

Qx 19 – Summary of Christian Childishness

Dear: Earlier in this excursion **Qx** (questioning policies promoted in “revealed religions”), I tried to show you some of the many inadequacies of New Testament (NT) policies. These inadequacies include injustices (or inequities), immoralities (or iniquities), incoherencies and insanities, as well as what I’ve called “sins” and “crimes” against humanity. From what I’ve already tried to show you, maybe you see why I say:

- Some policies in the NT [supporting gullibility rather than skepticism, enjoining “faith” rather than “evaluation”, promoting intolerance, encouraging racism, inculcating fear, advocating torture] are just as inhumane as – or even more inhumane than – the racism, male chauvinism, lying, prostitution, slavery, brutality, and slaughtering of innocents promoted in the Old Testament (OT);
- Some policies in the NT are so twisted and tangled [preaching honesty while displaying hypocrisy, advocating pacifism while threatening torture, commanding people to love their parents yet hate their mother and father, advising people to humble themselves to be exalted, to give generously so that they’ll receive more, to love what they hate (e.g., their enemies) and to hate what they love (e.g., their lives)] that there’s no way for followers to abide by such policies without being trapped in terrible double-binds, potentially driving followers insane; and
- Some policies in the NT [not to judge, to have the dead bury the dead, to accept that leaders rule by “divine right”, all the nonsense about “miracles”, and maybe worst, the mind-numbing command “We compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ”] are so stupid, so bizarre, so corrupt that there seems no way to understand them except to assume that their authors were insane.

In turn, perhaps this apparent insanity of the authors of the NT was derived from their bizarre speculation that the world was about to end. But whatever the cause of their craziness and the inadequacies of their policies, for this final chapter dealing with policies in the NT, I want to emphasize a characteristic of the NT that, in a way, summarizes all its other features, namely, the astounding childishness of it all.

Actually, this childishness is not confined to the NT (just as Christianity is not so confined): it permeates the entire Bible and is therefore at the core of the entire Christian religion. In fact (evidence for which I'll try to show you in the remainder of this Qx and in Yx), similar childishness is rampant in all "revealed" religions, including Judaism, Islam, and Mormonism: not only are the concepts promoted astoundingly childish, but the clerics attempt to control their followers as if they were little children. Consistently, these followers are usually the most emotional and the least educated, the most insecure and the least independent, the most intimidated and the least courageous, the most trusting and the least likely to reach sensible judgments – in a word, the most childish.

And at the outset of this chapter, I should show you that it's not my idea that Christianity (and therefore Mormonism) is childish: the idea is strongly promoted in the NT, itself (and therefore, also in the Book of Mormon). As evidence, consider the following quotations (all from the New International Version of the Bible at <http://bible.gospelcom.net/bible> and to which I've added some notes in "square brackets" and the underlining).

Matthew 18, 3: "And he [Jesus] said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'."

Mark 10, 14: "He [Jesus] said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'."

Luke 10, 21: "At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure'."

John 13, 33: "My children, I [Jesus] will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come."

1 Corinthians 4, 14: "I ["Saint" Paul] am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children."

Ephesians 5, 1 [allegedly written by "Saint" Paul]: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children."

Ephesians 5, 8: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”

1 Peter 1, 14 [allegedly written by “Saint” Peter]: “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.”

1 John 2, 18 [allegedly written by “Saint” John]: “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

1 John 5, 19: “We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

But at I’ll be trying to show you in what follows, Dear, there’s actually far more to the childishness of Christianity than the above urgings of the clerics for followers to “become like little children”. To that end, below I’ll provide you with details in various categories, indicated by underlined headings.

Childish Science

Although in this excursion **Qx** (emphasizing what I’ve called the “Quintessential Perspective”) I’ve purposefully avoided commenting on the silly science contained in the Bible (instead trying to emphasize the policies it contains), yet here, let me first remind you of Mangasarian’s penetrating summary: “Religion is the science of children; science is the religion of adults.” Then next and as a case in point, consider the following verbal comment by Frank Zindler, made during a debate with William Lane Craig, available in a video entitled *Atheism vs. Christianity* (Zondervan, 1996):¹

The most devastating thing, though, that biology did to Christianity was the discovery of biological evolution. Now that we know that Adam and Eve never were real people, the central myth of Christianity is destroyed. If there never was an Adam and Eve, there never was an original sin. If there never was an original sin, there is no need of salvation. If there is no need of salvation, there is no need of a savior. And I submit that puts Jesus (historical or otherwise) into the ranks of the unemployed. I think that evolution is absolutely the death knell of Christianity.

Childish Stories

Dear: Have you ever known a little child who didn’t want to hear a story – no matter how fanciful – and usually “the more fanciful the better”? When my own children were young, sometimes in response to their request for a story, I’d ask them to give me just the start of the first line (e.g., “Once upon

¹ Copied from <http://www.wasdarwinright.com/antirecreation-f.htm>.

a time there was a little girl who...”), and then I’d just *ad lib* the rest (“Once upon a time there a little girl who... was so excited that she didn’t want to sleep. So, after her father had tucked her into bed and then left the room, she slowly...”). And in the rest of the story, I could say essentially anything (of course including innumerable miracles) without the least concern for restrictions that Mother Nature imposes in reality.

So, too, it would seem for the “make believe” stories in the NT. What amazes me is how grownups (at least in stature) can sit in their pews, nodding in agreement (some times adding the occasional “hallelujah” or “praise the Lord”) while their clerics tell them cute but meaningless little stories about a virgin giving birth to a child (do people really think that it’s possible?!) at the start of the astrological age of Pisces (do they even know what their fish symbol means?!), complete with the astrology of the “Star of Bethlehem” dictating events on Earth (I know that many people “believe” in astrology, with it’s ~3500 year old Egyptian mantra “as above, so below”, but how anyone can be so childish?!), the child Jesus (= Jupiter) returning to his father’s house (Saturn) after 12 years (because that’s what happens in the stars!), innumerable miracles (“Praise Jesus!”), and all the rest of the nonsense, including speaking in tongues (aka babbling), having the Holy Spirit descend on people like a dove, and of course the fanciful stuff about various people “rising from the dead.” Surely no sane human older than six could “believe” such nonsense! Do such people also “believe” in Santa Claus?! They should trade in their Bibles for Superman comic books – then the silly people (possibly unable to read) could at least look at the pictures!

Childish Teachings

Along with such childish stories, of course come childish “morals”. A good example is, as Voltaire mentioned: “It is one of the superstitions of the human mind to have imagined that virginity could be a virtue.” [Have the people never heard the line “Go forth and multiply”? Do they know how that’s normally done?! If so, then how could virginity be a virtue?!] But rather than my again going into details about the childish morality (and horrible immorality!) promoted in the NT, let me just quote a paragraph (to which I’ve added some notes and the italics) from the article (which I urge you to read) entitled *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*, published in 1886 and written by Gerald Massey:²

² Available at http://www.gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/dpr_01_historical_jesus.htm.

The older I grow the faster I am losing my faith in all lovely unrealities. Consider the effects of such false teaching! Only the other day a child who had been taught that God made man out of the dust of the earth [i.e., the craziness promoted in one of the two conflicting genesis myths in the OT] was watching an eddying cloud of dust being whirled into shape by the wind, when she cried, “Oh, mother, come here! Look! I think God is creating another baby!” *Our mental standpoint has been made quite as childish with regard to other Beginnings.* And from every pulpit of the past we have been implored to remain as little children at the mother’s knee. We have been taught and compelled to surrender our reason, doff our [adulthood], and grovel like worms in the earth as the successful mode of wriggling our way through this world into heaven.

My own experience has been similar. As I mentioned before, I remember the story so frequently repeated by my mother. My nearest age brother when he first saw the stars (perhaps at age three or four) announced: “Look at all the peep-holes in the sky so that the wee godie can look down and spy on us.” My mother repeated the story so frequently, I suspect, because it was consistent with her own childish “understanding” of nature and her childish “belief” in the supernatural.

Such childish stories are commonly passed on from parents to their children, an idea that, more than 300 years ago, John Dryden (1631-1700) conveyed as follows in his poem *The Hind and the Panther*:

By education most have been misled;
So they believe, because they so were bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.

Thereby, as M.M. Mangasarian wrote in his 1909 book *The Truth about Jesus: Is He a Myth?* (which I encourage you to read and which you can find on the internet at several locations):³

We have been robbed by a thief in the night. Children have been cheated out of their natural senses, and ... [adults] who are sane on most other subjects will give up all common sense on this [the subject of religion] and talk like intellectual lunatics.

Pity the children indoctrinated with such silliness; pity the adults who are unable or unwilling to question their indoctrination.

³ E.g., at <http://www.textfiles.com/politics/jesusall.txt>.

