NOTES AND STUDIES

THE HERMETIC WRITINGS.

This article aims at giving (i) a brief statement of the history of the Hermetic writings, so far as it can be gleaned from the scanty external evidence at our disposal; (ii) some account of the contents of the Corpus Hermeticum and allied Hermetic fragments, together with a discussion of recent literature (mostly German) on the subject; and (iii) an attempt to estimate the significance of the writings for the history of religion.

I

The most considerable remains of the Hermetic writings are contained in a collection which is generally known as Poemander, after the title of its first piece. The MSS of this Corpus Hermeticum are derived from one tattered copy which perhaps owes its preservation to Michael Psellus, the Platonist Theologian, who commented on the book at Constantinople in the eleventh century. After the capture of Constantinople in 1453 a MS was secured by Cosimo Medici, and the collection, which was much prized by the Florentine Platonists, was translated into Latin in 1463. The Greek text was first edited by Adrian Turnebus in 1554; the edition of François Foix, based upon the text of Turnebus, followed twenty years later. The somewhat uncritical edition of Patricius—published in 1591—underlies the text of Parthey (Berlin 1854). Dr Reitzenstein's volume Poimandres (Leipzig 1904) contains a fresh edition of the text of nos. I and XIII of the collection, together with the text of the three concluding numbers, which are not included in Parthey's edition. Fragments of Hermetic writings

1 The comment of Michael Psellus on Poimandres 18 αἰδώσετε ἐν αἰσθήσει καὶ πληθώσετε ἐν πλήθει, in which he affirms his belief that Poimandres is the Devil, quoting Scripture for his own purpose, is printed in Parthey's edition of Poemander ad loc. I am indebted to Dr Armitage Robinson for the following reference of Psellus to the Hermetic writings: Τῷ δὲ Ἑρμαίην μονάδα (Corp. Herm. iv) καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τοῦ ἄνδρος τοῦτον συνιστάματα δὲ δὴ πρὸς τῶν θαυμάτων παῖδα τὰ τρίτα ἐπηγέρσεις, ἐν οἷς μὴ καθαρώς τὰς ἀληθείας δόξας ἑναντιώται, προσέσθε τριέτοιο γὰρ ή κατὰ τὴν Πλάτανον φιλοσοφίαν καὶ χρησμὸς ἀκριβῶς έικονία καὶ τὴν ψυχήν ἐκ τῆς ἀλήθειας ἀνάγνωστα, καὶ τὸν Ποιμανδρίην τούτον (οὗτο γὰρ τῶν οἰκείων λόγων ἐπέγραψε) ὡς ἀνειρώπωτα διαπέπτει. Psellus ed. Boissonade Πρὸς μαθητὰς ἀμελούντας p. 152.

2 Unless otherwise stated, quotations are from Parthey's edition.

3 These three numbers are found in all the MSS except the Florentine (Laurent. 71, 33) and three closely allied MSS. Dr Reitzenstein suggests that the omission was due in the first place to a fear that the pagan apologetic motive which these
are preserved by Stobaeus; a Latin translation of a Hermetic book, entitled λόγος τέλειος, is to be found among the works of Apuleius under the title Asclepius. Hermetic writings are contained among the works of the Greek alchemists, and finally Hermetic writings are extensively quoted by Lactantius and Cyril of Alexandria. The works of 'Hermes' on medicine and astrology need not detain us here.

The religiönsgeschichtliche Forschung of the present century has brought this literature into fresh prominence, and it is suggested that light will be thrown on the origins of the Christian faith by the 'pia erga Deum philosophia, fidei dogmatibus ut plurimum consona' of the collection, which led Patricius at the end of the sixteenth century to declare that the doctrines of Hermes would be a suitable substitute in the schools for those of Aristotle.

The literary fiction which attributed all Egyptian science and literature to 'Tat' was known to Plato: 'Ἡκονα περὶ Ναύκρατιν τῆς Αἰγύπτου γενόθαι τῶν ἐκεί παλαίων τινα θεών, οὗ καὶ τὸ ὄρνοιν τὸ ἱερόν, ὅ δ' ἐλατόν Ἰβων, αὐτῷ δ' ἡ ἀνοία τῷ δαιμόνι εἶναι Θεών, τούτῳ δὲ πρῶτον ἀριθμῷ τε καὶ λογισμῷ εὐρέων καὶ γεωμετρίαν καὶ ἀστρονομίαν, ἐτι δὲ πεπτείας τε καὶ κυβείας, καὶ ἰὴ καὶ γράφματα. The Egyptian Tat was identified with the Greek Hermes. Cicero distinguished five Mercurys, and says that the fifth, who was worshipped by the Pheneatae of Arcadia, was related to have slain Argus, and to have fled to Egypt, where he gave the Egyptians laws and letters. 'Hunc', adds Cicero, 'Aegyptii Theuth appellant, eodemque nomine anni primus mensis apud eos vocatur'. Hence also Strabo, speaking of the astronomical activities of the priests of Egyptian Thebes, says 'ἀναπηδεασί δὲ τῷ Ἐρμῆ πᾶσαν τὴν τοιαύτην σοφίαν. Clement of Alexandria gives an account of forty-two books of Hermes on a variety of subjects including geography, astronomy, theology, and medicine. Iamblichus (de Mysteriis viii 1) relates that Hermes had made a complete exposition of the universal essences (τὰς δῖας ὀσύνια) in 20,000 books, as Seleucus declared, or as Manetho said, in 36,525 numbers betray would discredit the entire collection. Cf. Poinandros, appendix Die Texte, p. 319 foll. of which the paragraph above is a summary.

2 A short account of these, some of which are extant in Latin translations from the Arabic, will be found in art. 'Hermes Trismegistos' by Kroll in Pauly-Wissowa R. E. vii pp. 797 foll.  
3 Praesatio apud Parthey op. cit. p. xix.
4 Phaedr. 274 C, cf. also Philob. 18 B.
5 Cic. de Nat. Deorum iii 56 and Mayor ad loc.
6 Strabo xvii 25.  
7 Strom. vi 4. 35 sqq.  
8 Cf. also De Myst. i 1 Θεός ὃ τῶν λόγων ἥγεμόν, ὃ Ἐρμῆς πάλαι δεδοκινεΐ καλῶς ἀποικὶ τοῖς ἱερείοις εἶναι κοινός... ὃ δ' καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι πρόγονοι, τὰ αὐτῶν τῆς σοφίας εὐρήματα ἀνετίθεσαν, Ἐρμὸς πάντα τὰ οἰκεῖα συγγράμματα ἑπονομάζοτε.
NOTES AND STUDIES

These allusions prove that the device of attributing Egyptian literature to Hermes was widely recognized, at any rate by the first century B.C., but they prove nothing as to the date of the Hermetic literature with which we are dealing. The books referred to by Manetho and Seleucus, and those of which Clement speaks, were perhaps not written in Greek, and ‘Hermes Trismegistos’ does not seem to have appeared in Greek or Roman literature before the last quarter of the second century A.D., when he was referred to by Athenagoras the Christian apologist. His allusion, however, is too vague to give any idea of the nature of his source.¹

Philosophic literature under the name of Hermes Trismegistos was certainly current in the first decade of the third century. Tertullian (adv. Val. 15)² refers to ‘Mercurius Trismegistos’ as ‘magister omnium physicorum’ and complains that not even he has given a satisfactory account of Creation. A few years later in the De Anima he speaks of ‘Mercurius Aegyptius, cui praecipue Plato insuevit’ (§ 2), and quotes him (ib. § 33) as saying that when the soul leaves the body, it is not reabsorbed into the soul of the universe, but remains determinate, that it may render an account to the Father of its deeds in the body.³

Hermes Trismegistos is also quoted in the Quod idola dii non sint attributed to Cyprian.⁴

Lactantius seems to be the first writer whose quotations from ‘Hermes’ can be identified with passages in the Hermetic writings which have survived. He is an important witness, for his references to ‘Hermes’—of whom he had a high opinion⁵—prove the existence of a body of Hermetic writings in the early years of the fourth century which included the Greek original of the pseudo-Apuleius Asclepius, some, though probably not all, of the numbers of the surviving Corpus, together with other works that have perished. The Asclepius is quoted under the title ‘λόγος τέλειος’.⁶ Now the ninth number of the Corpus Hermeticum, from which Lactantius also quotes⁷ opens with the following words:

¹ Athen. Leg. pro Christ. 28 ‘Ενεί δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ Ἔρμης ὁ τρισμέγιστος ἐπικάλομενος συνάτων (Οττο συνήπτων) τὸ ἱδίον (MSS ἰδίον) αὐτοῖς (i.e. Osiris and Horus) γένος καὶ ἄλλων μόροι ύπα καθ ἐκάστον καταλέγομαι, ὅτα λόγος καταλέγεται βασιλεῖς ἀντίκα αὐτοῖς μὴ νεμομάθαι θεοῦ. Harnack (Chron. i p. 318) dates the book A.D. 177–180.
³ I have not been able to identify the quotation in any of the surviving Hermetic writings. The editor of Tertullian in the Vienna Corpus refers to Corp. Herm. x, but there is nothing in that number which can have been the original of Tertullian’s words ‘ut rationem, inquit, patri reddat eorum quae in corpore gesserit’.
⁴ Op. cit. 6 ‘Hermes quoque Trismegistos unum deum deum loquitur eumque incomprehensibilem atque inaestimabilem confitetur’.
⁵ Cf. Lact. Instit. Div. iv 9 ‘Trismegistos, qui veritatem paene universam nescio quo modo investigavit . . .’.
⁶ Instit. Div. iv 6; vii 18.
The Hermetic writings seem to have had a considerable vogue about the time of Lactantius, for they are also cited by the author of the pseudo-Justin λόγος παραμετρικὸς πρὸς "Ελλήνας, whom Harnack assigns.

