

## *Yx32 – Clerical Quackery 12 – The Corporate Christ*

This is the 32<sup>nd</sup> in a series of posts dealing with the history of what I call “the God Lie”, the 12<sup>th</sup> in a subseries of posts dealing with Clerical Quackery, and my third and final post dealing with clerical quackery in concocting Christianity. In the prior two posts, I tried to outline how Christianity was concocted from a variety of available ingredients and how a new group of clerics claimed “authority” over “the supernatural” (and more importantly, over people) by composing myths about a personal “savior”, called Jesus the Christ. In this post, I’ll try to at least sketch how and why “the Corporate Christ” (or “Christ Incorporated”) emerged, i.e., how a new breed of clerics sold and eventually amassed enormous wealth and power promoting their confidence scheme (or “con game”).

In a nutshell, gullible people bought into the Christian con game, because what the con-artist clerics were selling was consistent with what a large fraction of all people, especially effeminate people, desired. The desire arose because evolution “genetically programmed” social animals (such as people) to be kind and to help one another, especially those needing help in birthing and raising offspring.

When it was seen that some people didn’t behave similarly and yet seemed to gain from their “selfish” behavior and, simultaneously, when people were unable to see that their own “unselfish” behavior actually did have its own “selfish” rewards (*via* “**what goes around comes back around**”), then people concluded that justice (which nature “teaches” everyone)<sup>1</sup> demanded that they should be rewarded for their “altruistic” behavior. Consequently, when a group of con artists offered an absolutely fantastic reward (namely, eternal life in paradise) simply for behaving in a normal, social manner (plus, of course, paying 10% of their income to the con artists!), then people leapt (and still leap) at the opportunity.

Still more was (and continues to be) offered by Christian con artists. If people realized that they hadn’t always been altruistic (or worse, had behaved in a manner that evolution and social conditioning had taught them was immoral), the clerics offered the people a “clean slate”, wiping sins clean, being “born again”, *via* a contrived ceremony called baptism.

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., <http://zenofzero.net/docs/J2JusticeandMorality.pdf>.

Further, as an added “come on”, the clerics guaranteed that no less than the creator of the universe would love them, protect them, and provide for them for eternity (and all the more so, if people made additional contributions to the clerics’ collection plates). As a result, the people most susceptible to the Christian con were (and still are) the poor, the stressed, the losers (including alcohol and drug addicts), the poorly educated, and those with overly sensitive emotions and underdeveloped abilities to think critically.

Below, I’ll try to sketch at least a little of the development of the Christian con during its first few hundred years. The sketch suggests that, similar to all clerics before and since, the real god that Christian clerics worshiped (and still worship) is power (preferably in the form of money). To gain a clearer and more complete picture of the resultant “Corporate Christ”, I recommend that the reader consult any of a huge number of books written by competent historians; my training and career were in the physical sciences. A book that I found to be especially illuminating, recommend to the reader, and will frequently quote in this post is the 1902 online book<sup>2</sup> by John M. Robertson entitled *A Short History of Christianity*.

### IN THE BEGINNING...

Originally, Christianity appears to have been<sup>3</sup> just another sect of Judaism, which is another religion based on the wild speculation that some “god” created the universe and which in turn (as I’ve tried to outline in earlier posts in this series) was derived from data-less speculations by the Persian mystic Zarathustra. Additional speculations incorporated into the Christian sect seem to have been promoted among:

- The Jewish sect called the Essenes (whose Dead Sea Scrolls show that they longed for “a teacher of righteousness”),
- A sect called the Nazarenes (which might have been an offshoot of the Essenes, with the word *nazar* meaning ‘branch’ or ‘sprout’ and which has nothing to do with a town called Nazareth, which probably didn’t exist during the alleged lifetime of Jesus), and
- A sect called the Ebionites (from the Hebrew word *Ebionim*, meaning “the poor” and one of whose saying probably was “**blessed are the poor**”).

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://englishatheist.org/killing/>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split\\_of\\_early\\_Christianity\\_and\\_Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_of_early_Christianity_and_Judaism).

As Robertson further points out:<sup>4</sup>

[The Ebionites] used a form of the *Gospel of Matthew* lacking the first two chapters [dealing with the Christ's alleged "virgin birth" and associated astrological nonsense associated with the start of the Age of Pisces, the fish], denied the divinity of Jesus, and rejected the apostleship of Paul...

Paul (or Saul of Tarsus, c.5 BCE – c.67 CE) became famous (or, some would say, "notorious" – if they agree that he ever existed!) for contaminating non-Jews (or "Gentiles") with the idea of a Jewish "savior".

So long as any Jewish sect emphasized a savior for the Jewish people (at least, a savior for those Jews who resented both other Jewish sects, including the Sadducees and the Pharisees, as well as domination by first the Greeks and then the Romans), the rest of the world would probably have been relatively immune from Jewish balderdash about a supernatural savior. Paul, however, unfortunately decided (against the apparent opposition of at least the Ebionites) that his phantom Jesus (seen only in a "vision") wasn't just a savior for the Jews but for everyone, saving us from our "original sin" of being related to Adam – but (as I've detailed elsewhere)<sup>5</sup> apparently not saving converts from mentally debilitating balderdash.

In defense of Paul's depicted character, I'll add that, similar to Jesus (if he existed), possibly Muhammad, and the probable creator of Mormonism (Sidney Rigdon), Paul seems to have been not overly concerned about making a fortune for himself (although, similar to the others mentioned, he undoubtedly found preaching easier than working for a living). Instead (similar to the others mentioned), he obviously sought power over people and, almost certainly, he was mentally imbalanced. As an illustration of Paul's mental condition, at *Romans 11*, 33 he exclaims:

O depth of wealth, wisdom, and knowledge in God! How unsearchable his judgments, how untraceable his ways! Who knows the mind of the Lord?

And yet, in the rest of his letters (or "Epistles"), Paul proceeds to explain God's "unsearchable judgments" and his "untraceable... ways", thereby demonstrating Paul's "thinking" that he "knows the mind of the Lord" – but not his own!