Childish Claims

Another common characteristic of children, besides their lack of understanding and (consistently) their willingness and even eagerness to listen to outrageous stories, is their propensity to make outrageous claims – and sometimes to accept similar claims by others: “Well, maybe you can fly on clouds, but I can jump over the moon.” Correspondingly, someone would need to be astoundingly childish to accept the following statements allegedly made by Jesus (in various chapters in *John*):

“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst... I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live... and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...”

It reminds me of a little child claiming to be able to jump over the moon, or hit a home run in the world series, or similar.

Let me show you more about the childishness in the above by quoting from an article written by A.J. Mattill, Jr. entitled *The Self-Centered Savior*, which you can find on the internet⁴ and which was published in the 2002 November/December issue of the *American Rationalist*.

Did Jesus think of himself as the center of all things? Let us consider a few of these self-references.

MEEK AND LOWLY. “I am meek and lowly in heart” (*Matthew 11, 29*), says Jesus... Jesus’ assertion of his own humility robs his humility of its reality...

SOLOMON AND JONAH. One day Jesus said to the people, “Behold, one greater than Solomon is here. Behold, one greater than Jonah is here.” (*Matthew 12, 41; Luke 11, 31...*)... Is that egocentrism, egomania, egotism, or what? Whatever we call it, it’s hardly meekness and lowliness...

SEVEN I-AM SAYINGS. Just how “meek and lowly in heart” Jesus was is also shown by his seven egocentric “I-am” statements in *John*.

1. “I am the bread of life...” meaning, “I am the absolute essential, without which your real life cannot begin or continue so abundantly that your every desire will be satisfied forever.”

⁴ E.g., at <http://psr.racionalista.pl/kk.php/q.en/d.76/s.2497>.

2. "I am the light of the world..." meaning, "I am the only one who exposes and dispels all the forces of darkness everywhere in the whole wide world."
3. "I am the door..." meaning, "I am the one and only one through whom people enter the fold of the saved and find God."
4. "I am the good shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep..." meaning, "I am the shepherd par excellence, and I love my sheep so much I'll give my life for them..."
5. "I am the resurrection and the life..." meaning, "I am the Savior who raises believers from their graves to enjoy the bliss of everlasting life."
6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." meaning, "I am the one and only way to my Father in heaven."
7. "I am the true vine..." meaning, "I am the excellent vine. If you stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you, then whatever you ask of me will be done."

There's no doubt about it. These are enormous and breathtaking claims, especially coming from the lips of a self-professed humble person. They impress many of us as being preposterous and utterly absurd, reflecting delusions of grandeur. How odd it is that Jesus, who referred to himself as "meek and lowly..." should contradict that claim by uttering the seven I-am sayings that illustrate the extent to which Jesus was engrossed in his own ego...

THE SON'S KNOWLEDGE. Another oddity: Jesus prefaced his profession of humility (*Matthew 11, 29*) with one of the most egoistic utterances in the Gospels: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal him" (*Matthew 11, 27; Luke 10, 22*). What kind of humility is that?...

THE CLINCHER. The extent to which Jesus regarded himself as the center of all things is illustrated by his words to his disciples: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (*Matthew 28, 18*). In other words, "My Father has given me ruling power, supernatural power, and universal power in heaven and on earth." Jesus did have too much ego in his cosmos! He was the self-centered Savior!...

Stated differently, the claims of the clerics' Jesus are similar to the claims of a little child.

Further, though, there's something truly horrible, here, which I'll introduce by quoting John Shelby Spong:

By the time you get to the fourth gospel (John), all the “I am” sayings come into the tradition. For Jews, God’s name was “I am...” The orthodox Jewish party excommunicated the early Christians; the orthodox said “You no longer have any part of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses,” and the revisionists responded by saying, “Yes, we do, because the God we meet in Jesus is the ‘I am’ of Moses and the burning bush...” Every time they could, they make Jesus say, “I am,” “I am,” “I am,” “I am.” One of them is: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me.” And that’s the text that turns Christianity into being demonic.

As for how such claims “turns Christianity into being demonic”, I’ll get to that soon.

Childish Promises and Gullibility

Along with making outrageous claims, children sometimes make outrageous promises – and other children are sometimes so gullible as to believe them! “When I jump onto the moon, I’ll lower a rope and lift you up,” promises one child, and the other answers: “Great – and when we pass by the clouds, I’ll let you ride on them.” Similar outrageous promises are rampant in the NT – and apparently a huge number of people are sufficiently gullible to believe them. For example, consider the following “promises” made by Christian (and therefore Mormon) clerics on behalf of their Jesus:

- That the losers, the weepers, the meek shall inherit the earth,
- That “believers” will be able to move any mountain of obstacles, provided that they have “sufficient” faith (and pay their tithes!),
- That “believers” will gain forgiveness for their sins, provided that they accept the clerics’ definition of what’s “sinful” (and pay their tithes!),
- That “believers” will escape death and gain eternal life in paradise, provided that they “believe” (and pay their tithes!), and
- That this eternal life in paradise will be easier for the poor than the rich, easier for the meek than the bold, and easier for the humble than those who are proud of their accomplishments.

How much these “promises” are worth is, of course, another matter. In that regard, consider more from the book by M.M. Mangasarian, referenced above. I’ve quoted this in an earlier chapter, but I encourage you to read it again.

[If] it had been reported of Abraham Lincoln that he predicted his own assassination; that he promised some of his friends they would not die until they saw him coming again upon the clouds of heaven; that he would give them thrones to sit upon; that they could safely drink deadly poisons in his name, or that he would grant them any request which they might make, provided they asked it for his sake, we would be justified in concluding that such a Lincoln never existed. Yet the most impossible utterances are put in Jesus' mouth. He is made to say: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do." No man who makes such a promise can keep it. It is not sayings like the above that can prove a man a God. Has Jesus kept his promise? Does he give his people everything, or 'whatsoever' they ask of him?

"But", it is answered, "Jesus only meant to say that he would give whatever he himself considered good for his friends to have." Indeed! Is that the way to crawl out of a contract? If that is what he meant, why did he say something else? Could he not have said just what he meant, in the first place? Would it not have been fairer not to have given his friends any occasion for false expectations? Better to promise a little and do more, than to promise everything and do nothing.

But to say that Jesus really entered into any such agreement is to throw doubt upon his existence. Such a character is too wild to be real. Only a mythical Jesus could virtually hand over the government of the universe to courtier who have petitions to press upon his attention. Moreover, if Jesus could keep his promise, there would be today no misery in the world, no orphans, no childless mothers, no shipwrecks, no floods, no famines, no disease, no crippled children, no insanity, no wars, no crime, no wrong! Have not a thousand, thousand prayers been offered in Jesus' name against every evil which has ploughed the face of our earth? Have these prayers been answered? Then why is there discontent in the world? Can the followers of Jesus move mountains, drink deadly poisons, touch serpents, or work greater miracles than are ascribed to Jesus, as it was promised that they would do? How many self-deluded prophets these extravagant claims have produced! And who can number the bitter disappointments caused by such impossible promises?

George Jacob Holyoake, of England, tells how in the days of utter poverty, his believing mother asked the Lord, again and again – on her knees, with tears streaming from her eyes, and with absolute faith in Jesus' ability to keep His promise – to give her starving children their daily bread. But the more fervently she prayed the heavier grew the burden of her life. A stone or wooden idol could not have been more indifferent to a mother's tears. "My mind aches as I think of those days," writes Mr. Holyoake. One day he went to see the Rev. Mr. Cribbace, who had invited inquirers to his house. "Do you really believe," asked young Holyoake to the clergyman, "that what we ask in faith we shall receive?" "It never struck me," continues Mr. Holyoake, "that the preacher's threadbare dress, his half-famished look, and necessity of taking up a collection the previous night to pay expense's showed that faith was not a source of income to him. It never struck me that if help could be obtained by prayer no church would be needy, no believer would be poor." What answer did the

preacher give to Holyoake's earnest question? The same which the preachers of today give: "He parried his answer with many words, and at length said that the promise was to be taken with the provision that what we asked for would be given, if God thought it for our good."

Why then, did not Jesus explain that important proviso when he made the promise? Was Jesus only making a half statement, the other half of which he would reveal later to protect himself against disappointed petitioners. But he said: "If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it," and "If it were not so, I would have told you." Did he not mean just what he said? The truth is that no historical person in his senses ever made such extraordinary, such impossible promises...

That is, no historical person in his senses – except a little child.

Childish Views of Morality and Justice

Along with making outrageous claims and promises, little children sometimes make outrageous threats, commonly associated with their naïve (black vs. white) views of right and wrong and of appropriate justice. In earlier Qx chapters, I showed you some of the many immoralities and injustices promoted in the NT. Somewhat as a summary of all that, I can imagine the following conversation between you and the clerics' childish Jesus – that is, I can imagine it provided you improve your Texas drawl:

"My dad is God."

