

M. M. MANGASARIAN



**THE BIBLE
UNVEILED**

M. M. Mangasarian

The Bible Unveiled

Including "The Truth About Jesus"

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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



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Preface

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The following work offers in book form the series of studies on the question of the historicity of Jesus, presented from time to time before the Independent Religious Society in Orchestra Hall. No effort has been made to change the manner of the spoken, into the more regular form of the written, word.

M. M. MANGASARIAN.



Picture in Herculaneum, of the Days of Pompeii, Showing Cupid
Crowned with a Cross.

PART I.

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A Parable

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I am today twenty-five hundred years old. I have been dead for nearly as many years. My place of birth was Athens; my grave was not far from those of Xenophon and Plato, within view of the white glory of Athens and the shimmering waters of the Aegean sea.

After sleeping in my grave for many centuries I awoke suddenly—I cannot tell how nor why—and was transported by a force beyond my control to this new day and this new city. I arrived here at daybreak, when the sky was still dull and drowsy. As I approached the city I heard bells ringing, and a little later I found the streets astir with throngs of well dressed people in family groups wending their way hither and thither. Evidently they were not going to work, for they were accompanied by their children in their best clothes, and a pleasant expression was upon their faces.

"This must be a day of festival and worship, devoted to one of their gods," I murmured to myself.

Looking about me I saw a gentleman in a neat black dress, smiling, and his hand extended to me with great cordiality. He must have realized I was a stranger and wished to tender his hospitality to me. I accepted it gratefully. I clasped his hand. He pressed mine. We gazed for a moment silently into each other's eyes. He understood

my bewilderment amid my novel surroundings, and offered to enlighten me. He explained to me the ringing of the bells and the meaning of the holiday crowds moving in the streets. It was Sunday—Sunday before Christmas, and the people were going to "the House of God."

"Of course you are going there, too," I said to my friendly guide.

"Yes," he answered, "I conduct the worship. I am a priest."

"A priest of Apollo?" I interrogated.

"No, no," he replied, raising his hand to command silence, "Apollo is not a god; he was only an idol."

"An idol?" I whispered, taken by surprise.

"I perceive you are a Greek," he said to me, "and the Greeks," he continued, "notwithstanding their distinguished accomplishments, were an idolatrous people. They worshipped gods that did not exist. They built temples to divinities which were merely empty names—empty names," he repeated. "Apollo and Athene—and the entire Olympian lot were no more than inventions of the fancy."

"But the Greeks loved their gods," I protested, my heart clamoring in my breast.

"They were not gods, they were idols, and the difference between a god and an idol is this: an idol is a thing; God is a living being. When you cannot prove the existence of your god, when you have never seen him, nor heard his voice, nor touched him—when you have nothing provable about him, he is an idol. Have you seen Apollo? Have you heard him? Have you touched him?"

"No," I said, in a low voice.

"Do you know of any one who has?"

I had to admit that I did not.

"He was an idol, then, and not a god."

"But many of us Greeks," I said, "have felt Apollo in our hearts and have been inspired by him."

"You imagine you have," returned my guide. "If he were really divine he would be living to this day."

"Is he, then, dead?" I asked.

"He never lived; and for the last two thousand years or more his temple has been a heap of ruins."

I wept to hear that Apollo, the god of light and music, was no more—that his fair temple had fallen into ruins and the fire upon his altar had been extinguished; then, wiping a tear from my eyes, I said, "Oh, but our gods were fair and beautiful; our religion was rich and picturesque. It made the Greeks a nation of poets, orators, artists, warriors, thinkers. It made Athens a city of light; it created the beautiful, the true, the good—yes, our religion was divine."

"It had only one fault," interrupted my guide.

"What was that?" I inquired, without knowing what his answer would be.

"It was not true."

"But I still believe in Apollo," I exclaimed; "he is not dead, I know he is alive."

"Prove it," he said to me; then, pausing for a moment, "if you produce him," he said, "we shall all fall down and worship him. Produce Apollo and he shall be our god."