1 Zielinski (Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft viii p. 335 n. 1) challenges the identification of the λόγος τέλεος referred to in Corp. Herm. ix, with the Greek original of the Asclepius. He regards the latter as 'pantheistic Hermetik', while Corp. Herm. ix— and therefore also the λόγος τέλεος there referred to— is 'platonisierend-dualistische'. Reference will be made later to Zielinski's attempt to distinguish between a Peripatetic, a Platonic, and a Pantheistic Hermetic (p. 523 n. 2 infra). It will be enough here to examine the particular grounds on which he rejects this identification: (1) He claims that the following words in IX § 4, τὴν γὰρ κακίαν τυπάδε δειν ολευν ἐπομεν ἐν τῷ άσυνθ χαρίν οὖσαν, must refer to the λόγος τέλεος alluded to in § 1, and that there is no parallel in our Asclepius; (2) Lydus, de mensibus iv 32 and 149, quotes a passage from a λόγος τέλεος of Hermes, giving an account, in Platonic manner, of the future of the souls of evil men. Wünsch ad loc. refers to Ascl. xxviii which Zielinski declares is no parallel. Accordingly Zielinski thinks we must assume a second (Platonizing) λόγος τέλεος, to which Corp. Herm. ix 1 refers, and from which, in all probability, Lydus is quoting. In answer to (1) it may be pointed out that both the Asclepius and Corp. Herm. ix have clearly always belonged to a considerable collection, and that there is no reason to suppose that επομεν in Corp. Herm. ix 4 refers to the λόγος τέλεος of § 1. (2) Lydus ib. iv 7 again quotes the λόγος τέλεος of Hermes, and the Greek original of Asclepius cc. xix and xxxix was unmistakeably his source (though perhaps he had a different recension from the Latin translator). Moreover, we know from passages of the Greek original in Lactantius that the translator treated the Greek with great freedom, omitting and inserting whole sentences; thus, though the verbal parallel between Lydus de mens. iv 32 and 149 and Ascl. xxviii is not very close, there is no difficulty in supposing the Greek original of the Ascl. to have been the book known to Lydus. In both passages the sense is the same.

Lactantius (Instit. Div. ii 15) refers to another λόγος τέλεος, written by 'Asclepius' and addressed to 'the king'—sermo perfectus, quem scripsit (Asclepius) ad regem. This must in any case be distinguished from the λόγος τέλεος of 'Hermes'. A fragment of the λόγος τέλεος πρὸς βασιλέα is probably preserved in Corp. Herm. xvi and xvii (Reitz. op. cit. pp. 348–354) under the title Οροι Ασκληπίου cf. infra p. 524.

2 Op. cit. fin. 'Αμμακος μὲν εἰς τοὺς πρὸτεύοντας λόγους πάγκραμφός τὸν θεὸν ὑμνάματος, ἐρμοῦ δὲ σαφῶς καὶ φανερῶς λέγοντος· θεον νοείας μὲν ἀητῆς χαλεπῶς, φράσει δὲ ἀδύνατον. The passage, which is also quoted by Lactantius (Epit. Instit. 4), Cyril of Alex. (c. Iul. i p. 31, Aubert), and Stobaeus (περὶ θεῶν ii 9) is an adaptation of Plato, like so much of the literature, cf. Tim. 28 Τὸν μὲν ὡς ποιητήν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ τοῦ παντὸς ἑφείρι τῷ ἔργῳ καὶ ἑφόρνα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν.
to this same period; and Arnobius refers to Mercury, along with Plato and Pythagoras, as a recognized classic in philosophy.¹

Our Latin paraphrase of the λόγος τέλειος was probably written sometime in the fourth century: it is freely quoted by St Augustine in the eighth book of the De Civitate Dei (cc. 23, 26) A.D. 413.

Cyril of Alexandria's reply to Julian's polemic against Christianity was written between the years 432 and 444, the year of Cyril's death.² It contains a number of quotations from Hermes Trismegistos,³ two of which are to be found in our Corpus;⁴ two others are parallel to quotations by Lactantius;⁵ the rest come from a collection of which we have no further trace.

Stobaeus, who is generally assigned to the latter half of the fifth century, has preserved a large number of excerpts from Hermetic writings of varying character. Among them are quotations from nos. II, IV, and X of our Corpus.⁶ It is noteworthy that in each case the text of Stobaeus is very different from that of the Corpus, so that he affords evidence of an entirely different tradition.⁷

The Hermetic literature then was varied and extensive. The collection used by Lactantius in the fourth century, that used by Cyril, and that used by Stobaeus in the fifth, were all of them far larger than our

¹ Adv. Nat. ii 13. ² Hauck R.-Encycl. art. 'Cyrill v. Alexandrien'.
⁷ A classification of the fragments in Stobaeus can only be tentative:—

Physica 134, 162, 182, 188 (Heeren), deal with ἐλευθερίαν, ἀλήθειαν, and πνεύμα. The last two at any rate are addressed to Ammon, and they may possibly be some of the works referred to in pseudo-Apuleius Asclepius c. 1 (cf. infra p. 519 n. 3).

Physica 384 sqq. (cf. Corp. Herm. ii), 398, 698-710, probably all belong to the Asclepius tradition (cf. infra p. 519 n. 3).

Physica 256 is addressed to Tat, and deals with the nature of Time.

Physica 316 treats of ὄνη as the δρακον γενεσεως.

Physica 468 and 754 are astrological. (For the ἐκεινος mentioned in these fragments cf. De Myst. p. 266; vide also Cumont, Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans pp. 33, 118.)

Physica 718, 756, 740, 744, 800, deal for the most part with the nature of body, soul, and perception.

There is a Hermetic fragment in the Ἐκείνος 23 on the nature of Truth.

In the Ἐκεινος 23 a passage is quoted from Hermes maintaining that death is merely the 'dissolution of the body and the disappearance of bodily sensation' (§ 27).

The longest fragment (Phys. 928 sqq.) is from the Κόρη Κόσμου, and contains an elaborate cosmological doctrine related by Isis to her son Horus, and formerly revealed to Isis by Hermes. The teaching here is quite distinct from that of any other surviving Hermetic writing.
Corpus, and all of them embodied some at any rate of the numbers we possess. The composite character of our collection suggests that it was compiled at a comparatively late date from various strata of Hermetic writings.\(^1\) The alchemist Zosimus, who flourished early in the fourth century, clearly knew of ‘Poimandres’ (Corp. Herm. i) and ‘baptism in a bowl’ (cf. Corp. Herm. iv), but we cannot be sure that he used our Corpus. Our Corpus was almost certainly in existence, approximately in its present state with perhaps nos. XVI, XVII, and XVIII (Reitz.) complete, at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century. About that date Hermippus in his work περὶ ἀστρολογίας embodies quotations without acknowledgement from nos. I, XVII (R.) and possibly XVIII (R.);\(^2\) and Fulgentius, who is assigned to the same period, quotes Poimandres: ‘Unde et Hermes in Opimandrae libro ait: ἐκ κόρου τροφῆς ἢ ἐκ κοιφών σῶματος’ (p. 26. 17 ed. Helm).\(^3\) Other allusions to Hermes in Fulgentius (85. 21; 74. 11) may refer to lost fragments of the last three numbers of the collection. These are the only clues to the history of the Corpus before the eleventh century.

II

In attempting to analyse the Corpus Hermeticum, it will be well to start from the narrow but firm foothold with which the external evidence has supplied us. Lactantius used a collection of Hermetic writings in the early years of the fourth century, which included the Greek original of the pseudo-Apuleius Asclepius,\(^4\) and nos. IX and XII of the Corpus. What, so far as we can judge from his quotations and references, was the character of the collection used by Lactantius? And what other numbers of the Corpus may we assign with reasonable probability to the same source?

To Lactantius as to Tertullian, Hermes was a wise man, who had lived in the distant past and whose doctrines were often in striking

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\(^1\) Mr Granger's article in this Journal, April 1904, The Poimandres of Hermes Trismegistus, appeared shortly before Dr Reitzenstein's Poimandres. The concluding numbers of the Corpus, which Reitzenstein has printed in an appendix to his book, prove conclusively that the Corpus cannot be both homogeneous and of a Christian origin, as Mr Granger then supposed. No. XVII (R.) is a frank apology for paganism. Nor, again, does Mr Granger's theory that the Asclepius is of an entirely different character from the other Hermetic writings seem to be borne out either by external or by internal evidence.


\(^3\) Cf. Poim. i 1 κόρον τε καὶ τροφῆς ἢ κόπου σώματος. The text in Fulgentius is obviously corrupt.

\(^4\) Text edited by Thomas Apulei Opera vol. iii, Teubner, 1908.
agreement with Christian revelation. Both Plato and Empedocles were probably indebted to him. 1 ‘Some’, says Lactantius, ‘will reckon him among the philosophers, and allow him no more authority than they would to Plato and Pythagoras, although in Egypt he is regarded as a god, and worshipped under the name “Mercury”,’—accordingly Lactantius proceeds to prove his point by quoting Apollo Milesius, an unmistakable god. 2 The quotations from Hermes in Lactantius are of a philosophical character, and account for, if they do not justify, that Father’s high estimate of their author.

The pseudo-Apuleius Asclepius was one of a collection, for Hermes declares at the beginning of the dialogue that he intends to write this book in the name of Asclepius, since he has already composed a number of books in the name of Hammon, and to his dearly beloved son, Tat, he has written ‘multa physica, exoticaque 3 quam plurima’.

A brief analysis of the Theology of the Asclepius 4 will form the best introduction to an examination of the Greek Corpus; some of the numbers in the latter will be found to be in close agreement with the general trend of thought in the Asclepius, while in other numbers the inconsistencies with the Asclepius will point to a different tradition. Other numbers again will not fall easily under one category or the other.