"Riiight." [That's fairly good, Dear, but hang on to that "i" in Riiiiiight a little longer.]

"If you don't believe that my dad is God then you're bad."

"Riiiiiight." [That's better.]

"You can't talk to me like that! When you die, I'm gonna be your judge."

"Riiiiiiiiight." [Come on, now, don't get carried away.]

"I'm not kidding: after you die, I'm gonna decide if you're gonna go to heaven or hell."

"Riiiiiight – why wait 'till I'm dead? I've judged you already."

"Judge not, for whomsoever you judge, you will be judged."

"Riiiiiight – I can see why you'd say that – but I still say you've lost it."

"If you don't believe me, you're gonna go to hell."

* Go to other chapters *via*

“Riiiiight – why don’t you go there right now?”

“You can’t talk to me like that! You’ll be sorry, my dad is God, and he said I could be judge.”

“Riiiiight, little boy, why don’t you go out and play with kids your own age.”

But actually, Dear, it wouldn’t be a wise to send the clerics’ Jesus out to play with children of comparable intellectual development. Based on the portrait of Jesus painted in the NT, he would probably charge outside blurting:

“I’m gonna get her. I’m gonna torture her. I’m gonna burn her in hell for eternity.”

Better to take the little brat to his mother to see if she would get him some psychiatric help.

Similarly for the black vs. white ideas of morality and for all the injustices promoted in the NT – and repeated to you by your mother and to me by mine. According to the clerics of all “revealed” religions, “the good” is to obey (the clerics!); “the bad” is to disobey – just as all good little children (and sheep!) are to obey. Further if you’re good, if you obey, you’ll be judged worthy of astounding benefits, up to and including eternal bliss in paradise, but if you’re bad, if you disobey, then you’re headed for eternal punishment in hell.

But what stupid, horrible, evil, *childish* concepts those are! As Joseph McCabe wrote in his book *The Story of Religious Controversy* (which seems to have been written in 1929 and which I encourage you to read):⁵

It occurred to no Christian, not even to Christ, that, if this moral sentiment [to love one’s enemies] is lofty, it ought pre-eminently to apply to man’s conception of God. On what principle [then] must Christ as man love his enemies, and Christ as God devise for them an eternity of fiendish torment? And, since God, the ideal, was held to punish transgressors of his law, human and ecclesiastical society everywhere continued without scruple to do so. We realize today that this is immoral. We inflict penalties to deter would-be transgressors, not as punishment. Who introduced this idea into the [Western] world? Plato and Aristotle. They taught the Greeks that the ‘punishment’ of a criminal was “a moral medicine” and a deterrent. Then came Christianity, and the sentiment was lost.

⁵ Available at http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_mccabe/religious_controversy/.

Again, Dear, it's childish of anyone to adopt a black vs. white view of morality, it's ridiculous to accept the "moral absolutes" promoted by the clerics, it's horrible for anyone to promote that the good is to obey anyone or anything (except your own best evaluation of the best-available data), and it's unadulterated evil to advocate torture of humans. As I've written before: anyone who judges things only as "good vs. bad" seems to have an "on vs. off" switch instead of a brain, the only "moral absolute" that I know is "evaluate", and with no moral absolutes (save "evaluate"), then the consequences for breaking "laws" should be not the black and white of heaven and hell, but a huge gradation of grey: from nagging thoughts, to remorse, to some ostracism, and then to some penalty, including forced re-education – in an attempt to deter others from making similar mistakes.

Please, Dear, think about other possibilities. Just as easily (for it's abundantly clear that essentially the entire NT is fiction) the damnable clerics could have depicted a Jesus who advocated kindness to every human. For example, the clerics could have had their Jesus say something similar to:

"Here's the new deal. Each of you do the best you can; use your brains as best you can; figure it out for yourselves. Then, come the end, the big boss will be adding up all your scores: a plus 10 for thinking your best and basing your decisions on the best available data, a plus 3 for helping a little old lady across the street, a minus 4 if you started violence against somebody, a minus ten if you preached about hell, and so on. He'll then divide your total score by the total number of your acts, so that your "average morality" will be somewhere between plus 10 and minus 10. If it's a minus 10, then, sorry, but you'll need to stay dead; if you're a plus 10 – well, then you get to call the shots, cause that ain't ever happened before. So hang in there; give it your best shot – and, oh, by the way: don't forget to enjoy the game!"

But of course that, too, would have been stupid (to suggest that there was a "big boss" upstairs waiting to judge people), but maybe buying into such a scheme wouldn't be quite so dumb as buying into the clerics' scheme. In their scheme, you get a guaranteed ticket to hell: if you don't do what they say, then you're headin' for hell; if you do what they say, then you may think that you're heading for heaven, but because you're so greedy (trying to get into heaven), then obviously you're actually headin' for hell. I mean, obviously the only way to get to heaven is to give up your ticket to heaven to someone less worthy – which of course means that you won't get into

heaven, but then, that's the only way to get into heaven, which means...
Somebody's bonkers!

Childish Views on Social Issues

Consistent with their childish view of morality and justice, the clerics who wrote the NT proceeded to promote astoundingly childish opinions about social issues. In earlier chapters I've shown you some of these. Here, let me show you more by again just quoting McCabe.

Then there is the "sublime principle", in a matter of vital human importance, about divorce. *Mark* and *Luke* make Jesus forbid divorce under any conditions. *Matthew* allows divorce for 'fornication'. The result is that the Churches are entirely at variance on one of the most important of social and moral problems. The Catholic thinks all divorce invalid; the British Protestant is sure that a woman commits no sin if she remarries after divorcing her husband for adultery; the German or American Protestant genially commits all three Evangelists (if not Jesus) to the flames and gets a divorce for half a dozen reasons. Verily, our age would be sadly perplexed if it had not these simple and sublime teachings of Jesus!

Next comes the famous council that, whereas the old law permitted one to demand "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", in the new and higher dispensation you must even turn the other cheek to the smiter and give the cloak also to the man who takes your coat. Since Christendom is unanimously agreed, and always has been agreed, that no man of sense would act upon this "sublime teaching" of Jesus, we need hardly linger over it. But it is necessary to point out, once more, that it is certainly not Jesus – not a Jew of the year 30 A.D. [CE] who said this. For, although the "eye for an eye" principle is found in *Exodus*, where it seems to be a fragment of earlier tribal customs [e.g., Dear: remember that it's in Hammurabi's Laws, chiseled in stone more than 600 years before Moses allegedly lived] the later books of the Old Testament say, over and over again, precisely what *Matthew* gives as a new law. "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair," says *Isaiah* (1, 6). "Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him" says Jeremiah in *Lamentations* (iii, 30). "If any demand thy ass, give him also the saddle", says the Talmud (*Baba kamma* 92, 2); and this saying is described as a popular proverb. "Let him strike thee", says Plato (*Gorgias*, 527), giving counsel how to deal with an angry man...

A divine would probably remind me that this rule of life takes a 'sublimier' – how they love that word *sublime*, and how utterly misplaced it is – form in the command: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Many, at least, incautiously choose this as the most characteristic saying of Jesus. It is an unhappy choice, for the sentence is taken verbatim from one of the books of the Old Testament (*Leviticus* 19, 18).

And to that rule one could quote substantial parallels from the moralists of every civilization. Buddha, if one prefers the more emotional expression that one must love

* Go to other chapters *via*

others as one loves oneself, far surpassed Jesus. Love, the love of man for man, was an essential part of his teaching. Indeed, of love of oneself he never dreamed. His whole mission to the common folk about him was to love each other and behave as if they loved each other. The Golden Rule, as such, would have been deemed by Buddha a cold and calculating expression of the true ideal.

In China both the great moralists, Kong-fu-tse [i.e., the master Kong, also known as Confucius] and Lao-tse [i.e., master Lao] formulated the Golden Rule. Kong-fu-tse commonly gave as the rule of conduct certain formulas which were identical in substance with that of Christ, but a disciple, one day asked him to put in a single word the essential rule of life. A word, in Chinese, means, not so many letters of the alphabet, but a single character, or two characters combined in one. It was solely on this account that Kong-fu-tse gave his rule in the very short form 'Reciprocity', as it is usually translated. The common statement of Christian controversial writers that he put it in a negative form is quite false. Literally, the character he used was the composite character "as heart"; have one heart with your fellowmen, or behave to them as you would have them behave to you.

