Keitzenstein gives the text of a very interesting ritual of lower theurgy, or rite of the sacred flame, which he characterises by the term " mystery of lychnomancy or lamp-magic." This is the lower side of such high vision as is referred to in "The Shepherd of Men" treatise and in the rite de- scribed in the following passage of the Pistis Sophia, 272, 373 :

" Jesus said unto his disciples : Come unto me ! And

1 Compare the cosmogony in Dieterich, Abraxas, 17, 43 : " Through the Bitterness of God, there appeared Mind . . . that restrains the heart, and was called Hermes." With this peculiar phrase " Bitterness of God" compare the " Bitter Chaos " of the hymn at the end of the J. source of the Naassene Document in "The Myth of Man" chapter; also the "Bitter Water" or Chaos of the Sethian System (Hipp., Philos., v. 19) ; so also Julian, in Oration V., who writes : " The oracles of the gods declare that through purification not only our soul but also our bodies are judged worthy of being greatly helped and presei'ved, for it is said in them that ' the mortal vesture of bitter matter is pre- served.1," Is it thus possible that the "Bitterness" of Jacob

Bohnie may be a reminiscence of the ancient Gnosis?

2 For pure Egyptian parallels see R. 24, n. 1.

3 See the theogony in Dieterich, op. tit., 18, 75 : " And the soul came into being. And God said : ' Thou shalt move all things . . . Hermes guiding thee.' " Compare G. H., x. (xi.) 21 : " But on the pious soul the Mind doth mount, and guide it to the Gnosis' light ;" also xii. (xiii.) 12, ix. (x.) 10, iv. (v.) 11, vii. (viii.) 2.

they came unto him. He turned to the four quarters of the world, and spake the Great Name over their heads, and blessed them, and breathed on their eyes.

" Jesus said unto them : Look, see what ye may see !

" And lifting up their eyes they saw a great Light, exceeding vast, which no dweller on earth could describe.

" He said to them again : Gaze into the Light, and see what ye may see !

" They said : We see fire and water, and wine and blood."

[Revised text, R. 25-27. Wessely, op. dt., " Griechische zauber- papyrus von Paris und London" (Vienna, 1888), 68, 930 ff.]

1. I invoke thee, 0 God, the living one,2 who dost show forth thy splendour in the fire, thou unseen Father of the Light ! 3 Pour forth thy strength ; awake thy daimon, and come down into this fire ; inspire it with [thy] holy spirit ; show me thy might, and let the house of the almighty God, which is within this light, be opened for me! Let there be light, —

1 These rubrics I have added, following the example of Reitzen- stein, but not his wording.

2 Compare the expression "Jesus the living [one]" found frequently in the Introduction to the " First Book of leou " (Carl Schmidt, Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus (Leipzig, 1892), 142-145 — reprinted with his recent translation of the Pistis Sophia in Band I. of his Koptisch gnostische Schriften (Leipzig, 1905) ; and also the Preface to the newest found logoi : " These are the . . . words which Jesus, the living [one], spake " (Grenfell and Hunt, New Sayings of Jesus, London, 1904).

3 Compare in the same writings the oft-repeated " Father of all fatherhood, Boundless Light."

[thy] breadth-depth-length-height-ray;1 and let the Lord, the [God] within, shine forth !

(&) A Stronger Form to be used if the Flame dies down

2. I adjure thee, 0 Light, holy ray, breadth-depth- length-height-ray, by the holy names which I have uttered,2 and am now about to speak . . . abide with me in this same hour, until I have besought thy God, and learnt about the things that I desire !

(c) The Theagogy or Invocation of the God proper

3. Thee I invoke, thou mightiest God and Master . . . thou who enlightenest all and pour's t thy rays by means of thine own power on all the world, 0 God of gods!

4. 0 Word (Logos) that orderest night and day, who guid'st the ship,3 and hold'st the helm, thou dragon-slayer,4 Good Holy Daimon . . . !

5. To whom the East and West give praise as thou dost rise and set, thou who art blest by all the gods, angels, and daimones !

6. Come, show thyself to me, 0 God of gods . . . !

7. Enter, make manifest thyself to me, 0 Lord ; for I invoke as the three apes invoke thee — who symbol-wise name forth thy holy Name.

1 See Dieterich, Jahrb. f. Phil, Suppl., xvi. 802, 171, and 706. Compare also Ephes. iii. 18, and the Valentinian interpreta- tion of the terms in this text as given by Hippolytus, Philos.y vi. 34 (Dunker and Schneidewin, p. 248) ; also the interpretation of the Light Hymn in Pistis Sophia, 146, where the " height " is identified with the " home " of the Light.

2 The magic names of power are omitted, as in the other prayers.

3 Horus is often represented as pilot of the sun-ship in its voyage across the ocean of space, the " Great Green."

* The dragon here undoubtedly meaning darkness. Cf. G. H.,i. 4.

8. In thy ape-form1 enter, appear to me, 0 Lord; for I name forth thy mightiest names !

9. 0 thou who hast thy throne about the height of cosmos,2 and judgest all, encircled with the sphere of Surety and Truth!3

10. Enter, appear to me, 0 Lord, for that I was before the fire and snow, and shall be after [them] ;

11. I am the one who has been born from heaven.4

12. Enter, appear to me, 0 Lord of mighty names, whom all have in their hearts,5 who dost burst open rocks,6 and mak'st the names of gods to move !

13. Enter, appear to me, 0 Lord, who hast thy power and strength in tire, who hast thy throne within the seven poles.7

1 d>y K^voKt(f>a\os. Can it be possible that behind this strange symbolism there may once have been some such idea as this — that as the ape is to man, so was this great elemental to the God ?

2 Lit., art seated on the head of cosmos.

3 That is the Eternity or ^Eon, called elsewhere the Pleroma or "fullness of grace," and identified with Agathodaimon (see prayer, R. 30). See also Wessely, op. cit.t 185 (R. 362) ; and com- pare John i. 14, " full of grace and truth " ; and 16, " Of his fullness have we received, and grace for grace."

4 The regenerate, or spirit-born — that is of " virgin-birth" or the " birth of Horus." But compare the declaration of the soul on its entrance into the unseen world after death, as given on an inscrip- tion found in the tomb of an Orphic or Pythagorean initiate, at Petilia, in what was once Magna Greecia : " Of Earth and starry Heaven child am I ; my race is of the Heavens ! " (See Inscr. Gr. Sicilice et Italics, 638 ; and my " Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries," Theosophical Review, xxii. 317.)

