

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN OF TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

It is not very hard to demonstrate that all that is taught by the Church as an essential part of Christianity did not come from Jesus. All the dogmas laid down as "necessary to salvation" were tacked on to, or brought into the religion by, monks and priests about three hundred years after Christ's time. These dogmas were not *invented* by them, but were the ready-to-hand ready-made essentials of Paganism, the various ramifications of which cult spread from Persia to Great Britain.

There has always been a tendency to shrink from a religion of action; man, feeling his weakness, has ever hankered after some scheme by means of which he could shift his responsibility on to the shoulders of another—something he could do, *without any lasting or continued effort*, to propitiate the deity he feared might have become offended. Such an end could be brought about by one sweep of a flint knife: plenty of blood (of a substitute, a willing or unwilling victim) was wanted for the god, as described on pp. 16 and 17, of this brochure and especially in "The

Sacrificial Vista" there quoted. This way of propitiating the angry god was of barbaric origin, and in the course of time the victim began to be looked upon as the dying deity—God Himself coming on earth to suffer for man's sins; and it is thus easy to see that the idea of reconciliation by these barbarous methods became the characteristic feature of every creed that was professed and practised in countries round about the birthplace of Jesus at the time of his advent. One of the popular cults was Mithraism, which came from Persia, where it seems to have been flourishing for about six hundred years, the cult reaching Rome about 70 B.C. It spread through the Roman Empire and extended to Great Britain, where remains of Mithraic monuments have been discovered at York, Chester, and other places. Mithra was believed to be a great *Mediator between God and Man*. *His birth took place in a cave on December 25th. He was born of a virgin. He travelled far and wide; he had twelve disciples; he died in the service of humanity. He was buried, but rose again from the tomb. His resurrection was celebrated with great rejoicing.*¹ His great festivals were the Winter Solstice and the Vernal Equinox—Christmas and Easter. He was called *Saviour*, and sometimes figured as a *lamb*. People were initiated into his cult through *baptism*. *Sacramental feasts* were held in his remembrance.

Again, I am not denouncing Christianity, but making an accurate statement of facts, when I say that at the

¹ Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, p. 338.

appearance of Jesus on earth there were temples without end dedicated to gods like Apollo or Dionysus among the Greeks, Hercules among the Romans, Mithra among the Persians, Adonis and Attis in Syria and Phrygia ; Osiris, Isis and Horus in Egypt ; Bēl and Astarte among the Babylonians and Carthaginians, and so on.

All these deities were sun-gods, and it was believed that they were born in a cave or underground chamber, of a virgin mother, on or about Christmas Day. They led a life of toil for the good of mankind and were called by such names as "Light-Bringer," "Healer," "Mediator," "Saviour," and "Deliverer." They were vanquished by the Powers of Darkness and descended into Hell or the Underworld. They rose again from the dead and became the lights to guide mankind to the Heavenly World. They founded Communions of Saints, and Churches into which disciples were received by baptism. They were commemorated by Eucharistic Meals.

I may perhaps be permitted here to give a short account of certain of these various "sons of God."

Adonis.—The Syrian god, born of a virgin, was killed and rose again in the spring. Every year *the maidens wept for Adonis* (Ezekiel viii. 14) *and then rejoiced over his resurrection.* Attis, the Phrygian god, was also born of a virgin named Nana. He was bled to death at the foot of a pine-tree. *His blood renewed the fertility of the earth and thus brought a new life to humanity.* He also rose from the dead. . . . In

celebrating his death and resurrection, his image was fastened to a pine-tree on March 24th, and the day was called the "Day of blood," since on that day the deity was bled to death. The image was then laid in a tomb with wailing and mourning, but the coming night changed sorrow to joy. The tomb was *found to be empty on the next day, when the festival of the resurrection was celebrated*. These mysteries seem to have included a sacramental meal and a baptism of blood.¹

Bacchus, sometimes called Dionysus, was born of a virgin named Demeter on December 25th. Her other name was Semele. Evil having spread over the world, the God of Gods was begged to save mankind. Jupiter hearkened to the prayer, and declared that *his son would redeem the world from its misery*. He promised a *Liberator* to the earth, and Bacchus came as a Saviour. He was called *the only begotten son*. "It is I," so says Bacchus to mankind, "who guide you; it is I who protect you, and who save you; I who am Alpha and Omega."² He was also a great traveller, and brought the gift of wine to mankind. It will remind the reader of the miracle of Jesus when he converted water into wine at the marriage feast.

"Suffering was common to all the sons of Jove," as Justin Martyr says, and for this reason they were called "The slain ones," "Saviours" and "Redeemers." Bacchus was also slain to redeem humanity,

¹ Dr. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, iv. p. 229.