"Produce him!" I whispered to myself. "What blasphemy!" Then, taking heart, I told my guide how more than once I had felt Apollo's radiant presence in my heart, and told him

of the immortal lines of Homer concerning the divine Apollo. "Do you doubt Homer?" I said to him; "Homer, the inspired bard? Homer, whose inkwell was as big as the sea; whose imperishable page was Time? Homer, whose every word was a drop of light?" Then I proceeded to quote from Homer's *Iliad*, the Greek Bible, worshipped by all the Hellenes as the rarest Manuscript between heaven and earth. I quoted his description of Apollo, than whose lyre nothing is more musical, than whose speech even honey is not sweeter. I recited how his mother went from town to town to select a worthy place to give birth to the young god, son of Zeus, the Supreme Being, and how he was born and cradled amid the ministrations of all the goddesses, who bathed him in the running stream and fed him with nectar and ambrosia from Olympus. Then I recited the lines which picture Apollo bursting his bands, leaping forth from his cradle, and spreading his wings like a swan, soaring sunward, declaring that he had come to announce to mortals the will of God. "Is it possible," I asked, "that all this is pure fabrication, a fantasy of the brain, as unsubstantial as the air? No, no, Apollo is not an idol. He is a god, and the son of a god. The whole Greek world will bear me witness that I am telling the truth." Then I looked at my guide to see what impression this outburst of sincere enthusiasm had produced upon him, and I saw a cold smile upon his lips that cut me to the heart. It seemed as if he wished to say to me, "You poor deluded pagan! You are not intelligent enough to know that Homer was only a mortal after all, and that he was writing a play in which he manufactured the gods of whom he sang—that these gods existed only in his

imagination, and that today they are as dead as is their inventor—the poet."

By this time we stood at the entrance of a large edifice which my guide said was "the House of God." As we walked in I saw innumerable little lights blinking and winking all over the spacious interior. There were, besides, pictures, altars and images all around me. The air was heavy with incense; a number of men in gorgeous vestments were passing to and fro, bowing and kneeling before the various lights and images. The audience was upon its knees enveloped in silence—a silence so solemn that it awed me. Observing my anxiety to understand the meaning of all this, my guide took me aside and in a whisper told me that the people were celebrating the anniversary of the birthday of their beautiful Savior—Jesus, the Son of God.

"So was Apollo the son of God," I replied, thinking perhaps that after all we might find ourselves in agreement with one another.

"Forget Apollo," he said, with a suggestion of severity in his voice. "There is no such person. He was only an idol. If you were to search for Apollo in all the universe you would never find any one answering to his name or description. Jesus," he resumed, "is the Son of God. He came to our earth and was born of a virgin."

Again I was tempted to tell my guide that that was how Apollo became incarnate; but I restrained myself.

"Then Jesus grew up to be a man," continued my guide, "performing unheard-of wonders, such as treading the seas, giving sight, hearing and speech to the blind, the deaf and the dumb, converting water into wine, feeding the

multitudes miraculously, predicting coming events and resurrecting the dead."

"Of course, of your gods, too," he added, "it is claimed that they performed miracles, and of your oracles that they foretold the future, but there is this difference—the things related of your gods are a fiction, the things told of Jesus are a fact, and the difference between Paganism and Christianity is the difference between fiction and fact."

Just then I heard a wave of murmur, like the rustling of leaves in a forest, sweep over the bowed audience. I turned about and unconsciously, my Greek curiosity impelling me, I pushed forward toward where the greater candle lights were blazing. I felt that perhaps the commotion in the house was the announcement that the God Jesus was about to make his appearance, and I wanted to see him. I wanted to touch him, or, if the crowd were too large to allow me that privilege, I wanted, at least, to hear his voice. I, who had never seen a god, never touched one, never heard one speak, I who had believed in Apollo without ever having known anything provable about him, I wanted to see the real God, Jesus.

But my guide placed his hand quickly upon my shoulder, and held me back.