6 These are the logoi hidden in the hearts of all.

6 This may be merely a figurative expression in praise of the might that can not only dissolve the most stable things on earth, but also set in motion the centre of stability of spiritual essences ; or it may refer to the idea of the " God born from the rock," which is most familiar to us from the Mithriac mystery-tradition, where the rock is said to symbolise in physics the " firmament," which was thought of as solid or rigid by the ancients.

7 That is, the seven cosmic spheres.

14. And on thy head a golden crown, and in thy hand a staff . . .l by which thou sendest forth the gods !

15. Enter, 0 Lord, and give me answer with thy holy voice, that I may clearly hear and truthfully about this thing !

(d) A Stronger Form of Adjuration if (c) fails

16. He doth enjoin thee, He the great living God, who is for the eternities of the eternities, the shaker and the thunderer, who doth create each soul and every birth. Enter, appear to me, O Lord, joyous, benignant, gentle, glorious, free from all wrath ; for I adjure thee by the Lord [of all] !

(e) The Greeting when the Presence of the God is manifested

17. Hail Lord, 0 God of gods, thou benefactor . . . ! Hail to thy glories 2 ever more, 0 Lord !

18. I give thee thanks, 0 Lord. Depart, 0 Lord, to thine own heavens, thine own realms, and thine own

v — an untranslatable reading. Is it Egyptian? — or is it intended for yuepWpetai' ? If the latter, it would presumably be connected with the Egyptian myth and cult of Memnon (see Roscher's Lexikon, coll. 2661 ff.). The Memnon cult was somehow connected with Hermes, for in the ruins of the temple were still (at the beginning of the third century) to be seen " statues of Hermes," according to Philostratus (Vit. Apoll., vi. 4), who also (Imag., i. 7) tells us that the Memnon statue was as a lyre which was struck by the rod (TT\T\KTPOV), that is the ray (^ a/cr/j), of the sun. If so, " the rod [of power], by which thou sendest forth the gods," that is thy rays, each god being a ray of the spiritual sun, might have the epithet Memnonian

applied to it. But in our present lack of information, this interpretation seems very strained.

THE POPULAR THEURGIC HERMES-CULT 97

course, preserving me in health, free from all harm, free from all fear of any ka,1 free from all stripes, and all dismay, hearkening to me for all the days of [all] my life !

19. Depart, 0 holy ray ; depart, 0 fair and holy light of highest God !

In connection with the above, we may also take the following ritual-prayer used in the consecration of an amulet ring.

1. Thee I invoke, 0 greatest God, Lord everlasting, thou world-ruler, above the world, beneath the world, mighty sea-ruler ;

2. Who shinest forth at dawn, out from the East rising for all the world, and setting in the West !

3. Come unto me, thou who dost rise from the four winds, joyous Good Daimon, for whom the heaven is thy revelling-place ! 2

4. I call upon thy holy, mighty, hidden names which thou dost joy to hear.

5. When thou dost shine the earth doth sprout afresh, the trees bear fruit when thou dost laugh, the animals bring forth when thou dost turn to them.

6. Give glory, honour, grace, fortune and power . . . !

7. Thee I invoke, the great in heaven . . . , 0 dazzling Sun, who shed'st thy beams on all the world !

8. Thou art the mighty serpent, the chief of all the

gods,1 0 thou who dost possess Egypt's beginning,2 and the end of all the world !

9. Thou art the [God] who saileth o'er the ocean ; thou art the [God] who doth come into sight each day.

10. 0 thou who art above the world, and art beneath the world, 0 mighty ruler of the sea, give ear unto my voice this day, this night, these holy hours [of thine], and through this amulet let that be done for which I consecrate it !

1 The serpent was a symbol of the Logos, and this is the idea underlying the so-called Ophite systems of the Gnosis.

2 This refers to the first nome of Upper Egypt, whose metro- polis, Elephantine, was once the chief seat of the popular Agatho- daimon cult (R. 29, n. 4). The " world " was thus the Egyptian civilised world, beyond which was the darkness of Ethiopia.

THE MAIN SOURCE OF THE TEISMEGISTIC LITEEATUEE ACCOEDING TO MANETHO, HIGH PEIEST OF EGYPT

HERMES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

THE more intimate contact of Greek thought and philosophy with Egyptian lore and mystic tradition began immediately with the brilliant era of the Lagides, who gradually made Alexandria the intellectual and religious, philosophic and scientific, centre of the Hellenistic world.

Thoth-Hermes, as we have seen, had been for the Egyptians from the earliest times the teacher of all ancient and hidden wisdom ; he was par excellence the writer of all sacred scripture and the scribe of the gods. We should then naturally expect that his dominating influence would play a leading part in the new development ; and this, indeed, is amply demon- strated by the evidence of the religious art of the time, which presents us with specimens of statues of the Greek type of Hermes, bearing at the same time either the feather of truth (the special symbol of Maat) on the head, or the papyrus-roll in the hand l — both symbols of Thoth in his dual character as revealer and scribe.

Of the complex nature of the mystic and apocalyptic literature that thus came into existence we have very distinct testimony.1 In keeping with its Egyptian prototype it was all cast in a theological and theo- sophical mould, whether it treated of physics, or medicine, or astrology. Thus we learn that Tamphilus, the grammarian,2 was intimately acquainted with a Greek- Egyptian literature dealing with "sacred plants" and their virtues as determined by the influences of the thirty-six Decans ; this lore, he tells us, was derived from the "Books ascribed to the Egyptian Hermes." 3

Of still greater interest are the Greek fragments of Petosiris and Nechepso which have come down to us.4 These Greek fragments are to be dated at least before the end of the second century B.C.,5 and afford us striking parallels with our extant Trismegistic literature.

In them we find the Prophet Petosiris represented as the teacher and counsellor of King Nechepso, as Asclepius of Ammon in one type of our literature; while it is Hermes who reveals the secret wisdom to two younger gods, Asclepius and Anubis, as in our sermons he does to Asclepius and Tat.

As to Petosiris himself, Suidas (s.v.) tells us that he was an Egyptian philosopher who wrote on comparative

1 See R. 3-7, to whom I am indebted for the indications.

2 Of the school of Aristarchus (fl. 280-264). The great Lexicon of Pamphilus is supposed by some to have been the basis of that of Hesychius.