The doctrine of God and the World in the Asclepius is adapted from the Timaeus, and often expressed in the language Plato had used. At the head of all stands God, the father, the lord, ‘qui est unus omnia, vel ipse est creator omnium’ (c. ii). This statement of the transcendence and the immanence of the supreme God at once in the same breath, without any apparent consciousness of the metaphysical difficulties involved, is characteristic of the writer’s shallow philosophy. ‘This Lord and Maker of all’, he tells us, 5 ‘made a second god, visible and sensible.... When then he had made this god, first, alone, and when his god appeared to him fair and full of all good things,

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1 Cf. Lact. Instit. Div. i 6; ii 12; Epit. 42. Tert. de An. 2.
3 So MSS. Thomas ingeniously suggests dieœdica. Cf. Cyr. Alex. c. Iul. ii p. 56 'Ομολογειν λαλάλον (Ἑρμης) τοις πρῶς Τὰ τε διεξοδική λύγευοι πρῶτα, φησίν. The fragments on εἰμαρμένη, ἀνάγκη, and πρῶτα, preserved in Stob. Phys. 134, 162, 182, 188, of which the last two were addressed to Hammon, may have belonged to the collection here referred to as written in the name of Hammon. Cf. also Stob. Phys. 398 and 698-710, where the teaching is similar to that of the Asclepius and allied writings in the Corpus Hermeticum.
4 For a learned and exhaustive account of Hermetic teaching vide Die Lehren des Hermes Trismegistos (Münster in Westfalen, 1913) by Dr J. Kroll. This book, however, does not discriminate between the various strata of Hermetic writings.
he marvelled, and loved him greatly as his own son (τόκος).'' In a later chapter (xxix) the world is described as an ‘animal’ in the style of the Timaeus. At the cost of consistency the sun is here introduced as the ‘secundus deus omnia gubernans omniaque mundana inlustrans’. The relation of the sun to the world is not made clear. To return to chapter viii—Hermes then proceeds to relate that ‘God, being so great and good, willed that there should be another who could behold Him, whom He had made from Himself, and therewith He makes man to imitate His wisdom and His care (diligentiae)’. So then ‘the lord of eternity is the first God, the second is the world, man is the third’ (c. x).

Man is an animal duplex: one part of him is ὄσιωδής, the form of the divine likeness; the other ἄλκος, that is to say, the body in which the divinity of the mind is enclosed. To the question why man was put into the world, instead of passing his time in bliss, where God is, Hermes answers that ‘when God had created man ὄσιωδής, he observed that he could not love all things, unless he were covered with a worldly (mundano) covering. Accordingly God clothed him with a bodily tabernacle ( חוֹדֵע = σκήπαοι), and ordained that all men should be so, and taking [a part] from each nature, he fused and combined them into one, as far as should serve his purpose. Thus God fashions man from a nature of soul and a nature of body, that is to say, an eternal and a mortal nature, in order that an animal thus fashioned should be able to satisfy both of its sources, to marvel at, and worship things celestial, and inhabit and govern things terrestrial’ (c. viii, p. 43). The reward of those who ‘live piously with God and lovingly with the world’ is to be ‘loosed from the bonds of mortality and to be restored, pure and holy, to the nature of their higher part, to wit the divine’. To the wicked ‘a return to heaven is denied, and there is ordained a migration into other bodies, foul and unworthy of a holy soul’.

Epicurean physics are repudiated: there is no such thing as void; that which appears to be void is full of spirit and air (c. xxxiii p. 72).

The dialogue concludes with prayer and praise to the supreme God. While they are praying, Asclepius asks Tat in a whisper whether they ought not to suggest to their father that they should burn incense during prayer. Hermes overhears the question and reproves Asclepius. ‘It is like sacrilege’, he declares, ‘to burn incense while praying to God. . . . The highest offerings (incensiones) to God are the thanks of men.’ After prayer, in which they ask God to keep them in the

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1 The language here is closely parallel to Tim. 37 C ὑπὸ τῶν αἰῶνων αὐτῷ καὶ ἐκείνων ἐνόησε τῶν ἄνθρωπων γεγονός ἄγαλμα ὅ γεννήθησα παθήρ ἡγάσθη τε καὶ εὑρήκεται. . . .
love of His knowledge, they 'turn to a repast—pure and without animal food'.

The last paragraph contains the key to the book; the writer's interest is rather religious than philosophical, and he uses his metaphysics as an intellectual justification for the pagan revival. His theory of the gods of mythology is interesting: God, the Lord and Father, is Creator of the heavenly gods whom He makes like Himself; the gods who are contained in temples are fashioned by man after his own likeness. The forms of the gods, made by man, are of two natures—a divine and a material. Statues have feeling and breath; they can foretell the future by dreams and other means; they can cause and cure human ills. A lament on the decay of Egyptian religion follows; soon the gods will leave the earth, which will be given over to the πονηροὶ δαίμονες, and things will go from bad to worse, until at length the supreme God 'will recall the world to its ancient form' (c. xxiii foll.).

As it stands, the Asclepius is the longest Hermetic writing that we possess, but Zielinski is probably right in distinguishing four loosely connected numbers as follows:

(1) cc. i–xiv, ending 'et de his sit hue usque tractatus' (p. 49 l. 16, Thomas).

(2) cc. xiv–xxvii, beginning 'de spiritu vero et de his similibus hinc sumatur exordium', and ending 'et haec usque eo narrata sint' (p. 65 l. 17, T.).

(3) cc. xxvii–xxxvi, beginning 'de immortali vero aut de mortali modo disserendum est' and ending 'sed iam de talibus sint satis dicta talia' (p. 76 l. 15, T.).

(4) cc. xxxvii to end, beginning 'iterum ad hominem rationemque redeamus' (cf. Corp. Herm. viii 1 περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, δὲ παῖ, νῦν λέκτενον).²

These divisions correspond, more or less, in length to the numbers of the Corpus. It should be added that Lactantius himself knew the Greek original as one whole under the title λόγος τέλειος.³

It has already been mentioned that at least two of the numbers in our collection (IX and XII) were associated with the Greek original of the Asclepius in the Hermetic writings as known to Lactantius.⁴

No. IX opens with an allusion to the τέλειος λόγος, and the phraseology

¹ The Greek original of this prayer is preserved in the Mimaut Magical papyrus, cf. infra p. 533 n. 2.
² Arch. f. Rel. viii p. 369.
³ He quotes cc. viii, xxvi, and xii (Instit. Div. iv 6; vii 18; vi 25) as from the λόγος τέλειος. His quotations prove the Latin to be a very loose paraphrase.
and the line of thought in both are strikingly similar. There is the same doctrine of the nature of man, and the same antitheses of αἰσθήσεως and νόησις, ὀλιγός and οὐσιώδης. No. XII, the other number from which Lactantius quotes, treats of νοῦς κοινός. νοῦς is one with the essence of God (ὁ θεός), as light is one with the sun. In men it is 'god' (θεός without the article)—and some men may be said to be 'gods'—and in animals it is φῶς. The argument is developed in a different way from that of the Asclepius, but the two are not inconsistent. The description of the Universe as 'the great God and image of the greater' is quite in keeping with the Theology of the Asclepius, and the doctrine of the immutability of the κόσμος (§ 18) and of the godlike nature of man (§ 19) recalls similar passages in the other work (cf. Ascl. 35 and 36).

How many of the other numbers in the collection may be referred to the same cycle? No. II (πρὸς Ἀσκληπιὸν λόγια καθολικὰ) is similar both in matter and style. The phraseology of the opening discussion on σῶμα and ἀγώματον, κυνὸν and κυνούμενον is closely related to no. XII 11, and the repudiation of void in §§ 10, 11 recalls Asclepius 33. No. V, ὅτι ἄφανθος ὁ θεός φανερώτατος ἐστιν, is addressed to 'Tat', and may well be one of the ψυχικά ad Tat to which reference is made in the opening scene of the Asclepius. It is an elaboration of the cosmological argument for the existence of God. It clearly belongs to the same group. πάντα δίδωσι καὶ οὕδεν λαμβάνεις, πάντα γὰρ ἔχεις καὶ οὕδεν δὲ οὐκ ἔχεις (§ 10 fin.) may be compared with no. II 16 fin. ὃ γὰρ ἀγαθὸς ἀπαντά ἐστι δίδωσι καὶ μηδὲν λαμβάνων. ὃ οὐν θεὸς πάντα δίδωσι καὶ οὕδεν λαμβάνει: while the concluding words ἢλπις μὲν γὰρ τὸ λεπτο­μερέστερον ἁπρ., ἄφες δὲ ψυχή, ψυχής δὲ νοῦς, νοῦ δὲ ὁ θεός are found word for word in no. XII 14. No. VIII treats of God, the World, and Man in a manner closely resembling the Asclepius. Here, as there, the World is described as δεύτερος θεός, and ἡμῶν ἀβατάτον. Man is the third animal: κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου γενόμενος, νοῦν κατὰ βούλησιν τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχων παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπέγεια ἡμᾶς, οὐ μόνον πρὸς τὸν δεύτερον θεόν συμπάθειαν ἔχει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔννοιαν τοῦ πρῶτον.

No. VI, addressed to Asclepius, maintains that there is good in nothing save God. This does not agree with the doctrine of no. IX, as will be shewn in the next paragraph. But the general similarity of phraseology and style 2 justify us in considering it with these numbers.

We may then fairly regard nos. II, V, VI, VIII, IX, and XII of the Corpus and the Asclepius as closely related in style, phraseology, and

1 Cf. Origen’s distinction: In Joh. ii 2 πάν δὲ τὶ πάρα τὸ αὐτὸθεοῦ μετοχῆ τῆς ἱερατίως θεοποιούμενον οὐχ ὁ θεός ἀλλὰ θεὸς κυριάτερον ἐν λαγνύτο.

2 We may e.g. compare vi 4 ὁ νόσια τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰ γε οὖσιν ἔχει, τὸ καλὸν ἐστὶν with xii iiii. ὁ νοῦς, ὁ Τάτ, ἐς αὐτὴς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ νοσίας ἐστιν, εἰ γε τὶς ἐστιν νοσία θεοῦ.
subject-matter. It is not, however, necessary to suppose that they are all by the same hand: indeed, the contrary seems more probable. Reitzenstein¹ points out that no. IX contains a polemic against the teaching of no. VI: no. VI ⁴ declares that δύσμος πληρωμά ἐστι τῆς κακίας, to which no. IX ⁴ replies that χώριον αὐτῆς (i.e. κακίας) ἢ γῆ, οὔτε δύσμος, οὔτε ἐννοί ποτε ἐρωτεί βλασφημοῦτα. Zielinski makes this difference of teaching a ground for distinguishing between a ‘peripatetic-dualistic’ and a ‘Platonist-dualistic’ Hermetic, and accordingly associates no. IX with parts of no. I and with no. VII as Platonic. As we shall see later on, I and VII are of a very different character from both VI and IX, and the difference lies not so much in actual divergence of teaching as in atmosphere and method of treatment. Nos. I and VII are hortatory, while nos. VI and IX are didactic. The controversy to which Reitzenstein and Zielinski² call attention provides a point of contact between VI and XI rather than a ground for separation.