Childish Philosophy

All of which sums to an astoundingly childish philosophy. Stated differently: if the philosophy promoted in the NT wasn't camouflaged by all its supernatural jabberwocky, then surely it would be easily recognized as one of the stupidest (and vilest) philosophies ever conceived. As Walter Kaufmann wrote in his *Critique of Religion as Philosophy*:

Christianity preaches that love is divine and points to Jesus as the incarnation of love. But a Buddhist, and not only a Buddhist, might well say that the sacrifice of a few hours' crucifixion followed by everlasting bliss at the right hand of God in heaven, while millions are suffering eternal tortures in hell, is hardly the best possible symbol of love and self-sacrifice. The boss's son who works briefly at lower jobs before he joins his father at the head of the company would hardly reconcile the workers to their fate if they should be tormented bitterly without relief. Of course, some Christians have felt this strongly and it has troubled them deeply, but the dominant note in the New Testament and ever since has been one of astounding callousness.

If the cause of such callousness were the premiss that the world was about to end, I would say that, in general, it's impossible ever to generate a sensible plan for living (i.e., a sensible philosophy) based on such a premiss.

Please, Dear, think about it for a minute or so. If you knew that the world was about to end (e.g., because a huge asteroid was about to hit the Earth), then wouldn't you live your "last days" differently? Wouldn't you be inclined to sample some of life's pleasures before you died? But then, suppose that you also accepted the premiss (although not a shred of data

supported it!) that upon your death, you'd be judged by some giant Jabberwock in the sky – and you'd be sentenced to be tortured for eternity in hell if, during your final days, you sampled some of life's pleasures! Poor little sweetheart: I'd expect that you'd long for your death – so that the torment of the temptations would end!

Well, Dear, that's the essence of the stupidity promoted in the NT (and in the Book of Mormon). And yes, Dear, maybe such stupidity could be perpetrated for a little while. But now (with approximately 2,000 years worth of data supporting the assessment that the NT predictions of the imminent end of the world were wrong), surely you agree that it would be ludicrous to adopt a philosophy derived from such crazy premisses. Yet, the vast majority of Christians (and Mormons, i.e., Latter-Day Saints) adopt such a philosophy, either because they don't read the NT (or the Book of Mormon) or because they're unable to understand what they're reading. Commonly, if they read their "holy books" at all, they read little passages that make them feel good: that the meek shall inherit the Earth (whatever that means), that after their death they'll be rewarded with an eternal life of bliss in paradise (whatever that means), that God is love (whatever that means), and so on.

As for the failed prophecy of the "imminent" end of the world, the childish followers find solace – and simultaneously fear – in "Saint" Peter's idiotic statement (*2 Peter 3, 3*), written by who knows whom and who knows when (but probably about a century after Peter had died):

Note this first: in the last days there will come men who scoff at religion and live self-indulgent lives, and they will say: "Where now is the promise of his coming? Our fathers have been laid to their rest, but still everything continues exactly as it has always been since the world began." In taking this view they lose sight of the fact [the "fact", no less] that there were heavens and earth long ago, created by God's word out of water [?!] and with water [?!]; and by water that first world was destroyed, the water of the deluge [!]. And the present heavens and earth, again by God's word, have been kept in store for burning [?!]; they are being reserved until the day of judgment when the godless will be destroyed [so you'd better "believe"!]. And here is one point, my friends, which you must not lose sight of: *with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day...* [italics added]

Think of it, Dear: "with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years..." What that means is that, for the clerics, the meaning of words is totally arbitrary!

Meanwhile, the rest of us (those of us who refuse to be intimidated by the clerics' threats to "believe" or "be destroyed") do our best to conform to the meaning of words used in our societies and as recorded in dictionaries (e.g., 'day' means...). But for the clerics, it's just as Lewis Carroll wrote (and why, many chapters ago, I suggested that his Humpty Dumpty was a cleric):

"There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory'," Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't – till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you'!"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument'," Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." [And thus, for a cleric, a day can be a thousand years!]

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all." [And I challenge you, Dear, to identify a cleric who doesn't plan to be a master!]

But setting aside the conniving of the Christian clerics, let me return again to their stupid, childish philosophy. And rather than my writing more, let me again quote the ex-Franciscan monk Joseph McCabe, whose knowledge of the subject and his writing abilities put mine to shame.

We feel the falseness of a philosophy or an ethic that belittles the pleasure of life and would condemn us, in a world of sunshine and flowers, to close our eyes to the light and color. Only men and women of a peculiar nature ever pay implicit attention to such counsels. The teaching of Jesus was condemned to futility by its own exaggerations. It is not too hard for human nature; but human nature healthily refuses to be ruled by it.

The Churches dare not in our age consistently advocate their Christian ethic. It is a condemnation, root and branch, of all pleasure. An ethic which puts married folk on a lower level, as weaklings who cannot scale the heights of superiority, has no place in [this] century. An ethic that preaches that a man must embrace poverty if he would be really "virtuous" dare not be urged from any pulpit in America. An ethic that bids the really-just man turn the other cheek to the smiter is not lofty or sublime, but a sheer blunder. And these things are essential parts of Christ's morality, however little they may be obtruded in Christian morality.

In fine, the entire atmosphere of the morality of Jesus in the Gospels unfits it for use in modern times. Efforts have been made to explain away the belief in hell of the prophet of Nazareth – ridiculous efforts to get rid of the plain meaning of the Greek words used in the Gospels – but no amount of ingenuity will explain away his belief that the end of the world was near. I should be disposed, on broad grounds, to believe that this is one of the few doctrines we can safely attribute to Jesus himself, not to the compilers of the Gospels... [Actually though, Dear, as I've suggested before and will show you more in Yx, I suspect that this "doctrine" was Paul's: I found no hint of it in the gospels found at Nag Hammadi in 1945, which of course were unavailable to McCabe in 1929 when he wrote the above assessment.]

It [the idea that the world was about to end] falsifies the entire conception of human life and duty, and makes the morality of the Gospels quite unsuitable for our time. In the light of that belief we can easily understand the ascetic exaggerations of the sayings of Jesus; and we can just as easily understand how... Christian morality never inspired social justice, which is immeasurably more important than personal virtue. Not one of the greater problems of life was ever confronted by the Gospel Jesus or early Christianity. It was left to pagan moralists to denounce war and slavery. It was left to Agnostic sociologists to discover that brutal material conditions would be reflected in brutality of mind, and that a low intellectual level meant, infallibly for the majority of men, a low moral level. Our modern conception of character and the way to improve and strengthen character has nothing in common with the moral platitudes of ancient Judea.

Nor has our personal conception of our rights anything in common with an ethic which was framed in the belief that God would shortly destroy the earth by fire and summon the souls of all men before his throne. In all our rebellions there is one sound note: we claim a freedom restricted only by the rights of others that we shall not hurt them. The alternative to that would be anarchy. The character of our age is that it is increasingly social, and only a social ethic will meet its needs. Let the platitudes and eccentricities of the Gospels slumber in the Greek books in which they were written. In the great light which has broken upon the world we cast aside the little lamps of long ago. We see our universe from end to end. We chart our path with a knowledge which no other age ever possessed. We need no moralists of old times to tell us how to behave.

Childish Appeal to Emotions

The hallmark of any "childish philosophy", Dear, is a philosophy that appeals to emotions – rather than relying on reasoning from data and then experimentally testing the predictions (i.e., relying on the scientific method). And as unscientific as they come, the philosophy (or better, the con game) promoted by Christian clerics (and the clerics of all "revealed" religions) relies principally on the primitive emotions (manifested in all children) of 1) fear, 2) greed, and 3) desire to belong. I'll illustrate what I mean under those

* Go to other chapters *via*

three subheadings, below, but first, let me show you an overview written by Isaac Goldberg, in an article entitled *Fighter For Freethought: Fifty Years on the Rationalist Front*, praising Joseph McCabe (whom I've quoted several times already). In what follows, I've changed the ordering of some of Goldberg's paragraphs (because by cutting so much, I damaged the continuity of his writing).⁶

There is a sense in which McCabe [trained to be a priest] has remained a priest: an un-priestly priest of an un-churchly church. The Church, to him, is anti-culture, anti-body, anti-soul, anti-child, anti-woman, anti-freedom; it is, in a word, the very negation of life and of progress...

They are the ideas that have come out of McCabe's human experience, born of his defiance and ratified by a fruitful life. McCabe's unrelenting anti-Christianity is not a mere, willful malevolence. His sympathy, his love for the human race, compel him to defy and to combat its enemies, in whatever guise. In the Church he beholds one of the arch-enemies. He is not taken in by its honeyed words, its beautiful platitudes. Behind the words and the speakers he penetrates to the deeds – to the exploitation of body and soul, to the superstition that degrades, to the hypocrisy, the unnatural aspersion of the body and its pleasures, to the insulting conception of chastity, to the perverted glorification of suffering, to the violent contrast between professions of love and preaching of hatred, to the utter topsy-turvification of the values by which men and women live, love, beget and die...

