

tion. The Priest of Mithras promised the initiates deliverance from sin, by confession and baptism, and a future life of happiness or misery. He celebrated the oblation of bread, image of the resurrection. The baptism of newly born children, extreme unction, confession of sins—all belonged to the Mitharic rites. The candidate was purified by a species of baptism, a mark was impressed upon his forehead, he offered bread and water, pronouncing certain mysterious words.

During the persecution in the early ages of Christianity, the Christians took refuge in the vast catacombs, which stretched for miles in every direction under the city of Rome, and are supposed to have been of Etruscan origin. There, amid labyrinthine windings, deep caverns, hidden chambers, chapels and tombs, the persecuted fugitives found refuge, and they there performed the ceremonies of the Mysteries.

To avoid persecution, the early Christians were compelled to use great precaution and to hold meetings of the Faithful (of the Household of Faith) in private spaces, under concealment of darkness. They assembled in the night, and they guarded against the intrusion of false brethren and profane persons as spies who might cause their arrest. They conversed together figuratively and by the use of symbols, lest cowans and eaves-droppers might overhear; and there existed among them a favoured class or Order, who were initiated into certain mysteries which they were bound by solemn promise not to disclose or even converse about, except with such as had received them under the same sanction. They were called Brethren, the Faithful Stewards of the Mysteries, Superintendents, Devotees of the Secret, and Architects.

In the "*Hierarchiæ*," attributed to St. Dionysius, the Arcopagite, the first Bishop of Athens, the tradition of the sacrament is said to have been divided into three degrees or grades—purification, initiation and accomplishment, and it mentions also, as part of the ceremony, "the bringing to light."

The Apostolic Constitutions, attributed to Clemens, Bishop of Rome, describe the early church and say: "These regulations must on no account be communicated to all sorts of persons, because of the mysteries contained in them." They speak of the Deacon's duty to keep the door, that none uninitiated should enter at the oblation. "Ostiarum, or doorkeepers, kept guard, and gave notice of the time of prayer and church assemblies, and also by private signal, in times of persecution, gave notice to those within, to enable them to avoid danger. The mysteries were open to the "*Fideles*," or faithful, only, and no spectators were allowed at the communion.

Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantino-ple, was born in 354, and died in 417. He says: "I wish to speak openly, but I dare not, on account of those who are not entitled. I shall therefore avail myself of disguised terms, discoursing in a shadowy manner. * * When the holy mysteries are celebrated, we drive away all uninitiated persons, and then close the doors." He mentions the acclamations of the initiated, "which" he says, "I here pass over in silence; for it is forbidden to disclose such things to the profane." Palladius, in his life of Chrysostom, records, as a great outrage, that a tumult having been excited against him by his enemies, they forced their way into the "*penetralia*" where the uninitiated beheld what it was not proper for them to see, and Chrysostom mentions the same circumstance in his epistle to Pope Innocent.

The Latin word "*tessera*" originally meant a square piece of wood or stone, used in making tasseled pavements; afterwards a tablet on which anything was written, and then a cube or die. Its most general use was to designate a piece of metal or wood, square in shape, on which the watchword of an army was inscribed; whence "*tessera*" came to mean the watchword itself. There was also a "*tessera hospitalis*" which was a piece of wood cut into two parts, as a pledge of friendship. Each party