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<sup>4</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/>.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., [http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ox13\\_New\\_Testament\\_Injustices.pdf](http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ox13_New_Testament_Injustices.pdf).

In earlier chapters,<sup>6</sup> I already criticized Paul's concoction, now known as Christianity (but which, more accurately, should be called "Paulism"). Here, therefore, I'll simply quote a little of the criticism of Paulism contained in Graham Lawrence's recent book *The Fallible Gospels* (which was formerly available on the web):

Paul is really a dreadful cheat about this concept of faith, avoiding definition and moving the theological goalposts to suit his purpose. To the Jews, faith had been trust in their God to guide the destiny of their nation as the Chosen People. To Paul, faith meant completely uncritical acceptance of what Paul said God had done and what Paul said the crucifixion and resurrection meant. Faith essentially meant loyalty and obedience to him, not just trust in and devotion to God.

Paul cheats because, by using the same word, 'faith', faiths in entirely different things are identified and given the same status and significance. Paul points out that Abraham was "justified" by God because of his faith (*Rom. 4, 1–5*); he could not have been justified by the Law of Moses because he predated Moses. Paul's logic is that you, too, are therefore justified by faith, made into a just person and given a new status in the eyes of God. The trouble is, he meant that you are justified by your faith in Jesus, as interpreted by Paul.

This contains a hole sufficiently large for me to drive a logical coach and four horses through without brushing the sides. Just as Abraham predated Moses, he predated Jesus. If Abraham was justified by faith before the crucifixion and resurrection [of Jesus], then you don't need to know about or believe in the crucifixion and resurrection to be saved, in exactly the same way and for exactly the same reason that you do not need the Law of Moses.

Paul would no doubt have reacted with anger and contempt to such an argument, as he would not have been able to counter its logic. There is ample evidence that he was not impressed by logic or by rational or intellectual knowledge (*Rom. 1, 21–22; Col. 2, 8; I Cor. 1, 19–21; 3, 18–19; 13, 8*). This is hardly surprising, as it was sometimes used to make a fool out of him; Paul did not do well against the philosophers of Athens (*Acts 17, 17–18; 17, 32*). He was not a stupid man, but he was so utterly convinced about his revelation that rationality was beside the point, completely irrelevant in comparison.

Ultimately, no matter how many millions of followers accept the words of any religious leader, no one can demonstrate any method of proving that what their particular leader said or believed is true or correct. Christianity must inevitably rest upon the irrational foundation of indefensible faith.

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<sup>6</sup> Starting at [http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ox13\\_New\\_Testament\\_Injustices.pdf](http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ox13_New_Testament_Injustices.pdf).

## THE INITIAL SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

As I outlined above and in the two prior posts, there appear to have been many reasons why non-Jewish people were susceptible to Paul's concoction and the resulting Christian con. The reasons include the following.

- Throughout the Roman Empire, superstition was rampant, including astrological nonsense and silly speculations that things called "gods" actually existed.
- Christianity provided people with an opportunity to join a peaceful, protective, helpful group to propitiate "supernatural" powers (e.g., with a communal meal), with the propitiation apparently especially important when the alignment of the planets Jupiter and Saturn (representing Jesus and Yahweh, respectively) indicated the end of the old Age of Aries and the beginning of the new Age of Pisces – which Paul interpreted to mean the end of the world.
- For good reasons, people who weren't warriors were especially fearful (afraid not only of their own deaths but also because it was a brutal time period, with thieves, thugs, and wars almost everywhere); therefore, the people (especially women and effeminate men) were susceptible to offers of a personal savior, especially one who (so it was claimed) offered life after death.
- People who were failures or felt guilt from prior behavior welcomed the opportunity to have a new beginning, with their "sins washed clean" in a baptismal ceremony, then to be accepted by the group as "good people".
- The poor and the downtrodden (including women and slaves) were especially receptive even to hints that they might find relief by joining the new religion. If nothing else, followers had a new leader, and they apparently could convince themselves that their new leader (Jesus) not only considered them important but even loved them.
- In its simplest form, Christianity had a powerful and valuable social message: we should love one another. As I already mentioned and as I've reviewed in earlier chapters<sup>7</sup> and earlier posts,<sup>8</sup> such reciprocal altruism is "genetically programmed" in all social animals (such as dolphins, elephants, monkeys, and humans); therefore, regardless of its superfluous balderdash dealing with "gods" and "the supernatural", the Christian message resonated in the minds of new recruits.

In brief, what Christianity offered was pure Zoroastrianism (including the speculation that everyone has a critical role in the ongoing "cosmic battle" between good and evil, with everlasting consequences in heaven or hell), but

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<sup>7</sup> For example, start at <http://zenofzero.net/docs/KindnesswithKeeness.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> For example, start at <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/2009/01/law-lie-1-morality.html>.

without the racism that Ezra added to create Judaism and without the warrior culture of Mithraism (another offshoot of Zoroastrianism, which was spread by Roman soldiers and was the main rival to Christianity during its first three centuries).

### Initial Organizational Structure

Although historical evidence is scant and of doubtful veracity, probably the most critical step in the spread of Christianity during its first century was its adoption of the organizational structure developed by the Greek Mystery religions and also used by the dominant Jewish sects (the Sadducees and the Pharisees). In turn, probably the most important aspects of this adopted organizational structure dealt with funding and with weekly assemblies of “believers”, either in private residences or at synagogues (from the Greek prefix *syn-* meaning ‘together’ and *agein*, ‘bring’). As Robertson describes:<sup>9</sup>

The Greek societies gave a model to the early Christian churches in more than one point of organization, most of them having had “presbyters” and a “bishop” (*episcopos*), and some being called “synagogues”, a term synonymous with *ecclesia* [i.e., ‘assembly’ or ‘church’].

The Jewish Christian sect apparently applied the funding scheme used by priests of the Jewish Temple. Thus, under Greek rule, when the Jews migrated to other areas (e.g., to the city of Alexandria), the Jewish priesthood sent “apostles” (from the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning ‘messenger’) to collect “tributes” or tithes to fund the Temple and its priests. There were 12 principal apostles, one for each of the 12 Jewish tribes (in turn, one for each sign of the zodiac). This Jewish organizational structure continued during Roman rule but became essentially independent of Temple priests after the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE. Copying the older administrative structure, the Jewish Christian sect identified its own 12 apostles and had its own requests for revenue.

