

An excerpt from St. Paul and The Mystery Religions by John Franklin Troupe: ALBERT SCHWEITZER lays a very peculiar emphasis upon the eschatology of Paul, which he claims arises out of his conception of union with Christ. In this book, St. Paul and His Interpreters, he points out the contrast between Paul's conception of union with Christ, and the idea in the Mystery Religions, namely, that the Divine essence passes into the soul of the living man, by means of gnosis and the vision of God. He then goes on to interpret Paul's conception in the light of his theory of Consistent Eschatology. The point of interest is the fact that Paul's eschatology is not due to the influence of the Mystery Religions. The Apostle's idea of union with Christ may be said to be a willing identification with the death of Christ, responsive to the love of the cross, accompanied by cessation from sin. Paul certainly had in mind the glorious consummation of the future, but it is equally certain that he presents no fixed program of events for that future. Death, for him, was a passing from the present life into the presence of the living Lord. Life in Christ meant for him, continued personal existence beyond the confines of space and time, in conformity with the life of the glorified Lord. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, Romans vi: 5. Our investigation has resulted in the discovery that there is nothing in Paul which may not be traced to Judaism or the vision on the Damascus road. At the beginning of our investigation it appeared that Paul's close and long continued contact with the Mystery Religions was suggestive of early Christianity being influenced by them, but it now appears that even where there are parallels between Paul and the Mystery Religions, he has used the mystery terminology as a vehicle to convey the true religion to hearers who were well acquainted with that form of speech.

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The present work forms the continuation of my History of the Critical Study of the Life of Jesus, which appeared in under the title Von Reimarus eu Wrede. Title, Paul and his interpreters: a critical history. Author, Albert Schweitzer. Publisher, A. & C. Black, Original from, the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Title, Paul and his interpreters: a critical history. Author, Albert Schweitzer. Translated by, William Montgomery. Publisher, A. and C. Black, Original from.

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