"I want to see Jesus," I hastened, turning toward him. I said this reverently and in good faith. "Will he not be here this morning? Will he not speak to his worshippers?" I asked again. "Will he not permit them to touch him, to caress his hand, to clasp his divine feet, to inhale the ambrosial fragrance of his breath, to bask in the golden light of his

eyes, to hear the music of his immaculate accents? Let me, too, see Jesus," I pleaded.

"You cannot see him," answered my guide, with a trace of embarrassment in his voice. "He does not show himself any more."

I was too much surprised at this to make any immediate reply.

"For the last two thousand years," my guide continued, "it has not pleased Jesus to show himself to any one; neither has he been heard from for the same number of years."

"For two thousand years no one has either seen or heard Jesus?" I asked, my eyes filled with wonder and my voice quivering with excitement.

"No," he answered.

"Would not that, then," I ventured to ask, impatiently, "make Jesus as much of an idol as Apollo? And are not these people on their knees before a god of whose existence they are as much in the dark as were the Greeks of fair Apollo, and of whose past they have only rumors such as Homer reports of our Olympian gods—as idolatrous as the Athenians? What would you say," I asked my guide, "if I were to demand that you should produce Jesus and prove him to my eyes and ears as you have asked me to produce and prove Apollo? What is the difference between a ceremony performed in honor of Apollo and one performed in honor of Jesus, since it is as impossible to give oracular demonstration of the existence of the one as of the other? If Jesus is alive and a god, and Apollo is an idol and dead, what is the evidence, since the one is as invisible, as inaccessible, and as unproducibile as the other? And, if faith

that Jesus is a god proves him a god, why will not faith in Apollo make him a god? But if worshipping Jesus, whom for the best part of the last two thousand years no man has seen, heard or touched; if building temples to him, burning incense upon his altars, bowing at his shrine and calling him 'God,' is not idolatry, neither is it idolatry to kindle fire upon the luminous altars of the Greek Apollo,—God of the dawn, master of the enchanted lyre—he with the bow and arrow tipped with fire! I am not denying," I said, "that Jesus ever lived. He may have been alive two thousand years ago, but if he has not been heard from since, if the same thing that happened to the people living at the time he lived has happened to him, namely—if he is dead, then you are worshipping the dead, which fact stamps your religion as idolatrous."

And, then, remembering what he had said to me about the Greek mythology being beautiful but not true, I said to him: "Your temples are indeed gorgeous and costly; your music is grand; your altars are superb; your litany is exquisite; your chants are melting; your incense, and bells and flowers, your gold and silver vessels are all in rare taste, and I dare say your dogmas are subtle and your preachers eloquent, but your religion has one fault—*it is not true.*"



The Lamb in the Holy Sepulchre, Mosaic of the IV Century,
Sarcophagus of Luc de Bearn. Showing the Lamb on the Cross.

In Confidence

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I shall speak in a straightforward way, and shall say today what perhaps I should say tomorrow, or ten years from now, —but shall say it today, because I cannot keep it back, because I have nothing better to say than the truth, or what I hold to be the truth. But why seek truths that are not pleasant? We cannot help it. No man can suppress the truth. Truth finds a crack or crevice to crop out of; it bobs up to the surface and all the volume and weight of waters can not keep it down. Truth prevails! Life, death, truth—behold, these three no power can keep back. And since we are doomed to know the truth, let us cultivate a love for it. It is of no avail to cry over lost illusions, to long for vanished dreams, or to call to the departing gods to come back. It may be pleasant to play with toys and dolls all our life, but evidently we are not meant to remain children always. The time comes when we must put away childish things and obey the summons of truth, stern and high. A people who fear the truth can never be a free people. If what I will say is the truth, do you know of any good reason why I should not say it? And if for prudential reasons I should sometimes hold back the truth, how would you know *when* I am telling what I believe to be the truth, and when I am holding it back for reasons of policy?