### Ruptures over Raptures

Yet, although the original Christianity was just another Jewish sect, rupture of relations between the Christian and other Jewish sects was apparently inevitable, not only from disagreements about whether or not “the savior” had appeared but also from diverging opinions about the meaning of “saved”, i.e., “rapture time”!

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<sup>9</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/>.

For the older Jewish sects (continuing with the traditional Jewish emphasis on family and tribe) a “savior” was to save the Jewish nation. [A similar tradition, emphasizing family and tribe has continued into Islam.] For the new Jewish sect, however (i.e., the Christians), having apparently adopted “foreign” ideas about individualism, being “saved” was as Zarathustra had originally speculated, i.e., not for the tribe or nation but for the individual.

The resulting schism led not only to expulsion of members of the Christian sect from Jewish synagogues, but in accordance with the “laws of Moses” about promoting any new religion, it apparently led to a Jewish campaign to exterminate Christians. As examples, according to Paul before his conversion to Christianity (or his creation of “Paulism”) he was among the Jews who persecuted Christians, and *Acts* tells of the stoning to death of “Saint” Steven and the decapitation of “Saint” James, son of Zebedee, who became known as the first Christian martyrs.

### Friction Between Jewish and Gentile Christians

Friction also developed between Gentile-converts to Christianity and the original Jewish Christians, the latter including Peter (or *Cephas*, “the rock”) and James the Just, who continued to follow “the laws of Moses”, e.g., dealing with circumcision and diet. Evidence for such friction is available in some of Paul’s letters (if they can be trusted as historically reliable). For example, at *Galatians 2, 9*, Paul claims that an agreement was reached between him and the “original apostles”:

Recognizing, then, the favor thus bestowed upon me [Paul; viz., his vision of Jesus], those reputed pillars of our society, James, Cephas [Peter], and John [“reputed pillars”?!] accepted Barnabas [Paul’s cohort] and myself as partners, and shook hands upon it, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles while they went to the Jews. All they asked was that we should keep their poor in mind, which is the very thing I made it my business to do.

Incidentally, notice that these “original apostles” (James, Peter, and John) gave permission for Paul to proceed to recruit Gentiles – provided that Paul kept the money flowing “back home”. Subsequently, however, dissension developed (*1 Galatians 2, 11*):

But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I [Paul] opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. For until certain persons came from James, he was taking his meals with gentile Christians; but when they came, he drew back and began to hold aloof, because he was afraid of the advocates of circumcision.

## Heated Arguments from Internal Friction

At *2 Corinthians 11, 5*, after listing his claimed accomplishments, Paul adds (according to the *Today's English Version of the Bible*):

I do not think that I am the least bit inferior to those very special so-called ["so-called"!] **apostles of yours!**

And at *2 Corinthians 11, 13*, Paul goes ballistic:

**Such men are sham apostles, crooked in all their practices, masquerading as apostles of Christ.**

Obviously, then, serious friction developed between the Gentile and Jewish Christians, and for Paul to describe Peter et al. as “**reputed pillars of our society**”, “**so-called apostles**”, and “**sham apostles**” (when they were allegedly commissioned by Jesus), shows that Paul’s faith had degenerated into fanaticism, unfortunately a common fate of religious people who are mentally deficient or disturbed.

## Animosities Between Christians & Jews

As the Christian sect grew, animosities grew also between it and the main, surviving, Jewish sect (the Pharisees, whose beliefs formed the basis for Rabbinic Judaism).<sup>10</sup> As Robertson summarizes:<sup>11</sup>

The relation of Judaism to Jesuism [Christianity], then, was somewhat as that of a mother country to a colony; the later growing by help of the former, deriving from it speech, lore, ideals, methods, models, and prestige, till in time the new environment elicits special characteristics, and mere geographical division no less than self-interest vetoes the payment of the old tribute. As usual, there was in the colony a loyalist party [consisting of Peter et al.] which bitterly resisted the severance.

Evidence for the clashes between the Pharisees and the Christians appears in subsequent Christian literature, e.g., with statements such as (*Matthew 23*): “**Alas for you, lawyers and Pharisees, hypocrites that you are... You snakes, you viper’s brood...**” (allegedly said the hypocrite Jesus, after telling others to love their enemies). Worse appears at *Matthew 27, 26*, where the author concocts the story that, after the conviction and sentencing of Jesus, the assembled Jews allegedly said: “**His blood be on us and our children.**”

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<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharisees>.

<sup>11</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/>.

That single line [almost certainly written by a Jewish Greek sometime after the Temple's destruction in 70 CE, whose probability of accurately reflecting history is essentially zero, and which was probably written as an *ex-post-facto* (i.e., fake) “prophecy” of the Temple's destruction] arguably led to the murder of at least ten million Jews during the subsequent 2,000 years, with Christian blaming Jews for the death of Jesus. Even for Christian simpletons, however, that concept is ridiculous, since Jesus was allegedly a god, and gods (allegedly being immortal) don't die – they just vanish when they're exposed to even a whiff of common sense.<sup>12</sup>

## GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

In spite of animosities against them, the new Jewish Christian sect grew relatively rapidly: because of its organizational structure, because (as already mentioned) it promoted messages that Gentiles were willing to buy (without the need to follow the details of Jewish law, especially the hideous policy of circumcision – probably originally established to remind men what pain the priests could cause if they were disobeyed), and because promoting the new religion (proselytizing) was part of the new sect's creed (whereas, in contrast, other religions not only didn't try to recruit members, but most established major barriers to entrance, e.g., the stringent initiation processes of the Mystery religions). Therefore, essentially the only impediment experienced by the Christian hustlers was people's reluctance to buy into a new con game.