² See Beausobre, also Higgins, *Anaclypsis*, vol. i. p. 322.

and was therefore called "the Slain one," "the Sin-bearer," "the Redeemer." His death, followed by resurrection, was celebrated with all kinds of wild festivities and there was celebrated a representation of the passion of Bacchus, dead, descended into hell and re-arisen.

Quetzalcohuatl, the Mexican Saviour, was born of a virgin, Chimalman, who had received the message informing her that she was to become the mother of a son without any connection with man, but through a heavenly messenger. Soon after the ambassador left she conceived and bore a son Quetzalcohuatl—a word that means "our beloved Son." This offspring of heavenly spirit connection fasted forty days and was tempted by the devil. He was also crucified, at which time the sun was darkened and withheld its light. His second coming was so eagerly looked for that when Cortez appeared the Mexicans greeted him as the returning God.¹

There are also many similar stories of Horis, Osiris, Apollo, Attis, and Bēl. Thus the passion story of the Lord of Christianity was almost identical with many previous stories of similar nature. The passion play of Bēl, the Babylonian Sun-God, was in existence centuries before the birth of Jesus. It was a mystery play acted every year in the beginning of spring. The main features of the play have recently been deciphered from some tablets discovered from Babylonian ruins, and these tablets disclose very remarkable

¹ Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. i. p. 60.

facts which must be perturbing to thousands of honest minds in Christendom. The story of Bēl and the story of Jesus are one and the same, and *this not only deprives the evangelical records of the claims to be genuine but it convicts them of complete plagiarism.* The following ¹, taken from the January 1922 issue of the *Quest*, which describes the tablets belonging to the cuneiform documents which were discovered by certain German excavators in the years 1903 and 1904 at Kalah-Shargat, the site of the ancient city of Assour. They belonged to the library of Assour, formed somewhere about the ninth century.

THE BABYLONIAN PASSION
PLAY.

Bēl is taken prisoner.

Bēl is tried in the House on the Mount (the Hall of Justice).

Bēl is smitten (wounded).

Bēl is led away to the Mount.

Together with Bēl a malefactor is led away and put to death. Another, who is also charged as a malefactor, is let go, thus not taken away with Bēl.

After Bēl had gone to the Mount, the city breaks out

THE CHRISTIAN PASSION
STORY.

Jesus is taken prisoner.

Jesus is tried in the House of the High Priest and the Hall of Pilate.

Jesus is scourged.

Jesus is led away to crucifixion on Golgotha.

Together with Jesus, two malefactors are led away and put to death. Another (Barabbas) is released to the people, and thus not taken away with Jesus.

At the death of Jesus, the veil in the temple is rent

¹ *The Sources of Christianity*, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din.

into tumult, and fighting takes place in it.

Bēl's clothes are carried away.

A woman wipes away the heart's blood of Bēl flowing from a drawn-out weapon (? spear).

Bēl goes down into the Mount away from sun and light, disappears from life, and is held fast in the Mount as in a prison.

Guards watch Bēl imprisoned in the stronghold of the Mount.

A goddess sits with Bēl; she comes to tend him.

They seek for Bēl where he is held fast. In particular a weeping woman seeks for him at the "Gate of Burial." When he is being carried away the same lamented: "O, my brother! O, my brother!"

(Synopt.), the earth quakes, the rocks are rent asunder, the graves are opened, and the dead come forth into the holy city (Matt.).

Jesus' robe is divided among the soldiers (Synopt., John, cp. Ps. xxii. 18).

The lance-thrust in Jesus' side and outflow of water and blood (John). Mary Magdalene and two other women busy themselves with the (washing, and) embalming of the body (Mark, Luke).

Jesus, in the grave, in the rock tomb (Synopt.), goes down into the realm of the dead (1 Pet. iii. 19, Matt. xii. 40, Acts ii. 24, Rom. x. 17, "descent into hell" dogma).

Guards are set over the tomb of Jesus (Matt.).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sit before the tomb (Matt., Mark).

Women, in particular Mary Magdalene, came to the tomb to seek Jesus where he is behind the door of the tomb. Mary stands weeping before the empty tomb because they have taken her Lord away (John).

Bēl is again brought back to life (as the sun of spring) ; he comes again out of the Mount.

Jesus' restoration to life, his rising from the grave (on a Sunday morning).

His chief feast, the Babylonian New Year's festival in March, at the time of the spring equinox, is celebrated also as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. the creation hymn "Once when on high" as the New Year's festival hymn).

His festival, approximately at the spring equinox, is also celebrated as his triumph over the powers of darkness (cp. e.g. Col. ii. 15).