The truth, however unwelcome, is not injurious; it is error which raises false hopes, which destroys, degrades and pollutes, and which, sooner or later, must be abandoned. Was it not Spencer, whom Darwin called "our great

philosopher," who said, "Repulsive as is its aspect, the hard fact which dissipates a cherished illusion is presently found to contain the germ of a more salutary belief?" Spain is decaying today because her teachers, for policy's sake, are withholding the disagreeable truth from the people. Holy water and sainted bones can give a nation illusions and dreams, but never,—strength.

A difficult subject is in the nature of a challenge to the mind. One difficult task attempted is worth a thousand commonplace efforts completed. The majority of people avoid the difficult and fear danger. But he who would progress must even court danger. Political and religious liberty were discovered through peril and struggle. The world owes its emancipation to human daring. Had Columbus feared danger, America might have slept for another thousand years.

I have a difficult subject in hand. It is also a delicate one. But I am determined not only to know, if it is possible, the whole truth about Jesus, but also to communicate that truth to others. Some people can keep their minds shut. I cannot; I must share my intellectual life with the world. If I lived a thousand years ago, I might have collapsed at the sight of the burning stake, but I feel sure I would have deserved the stake.

People say to me, sometimes, "Why do you not confine yourself to moral and religious exhortation, such as, 'Be kind, do good, love one another, etc.?' " But there is more of a moral tonic in the open and candid discussion of a subject like the one in hand, than in a multitude of platitudes. We

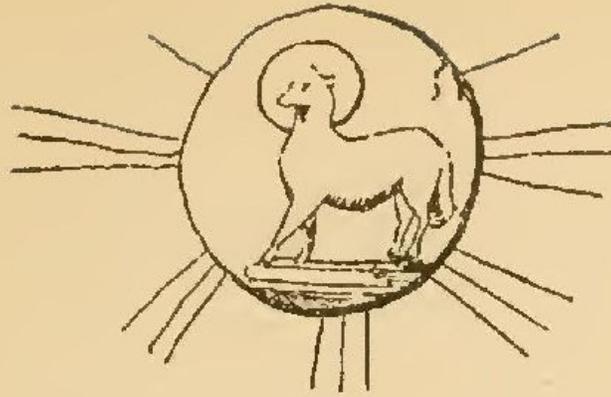
feel our moral fiber stiffen into force and purpose under the inspiration of a peril dared for the advancement of truth.

"Tell us what you believe," is one of the requests frequently addressed to me. I never deliver a lecture in which I do not, either directly or indirectly, give full and free expression to my faith in everything that is worthy of faith. If I do not believe in dogma, it is because I believe in freedom. If I do not believe in one inspired book, it is because I believe that all truth and only truth is inspired. If I do not ask the gods to help us, it is because I believe in human help, so much more real than supernatural help. If I do not believe in standing still, it is because I believe in progress. If I am not attracted by the vision of a distant heaven, it is because I believe in human happiness, now and here. If I do not say "Lord, Lord!" to Jesus, it is because I bow my head to a greater Power than Jesus, to a more efficient Savior than he has ever been—Science!

"Oh, he tears down, but does not build up," is another criticism about my work. It is not true. No preacher or priest is more constructive. To build up their churches and maintain their creeds the priests pulled down and destroyed the magnificent civilization of Greece and Rome, plunging Europe into the dark and sterile ages which lasted over a thousand years. When Galileo waved his hands for joy because he believed he had enriched humanity with a new truth and extended the sphere of knowledge, what did the church do to him? It conspired to destroy him. It shut him up in a dungeon! Clapping truth into jail; gagging the mouth of the student—is that building up or tearing down? When Bruno lighted a new torch to increase the light of the world,

what was his reward? The stake! During all the ages that the church had the power to police the world, every time a thinker raised his head he was clubbed to death. Do you think it is kind of us—does it square with our sense of justice to call the priest constructive, and the scientists and philosophers who have helped people to their feet—helped them to self-government in politics, and to self-help in life,—destructive? Count your rights—political, religious, social, intellectual—and tell me which of them was conquered for you by the priest.