Nos. XI and XIV are also of a philosophical character, but they do not betray any close relationship to the Asclepius. Αἰών and χρόνος play a large part in the cosmological doctrine of XI, and in both numbers a favourite antithesis is τὸ ποιοῦν and τὸ γεγονόμενον—terms which are not prominent in the other numbers.³

² Zielinski contributed two articles entitled Hermes und die Hermetik to the Archiv für Religionswissenschaft viii (1905) and ix (1906). In the second he severely criticizes the ‘Ägyptomanie’ of Reitzenstein’s Poimandres, and comes to the conclusion that we may expect Egyptology to throw light on the ‘lower’ Hermetic (i.e. alchemy, &c.), but that the ‘higher’ Hermetic (i.e. the Corpus Hermeticum and similar remains) is entirely Greek.

The former article attempts to discriminate between the various strata of Hermetic teaching, and contains some valuable criticism though the main drift of the argument seems open to question. Corp. Herm. i (Ποιμανδρίπ), it is assumed rather than proved, is the oldest Hermetic writing; in this number Zielinski finds a combination of Peripatetic and Platonic Hermetic; and then he groups the other numbers according to this distinction as far as possible; and lastly he finds a Pantheistic group (including the Asclepius).

It may perhaps be questioned in the first place how far it is legitimate to distinguish precisely between ‘peripatetic’ and ‘Platonic’ in a syncretic age like the second or the third century, and secondly the Poimandres itself seems to be of such a different character from the philosophic numbers of the Corpus that it is doubtful whether it is safe to base an analysis of the Corpus on divergences to be found within the Poimandres. Cf. infra p. 527.

³ Both these numbers are quoted by Cyril of Alexandria (Corp. Herm. xi 22, cf. Cyr. Alex. c. Iul. ii p. 52, Aubert; Corp. Herm. xiv 6 sqq., cf. Cyr. Alex. c. Iul. ii p. 64). It is impossible to determine the relation of Cyril’s collection of Hermetic writings to that of Lactantius. Twice they quote the same passage (Lact. Inst. Div. ii 8 and Id. ib. Epit. 4, cf. Cyr. c. Iul. i 31), but there is no extant Hermetic book from which they both quote. Cyril’s collection at any rate must have been a miscellaneous assortment; it included an account of the creation given by ὅ μέγας
No. X is obviously composite: § 7 affirms, and § 19 denies the transmigration of the souls of the wicked into the bodies of animals. It is addressed to Tat, and professes to be an epitome of the γενικοὶ λόγοι, which had been spoken to him before. It is extensively quoted by Stobaeus, who, however, used a very different text from that in the Corpus. The γενικοὶ λόγοι are referred to in an astrological fragment preserved by Stobaeus (Phys. 468), and again in another fragment on the soul (Stob. Phys. 860) which may well have come from the same source as part of this number. Corp. Herm. xiii contains the only other reference to the γενικοὶ λόγοι in our Corpus, and there are other parallels which suggest a connexion between X and XIII.² We shall probably not go far wrong, if we follow Zielinski in regarding §§ 4–9 as distinct from the rest of the number, and closely related to XIII. Tat’s exclamation (§ 4) ἐπλήρωσας ἡμᾶς, ὦ πατέρ, τῆς ἀγαθῆς καὶ καλλίστης θέας follows lamely on the preceding sections which have more in common with the Asclepius group. The reference to the γενικοὶ λόγοι in § 1 (they come again in § 7) will then be due to the compiler.

Nos. XVI and XVII (Reitzenstein) do not resemble any of the preceding either in matter or in style. No. XVI is a philosophical discourse addressed to ‘the king’ by somebody who quotes Hermes as his authority. Its present title, Ὄροι Ἀσκληπιόν, probably dates only from Byzantine times, and it may perhaps be part of the sermo perfectus quem scripsit Asclepius ad regem of Lact. Inst. Div. ii 15.³ The cosmology of this number is entirely different from that of the Asclepius: God is the father of all, the sun is demiurge, and the κόσμος is the instrument (ὄργανον) of creation. The intelligible essence (νοητὴ οὐσία) controls (ὁιωκεῖ) heaven, and heaven the gods. The demons are ranged under the gods and control men. No. XVII is a fragment of a dialogue between Tat and ‘the king’, in which Tat exhorts the king to worship statues ὡς καὶ αὕτα ἱδέας ἐκχωντα ἀπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ κόσμου.

ἀγαθὸς δῖαμος to Osiris, which is clearly based on the LXX version of Gen. i (Cyr. c. Iul. ii p. 56).

¹ Phys. pp. 766, 770, 774, 1000, 1004, Heeren.
² e.g. cf. x 4 Καὶ ὅλων δὲν ἐσθίασθη μον ὁ τοῦ νοῦ δίφαλμος ἐπὶ τῆς τοιαύτης θέας with xiii 14 ἀρχηγόθετα σοῦ ὁ δίφαλμος τοῦ νοῦ.
⁴ For text vide Poimandres p. 348 foll. Reitzenstein adopts a different numeration: no. XVI (Reitz.) follows no. XIV (Parthey).
⁵ So Reitzenstein op. cit. p. 192. Lactantius loc. cit. says that Asclepius expands the teaching of Hermes on piety as the one protection for man against evil demons and fate; this might well refer to Ὄροι Ἀσκληπιον i i foll.
⁶ On the sun in late Platonic speculation cf. Cumont Astrology and Religion pp. 31, 118.
⁷ This number concludes as follows: Ὁ οὖν βασιλεὺς ἐξαναστάτη ἐφι "Ὡρα ἐστιν, ὃ προφήτα, περὶ τὴν τῶν ἐνῶν ἐπιμέλειαν γίνεσθαι τῇ δὲ ἐπισκοπῇ περὶ τῶν ἐξής θεολογῆ."
No. XVIII (R.) Πρὸς βασιλέας is unique and was perhaps included in the collection by a mistake. Neither Hermes, nor Asclepius,¹ nor Tat is mentioned. It is a disquisition on the ‘Divine Right of Kings’: the reverence due to kings is analogous to the reverence due to God, and should be regarded as a preparatory exercise for the worship of the Supreme.²

It remains to consider nos. I, III, IV, VII, and XIII; it will be argued in the following paragraphs that nos. I, III, IV, and VII presuppose a different milieu from that of the main body of Hermetic writings; that the LXX version of Gen. i was certainly used in I and III; that New Testament influence is probable in I, VII, and XIII, while IV—on ‘baptism in a crater’—was almost certainly suggested by the Christian rite. Finally it will be shewn that a ‘Gnostic’ amalgam of Persian, Greek, Jewish, and Christian elements, preserved by the alchemist Zosimus, was associated with Hermes, and this fact, coupled with the allusion of Zosimus to ‘Poimandres’ and ‘baptism in a crater’, will suggest that we need not discount Jewish influence, as recent writers have tended to do, and that Christian influence is not to be ruled out of court on a priori grounds.

No. I is an account of a Theophany: Poimandres, ‘the mind of the supreme power’ (ὅ τις αὕθεντια νοῦς) appeared to the writer, when he was in a trance (κατασχέσιον μοι τῶν σωματικῶν αἰσθήσεων), and shewed him the creation in a vision. A dialogue ensues in which Poimandres explains the vision and gives an account of the creation of the sōmēn. It is not clear whether Tat and the προφητής are identical; the following passage from Iamblichus De Mysteriis viii 5 suggests that they are not: Ἐφηκήσατο δὲ καὶ ταυτὶ τὴν ὅδον ‘Ερμῆς ἡμῆνεσε δὲ Βίτος προφήτης’ Ἀρμωνι βασιλεὶ ἐν ἄδειοι ἐθνὸς ἀναγεγραμμένην ἐν λεγομενῳ γράμμασι κατὰ ζαίν τὴν ἐν λιγύστρῃ. It may also be noted that the complaint of the ἀκατασφαιρία of the Greeks in De Myst. vii 5 finds a curious parallel in the attack on the Greek language with no. XVI opens—‘Ελληνες, ὤ βασιλεῖ, λόγους ἔχουσι κενοὺς, (οὖδὲ) ἀποδείξειν ἐνεργητικοὺς. καὶ αὕτη ἔστιν (ὁ) Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφία, λόγων ψόφως ἡμεῖς δὲ οὗ λόγους χρώμεθα ἀλλὰ φωναῖς μεσταῖς τῶν ἔργων.