3 Apud, Galen, irepl a.v\S>v Qapp., vi. Procem. (torn. ix. p. 798 K).

4 See Riess, Philologus Supplem., Fragg. 27-29.

6 See Kroll, "Aus der Geschichte der Astrologie," Neue Jahrbb.f. Phil. u. Pad., vii. 559 ff.

Greek and Egyptian theology, making selections from the "Holy Books," and treating of astrology and the Egyptian Mysteries. Moreover, Proclus l tells us that Petosiris had an intimate knowledge of every order of the Gods and Angels, and refers to a hieratic formula of theurgic invocation to the greatest of the goddesses (Necessity), for inducing the vision of this Power, and the ritual of the manner of addressing her when she appeared, as handed on by the same Petosiris.

The mystical nature of this literature is still more clearly shown in what Vettius Valens2 tells us of Nechepso, who surpassed the Ammon of our literature and attained to direct knowledge of the Inner Way.

Vettius, in the first half of the first century A.D., laments that he did not live in those days of initiate kings and rulers and sages who occupied themselves with the Sacred Science, when the clear JSther spake face to face with them without disguise, or holding back aught, in answer to their deep scrutiny of holy things. In those days so great was their love of the holy mysteries, so high their virtue, that they left the earth below them, and in their deathless souls became " heaven-walkers " 3 and knowers of things divine.

Vettius then quotes from a Greek apocalyptic treatise of Nechepso, where the King tells us that he had remained in contemplation all night gazing into the aether ; and so in ecstasy he had left his body,4 and had then heard a heavenly Voice5 addressing him. This Voice was not merely a sound, but appeared as a

5 0o-fi— presumably a parallel with the Bath-kol of Talmudic Rabbinism.

substantial presence, who guided Nechepso on his way through the heaven-space.

It is, moreover, exceedingly probable that the mag- nificent spectacle of the star-spheres l to which Vettius refers, speaking of it as "the most transcendent and most blessed vision (Oewpia) of all," was taken directly from the same source.

With this we may compare the wish of Trismegistus that Tat might get him the wings of the soul and enjoy that fair sight,2 and the seeing of it by Hermes himself through the Mind.3

All of which proves the existence of books in Greek in middle Ptolemaic times treating in the same manner of identical subjects with those contained in our Trismegistic literature.

When, then, the sovereignty of Egypt passed into the hands of the Diadochi of Alexander, and the Ptolemies made Alexandria the centre of learning in the Greek world, by the foundation of the ever-famous Museum and Library and Schools in their capital, there arose an extraordinary enthusiasm for translating, para- phrasing, and summarising into Greek of the old scriptures and records of the nations. The most famous name of such translators and compilers and comparative theologians is that of Manetho,4 who introduced the

1 The same rapturous vision of the soul after death is trans- lated by Seneca (Cows, ad Marciam, 18, 2) from Poseidonius (135-(?)51 B.C.), who also clearly derived it from the same Egyptian Hellenistic literature.

4 There are some dozen variants in the spelling and accenting of this name in Greek transliteration ; in Egyptian we are told it means " Beloved of Thoth " (Mai en Thoth).

treasures of Egyptian mysticism, theology, mythology, history, and chronology to the Grecian world. More- over, seeing that the veracity and reliability of Manetho as a historian is with every day more and more accepted as we become better acquainted with the monuments, he seems to have done his work loyally enough.

Manetho was contemporary with the first two Ptolemies; that is to say, he lived in the last years of the fourth and the first half of the third century B.C. He was a priest of Heliopolis (On),1 and was thoroughly trained in all Greek culture2 as well as being most learned in the ancient Wisdom of Egypt.3 Manetho not only wrote on historical subjects, but also on the mystic philosophy and religion of his country, and it is from his books in all probability that Plutarch and others drew their information on things Egyptian. Manetho derived his information from the hieroglyphic inscriptions in the temples4 and from the rest of the priestly records ; but unfortunately his books are almost entirely lost, and we only possess fragments quoted by later writers.

THE LETTER OF MANETHO TO PTOLEMY PHILADELPHIA

One of these quotations is of great importance for our present enquiry. It is preserved by Georgius

1 Plutarch, De Is. et Osir., ix. and xxviii.

3 Julian, De Animalium Natura, x. 16.

4 Budge, op. sup. cit., i. 332, says : "A tradition says Solon, Thales, and Plato all visited the great college at Heliopolis, and that the last-named actually studied there, and that Manetho the priest of Sebennytus, who wrote a history of Egypt in Greek for Ptolemy II., collected his materials in the library of the priesthood of Ra."

Syncellus,1 and is stated to be taken from a work of Manetho called Sothis? a work that has otherwise entirely disappeared. The passage with the introduc- tory sentence of the monk Syncellus runs as follows :

" It is proposed then to make a few extracts concern- ing the Egyptian dynasties from the Books of Manetho. [This Manetho,] being high priest of the Heathen temples in Egypt, based his replies [to King Ptolemy] on the monuments 3 which lay in the Seriadic country. [These monuments,] he tells us, were engraved in the sacred language and in the characters of the sacred writing by Thoth, the first Hermes ; after the flood they were translated from the sacred language into the then common tongue,4 but [still written] in hieroglyphic characters, and stored away in books by the Good Daimon's son and the second Hermes, father of Tat — in the inner chambers of the temples of Egypt.

"'In the Book of Sothis Manetho addresses King Philadelphus, the second Ptolemy, personally, writing as follows word for word:

" ' The Letter of Manetho, the Sebennyte, to Ptolemy Philadelphus.

'"To the great King Ptolemy Philadelphus, the venerable : I, Manetho, high priest and scribe of the holy fanes in Egypt, citizen of Heliopolis but by birth a Sebennyte,5 to my master Ptolemy send greeting.

1 Chron., xl. See Cory (I. P.), Ancient Fragments, pp. 173, 174 — mispaged as 169 (2nd ed. ; London, 1832) ; and Mitller, Fragments Historicorum Grcecorum, pp. 511 ff. (Paris, 1848).

3 ffrri\£>v, generally translated " columns " ; but the term is quite a general one and denotes any monument bearing an inscription.

4 Syncellus has " into the Greek tongue," an evident slip, as many have already pointed out.

5 Sebennytus was the chief city of the Sebennyte province, situated about the centre of the Delta. Heliopolis or On, the

'"We1 must make calculations concerning all the points which you may wish us to examine into, to answer your questions 2 concerning what will happen to the world. According to your commands, the sacred books, written by our forefather Thrice-greatest Hermes, which I study, shall be shown to you. My lord and king, farewell.'"