"He is irreverent," is still another hasty criticism I have heard advanced against the rationalist. I wish to tell you something. But first let us be impersonal. The epithets "irreverent," "blasphemer," "atheist," and "infidel," are flung at a man, not from pity, but from envy. Not having the courage or the industry of our neighbor who works like a busy bee in the world of men and books, searching with the sweat of his brow for the real bread of life, wetting the open page before him with his tears, pushing into the "wee" hours of the night his quest, animated by the fairest of all loves, "the love of truth",—we ease our own indolent conscience by calling him names. We pretend that it is not because we are too lazy or too selfish to work as hard or think as freely as he does, but because we do not want to be as irreverent as he is that we keep the windows of our minds shut. To excuse our own mediocrity we call the man who tries to get out of the rut a "blasphemer." And so we ask the world to praise our indifference as a great virtue, and to denounce the conscientious toil and thought of another, as "blasphemy."



The Lamb Standing Upon the Gospels.
VIII Century.

Is Jesus a Myth?

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What is a myth? A myth is a fanciful explanation of a given phenomenon. Observing the sun, the moon, and the stars overhead, the primitive man wished to account for them. This was natural. The mind craves for knowledge. The child asks questions because of an inborn desire to know. Man feels ill at ease with a sense of a mental vacuum, until his questions are answered. Before the days of science, a fanciful answer was all that could be given to man's questions about the physical world. The primitive man guessed where knowledge failed him—what else could he do? A myth, then, is a guess, a story, a speculation, or a fanciful explanation of a phenomenon, in the absence of accurate information.

Many are the myths about the heavenly bodies, which, while we call them myths, because we know better, were to the ancients truths. The Sun and Moon were once brother and sister, thought the child-man; but there arose a dispute between them; the woman ran away, and the man ran after her, until they came to the end of the earth where land and sky met. The woman jumped into the sky, and the man after her, where they kept chasing each other forever, as Sun and Moon. Now and then they came close enough to snap at each other. That was their explanation of an eclipse. (Childhood of the World.—Edward Clodd.) With this mythus, the primitive man was satisfied, until his developing intelligence realized its inadequacy. Science was born of that realization.

During the middle ages it was believed by Europeans that in certain parts of the world, in India, for instance, there were people who had only one eye in the middle of their foreheads, and were more like monsters than humans. This was imaginary knowledge, which travel and research have corrected. The myth of a one-eyed people living in India has been replaced by accurate information concerning the Hindoos. Likewise, before the science of ancient languages was perfected—before archaeology had dug up buried cities and deciphered the hieroglyphics on the monuments of antiquity, most of our knowledge concerning the earlier ages was mythical, that is to say, it was knowledge not based on investigation, but made to order. Just as the theologians still speculate about the other world, primitive man speculated about this world. Even we moderns, not very long ago, believed, for instance, that the land of Egypt was visited by ten fantastic plagues; that in one bloody night every first born in the land was slain; that the angel of a tribal-god dipped his hand in blood and printed a red mark upon the doors of the houses of the Jews to protect them from harm; that Pharaoh and his armies were drowned in the Red Sea; that the children of Israel wandered for forty years around Mount Sinai; and so forth, and so forth. But now that we can read the inscriptions on the stone pages dug out of ancient ruins; now that we can compel a buried world to reveal its secret and to tell us its story, we do not have to go on making myths about the ancients. Myths die when history is born.

It will be seen from these examples that there is no harm in myth-making if the myth is called a myth. It is when we

use our fanciful knowledge to deny or to shut out real and scientific knowledge that the myth becomes a stumbling block. And this is precisely the use to which myths have been put. The king with his sword and the priest with his curses, have supported the myth against science. When a man *pretends* to believe that the *Santa Claus* of his childhood is real, and tries to compel also others to play a part, he becomes positively immoral. There is no harm in believing in *Santa Claus* as a myth, but there is in pretending that he is real, because such an attitude of mind makes a mere trifle of truth.