¹ There is no MS authority for the mention of Asclepius in the title.
² Reitzenstein op. cit. p. 207 sqq. suggests that the reference to ‘kings’ points to Diocletian and his colleagues; he thinks it was written to shew that Hermetic ‘religion’ meant loyalty to the Emperor and was added to the collection by the compiler, and in this way he tries to date the collection. There is, however, no ground for supposing that Diocletian and his colleagues are referred to: the reference to ‘kings’ is general, and its occurrence at the end of the collection is no evidence at all of date. Kroll (Pauly-Wissowa R.E. s.v. Hermes Trismegistos) even suggests that it may have been added by Psellus. Cf. Dibelius Zeitschr. f. Kirchengeschichte xxvi 168 sqq., Krebs Der Logos als Heiland im ersten Jahrhundert p. 134 sqq., and Review of latter in this Journal, October 1913, p. 122, by Dr Bethune-Baker.
seven διοικηταί, who control the seven spheres of the sensible world. The beasts were brought forth by Earth, Water, and Air. Then the Father of the Universe ‘begat Man equal to Himself, and loved him as His own son ... and gave him all His creations’. Man, however, wished himself to create, and thus fell through the seven spheres, receiving some quality from each. When Nature saw him, she loved him, and they were united, and Nature brought forth seven men; these were hermaphroditic and had characters corresponding respectively to each of the seven spheres. Both men and beasts were then divided into male and female, and generation and multiplication followed by order of God. Man’s salvation is effected by an ascension (ἀνάσας) through the seven spheres, at each of which he lays aside some quality he acquired at his fall. Thus at the first ζώνη he surrenders τὴν αὐξητικὴν καὶ μειωτικὴν ἐνέργειαν; at the second, τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν; at the third, τὴν ἐνθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην and so on. At last he reaches the ὑγιαστικὴ φύσις, where he joins the other beings (οἱ ὄντες) in glorifying the Father. They then all approach the Father in order, and surrender themselves into ‘powers’ (δυνάμεις). Thus they are absorbed in God, and reach their final goal—deification (θεωθηναί). Poimandres charges his hearer to guide those who are worthy, ‘that mankind may be saved by God through him’, and ‘mingles with the powers’. The writer then relates how he began to preach to men ‘the beauty of piety and knowledge’. Some scoffed, but others threw themselves at his feet and begged to be instructed. ‘And I raised them up and became guide to the race of men, teaching them how and by what means they might be saved. And I sowed in them words of wisdom and they were fed from the ambrosial water. And when even was come and all the brightness of the sun was beginning to set, I bade them give thanks to God. And when they had finished their thanksgiving (ἐξαπατρά), they turned each to his own resting-place.’ The number closes with a hymn of praise.

It is generally agreed that no. I as it stands is composite: there are two accounts of the fall of man in §§ 12–14, and the use of Νοῦς for Ποιμάνδρος himself in §§ 1 and 22 is hardly consistent with the identification elsewhere (e.g. §§ 9 and 12) of Νοῦς with the supreme God, but reconstruction of sources is not easy.

1 This and similar doctrines originated in the astrological lore of Babylon; they gained a hold on the Western world during the Hellenistic period and were recognized by Stoic philosophers such as Posidonius, the teacher of Cicero. Cf. Cumont Les Religions orientales p. 369, Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans pp. 67 foll.

Nos. III and VII may be considered together with I; no. III is a fragment on the Creation, and is of a similar character to much of I; and the exhortation in no. VII 'to stand soberly and look up with the eyes of the heart' is parallel both in thought and style to I 27.

These three numbers are marked off from the other Hermetic writings by differences of conception and style: broadly speaking, they are more mythological and less philosophical than the writings we have considered hitherto. The Theophany in I and the hortatory spirit of I 7 and VII cannot be paralleled in the Asclepius and kindred writings. The terms used are different, and the descriptions of the Creation in I and III are realistic and unmetaphysical. Finally the following parallels prove conclusively that Gen. i (LXX) was known to the writer of I and III, whereas we have seen no reason to suspect direct Jewish or Christian influence in the numbers dealt with in the first half of this section.

**Corpus Hermeticum** i (Πομάνδρης)

§ 5 καὶ ἄλλον τὸν ἐπιφερόμενον πνευματικὸν λόγον.

§ 11 διακεχώρισται δὲ ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων η τε γῆ καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καθὼς ἠθέλησεν ο νοῦς, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ’ αὐτῆς δ’ εἶχε ἥμα τετράποδα, ἐρπετά, θηρία ἄγρια καὶ ἥμερα.

§ 12 'Ο δὲ πάντων παντὶ δ’ ο νοῦς, ὅν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκάλυψεν ἀνθρωπον ἐαυτῷ ἵσον, οὔ ἢ ῥάσθη ὡς ἰδίων τόκου περικάλλης γὰρ ἦν τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἕχων. ὅτ’ όρα νότ’ ὁ θεὸς ἢ μόρφωσε τὴν ἡμιαίας μορφῆς, καὶ αὐτῇ παρέδωκε τὰ ἐαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα.

§ 18 ὁ δὲ θεῶς εὕθες εἶπεν ἀγών λόγῳ Λοίδον ἀδιάλειπτον ἐν ἀδιάλειπτος καὶ πληθύνεσθε ἐν πληθύσει, πάντα τὰ κτήματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. (Also III 3.)

**Genesis i**

v. 2 καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ θατοῦ.

v. 7 καὶ διεκφώρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ θατοῦ . . .

v. 24 καὶ ἔπεν ὁ θεὸς. Ἐξαγαγεῖτω ἡ γῆ ψυχὴν ζώαν κατὰ γένος, τετράποδα καὶ ἐρπετά καὶ θηρία τῆς γῆς κατὰ γένος.

v. 26 καὶ ἔπεν ὁ θεὸς. Ποιήσωμεν ἀνθρώπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὁμοιόμορφαν καὶ ἀρχιέτωσαν τῶν ἁρχῶν τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐρποτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

v. 28 καὶ ἐπιλόγησαν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς λέγων Ἀδιάλειπτον καὶ πληθύνεσθε.

1 Another somewhat similar fragment is preserved by Suidas, s.v. Ἡφασὶς ὁ Τρισμέγιστος.

2 I think I am right in saying that neither Reitzenstein nor Zielinski refers to Genesis i.
Before proceeding to examine the parallels to the New Testament in these numbers we must refer to the opening paragraph of the fifth vision of the Shepherd of Hermas, which contains some curious resemblances to the Poimandres. If, as Dr Reitzenstein and Dr Norden think, Hermas has borrowed from Poimandres, we have an important clue to the date of the latter.

The passages run as follows:

Poimandres i

'Εννοιας μοι ποτε γενομένης περὶ τῶν ὠντων καὶ μετεωρισθείσης μου τῆς διανοίας σφόδρα, κατασχεθείσων τε τῶν σωματικῶν αἰσθήσεων—καθά-περ οἱ ἐν ὑπνῷ βεβαιρημένοι ἐκ κόρου τε καὶ τρυφῆς ἢ ἐκ κόπου σώματος—ἐδοξά τινα ὑπερμεθέγγη μέτρῳ ἀπεριο-ρίστῳ τυγχάνοντα καλεῖν μου τὸ ὄνομα καὶ λέγοντά μου. Τί βούλει ἀκούσαι καὶ θεάσασθαι καὶ τί νοσάεις μαθεῖν καὶ γνῶναι;

φημὶ ἐγὼ. Σὺ γὰρ τίς εἶ;

Ἐγὼ μὲν, φησίν, εἰμί ὁ Ποιμανδρῆς, ὁ τῆς αἰθαντίας νοῦς, ὅσα δὲ ὁ βούλει, καὶ σύνειμι σοι πανταχ_scores; φημὶ ἐγὼ. Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα, καὶ νοσάσει τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶσαι τὸν θεόν· τοῦτ', ἐφην;

Shepherd of Hermas Vis. v

Προσευχαμένου μου ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ, καὶ καθίσαντος εἰς τὴν κλίνην

ἐλαύθεν ἄνηρ τις ἐνδοξὸς τῇ ὄψιν, σχῆματι ποιμενικῷ περικείμενοι δέρμα λευκόν, καὶ πήραν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῶν ὃμων καὶ μάθρων εἰς τὴν χεῖρα. καὶ ἡσυχάστω με, κἀγὼ ἀντηπαθαρμήν αὐτόν. καὶ εἴθες παρεκάθισεν μοι, καὶ λέγει μοι: Ἀπεστάλην ὑπὸ τοῦ σχεναστῶν ἄγγελου, ἵνα μετὰ σοῦ οἰκήσω τὸς λουπᾶς ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς σου. Ἐδοξά ἐγὼ ὅτι πάρεστιν ἐκπειράζων με, καὶ λέγω αὐτῷ: Σὺ γὰρ τίς εἶ; ἐγὼ γὰρ, φημὶ, γινώσκω ψ̄ παρεδόθην. λέγει μοι: Οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκεις με; Οὐ, φημὶ. Ἐγὼ, φησίν, εἰμί ὁ Ποιμήν ὃ παρε-δόθης.
Dr. Reitzenstein thinks that the resemblances between these passages can only be explained by literary dependence, and he has no hesitation in affirming the priority of *Poimandres*. The figure of the Shepherd in Hermas he describes as a 'sinnlose Maskerade', which has obviously been imperfectly adapted to its position in the *Shepherd*. Indeed, Dr. Reitzenstein considers that Hermas probably belonged at one period to the 'Poimandres-Gemeinde', which proved a half-way house to the Christian Church! If this be admitted, we are forced to push back the date of *Poimandres* at least to the early years of the second century, in order to allow for the teaching to spread from Egypt to Rome. Moreover, if this be so, it is not probable that we shall find Christian influence at so early a date. Whether or not the confused metaphysical speculations of the *Poimandres* would be likely to appeal to the simple mind of the author of the *Poimandres* is a question which it is not easy to discuss; but it may be submitted that the figure of the Shepherd in Hermas, so far from being a 'sinnlose Maskerade', is in full keeping with Jewish and early Christian conceptions; the image of the Lord as Shepherd was familiar to every Jew: *Poimandres* is far more of an enigma.