THE IMPOKTANCE OF MANETHO'S STATEMENT IN HIS " SOTHIS "

Here we have a verbal quotation from a document purporting to be written prior to 250 B.C. It is evidently one of a number of letters exchanged between Manetho and Ptolemy II. Ptolemy has heard of the past according to the records of Egypt ; can the priests tell him anything of the future ? They can, replies Manetho ; but it will be necessary to make a number of calculations. Ptolemy has also expressed a strong desire to see the documents from which Manetho derived his information, and the high priest promises to let him see them.

These books are ascribed to Hermes, the Thrice- greatest, and this is the first time that the title is used in extant Greek literature. This Hermes was the second, the father of Tat, we are told elsewhere by Manetho, and son of the Good Spirit (Agathodaimon), who was the first Hermes. Here we have the precise grading of the degrees in our treatises: (i.) The Shepherd of Men, or The Mind ; (ii.) Thrice-greatest ; (iii.) Tat. This refers to the ever-present distinction of pupil and master, and the Master of masters.

City of the Sun, was situated some thirty miles north of Memphis.

1 Presumably Manetho and his fellow priests.

If, however, we seek for historical allusions, we may perhaps be permitted to conclude that the first Hermes, that is to say the first priesthood among the Egyptians, used a sacred language, or in other words a language which in the time of the second Hermes, or second priesthood, was no longer spoken. It was presumably archaic Egyptian. The two successions of priests and prophets were separated by a " flood."

This " flood " was presumably connected with, if not the origin of, the flood of which Solon heard from the priest of Sai's, which happened some nine thousand years before his time, and of which we have considerable information given us in the Timceus and Critias of Plato.1 The Good Angel is the same as the Mind, as we learn from the Trismegistic literature, and was regarded as the father of Hermes Trismegistus. This seems to be a figurative way of saying that the archaic civilisation of Egypt before the flood, which presumably swept over the country when the Atlantic Island went down, was regarded as one of great excellence. It was the time of the Gods-! or Divine Kings or Demi-Gods, whose wisdom was handed on in mystic tradition, or revived into some semblance of its former greatness, by the lesser descendants of that race who returned from exile, or reincarnated on earth, to take charge of the new populations who had gradually returned to the lower Nile plains after the flood had subsided.

Thus we have three epochs of tradition of the Egyptian mystery-cultus : (i.) The first Thoth or Agatho-daimon, the original tradition preserved in the sacred language and character in the stone monuments of the

1 See my article on " The Sibyl and her Oracles," in The Theo- sophical Review, vol. xxii. pp. 399 S. See also the passage preserved from the Ethiopian History of Marcellua by Proclus in his com- mentary on the Timceus of Plato ; Cory, Ancient Fragments, p. 233.

Seriadic land, presumably the Egypt prior to the Atlantic flood ; (ii.) the second Thoth, the Thrice- greatest, the mystery-school after the period of the great inundation, whose records and doctrines were preserved not only in inscriptions but also in MSS., still written in the sacred character, but in the Egyptian tongue as it was spoken after the people reoccupied the country ; and (iii.) Tat, the priesthood of Manetho's day, and presumably of some centuries prior to his time, who spoke a yet later form of Egyptian, and from whose demotic translations further translations or paraphrases were made in Greek.

This natural line of descent of the fundamental doctrines in the tradition of the Trismegistic litera- ture, however, is scouted by encyclopsedisrn, which would have our sermons to be Neoplatonic forgeries, though on what slender grounds it bases its view we have already seen. It will now be interesting to see how the testimony of Manetho is disposed of. Our encyclopaedias tell us that the book Sothis is obviously a late forgery ; parrot-like they repeat this statement ; but nowhere in them do we find a single word of proof brought forward. Let us then see whether any scholars have dealt with the problem outside of encyclopsedism. Very little work has been done on the subject. The fullest summary of the position is given by C. Miiller.1 Muller bases his assertion on Bockh,2 and Bockh on Letronne.3

2 A. Bockh, Manetho und die Hundsternperiode : em Beitrag sur Geschichte der Pharaonen,'pp. 14-17 (Berlin, 1845).

3 M. Letronne, Recueil des Inscriptions grecques et latines de I'&jypte, torn, i., pp. 206, 280 ff. (Paris, 1842).

The arguments are as follows: (i.) That the term " venerable " (o-e/Sao-ro?) is not used prior to the time of the Koman emperors ; (ii.) that Egypt knows no flood ; (iii.) that the ancient mythology of Egypt knows no first and second Hermes; (iv.) that Egypt has no Seriadic land ; (v.) that the term " Trismegistus " is of late use.

THE ABGUMENTS OF ENOYCLOPJEDISM REFUTED

Let us take these arguments in order and examine them, bearing in mind, however, that the whole question has been prejudiced from the start, and that encyclopaedism, in order to maintain its hypothesis of the spuriousness of our Trismegistic writings, is bound to argue the spuriousness of Manetho's Sothis. The cate- gorical statements of Manetho are exceedingly distressing to the former hypothesis ; in fact, they give it the lie direct. As to the arguments, then :

(i.) The term <re/3acrro? is in later times equated with "Augustus," the honorific title of the Roman emperors. Therefore, it is argued, it could not have been used prior to their times. But why not? The king to an Egyptian was divine — every inscription proves it — and the term "venerable" was in early times always applied to the Gods. Why not then apply it to the " Great King " ? Indeed, what could be more natural than to do so ?

(ii.) We have already shown that, according to Plato, Egypt knew most accurately of a Flood ; Plato further tells us that Solon got his information from the priests of Sais, who told him that all the records were preserved in the temple of Neith.

It is not here the place to discuss the Atlanticum of Plato and the long history of opinion connected with

it, for that would require a volume in itself. I have, however, acquainted myself with all the arguments for and against the authenticity of at least the germ of this tradition, and with the problems of comparative mythology and folklore involved in it, and also with the recent literature of the subject which seeks to corroborate the main conceptions of Plato by the researches of seership. All this, taken in conjunction with the general subject of the " myths " of Plato, and the latest views on this subject, has convinced me that the greatest of Greek philosophers did not jest when, his dialectic having gone as far as it could, he sought refuge in the mystery-traditions for corroboration of those intuitions which his unaided intellect could not demonstrate.