Is Jesus a myth? There is in man a faculty for fiction. Before history was born, there was myth; before men could think, they dreamed. It was with the human race in its infancy as it is with the child. The child's imagination is more active than its reason. It is easier for it to fancy even than to see. It thinks less than it guesses. This wild flight of fancy is checked only by experience. It is reflection which introduces a bit into the mouth of imagination, curbing its pace and subduing its restless spirit. It is, then, as we grow older, and, if I may use the word, riper, that we learn to distinguish between fact and fiction, between history and myth.

In childhood we need playthings, and the more fantastic and *bizarre* they are, the better we are pleased with them. We dream, for instance, of castles in the air—gorgeous and clothed with the azure hue of the skies. We fill the space about and over us with spirits, fairies, gods, and other invisible and airy beings. We covet the rainbow. We reach

out for the moon. Our feet do not really begin to touch the firm ground until we have reached the years of discretion.

I know there are those who wish they could always remain children,—living in dreamland. But even if this were desirable, it is not possible. Evolution is our destiny; of what use is it, then, to take up arms against destiny?

Let it be borne in mind that all the religions of the world were born in the childhood of the race.

Science was not born until man had matured. There is in this thought a world of meaning.

Children make religions.

Grown up people create science.

The cradle is the womb of all the fairies and faiths of mankind.

The school is the birthplace of science.

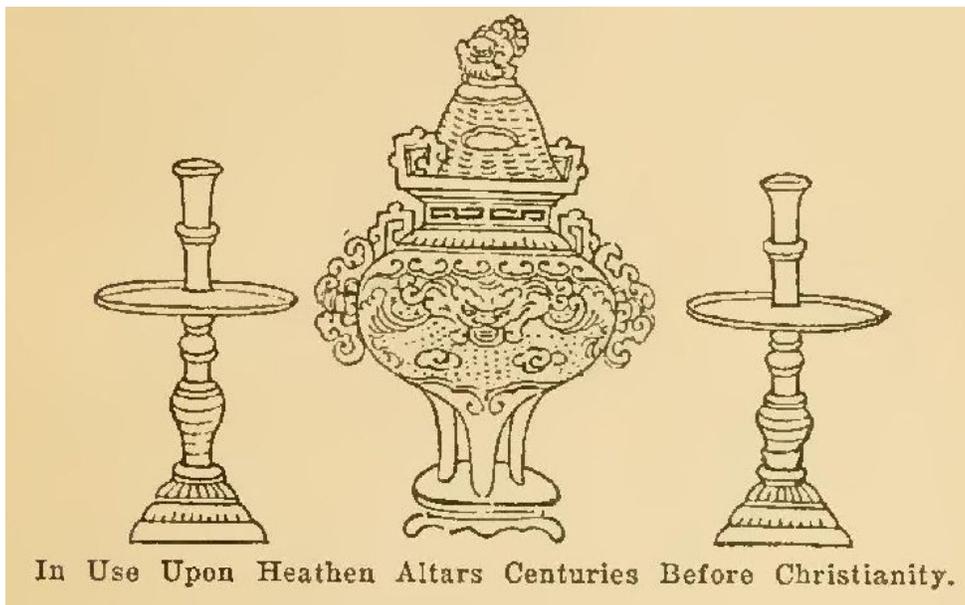
Religion is the science of the child.

Science is the religion of the matured man.

In the discussion of this subject, I appeal to the mature, not to the child mind. I appeal to those who have cultivated a taste for truth—who are not easily scared, but who can "screw their courage to the sticking point" and follow to the end truth's leading. The multitude is ever joined to its idols; let them alone. I speak to the discerning few.

There is an important difference between a lecturer and an ordained preacher. The latter can command a hearing in the name of God, or in the name of the Bible. He does not have to satisfy his hearers about the reasonableness of what he preaches. He is God's mouthpiece, and no one may

disagree with him. He can also invoke the authority of the church and of the Christian world to enforce acceptance of his teaching. The only way I may command your respect is to be reasonable. You will not listen to me for God's sake, nor for the Bible's sake, nor yet for the love of heaven, or the fear of hell. My only protection is to be rational—to be truthful. In other words, the preacher can afford to ignore common sense in the name of Revelation. But if I depart from it in the least, or am caught once playing fast and loose with the facts, I will irretrievably lose my standing.