The resulting growth of Christianity was, however, not so surprisingly large as might at first be expected from the estimate that it grew from a few hundred people to some number of millions during its first 300 years; instead, the result follows from simple mathematics. Thus, during the initial growth phase (before the market started to saturate with the new product!), then consistent with the proselytizing mandate, the incremental change in the number of adherents,  $dN$ , during any short time interval,  $dt$ , would be proportional to the current number of adherents,  $N$  (i.e.,  $dN = g N dt$ , where  $g$  is a proportionality constant, known as the growth rate). Solving the resulting differential equation reveals that the growth is exponential. That is, if the number of Christians at time zero was  $N_0$ , then the number at any time,  $t$ , would be given by  $N = N_0 \exp ( g t )$ .

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/1hHypothesesandProbabilities.pdf>.

For example, to grow from, say, a hundred people to a million people in 300 years (or from a thousand to ten million in the same time period) required a growth rate  $g = [\ln(N/N_0)] / t = [\ln(10^4)] / (300 \text{ yrs})$ , i.e., a growth rate of approximately only 3% per year, which isn't very impressive: it would mean only that, on average, every 100 people would need to convert (or "contaminate") only 3 additional people per year.

### Marketing Christianity

Although the rate of growth of the number of Christians wasn't very impressive, the con artists promoting Christianity displayed substantial marketing skills. Not only did they manipulate their pitch to fit local tastes, they incorporated many of their competitors "come-ons", including baptism (performed for thousands of years, with records of baptism in Sumerian and ancient Egyptian literature), special symbols (such as the cross, which Egyptians had used for thousands of years, first as the *ankh* and then to represent the pre-Christian "cult of the cross"), communal, sacrificial meals (rituals practiced by polytheists for at least the prior 5,000 years), festival and holy days [such as at the summer and winter solstices (with the winter solstice being the celebrated birthday of Mithra) and the spring and autumn equinoxes (with the celebration of "rebirth" in the spring equinox being celebrated for at least 5,000 years before Christianity)], and "passion plays" (e.g., dealing with the god Dionysus). In particular, following the Greeks whose theatrical productions were renowned for at least 500 years, the Christians apparently put on skits or plays to promote their religion.

So long as Christianity's growth was primarily from among the poor and illiterate, copying pagan rituals and producing plays or skits were probably sufficient to "entertain the masses". To fill leadership positions in the new Church with intellectuals, however, a literature base for the new religion was apparently deemed necessary. Of course, the Christians had a major "leg up" on competing pagan religions, since the Christians had what was almost certainly the most widely distributed tract of religious writing available in the Roman Empire (namely, the Jewish Bible); yet, Christian intellectuals apparently decided that literature focused on the new creed would be useful. As a result, during the time period from roughly 50–150 CE the myth-writing phase of the new religion got underway in earnest, with the myths apparently derived in part from the Jewish Bible (as illustrated in the previous post) and in part from the skits or plays that were produced for the masses.

### Mystery Plays for the Masses

It's commonly suggested that "the Nativity play" (dealing with the alleged virgin-birth of Jesus, a play that's still performed in most Christian schools by elementary-school children near the time of every winter solstice) and "the Passion play" (e.g., dealing with the alleged death of Jesus, as portrayed in Mel Gibson's hideous movie) were first performed in the Middle Ages.<sup>13</sup> It seems highly likely, however, that such skits were actually performed even before the scripts were written into the Gospels of the New Testament (NT)! Thus, as Robertson describes in some detail,<sup>14</sup> many scenes described in Matthew and Luke make sense only if it's assumed that they were essentially actors' scripts for non-historical events (e.g., the "virgin birth" of Jesus and his "resurrection" after death) and for obviously impossible-to-record dialogues and monologues (e.g., between Gabriel and Mary as well as the prayers of the isolated Jesus to his fictitious god). No doubt the plays were entertaining to the generally illiterate audiences (who could, nonetheless, easily follow the jumps in dialogues and rapid changes in scenes), but the result is that, for approximately 2,000 years, Christians have been worshiping characters (Jesus, Mary, Gabriel...) of stage plays, similar to how many TV and movie actors are "worshipped" today!

And just as today, people who were especially emotional seem to have been particularly impressed by the supernatural, fictional aspects of Jesus' birth and death. Those stories (derived from earlier pagan stories) coupled with messages to help the poor and oppressed and to love one another, apparently stimulated many women and effeminate men to embrace the new religion – and one another (literally and figuratively). For the Christian clerics, such reactions were a financial "godsend" (although Paul, for example at *1 Corinthians 5*, complained about the resulting debauchery at the church meetings), since some of the women so enamored had control of substantial wealth (e.g., from husbands who had been killed in Roman wars). As Robertson summarizes:

An important source of income from an early stage was the munificence of the rich women converts; and insofar as the Christist movement stood for a restraint on sexual license, it doubtless gained from the moral bias as well as from the superstition of women of the upper and middle classes throughout the empire. The richer women were indeed made to feel that it was their duty to make "oblations" in proportion to their means...

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity\\_play](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_play).

<sup>14</sup> At <http://englishatheist.org/killing/part1.htm>.

On the other hand, then as now, the giving of alms to the poor was a means of enlisting the sympathetic support of serious women; and the Christists here had a lead not only from oriental example in general and that of later Judaism in particular, but from the policy of food-doles now systematically pursued in the Roman empire. The later epistles show that much was made of the good offices of “widows”, who themselves poor and wholly or partly supported by the congregations, would serve as comforters of suffering or bereaved members, and ministrants to the sick.

### THE SLIPPERY SLOPE FROM FANTASY TO FANATICISM

Two posts ago I quoted the c.111 CE letter from the governor of Bithynia (present-day northwestern Turkey), Pliny the Younger, to the Roman emperor Trajan. If the letter is authentic, it provides an early indication of the nature of Christianity, describing it as a “contagious superstition”. Yet, to the Christians, their beliefs seemed, not only innocent, but commendable. As Pliny allegedly wrote:

They [the Christians] affirmed, however, the whole of their guilt, or their error, was that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food – but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your orders, I had forbidden political associations. I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses, but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition.

But whereas the Roman authorities considered refusal to honor the state gods to be treason (as did the earlier Greeks, who therefore executed Socrates), Pliny allegedly states:

I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it I repeated the question twice again, adding the threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For whatever the nature of their creed might be, I could at least feel not doubt that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy deserved chastisement.