It can of course be argued that every reference to a flood in Egyptian Hellenistic literature is but a repeti- tion of what the incredulous must regard as Plato's brilliant romance ; but in this connection, as in many others, it is equally arguable that all such references — Plato's included — are derivable from one and the same source — namely, Egypt herself.

And, indeed, on 9th November 1904, at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, a paper by Pro- fessor Naville was read by Mr F. Legge on " A Mention of a Flood in the Book of the Dead." The flood in question is that described in the Leyden version as Ch. clxxv.1

(iii.) Cicero (106-44 B.C.) speaks of five Mercurii, the last two of whom were Egyptian.2 One was the " son of Father Nile," whose name the Egyptians considered it impiety to pronounce — and for whom, presumably, they substituted the term Agathodaimon ; and the

1 See The Athenasum, 12th November 1904.

second was the later Thoyth, the-founder of Hermopolis.1 Cicero could hardly have invented this ; it must have been a commonplace of his day, most probably derived in the first instance from the writings of Manetho, from which generally the Greeks, and those imbued with Greek culture, derived all their information about Egypt.

And, indeed, Reitzenstein (p. 139), though he refers the information given by Syncellus to a Pseudo-Manetho (without a word of explanation, however), admits that the genealogy of Hermes there given is in its main features old.2

(iv.) The statement that Egypt knew no Seriadic land or country seems to be a confident assertion, but the following considerations may perhaps throw a different light on the matter.

In the astronomical science of the Egyptians the most conspicuous solar system near our own, represented in the heavens by the brilliant Sirius, was of supreme interest. Cycles of immense importance were determined by it, and it entered into the highest mysticism of Egyptian initiation. Sirius was, as it were, the guardian star of Egypt. Now ancient Egypt was a sacred land, laid out in its nomes or provinces according to the heavens, having centres in its body corresponding to the centres or ganglia of the heavens. As the Hindus had a Heavenly Ganges (Akasha-Ganga) and an earthly Ganges, so had the heavens a Celestial

1 Ursin, De Zoroastre, etc., p. 73.

2 For a permutation of the elements in this genealogy, in the interests of Heliopolis, see Varro, De Genie Pop. Rom., as quoted by Augustine in De Giv. Dei, xviii. 3 and 8.

Nile, and Egypt a physical Nile, the life-giver of the land. The yearly inundation, which meant and means every- thing for ancient and modern Khem, was observed with great minuteness, and recorded with immense pains, the basis of its cycle being the Sothiac or Siriadic ; Sirius (Seirios) being called in Greek transliteration Sothis and Seth (Eg. Sept). What more natural name, then, to give to the country than the Seriadic Land ?

The Nile records in ancient times were self-registered by pyramids, obelisks, and temples, and in later times nearly all monuments were built according to the type of the masonic instruments of the Egyptian astro- geological science. This science has been studied in our own times by an Egyptian, and the results of his researches have been printed " for private circulation," and a copy of them is to be found in the British Museum. In his Preface the author writes as follows : l

" The astrogeological science gave birth to a monu- mental system, by means of which the fruits of the accumulated observations and experience of the human race have been preserved, outliving writings, inscrip- tions, traditions, and nationalities. The principal monuments had imparted to them the essential property of being autochronous landmarks of a geochronological nature. Many of them recorded, hydromathematically, the knowledge in astronomy, in geography, and in the dimension and figure of the earth obtained in their respective epochs. They were Siriadic monuments, because their magistral lines were projected to the scale

1 Hekekyan Bey, C. E., A Treatise on the Chronology of Siriadic Monuments, demonstrating that the Egyptian Dynasties of Manetho are Records of Astrogeological Nile Observations which have been continued to the Present Time — Preface, p. v. (London, 1863). The book deserves careful study, and cannot be hastily set aside with the impatience of prejudice.

of the revolutions of the cycles of the star Surios (sic) in terms of the standard astrogeological cubit."

Doubtless our author flogs his theory too severely, as all such writers do ; but nilometry and the rest was certainly one of the most important branches of the priestly science.

But before we deal with the last objection urged against the authenticity of Manetho's Sothis, we will add a few words more concerning these Seriadic monu- ments known in antiquity as the Stelae of Hermes or of Seth, and erroneously spoken of in Latin and English as the " Columns " or " Pillars " of Hermes.

The general reader may perhaps be puzzled at the variety of spelling of the name of the star, but he should recollect that the difficulties of transliteration from one language to another are always great, and especially so when the two languages belong to different families. Thus we find the variants of Tehuti, the Egyptian name of Hermes, transliterated in no less than nineteen various forms in Greek and two in Latin — such as Thoyth, Thath, Tat, etc.1 Similarly we find the name of the famous Indian lawgiver transliterated into English as Manu, Menu, Menoo, etc.

With regard to these "Mercurii Columnse," it was the common tradition, as we have already pointed out, that Pythagoras, Plato, and others got their wisdom from these columns, that is to say, monuments.2 The

1 See Pietschmann, op. tit., pp. 31, 32; also Spiegelberg, Eecueil des Travaux relatifs d la Philologie et a VArcheologie fyyptiennes et assyriennes, xxiii. 199. R 117, n. 1.

2 See the last chapter of the book from which the following passage is quoted. See also lamblichus, De Mysteriis, cap. ii., who in a very clear statement of the sources of his information,

historian Ammianus Marcellinus,1 the friend of the Emperor Julian, has preserved for us a peculiarity of the construction of some of these pyramids or temples which is of interest. The passage to which we refer runs as follows :

"There are certain underground galleries and passages full of windings, which, it is said, the adepts in the ancient rites (knowing that the flood was coming, and fearing that the memory of the sacred ceremonies would be obliterated) constructed in various places, distributed in the interior [of the buildings], which were mined out with great labour. And levelling the walls,2 they engraved on them numerous kinds of birds and animals, and countless varieties [of creatures] of another world, which they called hieroglyphic characters."3

We are thus told of another peculiarity of some of the Seriadic monuments, and of the " Books preserved from the Flood " of which there were so many traditions. These are the records to which Sanchuniathon and Manetho make reference.

The Egyptian account is straightforward enough ; but when Josephus, following the traditional practice of his race in exploiting the myths of more ancient nations for the purpose of building up Jewish history — for the

and the method of treating the numerous points raised by Porphyry, says : " And if thou proposest any philosophical problem, we will resolve it for thee according to the ancient monuments of Hermes, on the thorough study of which Plato, and prior to him Pythagoras, founded their philosophy."