For superstition (and I count every religion ever invented a form, more or less gross, of superstition) is not to be fought by the intellect alone. The churches have been crafty in basing their chief appeal, not upon demonstrable fact but upon emotional vagaries. For all the apparatus of documents and arguments that they bring to bear upon their respective creeds, they seek first of all to affect one's emotions, as early in life as possible. Thus it happens that they decry the "mere intelligence", and proclaim the superior virtues of faith. Faith, to the church, is an unquestioning acceptance of dogma, armored by emotional ratification against the assaults of reason. Reason becomes a crafty devil, a shrewd sophist. Faith (that is, uncritical emotion, soothing prejudice, primitive wish-fulfillment) is transformed into something beyond doubt or debate; it becomes, by mere statement of itself, its own best proof...

What has he [the believer] learned at Church? Has his mind been trained there, or have his emotions and his mind alike been enslaved? Slavery is slavery, even when the chains are of gold. Corruption is corruption, even when it is accomplished to the accompaniment of good music, words that ring with solace and good-will but are otherwise sterile, and amidst an atmosphere of vague hope. The cracker-box Atheist proceeds not toward ignorance but away from it. Imposing, polysyllabic ignorance is one of the weapons of Churchianity...

⁶ Available at http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/issac_goldberg/fighter_for_freethought.html.

I congratulate Goldberg for providing such a perceptive overview of Christianity (and it's also an excellent overview of Mormonism). But now, let me focus on three of the principal, primitive emotions that all con-artist clerics attempt to stimulate to ensnare their marks, starting with

1) Fear. As you know, Dear, children can be afraid of many things. For children, perhaps there is a universal fear of the dark and of the unknown, but other fears are derived from particular experiences: fear of dogs (because a dog bit them), fear of men (because a man beat them), and so on, through a huge list of 'phobias' (the Greek word for 'fear'). Indeed, via evolution, Nature has preserved fear in all animals (including humans) because of its survival value.

As you also know, many adults maintain their childish fears, especially the fears of judgment and of death. And of course, here is where Christian (and Muslim and Mormon) clerics found key ingredients for their con games: deflect the people's fear of death to fear of judgment after death by their giant Jabberwock in the sky, for whom they just happen to be spokesmen. "Just do as we say," claim the clerics, "and not only will you no longer need fear death, you can look forward to it with pleasurable hope, because – provided you're 'good' – we'll put in a good word for you, so that you'll be able to live forever in paradise."

Here is the way the clerics have their Jesus state it, as reported in *John*:

"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst... I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life... I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die... I will not leave you comfortless... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

That is, in effect: "Don't be afraid, little children; I'll protect you."

It's so sad that our mothers bought into such a con game and then polluted our minds with such stupidity, which then permeates and discolors one's entire perception of life. It's so sad not only because our mothers simultaneously accepted the damnable clerics' conception of morality and justice but also because such stupid ideas of death so badly distort reality. In reality, it's clear that all the damnable clerics (Christian, Muslim, Mormon,

and for that matter, Hindu as well) don't have a clue about the value of death of every individual, namely, that it's Nature's way to promote survival of the species.

For example, if there were an historical Jesus and if the Gnostic Gospels (e.g., those found in the desert near Nag Hammadi in 1945) provide more reliable information about what he said (than what's given in the NT), then it's clear that the Gnostics' Jesus (just as with the clerics' Jesus) didn't have a clue about death. Thus, in the *Gospel of Thomas* there is the following:

The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us, how will our end come?" Jesus said, "Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is. Congratulations to the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death." Jesus said, "Congratulations to the one who came into being before coming into being."

That's pure gobbledygook! Jesus responded to a question not only with another question but also by "answering" his own question first (relating it to the unknown answer to the inquirer's original question) and then by adding "Congratulations to the one who came into being before coming into being", which is meaningless.

Similar meaningless junk is in the Gnostics' *Gospel of Truth*, allegedly quoting Jesus:

"The end, you see, is the recognition of him who is hidden, that is, the Father, from whom the beginning came forth and to whom will return all who have come from him."

First, this nonsense deceives by using the word 'end' not in relation to 'death' but to 'purpose'. Second, it's again pure gobbledygook: there isn't a shred of data to support either that "the beginning came forth" from any god or that anyone "will return" to any god.

And maybe I should add, Dear, that if anyone should complain that the above quotations aren't from the Bible, then you might want to ask the person why only 27 of the ~200 "gospels" were included in the NT. The answer is complicated (some details of which I'll show you in **Yx**) but in summary, after more than 1,000 years of arguing about which writings were "inspired by God" (e.g., "Saint" Paul's insane arrogance at *1 Corinthians 14*, 36: "...what I am writing to you is the Lord's command"!), finally some

clerics got together at the Council of Trent (in 1546) and took a vote on which to include in the NT. The vote was “24 to 15, with 16 abstentions”, for including what’s now in the “Holy” Bible and discarding the other “gospels”. But does a vote such as “24 to 15, with 16 abstentions” really make the Gnostic “gospels” any less “holy” than those in the “Holy” Bible?!

Meanwhile, there’s the mind-numbing nonsense in the “Holy” Bible about why people die – as decided by the insane “Saint” Paul, as subsequently repeated by the con-artist clerics who wrote the synoptic gospels, as subsequently plagiarized by Sidney Rigdon when he wrote the Book of Mormon, and then as our mothers indoctrinated me and you: people die, according to this stupidity, because Adam and Eve “sinned” by eating the apple, disobeying a direct command of God – even though, according to this same myth, God specifically excluded the possibility that Adam and Eve would know that it was “good” to obey and “bad” to disobey! Then, at least according to the insane “Saint” Paul (and his followers), God decided (thousands of years later!) to kill his son, Jesus, to appease himself for forgetting to tell Adam to obey!

I won’t add more to my assessment of this stupidity, but let me show you Mangasarian’s assessment⁷ (to which I’ve added the italics) as given in his book *The Truth about Jesus: Is He a Myth?*

The story of Eden possesses all the marks of an allegory. Adam and Eve, and a perfect world suddenly plunged from a snowy whiteness into the blackness of hell, *are the thoughts of a child who exaggerates because of an as-yet-undisciplined fancy*. Yet, if Adam and Eve are unreal, theologically speaking, Jesus is unreal. If they are allegory and myth, so is Jesus. It is claimed that it was the fall of Adam which necessitated the death of Jesus, but if Adam’s fall be a fiction, as we know it is, Jesus’ death as an atonement must also be a fiction.

In the fall of Adam, we are told, humanity itself fell. Could anything be more fanciful than that? And what was Adam’s sin? He coveted knowledge. He wished to improve his mind. He experimented with forbidden things. He dared to take the initiative. And for that imaginary crime, even the generations not yet born are to be forever blighted. Even the animals, the flowers and vegetables were cursed for it. Can you conceive of anything more mythical than that? One of the English divines of the age of Calvin declared that original sin – Adam’s sin imputed to us – was so awful, that “if a man had never been born he would yet have been damned for it.” It is from this mythical sin that a mythical Savior saves us. And how does he do it? In a very mythical way, as we shall see.

⁷ Available on the internet at, e.g., <http://www.textfiles.com/politics/jesusall.txt>.

When the world fell, it fell into the devil's hands. To redeem a part of it, at least, the deity concludes to give up his only son for a ransom. This is interesting. God is represented as being greatly offended, because the world, which he had created perfect, was all in a heap before him. To placate himself he sacrificed his son – not himself.

But, as intimated above, he does not intend to restore the whole world to its pristine purity, but only a part of it. This is alarming. He creates the whole world perfect, but now he is satisfied to have only a portion of it redeemed from the devil. If he can save at all, pray, why not save all? This is not an irrelevant question when it is remembered that the whole world was created perfect in the first place.

The refusal of the deity to save all of his world from the devil would lead one to believe that even when God created the world perfect, he did not mean to keep all of it to himself, but meant that some of it (the greater part of it, as some theologians contend) should go to the devil! Surely this is nothing but myth. *Let us hope for the sake of our ideals that all this is no more than the childish prattle of primitive man.*

In contrast to all such “childish prattle” concocted to “explain” why people die and to “explain” what happens when people die (e.g., the crazy stuff in the NT from the Ancient Egyptians and Persians and then repeated in the Quran and the Book of Mormon about a day of Judgment and then a sentence for eternity), all data suggest that, when we die, all material in our bodies return to the universe from which it came – and the only “souls” that continue are 1) the (modified) DNA codes that we pass on to our children and 2) any new ideas we had, devices we made, or processes we discovered that other people find useful. As for the question “Why do people die?”, the essence of the answer is simply: because there's survival value to any species if individual members have only a finite lifetime.

In earlier chapters, I've already addressed the question “Why do people die?”, but maybe I should repeat some of what I already wrote, especially to remind you of two aspects of the idea that there's survival value for the species if individuals have only a finite lifetime. Both aspects deal with adaptation to change: one with changes in the physical environment and the other with changes in the biological environment.