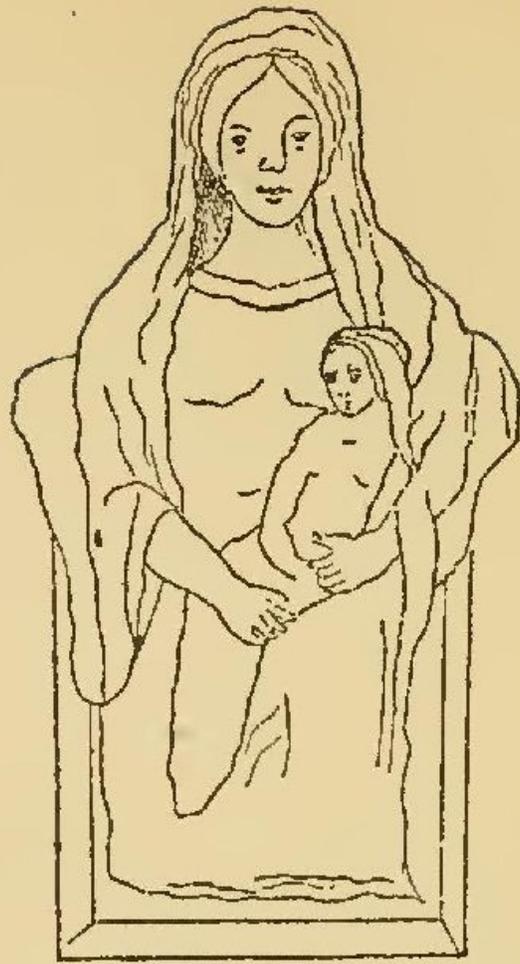
Our answer to the question, Is Jesus a Myth? must depend more or less upon original research, as there is very little written on the subject. The majority of writers assume that a person answering to the description of Jesus lived some two thousand years ago. Even the few who entertain doubts on the subject, seem to hold that while there is a large mythical element in the Jesus story, nevertheless there is a historical nucleus round which has clustered the elaborate legend of the Christ. In all probability, they argue,

there was a man called Jesus, who said many helpful things, and led an exemplary life, and all the miracles and wonders represent the accretions of fond and pious ages.

Let us place ourselves entirely in the hands of the evidence. As far as possible, let us be passive, showing no predisposition one way or another. We can afford to be independent. If the evidence proves the historicity of Jesus, well and good; if the evidence is not sufficient to prove it, there is no reason why we should fear to say so; besides, it is our duty to inform ourselves on this question. As intelligent beings we desire to know whether this Jesus, whose worship is not only costing the world millions of the people's money, but which is also drawing to his service the time, the energies, the affection, the devotion, and the labor of humanity,—is a myth, or a reality. We believe that all religious persecutions, all sectarian wars, hatreds and intolerance, which still cramp and embitter our humanity, would be replaced by love and brotherhood, if the sects could be made to see that the God-Jesus they are quarreling over is a myth, a shadow to which credulity alone gives substance. Like people who have been fighting in the dark, fearing some danger, the sects, once relieved of the thralldom of a tradition which has been handed down to them by a childish age and country, will turn around and embrace one another. In every sense, the subject is an all-absorbing one. It goes to the root of things; it touches the vital parts, and it means life or death to the Christian religion.



Ascension of Jesus, Ninth Century.



Juno Nursing Her Divine Child,
Mars.