1 Who flourished in the early second half of the fourth century A.D.

2 The passages and chambers being hewn out of the solid rock.

3 Ammiani Marcellini Rerum, Gestarum Libri qui super sunt, xxii. xv. 30 ; ed. V. Gardthausen (Leipzig, 1874), p. 301.

Mosaic Books supply innumerable examples of the working-up of elements which the Jews found in the records of older nations — runs away with the idea that Seth (the Egyptian Sirius) was the Biblical patriarch Seth, the Jewish " antiquarian " enters on a path of romance and not of history. Tis thus he uses the Egyptian Seriadic tradition for his own purposes :

"All of these [the Sons of Seth] being of good disposition, dwelt happily together in the same country free from quarrels, without any misfortune happening to the end of their lives. The [great] subject of their studies was that wisdom which deals with the heavenly bodies and their orderly arrangement. In order that their discoveries should not be lost to mankind and perish before they became known (for Adam had foretold that there would be an alternate disappearance of all things l by the force of fire and owing to the strength and mass of water) — they made two monuments,2 one of brick and the other of stone, and on each of them en- graved their discoveries. In order that if it should happen that the brick one should be done away with by the heavy downpour,3 the stone one might survive and let men know what was inscribed upon it, at the same time informing them that a brick one had also been made by them. And it remains even to the present day in the Siriad land." 4

This passage is of great interest not only as affording a very good example of the method of inventing Jewish " antiquities," but also as permitting us to recover the outlines of the original Egyptian account which Josephus purloined and adapted. The Sons of Seth were the initiates of the archaic priesthood of the

First Hermes.

3 ^irojujSpfay, a downpour or flood of rain.

Adam has been substituted for the First Man, in the sense of our " Shepherd " tradition ; and the two kinds of monuments (which Josephus seems to regard as two single structures and not as relating to two classes of buildings) may refer to the brick structures and temples of that age, and to specially constructed and more lasting monuments of stone — perhaps rock-cut temples, or the most ancient pyramids. I have also asked myself the question as to whether there may not be some clue concealed in this " brick monument " reference to the puzzling statement in the Babylonian Talmud1 that Jesus set up a " brick-bat " and worshipped it. Jesus is said in the Talmud Jeschu Stories to have " learned magic in Egypt," and the magical wisdom of ancient Egypt is here said to have been recorded on monuments of brick.2

Reitzenstein (p. 183), after pointing to the similarity of tradition as to the Seriadic Land contained in Josephus, and in what he characterises as Pseudo-Manetho,3 adds the interesting information that the Seriadic Land is borne witness to by an inscription as being the home and native land of Isis ; indeed, the Goddess herself is given the name of Neilotis or Seirias ; she is the fertile earth and is Egypt.1

To continue, then, with the consideration of the arguments urged against the authenticity of Manetho's Sothis. With regard to objection (iv.), we have given very good reasons for concluding that so far from Egypt " knowing no Seriadic land," Egypt was the Seriadic Land par excellence, and the Books of Hermes

3 A similarity already pointed out by Plew, Jahrb. f. Phil. (1868), p. 839.

were the direct descendants of the archaic stone monu- ments of that land. And further, we have shown that our Trismegistic writings are a step or two further down in the same line of descent. The whole hangs together logically and naturally.

We have thus removed four of the five props which support the hypothesis of forgery with regard to the Sothis document. Let us now see whether the remain- ing prop will bear the weight of the structure.

(v.) We are told that the term " Trismegistus " is of late use. This assertion is based entirely on the hypothesis that all our extant Trismegistic writings are Neoplatonic forgeries of the third or at best the second century, before which time the name Thrice-greatest was never heard of. The term Trismegistus must go as far back as the earliest of these writings, at any rate, and where we must place that we shall see at the end of our investigations.

That the peculiar designation Trismegistus was known in the first century even among the Romans, however, is evident from the famous Latin epigrammatist Martial (v. 24), who in singing the praise of one Hermes, a famous gladiator, brings his paean to a climax with the line :

A verse which an anonymous translator in 1695 freely

Hermes engrosses all men's gifts in one, And Trismegistus' name deserves alone.

Such a popular reference shows that the name Trismegistus was a household word, and argues for

1 Pietschmann misquotes this line, giving " ter maximus " for " ter unus " (op. cit., p. 36).

many years of use before the days of Martial (A.D. 43-104 ?). But have we no other evidence ?

In the trilingual inscription (hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek) on the famous Rosetta Stone, which sings the praises of Ptolemy Epiphanes (210-181 B.C.), Hermes is called the " Great-and-Great." 1 Letronne renders this deux fois grand ; 2 and in his notes 3 says that the term " Trismegistus " was not known at this date, thus contemptuously waving aside Manetho's Sothis. Had it been known, he says, it would undoubtedly have been used instead of the feebler expression " great-and- great." 4 But why undoubtedly ? Let us enquire a little further into the matter. The Egyptian re- duplicated form of this attribute of Hermes, da, da, the " great-great," is frequently elsewhere found with a prefixed sign which may be transliterated ur.5 So that if the more simple form is translated by " great, great," the intensive form would naturally be rendered "great, great, great," or "three times great." But we have to deal with the form "thrice-greatest," a superlative intensive. We have many examples of adjectives intensified with the particle T/O/? in Greek,6

'Epjirjs & fifyas Kal fifyas, line 19 ; the reading is perfectly clear, and I cannot understand the remark of Chambers (op. cit., Pref. vii.) that Hermes is called " nfyas, nfyas, ntyas " on the Kosetta Stone.

2 " Inscription grecque de Rosette," p. 3, appended to Miiller, Frag. Hist. Grate. (Paris, 1841).

4 Recueil des Inscriptions grecques et latines de Vfigypte, i. 283 (Paris, 1842).

8 See Pietschmann, op. sup. cit., p. 35.

6 In Greek not only is the term rplff^axap (thrice-blessed) applied to Hermes in the inscriptions of Pselcis (see Letronne's Recueil, i. 206 n.), but also in a Magical Prayer (Wessely, 1893 — p. 38, 11. 550 ff. ; Kenyon, p. 102) he is addressed as t purity as, or " thrice-great " simply.

but no early instances of their superlatives ; therefore, what ? Apparently that the term " Trismegistus " is a late invention.

