

trine of a future state of reward and punishment. Aristides said the welfare of Greece was secured by the Eleusinian mysteries alone!

But now, such is the fate of human things, those mysteries, venerable as they were in their first institution, did, it must be owned, in course of time degenerate; and those very provisions made by the state to enable the mysteries to obtain the end of their establishment, became the very means of defeating them. For we can assign no surer cause of the horrid abuses and corruptions of the mysteries (besides time, which naturally and fatally depraves and vitiates all things,) than the season in which they were represented and the profound silence in which they were buried. For *night* gave opportunity to wicked men to attempt evil actions, and *secrecy* encouragement to repeat them; and the inviolable nature of that secrecy, which encouraged abuses, kept them from the magistrate's knowledge so long, till it was too late to reform them. In a word, we must own that these mysteries, so powerful in their first institution for the promotion of virtue and knowledge, became in time horribly subservient to the gratification of lust and revenge. Nor will this appear at all strange after what has been said before. A like corruption from the same cause crept even into the church, during the purest ages of it. The primitive Christians in imitation, perhaps, of those pagan rites, or from the same kind of spirit, had a custom of celebrating vigils in the night, which at first were performed with all becoming sanctity; but in a little time they were so overrun with abuses that it was necessary to abolish them.

The first and original mysteries, of which we have any account, were those of Osiris and Isis in Egypt,—whence they were derived to the Greeks, under the presidency of various gods, as the institutor thought most for his purpose. Zoroaster brought them into Persia, Cadmus and Inachus into Greece at large, Orpheus into Thrace, Melampus into Argis, Throphonius into Bœotia, Minos into Crete, Cinyras into Cyprus, and Erechtheus into Athens. And as in Egypt they were to Osiris and Isis, so in Asia they were to Mithras, in Samothrace to the mother of the gods, in Bœotia to Bacchus, in Cyprus to Venus, in Crete to Jupiter, in Athens to Ceres and Proserpine, in Amphissa to Castor and Pollux, in Lemnos to Vulcan, and so to others in other places, the number of which is incredible. The Phœnicians in general were those who brought the Egyptian Mysteries into Europe.

The whole Mosaic religion was an initiation into mysteries, the principal forms and regulations of which were borrowed by Moses from the secrets of the old Egyptians.

The ancient Christians towards the end of the first century were also divided into two orders, similar to the lesser and greater mysteries of the ancients. These orders were distinguished by the names *believers* and *catechumens*. The latter were candidates for baptism, or persons