A synonym for “inflexible obstinacy” is ‘fanaticism’, and similar to the Jews during the Maccabean Revolt (167–165 BCE), the Christian “martyrs” convinced themselves that dying for their religion guaranteed them eternal

life in paradise (just as Islamic fanatics later did – and still do). Thus, as Ignatius, the third Bishop of Antioch,<sup>15</sup> allegedly wrote on his way to being martyred in the Coliseum at Rome, in about 108 CE:

I am writing to all the Churches and I enjoin all, that I am dying willingly for God's sake, if only you do not prevent it. I beg you, do not do me an untimely kindness. Allow me to be eaten by the beasts, which are my way of reaching to God. I am God's wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become the pure bread of Christ.

After a century and more of the murder of such “martyrs” (the total number of whom is now essentially impossible to determine, but there's no doubt that the total number is vastly smaller than the number of “heathens” killed by the Christians once they gained power), Tertullian (c.160 – 220 CE, “the father of Latin Christianity”)<sup>16</sup> wrote the following,<sup>17</sup> which basically says “bring it on”:

...go zealously on... you will stand higher with the people if you sacrifice the Christians at their wish, kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust; your injustice is the proof that we are innocent... your cruelty, however exquisite, [doesn't] avail you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed...

That very obstinacy you rail against is the preceptress. For who that contemplates it, is not excited to inquire what is at the bottom of it? who, after inquiry, does not embrace our doctrines? and when he has embraced them, desires not to suffer that he may become partaker of the fullness of God's grace, that he may obtain from God complete forgiveness, by giving in exchange his blood? For that secures the remission of all offenses.

And apparently the result was as Tertullian suggested: rather than the resulting execution of Christians diminishing membership in the cult, their self-designated “baptism in blood” apparently led to increased interest in Christianity, presumably because simple people began to wonder what could be so important in the new cult that members would willingly choose death rather than abandon it. Similar fascination with martyrdom persists to this day, as evidenced by current interest in Islam by simpletons because of the fanaticism of their “holy warriors”.

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<sup>15</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius\\_of\\_Antioch\\_-\\_Letters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius_of_Antioch_-_Letters).

<sup>16</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>.

<sup>17</sup> From <http://www.mortalresurrection.com/2010/02/06/the-blood-of-the-martyrs/>.

Thereby, what religion amply reveals is a fundamental flaw in the minds of apparently the majority of humans: of course willingness to die for a belief isn't a flaw (all humans probably consider such willingness to be perhaps the single most honorable trait of humans); the flaw is in basing beliefs not on evidence but on desires. In brief, Jews, Christians, Muslims et al. desire to live forever; therefore, they believe they can; consequently, they're willing to die as martyrs to do so.

Stated differently, without a shred of evidence to support their beliefs, religious fanatics believe that, by dying (e.g., as Jewish zealots, as Christian martyrs, or as Muslim *mujahideen*), they'll live forever in paradise. Meanwhile, for those of us whose brains are still functioning, we judge that, if you're willing to die fighting for the freedom of your family and society, then honor is your due. But if you're willing to die so you'll live forever, then you're a religious fanatic, you have a serious mental problem, you've lost touch with reality – in a word, you're bonkers.

Reality tries to teach all of us, every day of our lives, that we should hold beliefs only as strongly as relevant evidence warrants. Unfortunately, however, religious people choose to ignore reality and to live in a world of “make believe”.

Illustrative of such make believe are the ideas promoted by “the Church Father” Tertullian in the following quotation, which is an abbreviation of the summary given in the Wikipedia article on Tertullian:<sup>18</sup>

1. The soul was not preexistent, as Plato affirmed, nor subject to metempsychosis or reincarnation, as the Pythagoreans held. In each individual it is a new product, proceeding equally with the body from the parents, and not created later and associated with the body (*De anima, xxvii*). This position is called traducianism in opposition to ‘creationism’, or the idea that each soul is a fresh creation of God. For Tertullian the soul is, however, a distinct entity and a certain corporeity and as such it may be tormented in Hell (*De anima, lviii*).
2. The soul's sinfulness is easily explained by its traducian origin (*De anima, xxxix*). It is in bondage to Satan (whose works it renounces in baptism), but has seeds of good (*De anima, xli*), and when awakened, it passes to health and at once calls upon God (*Apol., xvii*) and is naturally Christian. It exists in all men alike; it is a culprit and yet an unconscious witness by its impulse to worship, its fear of demons, and its musings

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<sup>18</sup> At <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>.

on death to the power, benignity, and judgment of God as revealed in the Christian's Scriptures (*De testimonio*, v-vi).

- God, who made the world out of nothing through his Son, the Word, has corporeity though he is a spirit (*De praescriptione*, vii; *Adv. Praxeam*, vii)...
- The Son is distinct from the Father, and the Spirit from both the Father and the Son (*Adv. Praxeam*, xxv). “These three are one substance, not one person; and it is said, ‘I and my Father are one’ in respect not of the singularity of number but the unity of the substance.” The very names ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ indicate the distinction of personality. The Father is one, the Son is one, and the Spirit is one (*Adv. Praxeam*, ix).
- In soteriology [the doctrine of salvation] Tertullian does not dogmatize, he prefers to keep silence at the mystery of the cross (*De Patientia*, iii). The sufferings of Christ's life as well as of the crucifixion are efficacious to redemption. In the water of baptism, which (upon a partial quotation of *John 3:5*) is made necessary (*De baptisate*, vi.), we are born again...
- With reference to the “rule of faith”, it may be said that Tertullian is constantly using this expression, and by it means now the authoritative tradition handed down in the Church, now the Scriptures themselves, and, perhaps, a definite doctrinal formula. While he nowhere gives a list of the books of Scripture, he divides them into two parts and calls them the *instrumentum* and *testamentum* (*Adv. Marcionem*, iv.1). He distinguishes between the four Gospels and insists upon their apostolic origin as accrediting their authority (*De praescriptione*, xxxvi; *Adv. Marcionem*, iv.1–5)...