Thus, from only a few examples, Charles Darwin suggested in his 1859 book *The Origin of Species* the general principle (independently proposed by Alfred Wallace) that in a changing physical environment, offspring with characteristics even just slightly more appropriate for the new environment

would have a survival advantage, characteristics that in Gregor Mendel proposed would be passed on to their own offspring in “discrete hereditary particles” now called genes. We can now see how this principle of evolution or “natural selection”, the “nonrandom survival of randomly varying hereditary characteristics”,⁸ can be used to answer a huge number of questions, from how giraffes developed long necks, to how cacti developed thorns, and from how huge mammals such as whales returned to the sea (and still have “remnants of the walking legs of their terrestrial ancestors”!) to how people preferentially had black skin and large brains. Thereby, new characteristics and even new species evolved (and still evolve) courtesy the saving grace in any environment with finite resources that individuals had only a finite lifetime – at least it’s a “saving grace” for the surviving genes!

To see the other mentioned advantage of individuals having only a finite lifetime (namely, to adapt to changes in the biological environment), let me remind you of the proposed principle: successful systems attract parasites. In particular, the survival advantage to the genes of any species (if their individual hosts have only a finite lifetime) is that successful living systems do attract parasites. To illustrate, consider what are arguably far-and-away the most successful living systems, namely, plants. They are astounding: they take inert elements from the soil, add some water and carbon dioxide, and with only the Sun’s light, they manage to build enormously complex hydrocarbon molecules (using the absolutely amazing chlorophyll molecule, which uses photons from the sun to free electrons, and then breaks hydrogen free from water molecules and joins the hydrogen with the carbon from carbon dioxide). Unfortunately for such an astounding successful system, plants attract parasites, such as insects and animals – e.g., humans!

⁸ I copied this apt phrase from Richard Dawkins’ 2006 article “Darwin and Darwinism”, available at http://www.mukto-mona.com/Articles/dawkins/darwin_and_darwinism120206.htm, originally published in *Mukto-mona* (“an online network of humanists from South Asian and other countries) on the Darwin’s birthday (12 February). In this article, Dawkins states:

The modern genetic theory of natural selection can be summarized as follows. The genes of a population of sexually interbreeding animals or plants constitute a gene pool. The genes compete in the gene pool in something like the same way as the early replicating molecules competed in the primeval soup. In practice, genes in the gene pool spend their time either sitting in individual bodies which they helped to build, or traveling from body to body via sperm or egg in the process of sexual reproduction. Sexual reproduction keeps the genes shuffled, and it is in this sense that the long-term habitat of a gene is the gene pool. Any given gene originates in the gene pool as a result of a mutation, a random error in the gene-copying process. Once a new mutation has been formed, it can spread through the gene pool by means of sexual mixing. Mutation is the ultimate origin of genetic variation. Sexual reproduction, and genetic recombination due to crossing over, see to it that genetic variation is rapidly distributed and recombined in the gene pool.

Meanwhile, though, we animals are also quite successful systems. Thereby, we've attracted our own set of parasites: not only clerics but also a huge variety of bacteria and viruses. Now, Dear, my biology is embarrassingly weak, but as you can see even from your dictionary, bacteria are typically "one-celled microorganisms that have no chlorophyll, multiply by simple division, and can cause diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and anthrax" – and the Bubonic Plague (or "Black Death"). Basically, all bacteria need is a host environment on which they can "munch". In contrast, viruses are "capable of multiplying only in connection with living cells and are regarded both as living organisms and as complex proteins..." They cause illnesses in humans from measles to polio and from some cancers to AIDS. And my point in going through that was just this: there is enormous survival advantage for any species to frequently replace individual members with "fresh" new members (parasite-free and different DNA codes, codes that viruses will need to "figure out" how to "crack"), while casting aside old members who succumb to the species' parasites, such as the various bacteria and viruses – and, for that matter, various clerics! That is, again, there's benefit for the survival of any species' genes if their individual hosts have only a finite lifetime – i.e., if individuals (such as people) die.

As for the mechanisms by which individuals die, I leave the topic for you to investigate yourself; I'm certainly no expert on the (dreary!) subject. But assuming that the individual isn't killed in an accident, eaten by a predator (including some bacteria or virus), starved to death, etc., I gather that biologists have concluded that all individuals (save some life, such as bacteria, that don't reproduce sexually) have inherited some "death genes", i.e., genes that basically turn off the life of their host (in my case, with failing eyesight and hearing, poorer muscle control, and as you've no doubt noticed, diminished mental capacity). As Richard Dawkins said: "Death is the first sexually transmitted disease." If such death genes could think and talk, I imagine that they'd say something similar to: "Hey, who needs this host? After it reproduces a few times, trash it – it's just uselessly consuming resources needed for the next generation. Besides, in the choice between immortality and reproduction, sex is a helluva lot more fun!"

For contrast to the above ideas about why people die, ideas derived from a huge quantities of data and whose predictions have been tested innumerable times, think of the stupidity of what's promoted by the damnable Christian (and Muslim and Mormon) clerics:

* Go to other chapters *via*

- “Fear death!” [What’s to fear? You can’t be aware of a lack of awareness!]
- “Do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do. I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Believe me, he is the one to fear.” (*Matthew 10, 28; Luke 12, 4*) [Fear a judgment when you’re dead? Gimme a break!]
- “People die because Adam sinned! If you don’t sin, if you do what we clerics tell you to do, you’ll live forever in paradise.” [Only in your dreams!]
- “Jesus died as an atonement for your sins. And all He asks you to do is just believe that, pay your tithes, and you’ll never die.” [Somebody’s gotta be kidding – or trying to make a fortune running a con game!]

And it’s bad enough that they’re either kidding or running a con game, Dear, but it’s actually much worse, because there’s staggering immorality in what these damnable clerics preach. To see what I mean, let me again quote Massey (referenced earlier in this chapter):

Anyone [any “believer”] who would consent to be saved at the expense of another, and an innocent person [e.g., the clerics’ Jesus], ought only to escape, if at all, because he would not be worth the damning. Far nobler was the teaching of Captain George W. Pendleton of *The Cleopatra*, of Gloucester, Mass. His vessel was doomed and sinking fast, when the boat put off from the *Lord Gough* with a crew that volunteered to try and rescue the shipwrecked man. But with salvation in sight the American captain, by agreement with his men, hauled down his own flag of distress. He thought the boat could live in such a sea. “I said to my men, ‘shall we let those brave fellows risk their lives to save ours?’ and they said ‘No.’ Then I hauled down the flag.” And so they deliberately elected to die first. That was the gospel according to George Pendleton!

But this sacrifice of the innocent to save the guilty – of others instead of self – [as in the NT] is the religion of savages; it belongs to the most benighted conditions of the human race, and as such is doomed to die out of any state of true civilization. The doom of historic Christianity is sealed, because it was based upon dogmas against which the highest instincts of the race will forever rise in insurrection, and doctrines that are certain to be rejected by the growing moral sense of enfranchised humanity.

* Go to other chapters *via*

Meanwhile, though, the clerics' stimulate other emotions (besides fear) in an attempt to fill their coffers. Another is

2) Greed / Selfishness. Depending on a child's experiences in life, sometimes greed surpasses even fear as the primary emotion. And sometimes the greed of children seems to have no bounds: when they identify something they want, they'll commonly go to extraordinary lengths to get more and more. For example, Dear, how is that you would brave even the dark (not to mention all the ghosts and goblins on the streets) to get even more candy on Halloween?! But that's nothing compared to the way Christian (and Muslim and Mormon) clerics manipulate their childish followers' greed. Thus, as reported in *Matthew*, Christ said:

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven.”

So what was Christ preaching? Not generosity but greed! Not to help other humans out of some “goodness” of your “heart” (“Christian charity”!), but so that the giver will get the biggest prize of all (“treasurers in heaven”). So the “Christian thing” to do isn't to give, it's to get! Give a little, to get a lot more back! The Christian-claim that this is generosity is hypocrisy!

But rather than my repeating what I already wrote earlier in this **Qx** about such hypocrisy, let me again quote the amazing Massey.

The Christian scheme of salvation is a false method of dodging the devil at last. People will no longer believe in the lying delusion when once they learn that there is nothing to be got out of it; no good to be gained by it. Its success hitherto has depended on the appeal to selfishness. Next to fear, the chief appeal has been made to the desire for gain. What are considered to be the supreme expressions of Christliness in the Gospels too often denote a low and vulgar type of morality, or they become immoral in their appeal to selfishness.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy...” “Be ye good bankers” is one of the most significant sayings. The appeal is continually made to the sense of personal gain, nonetheless selfish because it is applied to the next world instead of this; on the contrary, it is increased because the promised gain is to be eternal.