If it is necessary to suppose literary connexion, the artificial literary composition of *Poimandres* makes it more probable that the borrowing was on that side. However, the similarity between the two passages is less remarkable than appears at first sight, and is probably a coincidence: there is really nothing in common between the very substantial Shepherd of Hermas with his sheepskin, his wallet, and his staff, and the mysterious apparition of the *Poimandres*; and the question—Σὺ γὰρ τίς εἶ;—with which

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2 Casaubon (Exercit. i ad Baron. p. 85) illustrates the author's acquaintance with Classical Greek by comparing the opening words of *Poimandres* with the first line of Xen. Cyropaed. Ἐννοεῖα μοι ποτὲ γενομένης περὶ τῶν ὄντων... These writings are syncretic in style as well as matter.
3 See Krebs Der Logos als Heiland, 1910, pp. 136 ff, and Bardy in Revue Biblique, 1911, pp. 391 ff, for severe and searching criticism of Dr Reitzenstein's view.
4 If Ποιμὴν is derived from ποιμã and ἄρηφ, as is generally supposed, the formation is unparalleled. Mr. Granger (J.T.S. 1904, vol. v p. 400) suggested that the word is a transliteration of the Coptic Pemenetre, meaning 'The Witness', with reference to the widely spread legend about Hermes. On this assumption there would be no allusion at all in *Poim.* to a shepherd. And, as Mr Granger shews, the
the unexpected visitor is in both cases greeted is too natural to call for comment. 1

It is impossible to attach any weight to Dr Reitzenstein's other argument for the dependence of the Shepherd on Poimandres. 2 In the ninth similitude of the Shepherd Hermas is conducted to a mountain in Arcadia, where he sees a vision. The mention of Arcadia is strange and has not been satisfactorily explained. Now the Egyptian Hermes is supposed to have come from Arcadia (cf. Cic. de Nat. deor. iii 56 quoted above p. 514), and no. XIV refers to the γεννυκότι λόγων which had been spoken ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ ὀρόν μεταβάσεως. Hence Dr Reitzenstein detects Hermetic influence in the Arcadian mountain of the Shepherd. It is perhaps sufficient to point out that there is no trace of an allusion to Hermes in the Shepherd and no trace of an allusion to Arcadia in Poimandres; and that the reference to the mountain, even if it proved anything, occurs in a number which Dr Reitzenstein himself regards as later than Poimandres and but slightly connected therewith. 3

The next question we have to consider is the question whether any of these numbers betray Christian influence.

In no. IV Hermes relates to Tat how the Creator made the world by logos and then created man. He bestowed logos on all men, but reserved nous as a special reward (δέλαον), 'God filled a great bowl (κρατήρ) 4 with nous and sent it down and a preacher (κηρυκές) therewith, and bade him preach thus to the hearts of men: Baptize thyself, thou heart that canst, into this bowl, thou that believest that thou shalt ascend unto Him that sent down the bowl, thou that dost recognize wherefore thou hast been born. And as many as understood the message and baptized themselves in nous, were made sharers in knowledge (γνώσις), and became perfect men by receiving the gift of nous.' When Tat expresses a desire for baptism, Hermes answers, that he must first hate his body, and so love himself, and that by loving himself he will win nous, and by nous he will share in episteme. Man's true

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1 We may compare Acts ix 5 εἰπεν δὲ (ὁ Σαύλος) τίς εἶ, κύριε; δὲ δὲ 'Εγὼ εἶμι Ἰησοῦς δύο σοι διάκονος.
4 The κρατήρ was perhaps suggested by Plato Tim. 41 D. The reference of Arnobius to 'Platonicus ille crater, quem conficit miscetque Timaeus' (adv. nat. ii 53) shows that the passage was well known. There is another Platonic reminiscence in § 6: ἐπὶ δὲ μὲν θεὸς ἄνατος, ἡμείς δὲ αἰτίον τῶν κακῶν is obviously adapted from the famous words aitia ἠλομένου, θεὸς ἄνατος (Plat. Ref. 117 E).
destiny is to reach the *monas*, 'which controls and draws upward those who haste to behold her, even as they say a magnet draws iron'.

It is difficult not to think that Christian baptism supplied the writer with his simile of baptism: we may surmise that he was a pagan, perhaps not unfriendly to Christianity, who wished to shew that the true baptism was to be found in his own philosophy.¹

In no. XIII Tat asks Hermes to explain further his enigmatical statement in the *γενικὸν λόγον* that nobody can be saved before regeneration. Hermes answers that regeneration is effected by the will of God. When Tat enquires further, Hermes replies: 'What shall I say, my son? I can only say that I see a vision, which has arisen, uncreated (ἀπλαστὸν) in me out of the mercy of God, and I have gone out of myself into an immortal body...' 'O Father, you have shaken me into no small madness and frenzy', answers Tat, 'for now I see not mine own self.' After further talk on regeneration, Hermes reveals to Tat the 'hymn of regeneration'. 'Stand thus, my son, beneath the open sky and worship looking towards the south wind, as the sun sets, and at sunrise likewise towards the east. Now hush! my child.' Then follows ὄμνηδια κρυπτή. The powers of nature are invoked, and a λογική θυσία is offered to God. The dialogue closes with an injunction to Tat to keep secret 'the tradition of regeneration'.

It should be added that this dialogue contains the only passage in the *Corpus* outside no. I in which the name of Ποιμάνδρης occurs (§ 15). The reference suggests literary relation rather than common authorship.

The following parallels in this number to the Fourth Gospel are remarkable though hardly conclusive; §§ 2, 4 τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ as the agent in regeneration, cf. John i 13 ὅτι ἐὰς αἰμάτων, οὗτος ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός, ἀλλ' ἐκ θελήματος ἁρμόνιος, ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. § 2 τοῦ τὸ γένος, δὲ τέκνον, ὅτι διάδεσκεται, ἀλλ' ὅταν θέλη, ὅτι τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμμηνήσκεται. Cf. John xiv 25 ὁ παράκλητος... ὅμως διαδίδει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὅμως πάντα ἀπὸν ὑμῖν. § 21 θεί, σὺ πάτερ, σὺ ὁ κύριος, σὺ ὁ νοῦς recalls the Christian Trinity. Finally with § 21 Σύ, δὲ τέκνον, πέμψω δεκτὴν θυσίαν τῶν πάντων πατρί θεῷ ἀλλὰ καὶ προσθέσει, δὲ τέκνον, "διὰ τοῦ Λόγου", compare 1 Pet. ii 5 ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικάς θυσίας εὑπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

We must now return to no. I. The parallels here to the New Testament—especially to the Fourth Gospel—are closer, and when we

¹ Did the baptismal vow suggest the following sentence in § 7 ὅτι ὅ τῶν θεῶν ἐπιλημμένην ἥ τοῦτο μένων, ὅτι καθώσπερ αἱ ποιμαὶ μίνων παρείχονται μήτε αὐταὶ ἐνεργήσαι τι δυνάμει, τοῖς δὲ ἐμποδίζονται—τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ὅτους μίνων ποιμανύσιαν ἐν τῷ κύριῳ παραγόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν σωματικῶν ἑδονῶν! Cf. Tert. de cor. mil. c. 3 'Aquam aditus ibidem sed et aliquanto prius in ecclesia sub antistitis manu, contestamur nos renuntiare diablo et pompa et angelis eius.'

M m 2
Poimandres

§ 19 ο δὲ δειχνήσας τὸ ἐκ πλάνης ἔρωτος σώμα, οὕτως μενεῖ ἐν τῷ σκότει πλανώμενος, αἰσθητὸς πάσχουν τὰ τοῦ θανάτου.

§ 31 ἄγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται, καὶ γινώσκεται τοὺς ἴδιους.

§ 32 διὸ πιστεύω σοι καὶ μαρτυρῶ, εἰς ζωὴν καὶ φῶς χωρὶς. εὐλογητὸς εἶ πάτερ ὁ σὸς ἄνθρωπος συναγάγειν σοι βούλεται, καθὼς παρεδώκας αὐτῷ τὴν πάσαν ἐξουσίαν.

St John

iii 19 καὶ ἔγαγμην οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς.

xii 46 ἢ τὰ γεγονότα εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ μὴ μελησθῇ.

i 11 εἰς τὰ ἱδία ἔλθεν.

x 14 γενόσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκοντι με τὰ ἐμὰ.

For μαρτυρῶ cf. St John passim.

xvii i Πάτερ, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ἀραβική δόξα αὐτοῦ σου τῶν υἱῶν, ἵνα ὁ υἱὸς δοξάσῃ σε, καθὼς ἐδώκας αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν...

Poimandres 27 οἱ μέθη καὶ ὑπὸν ἐκφυγὸς ἐκδικομένως, καὶ τῇ ἀννωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, νήψατε παίσασθε κραπαλῶντες δηλόμενοι ὑπὸ τὸ ἀλόγον (cf. also VII 1) reads like an echo of i Cor. xv 34 ἐκνῆφατε δικαίως καὶ μὴ ἀμαρτάνετε, ἀγνωσίαν γὰρ θεοῦ τίνες ἔχονεν (cf. also Luke xxi 34).

Is it fanciful to see an allusion to the Christian Baptism and Eucharist in the following account of his mission by the writer of Poimandres?—καὶ ἐσπείρα αὐτοῖς τὸν τῆς σοφίας λόγον, καὶ ἐτράφησαν ἐκ τοῦ ἄμβρουσον ὕδατος.2 ὑφίας δὲ γεγόνομεν... ἐκέλευσα αὐτοὺς ἐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ. καὶ ἀναπληρώσαντες τὴν ἐχαρίσταταν, ἐκατός ἐτράπη ἐς τὴν ἴδιαν κοίτην (§ 29).

Before leaving no. I. A word must be said about the prayer with which it concludes; it is a curious passage and is worth quoting in full:—

Δῶ δῶδαμι ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ ἵσθιος ἄλης εὐλογίαν τῷ πατρὶ θεῷ. "Αγίου ὁ θεός, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὄνων· ἄγιος ὁ θεός, οὐ ἢ βουλή τελείται ἀπὸ τῶν ἄνθρωπων ἔναντι τοῦ ἐλέημαν. ἄγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοὺς ἴδιους· ἄγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συντασσόμενος ἐν τῷ ἄγιῳ εἶ, οὐ πᾶσα φύσις ἐκὼν ἐφυνή ἄγιος εἶ ἡ ὕφιας οὐκ ἐμφάνισεν· ἄγιος εἶ ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἑνωρφοτερος· ἄγιος εἰ ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων· ἄγιος εἰ ὁ κρίσεως τῶν ἐπαίῶν. δέχθαι λογικὰς θυσίας ἅγιος ἀπὸ ψυχῆς καὶ καρδίας πρὸς σε ἀνατεταμῆνης, ἀνεκλάλητη, ἀφθηγή, σιωπὴ φαινομένη. αἰτουμένῳ τὸ μὴ σφαλήνα τῆς γνώσεως

1 So Kennedy St Paul and the Mystery Religions p. 167.

2 For the water of baptism regarded as a draught cf. Passio S. Perpet. viii, Odes of Sol. vi 10, 11, and Bernard ad loc. I owe these references to Dr Armitage Robinson. Dr Robinson has also pointed out to me two more slight but curious parallels to New Testament phraseology in Poimandres: the writer's 'call' λοιπὸν τί μέλλεις; οὐχ ὃς πάντα... § 26 may be compared with the words of Ananias to St Paul, καὶ νῦν τί μέλλεις; Acts xxii 16, and the curiously redundant expression § 29 ὑφίας δὲ γεγομένης καὶ τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου αὐγῆς ἀρχομένης διέσθαι recalls Mark i 32 ὑφίας δὲ γεγομένης, ὅτε ἐθανεν ὁ ἡλίος.
Two remarkable parallels to St John have already been remarked upon. We may also observe that the prayer is introduced with an expression taken from the LXX or New Testament—δέωμε ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ ἱσχύος δῆσε εἰλογιαν τῷ πατρὶ θεῷ. The phrases in thick type above are closely similar to phrases in the Greek original of the prayer at the end of the Asclepius, discovered by Reitzenstein in the Mimaut Papyrus, and we may surmise that the compiler of this prayer was familiar with the Asclepius prayer or some similar composition.