And in case readers didn't follow all of that [gobbledygook!], a synopsis is the following: without a shred of evidence to support his claims, Tertullian (similar to all religionists, before and since) proposed a bunch of meaningless crap that isn't worth the electromagnetic excitations used to transfer it over the web. As Graham Lawrence aptly summarized in his book *The Fallible Gospels* (which seems to be no longer on the web):

What is theology, after all? It could hardly be respected as either art or science. Sitting in a chair pontificating about the nature of the soul, or the Trinity, or whether Jesus was pre-existent and through him things were created, and what happens after death. There is such an utter fantastic pointlessness about just making assertions based on absolutely nothing but imagination or wishful thinking. Why not make assertions about being telepathically bombarded with political opinions by a race of intelligent but malicious digestive biscuits that live under the shade of large rocks on the planet Neptune? Who can argue with it, if you don't have to demonstrate what basis it rests on? Would God himself have made us into conscious and intelligent beings in order to be so gullible?

A review and overview (say by an imagined god!) of some of the squabbles (or “[theological disputes](#)”)<sup>19</sup> during the development of Christian dogma, illustrates the idiocy of all organized religions:

- As already mentioned, the first major schism in Christianity occurred over the question of whether God wanted non-Jewish Christian males to be circumcised and to follow Jewish dietary laws. The insane “Saint” Paul said “No”, the original Jewish Christians probably said “Yes”, and God looked on his work of the first day and said: “[What a bunch of nincompoops.](#)”
- Subsequently, Christianity splintered over the question of the nature of the fabled Jesus. The Gnostics (who thought matter was evil and light was good, i.e., not knowing that matter and light are both energy, *via*  $E = mc^2$ ) maintained (“docetism”) that Jesus couldn’t have been made of icky matter, that his physical body was therefore just an illusion (as was his crucifixion), and consequently, the idea of eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus (i.e., the Eucharist ceremony of Christianity) was abominable. And God looked on his work of the second day and said: “[They’re all bonkers.](#)”
- Another branch of Gnosticism, the Marcionites (followers of Marcion of Sinope, who in turn was a follower of Paul and who made his money with a fleet of ships), maintained that the Jewish god (Yahweh) was the evil god who made matter and not the good god who made light. And God looked on his work of the third day and said: “[What evidence do these morons have that things called gods even exist?](#)”
- Tertullian (quoted above) was one of those who rejected Marcion’s message, sarcastically wondering<sup>20</sup> if the “[shipmaster from Pontus \[Marcion\]... had ever been guilty of taking on contraband goods or tampering with them after they were aboard.](#)” And God looked on his work of the fourth day and said: “[What on Earth are these people smoking?](#)”
- In further conflict with what has become orthodox-western Christianity, the Arians maintained: “[Jesus, while not merely mortal, was not eternally divine and was, therefore, of lesser status than God.](#)” And God looked on his work of the fifth day and said: “[Will this craziness never end?](#)”
- The Christians who eventually won the arguments maintained that three (the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit) are one. And God looked on his work of the sixth day and said, “[For Christ’s sake, give it a rest!](#)”

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<sup>19</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity).

<sup>20</sup> See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian>.

## CONSTANTINE: THE CAUSE OF THE CHRISTIAN CALAMITY

Instead of giving their brains a much-needed rest and without having a shred of data to support a single, ridiculous claim, the Christian lamebrains continued to argue (over nothing but blatant balderdash). Yet, at least their arguments didn't degenerate to blows, until the emperor Constantine became involved.

Constantine was a real “piece of work”, on par with the mythical monster Moses<sup>21</sup> and the murdering megalomaniac Muhammad.<sup>22</sup> Constantine was as much the founder of Christianity as Moses (or, in reality, Ezra) was of Judaism and Muhammad was of Islam. Constantine probably delayed the demise of Christian foolishness by at least a thousand years.

Constantine's father was the politically astute Roman soldier Flavius Constantius, a member of Emperor Aurelian's imperial bodyguard. His mother, Helena (later dubbed “Saint” Helena), was a Christian, and either she or her mother seems to have been a stable-maid or innkeeper. Constantine's father (Constantius) later abandoned Helena to marry one of the Emperor Maximian's daughters and to become Caesar (junior emperor) over Britain and Gaul. When Constantine claimed the same position upon his father's death, the Western Roman Emperor Maxentius (who reigned from 306–312), the son of Maximian, described Constantine as “the son of a harlot” (i.e., “Saint” Helena).

Constantine (c.274–337) apparently realized that, if he were to achieve his ambition of being ruler of the entire Roman empire, then with his “questionable” background, he would need to be even more politically astute – and ruthless – than his father. Details of his career<sup>23</sup> demonstrate his abilities to keep his army loyal, to manipulate the public (e.g., dealing with his religious inclinations, if any), and to murder anyone, including his wife and son. He became known as “the butcher emperor of Rome”; Western (Roman) Christians later called him “Constantine the Great”; Eastern (Orthodox) Christians, whom Constantine set up at his new headquarters in the ancient Greek city of Byzantium, renamed Constantinople (now Istanbul), still call him “Saint Constantine”.

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapters Yx12 & Yx13.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Yx33.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_I).

It was presumably a combination of Constantine's Christian mother's influence and the value he saw in having millions of Christians beholden to him that led to the 313 *Edict of Milan*, ending the persecution of Christians and restoration of their confiscated properties. The edict was co-signed by Constantine and the emperor of the western part of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantine's brother-in-law Licinius. Later (in 325), after Constantine became sole emperor, he had Licinius killed.