You are invited to invest your capital in a bank above [i.e., in heaven] that offers you an eternal interest, and like all bankrupt concerns, deludes the gullible by promising too much profit. Your alms are to be given secretly, and he that seeth in secret will

recompense you. Isn't that calculated to fix one eye on the reward with a leer of cunning in it, as of knowing a good thing when you do see it? One almost expects to see an image of the winking Christ as well as the winking virgin...

But we shall not catch a whale by merely offering a sprat in that way; nor receive a hundred-fold in heaven for all that we may have consciously given up and forgone on earth. All that is but a survival of primitive teachings – the doctrines of the human childhood – an inducement for the individual not to be at war with society or the Church, no matter what laws of nature may have to be sacrificed and violated. And the fact remains to be faced that the teaching is not true.

The meek do not inherit the earth, and are not going to. We are not forgiven because we are forgiving. Nature does not keep her books of account in that way. Nor are we allowed to cook the accounts in any such fashion. Our false teachers have been monstrously mistaken. The Lord of all does not carry on the business of the Universe as an advertised system of Bribes and Fines. We cannot outset on one line of conduct that which we have done on another. No death of Jesus can save us from ourselves.

It was taught that he came to abrogate certain Jewish laws, but no Jesus can upset the natural law of development. What we are now is the result of what we have been, and what we are hereafter will be an evolution from what we are here. There is no dodging the devil of cause and effect. Belief can work no cataclysmal change in death for all the false teaching in the world. No blood of the Lamb will wash out one single internal blot; no tear of pity can make the stained record white. Nothing but life can work any transformation of character here or hereafter; death does not, cannot do it. All such teaching is entirely false...

The orthodox teachings are so false that they have made the utterance of truth a blasphemy, and all the proclaimers of truth blasphemers! Oppose their savage theology, and you are denounced as an Atheist. Expose the folly of their faith, and you are an Infidel all round. Deny their miracles, and they damn your morals.

The Christian scheme, if true, could only lead to eternal wretchedness all round, torments in heaven far worse than all the miseries of hell. Who could be selfishly happy in heaven with a knowledge of everlasting hell?

Which then, Dear, brings me to the third of the primitive emotions that the con-artist clerics manipulate to get power over you and your money, namely,

3) Love / a Sense of Belonging. I expect that I've already written enough (too much?!) on this subject, Dear, but please think about it some more. Think about why children form into cliques and join various clubs and gangs. Think about the many "group rules" that kids willingly accept to gain a feeling of belonging, such as the silly Hebrew, Moslem, and Mormon rules of people changing their names – even (in the case of Mormonism)

taking secret names! Consider intellectual differences between a kid's gang, a street gang, a gang of thieves, and any religious group. Think about how group members ostracize others for failing to conform to "group think".

And though it may be painful, think about how most children react who are threatened with the loss of their mothers' love if they don't "believe" in their mothers' religion. Consider, also, why your parents indoctrinated you with the absurdity that Jesus was the son of some god, when the idea doesn't have a shred of data to support it. In a later chapter (in X2, dealing with "EXcavating Reasons for Religions"), I'll go into some of the many reasons why people "believe" such silliness, but let me just mention here that, similar to the vast majority of people who choose to "believe" their culture's religion, your parents chose to do so simply because they wanted to "belong". We humans are social animals, and the resulting "herd instinct" can be very strong – especially for the insecure and immature.

As with most people, those who are religious just want to feel good and be perceived as "good" – so they sit back and listen to their clerics weave still another fanciful tale, because as children, the people have been trained by their parents to "believe" that that's what "good people" do. And in the case of Christianity (and Islam and Mormonism) of course they like the idea that all they need do, to gain eternal life in paradise, is just get baptized, "believe", and "be good" (i.e., do as their clerics demand). Thereby, through influences from parents, other relatives, friends, and their cultures, people buy into the con game that if they give a little, then they'll get a lot – a whole lot, namely, eternal life in paradise! What such people apparently don't see is that what they gave up was real, whereas what they got, at best, was an illusion (save for the approval from relatives and friends, and thereby a sense of belonging): what the people gave up (besides money to the con-artist clerics) was their volition (yielding to the clerics the right to define their own lives) and what they got in return ranged from the safety of belonging to the "glory" of dying for some "holy war", defined, of course, by the clerics (to protect their con game).

But rather than my writing any more on this topic, let me just quote from an article entitled *Religion and How I Lost It*, written by the former preacher Bob Hypes:⁹

⁹ The article is from the magazine *The Skeptical Review* 1995, No. 1; you can find it on the internet at, e.g., <http://www.infidels.org/library/magazines/tsr/1995/1/1lost95.html>.

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. These lyrics constitute one of my earliest memories of religious instruction or the concept of religion. They may formulate the base experience for many others as well. Even if the song itself does not elucidate such a memory, the concept implied in these lyrics may.

This may comprise the primary religious training of the preschool child, a training based on unqualified love directed from this brotherly figure, Jesus, to the lowly little child, a source of warmth and comfort, a contrast to the child's own fragility. No matter where we go or what we do the rest of our lives, that image will remain in some part of our being. It may be the one feeling that is hardest to shake when we grow to question and doubt this religion called Christianity.

We next learn that God is the creator of all that we behold and all that we will never understand. He is the grandfather many of us never knew or an extension of the grandfather on whose knee we sat when young. We also become aware of God's propensity for wrath, and we are told not to tempt him or displease him. Then we are introduced to the Holy Spirit and the unfathomable tale of the Trinity. That three can equal one is totally outside of our ability to understand. In fact, few, if any, adults can comprehend this one. The story continues to become more muddled and confusing, and yet we are told we must believe, and we oblige. Belief becomes a habit driven by fear of the unknown or the fear of rejection if we doubt or question, so our questions are internalized, and we begin to feel guilt.

We now learn a more rigid set of moral values. We learn that thinking a wrong thing is the same as committing the act. Our guilt grows, and our ability to deal with it overwhelms us. The feelings of inadequacy wash over us, challenging the depth and the coldness of the baptismal immersion. Thoreau said it well: "They think they love God! It is only his old clothes, of which they make scarecrows for the children. Where will they come nearer to God than in those very children?"

Theists base their belief on faith, belief based on emotion and culturalization. When reason and rationale challenge that faith, then the reason can have no value and the rationale must be incorrect. Faith is irrefutable and errorless because it must be in order to validate all in which they believe. They then raise their children into the habit of accepting absurdities, mysteries, convoluted thinking, and supplication. They do this while the children's minds are supple and moldable...

Few Christians can delineate the reasons and evidences for their faith. Almost any attempt to elucidate qualitative responses on the subject elicit catch phrases and incoherent babbling. If one believes, based on naïvety or innocence, it may appear charming or quaint, such as a child believing in Santa Claus. If one believes culturally, because he was raised to believe certain things, it can be understood, even if there is no other basis. If one believes as a result of erroneous information or faulty study, it is lamentable. When one defends, propounds, and propagates such error as

fact and refuses to examine other information objectively, it is intellectually reprehensible...

And whereas I'm growing weary of all of this, let me begin turning it off by quoting from the Epilog of the book *The Fallible Gospels* by Graham Lawrence.¹⁰

Is it unkind, not to leave people with what gives them comfort? Why? If you meet a six-year-old who believes in Santa Claus, that is fine. If you meet a fourteen-year-old who believes in Santa Claus, is it right to leave him with his comforting belief? Isn't there something wrong? Would you not be leaving him with an inappropriate delusion, with inadequate information about how the world works, and preventing his maturing, his personal development?

The idea that leaving people with "comfort" is sufficient justification for behavior is philosophically indefensible. A government that provides the peasants with bread and circuses, or alternatively with some sophisticated daydream technology and happiness chemicals, is providing them with comfort. People have got to grow up, to take responsibility and have the courage to face things. Growing up is tough, but it's the right thing to do. By encouraging people to hide their heads in the sand, we make it impossible for them to hold their heads up high.

Classical Christianity was fine for the childhood of the culture. We have much to thank it for. But we are big boys and girls now, and it's rather sad to be carrying Santa Claus of Nazareth around with us.

It would seem to be difficult to ensure the survival of Christianity among the intelligent by changing its nature, so that it becomes symbolic and ethical rather than superstitious. To deny the literal truth of miraculous events and to replace it with more elusive and difficult symbolism is troublesome, but adult things are always more complicated than childhood things. If Christianity, out of insecurity, hangs on to its insistence on literal historical truths it will deserve to be more and more rejected, instead of being able to be respected in a modern, less naïve world.