The Poimandres prayer also occurs in a papyrus—dating probably from the third century, published in the Berliner Klassikertexte Heft VI Allchristliche Texte p. 110. The papyrus contains three prayers, of which the first and third are unmistakeably Christian. The editors had not detected the source of the second prayer, and accordingly treated it as Christian too. The identity of the prayer with the conclusion of Poimandres has been pointed out by Reitzenstein in the Göttingen Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften (philol.-hist. Klasse) 1910 pp. 324 ff. A Christian doxology has been added; otherwise the differences are slight, but there can be no doubt that Reitzenstein is right in claiming the Poimandres text as prior to that of the papyrus.

It may be submitted that if the Poimandres was recognized as a semi-Christian production, it is prima facie easier to account for the inclusion of the prayer in a collection of Christian prayers, than if we regard the document, with Dr Reitzenstein, as a purely heathen work.

This section will conclude with some account of the quotations from and references to Hermes in the alchemist Zosimus, who, as already stated, clearly knew of ‘Poimandres’ and ‘baptism in a bowl’.

Zosimus flourished early in the fourth century A.D., and was the author of a chemical encyclopaedia containing treatises of Cleopatra, Mary the Jewess, and others. We possess about 150 pages of his

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1 Cf. Deut. vi 5 ἄγαπησες κύριον τὸν θεόν σου... ἐξ ἀληθείας τῆς ψυχῆς σου καὶ ἐξ ἀληθείας τῆς δυνάμεως σου (al. ἱσχύος, cf. Origin Hexap. ad loc.) and Mark xii 30, and Swete ad loc.
2 Cf. Wessely Griechische Zauberpapyri p. 36, Denkschr. der k.k. Akademie, philos. Klasse, Wien. The papyrus dates from the fourth century and contains a number of incantations and prayers—many quite unintelligible—loosely strung together. Jewish names are prominent. Reitzenstein has reconstructed the text of the prayer in Archiv für Rel. vii p. 396.
3 The writer is indebted to Reitzenstein’s Poimandres for the references in the first place.
works, which have come down to us in the form of extracts made later by Byzantine commentators, whose comments and interpolations are not always easy to distinguish from the original. His remains are a queer jumble of chemistry and magic. The following passage occurs in a letter of Zosimus to his sister Theosebeia:—

Σῦ γοῦν μὴ περελκῶν ὡς γλυφὶ, ὅς καὶ ἐν τοῖς καὶ ἐνεῖλαν ἔξειπτον σου, καὶ μὴ περιμέμπουν, ζητοῦσα θεόν· ἀλλ' οὐκάδε καθέξου, καὶ θεός ἦζε πρὸς σε, ὁ πανταχῶν ὥν καὶ εἰκὸν ἐν τῶ πρὸς ἐλαχίστῳ ὡς τὰ δαιμόνια· καθεξομένη δὲ τῷ σῶματι, καθέξου καὶ τοῦ πάθεσι, ἐπιθυμεῖ ἢδονὴν θυμὸν λύπη καὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις μόρας τοῦ θανάτου καὶ οὕτως ἐκείνη διευθύνουσα προσκαλέσῃ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν τὸ θείον καὶ οὕτως ἦζε τὸ πανταχῶν ὥν καὶ οὐδαμοῦ καὶ μὴ καλουμένη, πρόσφερε φυσιάς τοῖς ..., μὴ τὰς προσφύρας, μὴ τὰς θρεπτικὰς αὐτῶν, καὶ προσνεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἀποθρεπτικὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἀναμετάκες τὸ προσεφώνησέν Μεμβρής τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων Βασιλεὶ Σολομώντι, αὐτὸς δὲ μάλιστα Σολομών ὅσα ἔγραψεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας καὶ οὕτως ἐνεργοῦσα, ἐπιτεέψῃ τῶν γνησίων καὶ φυσικῶν καρπικῶν ταῦτα δὲ ποιεῖ ἐως παντελεωμένη τὴν ψυχήν. ὅταν δὲ εἰπιγραφαὶ αὐτήν τελεωθεύσαν, τότε καὶ τῶν φυσικῶν τῆς ὑλῆς καταπτήσαν, καὶ καταδραμοῦσα ἐπὶ Ποιμένανδρα, καὶ βαπτίζοντά τῷ κρατήρι, ἀνάδραμε ἐπὶ τὸ γένος τὸ σῶν.

Whatever may be the meaning of this obscure passage, we have undoubtedly here an allusion to the Ποιμένανδρα and the κρατήρ of the Corpus Hermeticum. Another passage in Zosimus further illustrates the connexion: Μὲ δὲ, ὡς μακαρία, παῖσαι ἀπὸ τῶν ματαίων στοιχείων, τῶν τὰς ἀκοῖς σοι ταραττόντων. ἤκουσα γὰρ ὅτι μετὰ Παρθένου τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἅλλων τῶν ἅλλων ἀπαθεῖτων ἀνδρῶν διαλέγη, καὶ ἀπὸ ἁκοίεσσα παρ' αὐτῶν μάταια καὶ κενά λογύρια πράττεν ἐπιχειρεῖ. παῖσαι οὖν ἀπὸ τῶν τετυφλωμένων τῶν νοῦν καὶ ἀγαν καιομένων καὶ γὰρ κάκεινος ἐλεηθήναι δεῖ καὶ ἀκούσα τῶν λόγων τῆς ἐλθεσίας, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἄξιοι, ἐπειδὴ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀνθρώποι εἰσιν, ἀλλ' οὐ βουλοῦντο ἐλέους ἐπιτυχεῖν. In view of the former passage, the parallels here to the following quotations from the Corpus can hardly be accidental:—

I 26 λούσων τὰ μέλλεις; ὅχι ὡς πάντα παραλαβῶν καθοδηγὸς γίνῃ τοῖς ἄξιοις; XIII 3 ὅρω τῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀπλαστῶν θείων γεγενημένην ἐξ ἐλέους θεοῦ; XIII 8 ἀφιστάται ὧν αὐτὰ (i.e. various vices) ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλεηθέντος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ

This use of ἐλέους, ἐλεηθῆναι may be due to Jewish influence

1 Cf. Berthelot Les Alchimistes grecs p. 211.
2 Berthelot op. cit. p. 244. No attempt has been made to correct the mistakes in the MS readings.
3 Cf. Corp. Herm. x 16 ἀναδραμοῦσης τῆς ψυχῆς εἰς λαυτὴν.
4 Berthelot op. cit. p. 190.
5 Usages of ἐλέους in Epictetus are by Lightfoot (Philippians p. 314 n. 3, and by Bonhöffer Epiktet u. d. Neue Testament p. 69). Particularly striking is
NOTES AND STUDIES

(cf. e.g., Jer. vii 16 and LXX and New Testament passim) for in this alchemistic literature 'Moses', 'Mary', and Jews in general play a large part. Particularly significant is the association of 'Hermes' with Jewish works. Hence also it is not surprising to find Zosimus using Genesis i, much as we found it used in Corp. Herm. i and iii, and also in the Hermetic fragment preserved by Cyril of Alexandria referred to above (p. 523 n. 3).

One more quotation from 'Hermes' in Zosimus must be referred to, because it contains one direct mention of, and much allusion to, Jesus Christ.

It occurs in a letter to Theosebeia: 'Ο μέντοι Ἐρμῆς ἐν τῷ περὶ ἀναυλίας διαβάλλει καὶ τὴν μαγείαν, λέγων ὅτι οὐ δεί τὸν πνευματικὸν ἀνθρώπον τὸν ἐπιγνώτα ξαναίν, οὔτε διὰ μαγείας καταρθοῦν τι, έαν καὶ καλὸν νομίζοισα, μηδὲ βιάζοντα τὴν ἀνάγκην, ἀλλ' ἕαν ὡς ἦχε φύσεως καὶ κρίσεως: πορεύεσθαι δε ἀπὸ μόνον τοῦ ζητεῖν, ξαναίν καὶ θεοὺς ἐπηγινώτα, κρατεῖ τὴν ἀκατονύματον τριάδα: καὶ ἕαν τὴν εἰμαρμένην θλείς ποιεῖν, τῷ ἕαν τῇ στήλῃ, τούτεστι τῷ σώματι. καὶ οὕτως, φησί, νοῦς καὶ πολιτευόμενος θεάτη τὸν θεοὺς υἷον πάντα γνώμενον τῶν θεῶν ψυχῶν ένεκεν· ὑπατή ἑκοστάσῃ ἐκ τοῦ χῶρον τῆς εἰμαρμένης ἐπὶ τὸν ἀσώματον, ὥσις αὐτῶν γινόμενον πάντα, θεῖον, ἀγγελον, ἀνθρώπον παθητόν· πάντα γὰρ δυνάμενος πάντα ὡς θέλει γίνεται, καὶ πατρὶ ὑπακούει διὰ παντὸς σώματος δυνής, φωτίζων τὸν ἐκάστης νοῦν εἰς τὸν εὐδαίμονα χῶρον ἀνώρμησε, ὀποτερ ἦν καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὸ σωματικὸν γενέσθαι, αὐτῷ ἀκολούθουντα καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν ὑρεγόμενον καὶ ὑδήγομενον εἰς ἐκεῖνο τὸ φῶς. An interesting passage follows in which Adam and Tat (Θωσίθ) are identified, and a distinction is drawn between ὁ σάρκινος Ἀδὰμ and ὁ ἐσώ αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπος ὁ πνευματικός. τὸ δὲ προσηγορικὸν αὐτοῦ ὄνομα, Zosimus continues, φῶς καλεῖται, ἀρ' οὖ καὶ φῶςα παρηκολούθησε λέγεσθαι τοῦς ἀνθρώπους. This heavenly being was persuaded, when he was φῶς, ἐνθύσασθαι τὸν παρὰ αὐτοῦ (?) Ἀδὰμ, τὸν ἐκ τῆς εἰμαρμένης, τὸν ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων στοιχείων. The story of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Pandora is then introduced: Pandora is Eve, and Prometheus and Epimetheus correspond to the spiritual and fleshly Adam respectively, and are together one Man. Καὶ πότε μὲν ψυχής ἦχετε εἰκόνα τοῦ Προμηθέως, πότε δὲ νοῦς, πότε δὲ σαρκός, διὰ τὴν παρακοήν τοῦ