Constantine's experiences and his becoming sole emperor were turning points for establishing "the Corporate Christ", as the following introductory comments by Robertson illustrate:<sup>24</sup>

[Constantine's] father [Constantius] had been a monotheist, who protected the Christians on philosophical principles; and from the constant success of Constantius in all his undertakings, as compared with the ill fortune of his own rivals, the son argued that the religion of One God was propitious to his house. His personal success in war was always his main argument for the Christian creed, and in such an age it was not the least convincing. The fact that he postponed his baptism till shortly before his death is not to be taken as indicating any religious hesitations on his part. Multitudes of Christians in that age did the same thing, on the ground that baptism took away all sin, and that it was bad economy to receive it early. [☺] In his case such a reason was especially weighty, and there is no reason to suppose that he had any other. Since, however, the pagans still greatly outnumbered the Christians, he could not afford to declare definitely against all other cults; and, beginning by decreeing toleration for all, he kept the pagan title of *pontifex maximus*, and continued through the greater part of his life to issue coins or medals on which he figured as the devotee of Apollo or Mars or Herakles or Mithra or Zeus.

While, however, he thus propitiated other gods and worshippers, he gave the Christians from the first a unique financial support. Formerly, the clergy in general had been wont to supplement their monthly allowances by trading, farming, banking, by handicraft, and by practicing as physicians; but the emperor now enacted that they should have regular annual allowances, and that the church's widows and virgins should be similarly supported. Further, not only did he restore the possessions taken from believers during the persecution, he enacted that all their priests (like those of Egypt and of the later empire in general) should be exempt from municipal burdens; a step as much to their interest as it was to the injury of the State and of all public spirit.

The instant effect was to draw to the priesthood multitudes of gain-seekers, the churches of Carthage and Constantinople soon had 500 priests apiece, and so strong were the protests of the municipalities against the financial disorder he had created that Constantine was fain to restrict his decree.

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<sup>24</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/part1.htm>.

Certainly pagan flamens [priests “serving” particular deities] and public priests of the provinces, a restricted class, had had the same privilege, and this he maintained for them despite Christian appeals; nor does he seem to have withdrawn it from the priests and elders of the Jewish synagogues, who had also enjoyed it; but his direct gifts to the churches were considerable, and by permitting them to receive legacies in the manner of the pagan temples he established their financial basis. So great was their gain that laws had to be passed limiting the number of the clergy, and from this time forward, laws were necessary to restrain priests and bishops from further enriching themselves by lending at interest.

Clerical power was still further extended. Bishops, who had hitherto acted as arbitrators in Christian disputes, had their decisions legally enforced, and the important legal process of freeing slaves was transferred from the temples to the churches. Some pagan temples he temporarily suppressed, on moral grounds; some he allowed to be destroyed as no longer in use; but though he built and richly endowed several great Christian churches and passed some laws against pagan practices, he never ventured on the general persecution of pagans which his Christian hangers-on desired; and the assertions of Eusebius as to his having plundered the temples and brought paganism into contempt are among the many fictions some of them perhaps later forgeries in the works of that historian. As it was, Christian converts were sufficiently multiplied...

With the increase in converts, treasury, and power, the Christian clerics were ready to learn Constantine’s next lesson, namely, how to slaughter one’s opponents. That is, by the time of Constantine, Christianity had adapted and adopted essentially all features of the pagan religions, except war: the Christians argued fanatically, but they generally maintained the “turn-the-other-cheek” policy of pacifism, a policy that presumably attracted many effeminate people and presumably explains why Christian persecution persisted for two centuries. Once he became sole emperor, however, Constantine showed the Christians how to use the sword to get their way, and a new wave of militant Christian clerics grabbed the sword and associated power with gusto. Within a century, the mystic Christian murderers bludgeoned Europe into its Dark Ages, which continued for the worst part of the next 1,000 years.

The root cause of the Dark Ages was dogma, which dictates what people are to think. Dogma is common in all religions, because religious ideas have no evidentiary basis; they arise solely from someone’s whim; therefore, if a religious group is to maintain cohesion, the group must agree to some otherwise arbitrary dogma.

Constantine showed the Christian clerics how to apply force to establish “agreement”, just as Moses had allegedly done (*Exodus 32*) and as Muhammad later did. Thus, as described by the Wikipedia article<sup>25</sup> on Constantine, the descent into the Christian Dark Ages started in 316, only three years after their own persecution officially ended:

Constantine himself disliked the risks to societal stability, [which] religious disputes and controversies brought with them, preferring where possible to establish an orthodoxy. The emperor saw it as his duty to ensure that God was properly worshipped in his empire, and what proper worship consisted of was for the Church to determine. In 316, Constantine acted as a judge in a North African dispute concerning the validity of Donatism. [The North African Donatists refused to recognize the authority of priests and bishops who had renounced Christianity during the persecution but were returned to power by Constantine.] After deciding against the Donatists, Constantine led an army of Christians against the Donatist Christians. After 300 years of pacifism, this was the first intra-Christian persecution. More significantly, in 325 he summoned the Council of Nicaea, effectively the first Ecumenical Council... Nicaea was to deal mostly with the heresy of Arianism.

The Arians, followers of Arius of Alexandria,<sup>26</sup> believed in their own special balderdash, namely, that “the Son of God did not always exist, but was created by – and is therefore distinct from and inferior to – God the Father.” At the First Council of Nicaea,<sup>27</sup> Constantine had clerics (who wanted to stay in power) agree to a creed in which Jesus was proclaimed both “the Son of God” and “very God of very God” (whatever that might mean). The creed added:

...those who say: “There was a time when he was not”; and “He was not before he was made”; and “He was made out of nothing”, or “He is of another substance” or “essence”, or “The Son of God is created”, or “changeable”, or “alterable” – they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.

At his website,<sup>28</sup> Edward Babinski has assembled approximately 30 quotations relevant to the resulting Christian-induced mayhem, two of which are the following.

<sup>25</sup> At [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_I).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism>.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene\\_Creed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicene_Creed).

<sup>28</sup> See <http://www.edwardbabinski.us/history/intolerance.html>.

**Walter Nigg, The Heretics:**

The first ecumenical church council, the Council of Nicaea, assembled in the year 325 in the imperial palace of the first Christian emperor, Constantine. Once the discussions started the participants threw their episcopal dignity to the wind and shouted wildly at each other. They were concerned primarily with improving their positions of power. Diplomacy was wielded as a weapon, and intrigues often replaced intelligence. There were so many ignorant bishops that one participant bluntly called the council “a synod of nothing but blockheads.” Constantine, who treated religious questions solely from a political point of view, assured unanimity by banishing all the bishops who would not sign the new profession of faith hammered out at the council. In this way unity was achieved...

