

LETTER 50
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THE PAGAN MOTHER GODDESS

Reading your letter makes me realize afresh how unfortunate it is that in our day many who hate Christianity are established in positions of importance and leadership in the scholarly world. It is thus possible for them sometimes to make sweeping dogmatic assertions with practically no factual basis. Others may repeat one or more of these assertions, often in exaggerated form. As a result, ideas are sometimes widely circulated which are quite without any factual warrant.

This is certainly true as regards any assertion that some feature of Christianity is derived from the pagan Mother Goddess. There is no factual basis whatever for such a statement.

The New Testament presents the Virgin Mary as a very fine woman who was blessed by God in being permitted to become the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not the slightest suggestion in the New Testament that she was, or ever became, anything more than a very fine human being. The exaltation that is given to her in Roman Catholicism is not found in the New Testament, and came only after the lapse of a number of centuries. It is an addition to Christianity, not a part of it. Even so it would be difficult to prove that it is derived from any pagan teaching about a Mother Goddess.

The worship of the Mother Goddess originally seems to have been confined to Asia Minor. It spread eventually to Greece and Rome, and was combined with the Greek goddess, Rhea, who, although the mother of Zeus, had not previously enjoyed any great prominence in the religion of Greece. The outstanding features of the official Greek and Roman religions do not emphasize any such figure.

This Mother Goddess Rhea has no connection with Babylon. Any mention of Rhea in connection with "Semiramis of Babylon" is quite without foundation. At a fairly late period,