

erto, then, the mysteries are to be considered as invented not to deter, but to *invite* the curiosity of the people. But, (secondly,) they were kept secret from a necessity of teaching the initiated some things improper to be communicated to all. The learned Varro, in a fragment of his book of Religion, preserved by St. Augustine, tells us that "there were many truths which it was inconvenient for the state to be generally known; and many things which, though false, *it was expedient the people should believe*, and that, therefore, the Greeks shut up their mysteries in the silence of their sacred inclosures."

Now, to reconcile this seeming contradiction, of supposing the mysteries to be instituted to *invite* the people into them, and at the same time to keep them from the people's knowledge, we are to observe that in the Eleusinian rites, as also in others, there were two mysteries, *the greater* and *the less*. The end of *the less* must be referred to what is said of the institutor's intention to invite the people into them, and of *the greater*, to his intentions of keeping some truths from the people's knowledge. Nor is this said without sufficient warrant; antiquity is very express for this distinction. We are told that the lesser mysteries were only a kind of preparatory purification for the greater, and might be easily communicated to all. That four years was the usual time of probation for those greater mysteries, in which as Clemens Alexandrinus expressly informs us, the *secrets were deposited*.

However as it is very certain that both the greater and lesser mysteries were instituted for the benefit of the state, it follows that the doctrines taught in both were equally for the service of society, only with this difference, some, without inconvenience, might be taught promiscuously, others could not. The greater mysteries taught the doctrine of one Supreme God, and that polytheism was an error; admitting at the same time that the sun, moon and stars were minor divinities, under the superintendence of one Supreme. The belief, however, in hero-gods was so engrafted on the minds of the ignorant multitude, that it was feared the open promulgation of a doctrine in opposition to that faith would lead to disturbances in the state, and might produce great evil. This mystery consequently was confided only to a chosen few of the most intelligent, under the sanction of an *oath* and the penalties of the law. The revealing of the secrets of these mysteries was punished with death.

The mysteries being of great service to the state, we shall not be surprised to hear the wisest of the ancients speaking highly in their commendation, and their best law-givers and reformers providing carefully for their support. Plato introduced Socrates speaking after this manner: "In my opinion, those who established the mysteries, whoever they were, were well skilled in human nature." And Tully thought them of great use to society, for preserving and propagating the doc-