Epictetus ii 7, 12 τῶν θεῶν ἐπικαλοῦμεν δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ. "Κἂν ἐλέγησον ἐπιτρεψόν μοι ἐξελθεῖν." (Cf. also Paris Pap. 51 = Milligan Greek Papyri no. 6 l. 24.) This, however, is surely insufficient evidence to support Dr Norden's statement (Agnostos Theos p. 389) that the Church borrowed the kyrie eleison from Hellenic ritual, in view of such passages as Matt. xv 22, xx 31 ; Ps. 1 3.

1 Cf. e.g. Berthelot op. cit. p. 232 καὶ τάδε μένος 'Εβραίοι καὶ αἱ Ισραήλ 'Ερμοῦ βιβλίων . . .

3 Berthelot op. cit. p. 135.

3 Ib. op. cit. p. 230.

1 Clearly πηλό should be read. No attempt has been made to emend the MS text.
'Επιμήθεως ἦν παρόκουσε τοῦ Προμήθεως τοῦ ἱδίου φησὶ γὰρ ὁ νόος ἡμῶν·
'Ὁ δὲ νῦν τοῦ θεοῦ πάντα δυνάμεις, καὶ πάντα γνώμενος ὅτε θέλει, ὡς θέλει, 
φανεὶ ἐκάστῳ Ἀδάμ προσήν Ίησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅπως καὶ τὸ ἀντέρον 
διήγην φότες καλούμενον. Ἐφάνη δὲ καὶ τοὺς πάνω ἢθυπάτους ἀνθρώπους, ἄνθρωπος γεγονός, παθητὸς καὶ ραπτικός, καὶ λάθρα τοὺς ἱδίους φῶτας συλήσας, ἀτε μηδὲν παθῶν, τὸν δὲ θάνατον δείξας καταπατεῖσθαι, καὶ 
ἔοισαί καὶ ἔως ὅρπι καὶ τοῦ τέλους του ἄλλην τόπου τάσσει λάθρα, καὶ φανερὰ 
συλλὼν τῶν ἔστων, συμβουλευών αὐτῶν λάθρα, καὶ διὰ τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν καταλαγῆν ἔχειν τοῦ παρ' αὐτῶν Ἀδάμ, κοσμομένου καὶ φονευομένου παρ' αὐτῶν 
τυφληγορούντος καὶ διαζηλομένου τῷ πνευματικῷ καὶ φωτεινῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, τῶν 
ἔστων Ἀδάμ ἀποκτείνοντι. Τοῦτο δὲς ἀντίμιμος δαιμών, ὁ σὺνίστασθαι, ὅτι ὁ 
ὁ γεγονὸς ἢθυπάτως καὶ τοῦ τέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ, διδοὺν αὐτῷ τὴν ἱδίον Ἀδάμ εἰς φόνον, τὰ 
ἔστων φωτεινὰ πνεύματα σώζοντες (ἐξ) ἱδίον χῶρον ὅποιον καὶ πρὸ κόσμου ἔστη. 
Before the ἀντίμιμος δαιμών comes himself, he sends a προδρόμος 
comes himself, he sends a προδρόμος from Persia. 
καὶ ταῦτα μόνον Ἐβραῖοι καὶ οἱ ἐβραῖοι Ἐρμοῦ βιβλίοι περί τοῦ 
φωτεινοῦ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ τοῦ ὁδηγοῦ αὐτοῦ ἱδίον θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ γῆνος Ἀδάμ, καὶ 
τοῦ ὁδηγοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀντιμίμον τοῦ δυσφήμη λέγοντος ἔστων εἶναι ἱδίον θεοῦ 
πλανῶν.

It is significant that this curious amalgam of Egyptian, Greek, Jewish, 
and Christian ideas was associated with Ἰερέας. Since it purports to 
come from the same hand as almost the only reference to Ἰερέας 
that has been discovered, we may be prepared to assign more weight 
to Jewish influence than Dr Reitzenstein seems prepared to allow, 
and to regard Christian influence as at least possible.

III

The bulk of the Hermetic writings were probably written in the third 
century or not earlier than the end of the second century. Lactantius 
supplies us with our first reliable date for the extant literature, but 
philosophical writings under the name of Hermes were current in the first 
decade of the third century when Tertullian wrote the De anima 
and Adversus Valentinianos. However, as we have seen, Ἰερεῖκα ἢθυπάτως 
conceptions are not markedly original, and they may, without question, 
be regarded as products of a movement reaching back far beyond the 
date of the writings themselves. Dr Reitzenstein in his Ἰερεῖκα 
regards Hermetic doctrine as a combination of Stoic and Egyptian 
thories dating from the time of the Ptolemies.1 I am not qualified 

1 Cf. the title of Corp. Herm. x xi Νοὸς πρὸς Ἰερέας.
2 Reitzenstein's Poimandres is not easy reading: there is a convenient summary 
of his position in Krebs Der Logos als Heiland pp. 126-133, and in Dr Bethune- 
Baker's review of the latter in this JOURNAL, October 1913. Reitzenstein's 
Agyptomanič is vigorously attacked by Zielinski Archiv f. Rel. 1906 pp. 27 foll.
to express an opinion on the extent of Egyptian influence, but it appears
to me that the *Asclepius* at any rate, and the allied numbers of the
*Corpus* are little more than popularized Greek metaphysics, coloured
by astrology.

Dr Reitzenstein further maintained that the *Poimandres* presupposed
a ‘Gemeinde’, founded probably about the time of the birth of Christ and
lasting down to the fourth century.¹ In the course of the second
century it spread to Rome (this takes in Hermas) and in the third
became absorbed in other Hermetic ‘Gemeinden’. This theory has
not won acceptance among scholars; M. Cumont has pointed out that
there is no trace, at any rate in the Latin world, of a Hermetic sect
with clergy and a *cultus*²; but I venture to suggest that it has not been
generally recognized how drastic an alteration of Dr Reitzenstein’s
estimate of the writings is required, if we abandon his theory of a com-
community (for which there is no evidence beyond the writings themselves)
lasting through several centuries.

It will be well first to have the verdict of two eminent scholars on
‘Hermetism’. Dr W. Kroll, criticizing Reitzenstein, says: ‘Least of
all can I believe in communities of Poimandres (at the time of the
birth of Christ), Nus, Anthropos, &c.; and our writings are not to be
considered as liturgies of these communities, on the contrary, their
character is purely literary.’³ M. Cumont, speaking of the mysteries of
Isis, remarks that ‘“Hermetism”, which tried to construct a theology
to satisfy all minds by a skilful mixture of Greek, Egyptian, and Semitic
elements, never appears to have been imposed generally on the Alexan-
drine Mysteries, which are earlier than it; and, even so, it was unable
to escape the contradictions of Egyptian thought. It was not in virtue
of its doctrine that Isiac religion had its hold over men’s hearts’.⁴

Recent investigation of religious thought and practice in the Graeco-
Roman world at the time of the rise of Christianity has shewn that
a philosophico-religious view of the world was widely held. Stoicism—
tempered with Platonism and dominated by astrology—held the field.
German research has taught us to discover Posidonius, the elder con-
temporary of Cicero, behind much of Philo, of Seneca, and of Plutarch,
and to recognize him as the forerunner of a host of lesser writers. The
Hermetic writings are later in date, but they may be assigned, broadly
speaking, to the movement associated with Posidonius.⁵ The other
fact which is being pressed home by recent research is the prevalence

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² *Les Religions orientales* p. 340 n. 41.
⁴ *Les Religions orientales* p. 132.
⁵ Cf. the interesting account of Posidonius in E. Bevan’s *Stoics and Sceptics*
pp. 85 foll.
at the same time of mystery cults of Isis, Attis, and, later, of Mithra. What was the relation of the popular philosophic movement to these cults? Many recent writers seem to think that it was very close, and give the impression that teaching such as that found in the Hermetic writings was little short of a recognized ‘Hellenistic mystery-theology’, and doubtless many individuals, like Plutarch for instance, or, later on, Iamblichus, did read their philosophy into the cults. The question, however, is rather whether these doctrines were bound up with the cults themselves. Was Hermetic teaching ever associated with a cult, in the way in which primitive Christian teaching was connected with Baptism and the Eucharist? Dr Reitzenstein seems to imply that it was. But his theory does not seem to be probable in itself, and he has not adduced evidence to support it.

J. M. Creed.

¹ I think this fairly represents the trend of e.g. Reitzenstein’s Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen. Dr Kennedy in his book, St Paul and the Mystery Religions, seems to me a little misleading when in chapter iii he includes an account of Hermetism together with the accounts of Eleusis, Cybele, and Isis Mysteries. He admits that Hermetism is not quite parallel to these cults, but believes in ‘religious communities’ associated with Hermes (p. 114). Can a Theosophical Society be properly termed a ‘community’?