Look at the tragedy of the Roman Catholic Church, which presumably could not afford to risk the idea of "symbolizing" the faith. I imagine they see it as the thin end of the wedge, as philosophical suicide. So they still insist on perpetual virginity for Mary, and ascensions and trans-substantiations and infallible Popes, while swimming against the tides of scholarship, science, and society. The role of women in society passes them by: Jesus himself was far more tolerant about women than they are. The idea of a sense of responsibility about population levels (or their effect on the ecosphere) has no impact on any of their pronouncements about birth control. The idea of acknowledging sexual activity outside one marriage, or recognizing the growth in divorce rates and shrinking family sizes even in nominally Catholic

¹⁰ Available at <http://freespace.virgin.net/graham.lawrence/gospelintro.htm>.

countries, has no impact on any sense of compassion or reasonableness; it just makes them dig in their heels and condemn, and contribute even more to feelings of guilt or perpetuating miserable relationships. What matters to them is no longer their own people but only their sense of self-preservation for their own outmoded dogma. The Church, in fact, has overturned the soul of its own founder; it has decided that man was made for the Sabbath and not *vice versa* after all.

Am I “going soft” and allowing Christianity in by the back door, by mentioning a suggestion of symbolizing? Should I now get involved in tolerant and defensive discussion of the acceptability of the “Christ of faith” as opposed to the “Jesus of history”? Not really. I would find it rather cowardly not to be honest about this. A Jesus who lives in your heart and your mind only lives there. He doesn’t “really” live somewhere else, in a place called heaven. Talking with him in prayer is just a kind of socially acceptable madness. A car sticker that says “Jesus loves you” makes as much sense as one that says “Caesar wants your taxes.”

As a final thought from me about all this Christian (and Muslim and Mormon) childishness, I can’t help thinking: pity the poor people! In these religions, the two primary “commandments” are that the people are to obey and that they are to feel (or hold, or possess, or create, or stimulate...) an emotion. Pity there wasn’t a rational person within Christ’s inner circle of confidants; if there were, who knows what wondrous things humans might have accomplished if, ~2,000 years ago, one of Christ’s disciples had said something similar to the following.

“Hey, there, Christ buddy, hold on a bit. Whatcha doin’ commanding people how to feel. People just feel, period. You don’t tell somebody to love something: either they love it or they don’t. Same with hate. Those are feelings that people have. They just have them. Such feelings summarize what people have experienced. I tell you: I’ve got a neighbor that even YOU would hate; the guy’s a rotten bastard. Oh sure, I can fake love for that bastard, but my true feelings ain’t gonna change. If you tell people that they gotta feel a certain way, you’re just gonna tie them in knots.

“Look, if you’re gonna command people to love something, why not at least choose something that most people already like: how about telling them to love sunsets, or maybe rainbows, or how about lemon-meringue pie. Yah, I could go for that one; Lord but I love lemon-meringue pie; you know that dinner bash you’re plannin’, well how about...”

Sorry, Dear, sometimes I get carried away. Let me try something else. For example, how about the “Golden Rule” as given by *Matthew 7, 12*:

“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

Now, at first glance, that might seem to be a fairly good rule to live by, but as I’ve suggested before (in **L**), compare it with a similar suggestion made hundreds of years earlier by Aristotle (384-322 BCE): “We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us.” Even earlier, from Confucius (555-479 BCE), there’s: “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” Now, Dear, if you’ll examine those three thoughts (as I encouraged you to do in an earlier chapter), you’ll see some significant differences.

Personally, I prefer the code given by Confucius: he recommended constraint – don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you. But Aristotle’s is good, too; but notice that he restricted his recommendation to dealings with friends: that’s a critical difference. And then there’s the statement that the clerics claim was made by Jesus, which if true, suggests a “busy body” and of considerably lower intellect than Confucius and Aristotle. Would that one of Christ’s buddies would have chirped in:

“Hey, Christ, what’s all this about poking your nose into other people’s business. Are you sure you want to say that? Why not just use what that Greek guy said or what that Chinaman concocted.”

That the injunction from the clerics’ Jesus is derived from someone of lower intellect is equally clear: it’s dumb to suggest that you know what the other person wants / needs / should be given. Thus, to “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” I wish one of the disciples would have butted in with:

“But, but... Jesus Christ, wait a minute. That could be horrible. It could be rotten. You’re preachin’ love, but this practice of butting into other peoples’ affairs could be horribly hateful. I mean, maybe you would like me to throw your piece of lemon-meringue pie in the trash (‘cause you’re gettin’ so damn fat), but you so much as put a finger on mine and I’m gonna trash you, fella. But out! For God’s sake, man, screw your brains back in.”

Yet, there's little doubt that the idea promoted by the clerics' Jesus wasn't to "but out" but to "but in". As reported in *Matthew*, Jesus (the "Prince of Peace") added: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you..." and the famous "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" and "judge not, that ye be not judged." Pity a disciple didn't challenge this junk:

"Christ, ya gotta take it easier; you've had a rough day; just rest there for awhile; stop talkin' and, for a change, try listening. You say you're preachin' peace, but if you think about it for a while, you'll see that what you're preachin' leads to war. Now, I grant you that if every single human behaved the way you want, then it would work, but in the real world, your way has less chance than a snowball in hell. Look: all it takes is for one human to choose otherwise, and your whole scheme falls apart. Follow this:

"All it takes is one human to see that he or she can win by taking rather than giving. He swats you on your right cheek and takes your wallet, and you preach turning the other cheek and giving the bandit your means of transportation. With that success, the bandit moves onto the next victim and grabs land, a home, and murders any members of the family whom he doesn't feel like using. And so on. Next he takes over a whole town. When the regional authorities get wind of it, they remember "judge not", and give the thief the region. And after he takes the region, he takes the whole nation, no doubt with some fool waving a paper and saying "Peace in our time." What then if he decides to eliminate an entire race, such as the Jewish people?

"But in this real world, somewhere in all of it, someone will see the stupidity in your scheme: that it's not for this world. Then what? The people will finally react against the tyrant. So, then, what's the sum of your preaching? With your kind of peace, by convincing the first guy to turn the other cheek and with your rot about "judge not", then what should have stopped when the first victim slapped back, ended up in a World War. No "Prince of Peace" would preach pacifism. Pacifism leads to war. I know that you have the best of intentions, but let me tell you something: the road to hell is paved with good intentions."

"For God's sake, Christ, come off it. How about tryin' another approach? Look, these people have problems – real problems. How

about if we try to help them? To alleviate hunger and thirst, how about if we check out those new ideas about drip irrigation? And you know, I've heard some amazing stuff about a new type of steam engine developed by that fellow Hero of Alexandria: maybe we could look into scarin' up some venture capital to fund constructing a machine, using his idea with some of Archimedes' ideas, that could plow some of those unused tracts – maybe we could call it a tractor. And as for light in the darkness, have you heard about some of the new stuff done with lodestone? Some guy swears he saw a spark when he moved a needle rapidly near one of those stones. Perhaps by spinning wire around lodestone, maybe using a steam engine or maybe just using a water wheel, we could get enough sparks to generate light – real light, not just more platitudes.

“And as for the troubled and the fearful, why don't we first try to understand the cause (there's potentially a new field of knowledge, here, analyzing the psyche – maybe we could call it psychoanalysis) and then try to do something to alleviate the cause: better working rules, less violence, a social-security system, more police protection, and so on. And as for their fear of death, after we've done all we can to improve medical care for everyone, why don't we try to educate the people, so that they'll see that they're just part of nature, and as such, death is what it should be. Especially try to teach the youngster's not to fear death (except insofar as that fear will encourage them to be more careful); death is primarily a concern of old people, and with age and education, most old people develop sufficient wisdom to deal with their death.”

Would that such a person would have corrected Christ! Instead, for 2,000 years now, the Christian churches have promoted Christ's crap, preying on childish fear, greed, stupidity, and schizophrenia, especially of the poorest and dumbest in their congregations, turning them all into hypocrites and tying the most intelligent of the congregations into double binds.

Which leads me to my last set of “Christian” limericks:

*Although Christ warned that we'd go to hell
Just for saying “Thou fool”, I must tell:
He didn't say this
To promote human bliss,
But to silence his critics – and well!*

*Although Jesus said he was, no less,
Than the son of the Great Holiness;
I'm still at a loss:
Was some blood from a cross
The best cleanser for cleaning God's mess?!*

*Although Christ claimed that he was the son
Of a God who was second to none,
With his preaching of sorrow
And still more for tomorrow,
What's the good of a God who's no fun!?*

*Although Christ loved to say the word "verily"
Yet he never did utter it merrily;
With gnashing of teeth
And bitch, bitch, bitch, beef
As a model of man he did terribly!*

*Although Jesus required they give,
And their enemies they should forgive,
While he had their attention
He neglected to mention
The purpose of life is to live!*

And to promote that, little one, you otta get some exercise!