But may we not legitimately suppose, in the absence of further information, that when the Egyptian had intensified his reduplicated form he had come to an end of his resources — it was the highest term of great- ness that he could get out of his language? Not so when he used Greek. He could go a step further in the more plastic Hellenic tongue. Why, then, did he not use " thrice-greatest " instead of " great-and-great " on the Eosetta Stone ?

Because he was translating ad da and not its intensified form. But why did he not use the intensified form in the demotic inscription ? Well, " whys " are endless ; but may we not suppose that, as Ptolemy was being praised for his justice, which he is said to have exercised " as Hermes the great-and-great," the reduplicated form was sufficient for this attri- bute of the idealised priesthood, while the still more honorific title was reserved for Hermes as the per- sonified Wisdom ? Or, again, may it not have been

politic to refrain from adjectives which would have dimmed the greatness of Ptolemy?

So I wrote in November 1899, when the major part of this chapter was first published in The Theosophical Review. Shortly afterwards, however, I came across an entirely new clue. In his Stories of the High Priests of Memphis : the Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamuas (Oxford, 1900), F. LI. Griffiths presents us with the translation of an exceedingly interesting demotic text, found on the verso of two Greek docu-

ments, the contents of which prove them to be official land-registers of the seventh year of Claudius (A.D. 46-47). There is also " strong evidence for attributing the demotic .text to some time within thirty years from that date" (p. 41). So much for the copy of the original ; but what of its contents ? As they belong to the most important cycle of folk-tates of Egypt, it is to be assumed that their form and substance is old.

In this papyrus we are told that on an occasion of great need when the Pharaoh of Egypt was being over-come at a distance by the sorceries of the Ethiopian en- chanters, he was saved, and the magic of the Black Ones sent back upon them, by a certain Hor, son of Pa-neshe, most learned in the Books. Before his great trial of strength with the Ethiopian spells, we read of this Hor that:

" He entered the temple of Khmun ; he made his offerings and his libations before Thoth, the Eight-times-great, the Lord of Khmun, the Great God " (p. 58).

To this Griffiths appends the following note :

"'Thoth, eight times great'; the remains of the signs indicate this reading. The title, which here appears for the first time in Egyptian literature, is the equivalent of T/our/xeytoroy [thrice - greatest], a late epithet first used about the date of this MS.1 6 is /xe'ya? [great], which we may represent algebraically by a; 6 6 (2a), a common title of Thoth in late hiero- glyphic, is yue'ya? Kal /ueyas [great and great] on the Eosetta Stone, but probably represents ^e-yia-ro? [greatest], and 86 is therefore T/oicr/oteytcrrof [thrice- greatest], i.e. (2a)3. The famous epithet of Hermes which has puzzled commentators thus displays its mathematical formation. 66 = 3(2a) would not fill the

1 Griffiths here refers to Pietschmann as his authority for this statement.

lacuna on the papyrus, nor would it give the obviously intended reference to the name of Thoth's city, 'the Eighth,' and the mythological interpretation of that name."

The mythological interpretation of that name, namely Khmun (Khemen-nw), which Budge transliterates Khemennu, Griffiths says is " the eighth city," i.e. " the eighth in Upper Egypt going up the river. " x

We are loth to deprive any one of a so fair adaptation to environment in the evolution of purely physical interpretation ; but we are afraid that our readers will have already learned for themselves that Khemennu was the City of the Eight, the City of the Ogdoad, and will expect some less mundane explanation of the name ; not that we altogether object to Khemennu being the " Eighth City up the Kiver," if that river is

interpreted as the Celestial Nile on which the soul of the initiated sailed in the solar boat.

Eeitzenstein then is wrong in supposing (p. 117, n. 6) that Griffiths connects the honorific title Trismegistus with the eight cynocephali who form the paut of Thoth ; but we may do so.

The nature of this symbolic Ogdoad is most clearly seen in the inscription of Der-el-Bahari, of the time of the Twenty-second Dynasty which Maspero has lately published.2

In it the Osirified says to the Supreme :

" I am One who becomes Two ; I am Two who becomes Four ; I am Four who becomes Eight ; I am the One after that."

So also in the first Hermes Prayer, quoted in a preceding chapter, addressed to Hermes as Agatho-

2 Recueil des Travaux relat. a la Phil, et a FArcheol. egypt. et assyr., xxiii. 196. Cf. R. 54.

daimon, Thoth is he " whom the Eight Wardens guard."

These Eight, we may perhaps be permitted to specu- late, were generated Two from One, aa aa, Greatest ; Four from Two, Twice-greatest; Eight from Four, Thrice-greatest.

Such a combination would specially commend itself to men trained in Pythagorean mathematical symbols, as were doubtless many who took part in compiling the Egyptian Hellenistic theosophical literature.

I, therefore, conclude that the honorific title Thrice- greatest can very well go back to early Ptolemaic times ; and therefore, as far as I can see, the authenticity of Manetho's Sothis stands unimpugned as far as any arguments so far brought against it are concerned. I therefore regard the quotation of Syncellus as a most valuable piece of information in tracing the genesis of the Trismegistic literature. Whether or not any of our extant sermons can be placed among these earlier ftfrms of this literature will be discussed later on.

THE EARLIEST TRISMEGISTIC LITERATURE

That, however, literature of a similar nature existed in early and middle Ptolemaic times we have already seen from the material adduced at the beginning of this chapter ; we may therefore fitly conclude it by pointing out that in later Ptolemaic times, and down to the first century A.D., we find in the same litera- ture specimens of cosmogenesis closely resembling the main elements of the world-formation given in our " Shepherd " treatise.

An excellent example is that of the fragmentary cosmogonical poem, the text of which Reitzenstein has printed in his Zwei religionsgesch. Fragen, to which we

have already referred. This poem Eeitzenstein (p. 92) dates as belonging to the first century B.C., though it may probably be earlier ; it declares itself to be of the Hermes tradition, both in its statement about itself and also in the fact that it is Hermes, the Beloved Son of Zeus, who is the Logos-Creator of the cosmos, and also the progenitor or "father" of the prophet- poet who writes the vision.

But not only did the tradition of Egyptian Hermes dominate the Greek forms of cosmogony which emanated from Alexandria and spread through the Hellenic world, but it also imposed itself upon the forms of cosmogony and the history-writing of other nations; the most striking example of this is to be found in the Phoenician Histories of Philo Byblius, who lived in the second half of the first century A.D.