From the above it will be seen that the passion story of the Bible is simply a re-casting of the story of Bēl. All these facts were not brought to light by those who may be dubbed enemies of Christianity, but have been admitted by many who were accepted leaders of Christianity both in the olden days and at the present time.

It is interesting to note the observations made by some of the Early Fathers on this subject. The following is from Tertullian :—

"The devil, whose business is to prevent the truth, mimics the exact circumstances of the Divine Sacraments in the Mysteries of Idols. He himself *baptizes some*, that is to say his believers and followers ; he promises *forgiveness of sins from the sacred fount*, and *thereby initiates them* into the religion of Mithra. Thus he marks the foreheads of his own soldiers, thus he celebrates the *oblation of bread* ; he brings in the symbol of *resurrection*, and wins the crown with the

sword. He limits his chief priest to a single marriage, he even has his virgins and ascetics."

Justin Martyr says :—

"The apostles, in the commentaries written by themselves which we call Gospels, have delivered down to us how that Jesus thus commanded them: 'He having taken bread, after that he had given thanks, said: "Do this in commemoration of me; this is my body"; also having taken the cup and returned thanks, He said, "This is my blood," and delivered it unto them alone'; which things the evil spirit has taught to be done out of memory in the mysteries and ministrations of Mithra. . . . For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn." ¹

Cortez, the explorer of Mexico, also complained that the devil had positively taught to the Mexicans the same things which God taught to the Christians.

St. Jerome admits that Mithra and Baal, or Bēl, were the same, and called sons of the Lord. He says: "The Sun whom the heathen worship under the names of Lord Sun (Baal Samus) and Son of the Lord (Bor Belus)."

BIRTH₂₂ DATE OF JESUS.

In his *Life of Christ* Dean Farrar has remarked that there is no satisfactory proof by which the 25th of

¹ Justin Martyr, *Apol.* II.

December can be decided upon as the actual date of Christ's birth. The Bible is silent on the subject, though it makes mention of the shepherds being that night with their flocks in the fields of Bethlehem.¹ This makes it difficult to accept December 25th as the real date of the Nativity, since December being the height of the rainy season in Judea, it is unlikely that shepherds or their flocks would have been out by night in the fields of Bethlehem.

I am told that the Feast of the Nativity was originally held on January 6th (the Epiphany), but in A.D. 353-4 Pope Liberius altered it to December 25th, but there seems to be no evidence of a Feast of the Nativity taking place at all before the fourth century A.D. It was not until A.D. 534 that Christmas Day and Epiphany were reckoned by the Law Courts as *Dies Non*.²

The Greek Church observes Christmas on January 7th. On or about the year 530 a Scythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, an abbot and astronomer of Rome, was commissioned to fix the date of the birth of Jesus.³ He it was who assigned the day and the date and the month now accepted in Christendom. Though the said Exiguus does not give the data which led or authorized him to fix December 25th, it seems highly probable that he may have been influenced by the edict of the Papal chair in 353, when Pope Liberius named the same date: anyhow, the date is the same—

¹ Hastings, *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics*, Art. "Christmas."

² *Ibid.*

³ *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, p. 26.

within a day or two—of the supposed births of many of the Sun-gods.

Had Jesus been one of the Sun-gods, as he has been most unfortunately portrayed by some of his zealous followers—the builders of the Church in the early days—the position is quite tenable. But this great Messenger of Allah came (much as Muhammad did six hundred years later) to demolish paganism, as the Qur-án says. His Church says the same. His story should be quite different and distinct from that of the deities of the ancient days. St. Augustine declared: “We hold this (Christmas) day holy, not like the pagans, because of the birth of the sun, but because of the birth of Him who made it.” And there are many other animadversions of the early Fathers, cursing the devil for introducing into his cult almost all the Church mysteries! ¹

Our fair-minded Christian friends will, I think, do well to ponder deeply over these facts. To some it may even appear that we have been worshipping the Sun-God for all these centuries in the name of Jesus. We have seen his crucifixion and resurrection celebrated on the dates on which the pagans did the same in connection with their own gods; and indeed all the occurrences that are believed to have taken place on those dates in the story of Jesus are almost word for word the same as in the story of the pagan deities. It seems almost like the irony of fate that Christianity,

¹ *The Religion of Jesus and the Traditional Christianity.* (Basheer Muslim Library, Woking, Surrey.)

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which came to demolish paganism, should have fallen a victim to that same cult ! Why should we be asked to believe in pagan teachings ? It looks as though the pure religion of Jesus has been disfigured by making the great Prophet of Nazareth a substitute for a pagan deity. It is due to the Master that his religion should be purged of fallacies by making a clean sweep of the man-made dogmas which are so many blots on an otherwise perfect Faith.