The Problem Stated

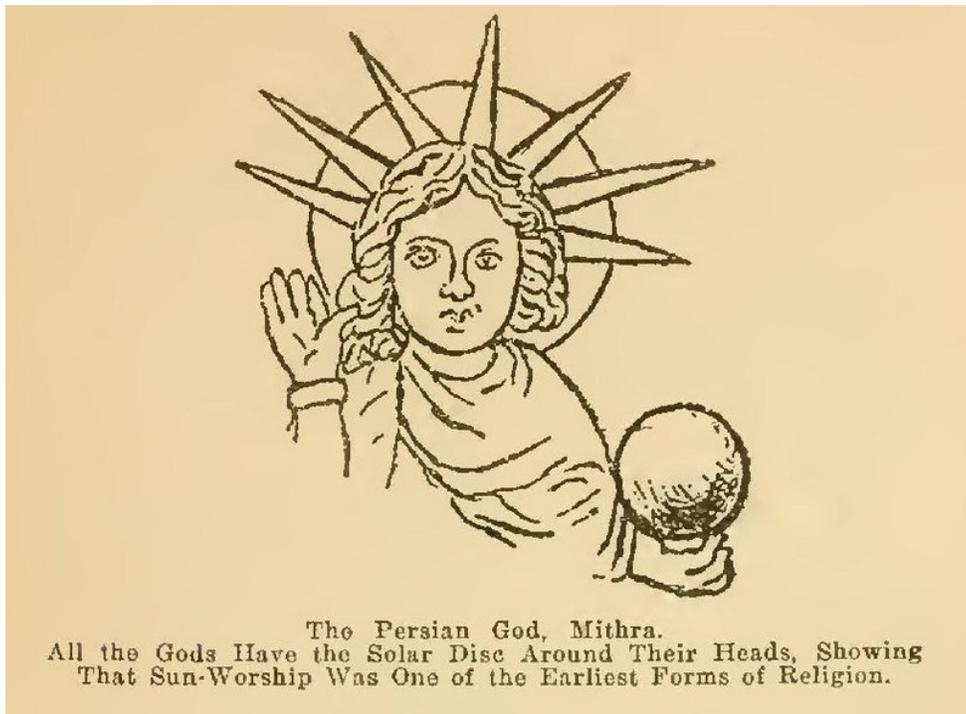
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Let me now give an idea of the method I propose to follow in the study of this subject. Let us suppose that a student living in the year 3000 desired to make sure that such a man as Abraham Lincoln really lived and did the things attributed to him. How would he go about it?

A man must have a birthplace and a birthday. All the records agree as to where and when Lincoln was born. This is not enough to prove his historicity, but it is an important link in the chain.

Neither the place nor the time of Jesus' birth is known. There has never been any unanimity about this matter. There has been considerable confusion and contradiction about it. It cannot be proved that the twenty-fifth of December is his birthday. A number of other dates were observed by the Christian church at various times as the birthday of Jesus. The Gospels give no date, and appear to be quite uncertain—really ignorant about it. When it is remembered that the Gospels purport to have been written by Jesus' intimate companions, and during the lifetime of his brothers and mother, their silence on this matter becomes significant. The selection of the twenty-fifth of December as his birthday is not only an arbitrary one, but that date, having been from time immemorial dedicated to the Sun, the inference is that the Son of God and the Sun of heaven enjoying the same birthday, were at one time identical beings. The fact that Jesus' death was accompanied with the darkening of the Sun, and that the date of his resurrection is

also associated with the position of the Sun at the time of the vernal equinox, is a further intimation that we have in the story of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, an ancient and nearly universal Sun-myth, instead of verifiable historical events. The story of Jesus for three days in the heart of the earth; of Jonah, three days in the belly of a fish; of Hercules, three days in the belly of a whale, and of Little Red Riding Hood, sleeping in the belly of a great black wolf, represent the attempt of primitive man to explain the phenomenon of Day and Night. The Sun is swallowed by a dragon, a wolf, or a whale, which plunges the world into darkness; but the dragon is killed, and the Sun rises triumphant to make another Day. This ancient Sun myth is the starting point of nearly all miraculous religions, from the days of Egypt to the twentieth century.



The story which Mathew relates about a remarkable star, which sailing in the air pointed out to some unnamed