The fragments of this work are of great interest to our present enquiry, as they tend to show that both Egypt and Phoenicia, the two most sacred nations, derived their cosmogonical knowledge and mystery-traditions from the same source ; that source being traced to the most archaic Books of Thoth.

This is all, no doubt, an overwriting of Phoenician records in the light of Egyptian tradition ; Philo, however, would have us regard his work as a Greek translation or paraphrase of a compilation made by an ancient and learned Phoenician priest, Sanchuniathon, based immediately upon archaic Phoenician records by one who was also learned in the oral tradition of his own mysteries.

The initial question as to whether Philo had a genuine Phoenician document before him or not, need

not occupy us here, save in the most superficial fashion, as we are at present interested in the Egyptian elements of his account solely, and not in disentangling the native Phoenician substratum.

It must, however, in fairness be said that though the Byblian prefaces his account with an introduction and intersperses it with occasional remarks, all this is transparently his own, and is clearly distinguishable from what have every appearance of being translated

ARE HIS " PHCENICIAN HISTORIES " A FORGERY ?

The general theory, however, since the time of Orelli 1 has been that Philo forged the whole of this cosmogony and history. On the contrary, it was made considerable use of by Porphyry in his criticism of Christianity, and Eusebius2 quotes the passages used by Porphyry.3 The whole work of Philo, moreover, is claimed to be recovered by Wagenfeld, who has elaborately defended its genuineness.4 There indeed seems no reason to

1 J. C. Orelli, Sanchoniatlwnis Berytii quce feruntur Fragmenta (Leipzig, 1826).

2 Prceparatio Evangelica, I. vi., vii.

3 These are collected by Cory in his Ancient Fragments, pp. 3 ff. (London, 1832) ; and they may also be found in C. Miiller, Fragmenta Historicorum Gracorum, " Philo Byblius," iii. pp. 560 ff. (Paris, 1848).

4 F. Wagenfeld, Sanchuniathon's Urgeschichte der Phonizier in einem Auszuge a us der wieder aufyefundenen Handschrift von Philo' s vollstdndiger (fbersetzung (Hanover, 1836). In the following year Wagenfeld published the Greek text with a Latin translation under the title Sanchoniathonis Historiarum Phoenicia Libri IX. (Bremse, 1837). For the further consideration of the reliability of Sanchuniathon, see Count (Wolf Wilhelm) Baudissin's Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte, Heft ii., " Uber den religions- geschichtlichen Werth der phonicischen Geschichte Sanchuni- athon's" (Leipzig, 1876).

accept the forgery-hypothesis, which apparently rests on an even flimsier basis than the forgery-theory of the Trismegistic writings. The work, on the contrary, considered as a specimen of Phoenician story strongly influenced by Egyptian tradition, is a most interest- ing document for understanding the ancient Semitic mystery-tradition as distinguished from Jewish adapta- tions of general Semitic legend — in other words, the distinction of Semitismus and Israelitismus. Porphyry was not only a Semite himself but also a good critic, and not likely to base his arguments on a forgery; nor would Philo have ventured to put forward a forgery when there were thousands of learned and fanatical Jews who would have been only too glad to expose it.

Philo tells us that the Phoenician public traditions being chaotic, " Sanchuniathon, a man of great learning and a busy searcher [after knowledge], who especially desired to know the first principles from which all things are derived, most carefully examined the Books of Taaut, for he knew that Taaut was the first of all under the sun who discovered the use of letters and the writing of records. So he started from him, making him as it were his foundation — from him the Logos whom the Egyptians called Thouth, the Alexandrians Thoth,1 but whom the Greeks have turned into Hermes."2

SANCHUNIATHON AND THE BOOKS OF HERMES

This evidently means that the source of Sanchuni- athon's information as to the mystic beginning of things was derived from the Books of Thoth, and

1 Perhaps attempts at transliterating the dialectic variants of Upper and Lower Egypt of the name Tehuti.

that this was so may be seen from the following passage :

" He supposes the beginning of all things to consist of a Dark Mist of a spiritual nature, or as it were a Breath of dark mist, and of a turbid Chaos black as Erebus ; l that these were boundless, and for many an age 2 remained without a bound. ' But when,' he 3 says, ' the Spirit fell in love with his own principles,4 and they were interblended, that interweaving was called Love ; 5 and this Love was the origin of the creation of all things. But [Chaos] did not know its own creation.6 From its embrace with Spirit Mot was born.7 From her [Mot, the Great Mother] it was that every seed of the creation came, the birth of all the cosmic bodies.

" ' [First of all] there were [Great] Lives 8 devoid of sensation, and out of these came subsequently [Great]

1 This is the beginning of the out-breathing of the universe or of any system ; it is the Great Breath or Spirit moving on the Waters of Chaos, the primal nebula. Erebus was fabled to be a region of nether darkness separating Earth and Hades (not Hell). It was the Dark Side of Heaven.

3 That is, Sanchuniathon ; so that we may take this passage as a direct quotation, or rather translation.

4 Or sources ; that is, the primal states of Matter or Chaos.

5 Pothos, triOos ; yearning, longing — love for all that lives and breathes. This union was symbolised not only among the Phoenicians but also among most of the other nations by an egg, round which a serpent twines. When the egg and serpent are represented apart they stand for " Chaos " and " Ether," matter and spirit ; but when united they represent the hermaphrodite or male-female first principle of the universe, spirit-matter, called in Greek translation Pothos or Eros.

6 Cf. " The Darkness comprehended it not " of the Proem to the Fourth Gospel.

7 Here Philo, the translator, volunteers the information that some call this prime plasm of Chaos, " Slime," others explain it as " Fermentation," in a watery sort of medium.

8 The primal elements and their subdivisions.

Lives possessed of intelligence.1 The latter were called Zophasemin (that is to say, " Overseers of the Heavens "). The latter were fashioned in the form of eggs, and shone forth as Mot, the Sun and Moon, the Stars and the great Planetary Spheres.

"'Now as the [original] nebula began to lighten, through its heat mists and clouds of sea and earth2 were produced, and gigantic downpours and torrents of the waters in the firmaments. Even after they were separated,3 they were still carried from their proper places by the heat of the sun, and all the [watery and earthy elements] met together again in the nebula one with the other, and dashed together, amid thunder and lightning ; and over the crash of the thunderings the [Great] Eational Lives before-mentioned watched,4 while on the land and sea male and female cowered at their echo and were dismayed.'