The council also pronounced Arius a heretic. People who owned his writings were ordered to deliver them up on pain of punishment. Arius was banished. And the emperor declared that to side with Arius was a crime. Violent repression of the Arian heresy, however, accomplished the opposite, and served to spread rather than crush the heresy...

Someone close to the emperor intervened on Arius' part and in 330, Arius was reinstated to his priesthood. The hoped for reconciliation between Arius and Athanasius, failed; the factional struggle continued and became intertwined with political disputes. Then, ten years after being condemned, Arianism gained the upper hand, was proclaimed truth, and the opposing party condemned as advocates of error. In 335 it was Bishop Athanasius' turn to go off into exile...

But then, on the eve of his reinstallation to ecclesiastical power, Arius died (or was possibly murdered). History is dumb as to the means of his death, but Athanasius circulated his own version of what happened. He said that Arius fainted in a public privy, and, like Judas Iscariot, his bowels poured out of him, his liver emerged, covered with blood, and then, suffering the most violent pain, he discharged his heart, the seat of all his wickedness. To crown these horrors, Arius' whole body became thinner and thinner until at last the heretic fell through the opening of the privy into the sewer beneath. Which no doubt tells us more about the character of Athanasius, who spread such a repulsive story, than about what really happened to Arius...

**Martin A. Larson, The Story of Christian Origins:**

When the Emperor Constantine repented the murder of his wife, his son, and “some of his nearest relatives,” he was told by a Roman philosopher that such guilt as his could not be eradicated. When some Christian bishops, however, informed him that he could be purified by baptism, he was delighted, and became a Christian. Afterwards, he always carried a priest with him and accepted baptism only on his deathbed so that he might commit sin with impunity to the very end.

Constantine was induced by the bishops to issue a decree outlawing all Christian sects (“the Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulians, Montanists,” etc.) other than the one he had converted to. They were “in league with the devil,” and he “commanded

all their houses of prayer be made over to the Catholic Church; that no facility whatever be left for any future gathering.”

Ironically, scarcely was the signet dry on this edict when Arianism erupted in the East, Donatism split the northwestern African churches into warring camps, and Manichaeism began to spread throughout Christendom.

There is only one phase of ancient Christian persecution which remains fully recorded: the five decades in which Arian and Athanasian Christians contended for supremacy and in which several hundreds of thousands must have perished while millions suffered distress or exile.

It's thus seen that the real lesson Constantine taught the clerics (a lesson also learned by followers of Moses and Muhammad) was: once you pick up the sword, you need to keep swinging it. Illustrating the resulting blood that flowed is another of the quotations assembled by Babinski:<sup>29</sup>

**Joseph McCabe, How Christianity Triumphed:**

After one “election meeting” in a church, in October 366, the “ushers” picked up from the floor one hundred and sixty Christian corpses! It is sheer affectation of modern Roman Catholic writers to question this, as we learn it from a report to the emperor of two priests of the time. The riots of the Christians which filled the streets of Rome with blood for a week, are, in fact, ironically recorded by the contemporary Roman writer, Ammianus Marcellinus.

In one day the Christians murdered more of their brethren than the pagans can be positively proved to have martyred in three centuries, and the total number of the slain during the fight for the papal chair (in which the supporters of Pope Damasus literally cut his way, with swords and axes, to the papal chair through the supporters of the rival candidate Ursicinus) is probably as great as the total number of actual martyrs. If we add to these the number of the slain in the fights of the Arians and Trinitarians in the east and the fights of Catholics and Donatists in Africa, we get a sum of “martyrs” many times as large as the genuine victims of Roman law; and we should still have to add the massacre by Theodosius at Thessalonica, the massacre of a regiment of Arian soldiers, the lives sacrificed under Constantius, Valentinian, etc.

This frightful and sordid temper of the new Christendom is luridly exhibited in the murder of Hypatia of Alexandria in 415. Under the “great” Father of the Church, Cyril of Alexandria, a Christian mob, led by a minor cleric of the church, stripped Hypatia naked and gashed her with oyster shells until she died. She was a teacher of mathematics and philosophy, a person of the highest ideals and character. This barbaric fury (of the Christians) raged from Rome to Alexandria and Antioch, and degraded the cities with spectacles that paganism had never witnessed...

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<sup>29</sup> At <http://www.edwardtbabinski.us/history/intolerance.html>.

Salvianus, a priest of Marseilles of the fifth century, deplores the vanished virtue of the pagan world and declares that “The whole body of Christians is a sink of iniquity.” “Very few,” he says, “avoid evil.” He challenges his readers: “How many in the Church will you find that are not drunkards or adulterers, or fornicators, or gamblers, or robbers, or murderers – or all together ” (*De Gubernatione Dei*, III, 9) Gregory of Tours, in the next century, gives, incredible as it may seem, an even darker picture of the Christian world, over part of which he presides.

You cannot read these truths, unless you can read bad Latin, because they are never translated. It is the flowers, the rare examples of virtue, the untruths of Eusebius and the Martyrologies, that are translated. It is the legends of St. Agnes and St. Catherine, the heroic fictions of St. Lawrence and St. Sebastian that you read. But there were ten vices for every virtue, ten lies for every truth, a hundred murders for every genuine martyrdom.

As Robertson perceptively summarized:<sup>30</sup>

The hatred was beyond all measure, and can be accounted for only by recognizing that a creed which appeals to emotion and degrades reason is potentially the worst stimulant of evil passions.

I would add that every organized religion (particularly Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism, etc.) “appeals to emotion and degrades reason”.

Immediately following Constantine, conditions became even worse, as Robertson describes:

Under the family of Constantine his creed and his policy were maintained, with no better fruits under either the personal or the political aspect. To his three sons (Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans) with two of his nephews, [Constantine] left the empire, but immediately the nephews were massacred with their fathers. Of the three sons, the second destroyed the first in war (340) and the third, succeeding to the western provinces of the first, fell in war with a new competitor, Magnentius (350), whereafter Constantius, defeating the latter by deputy, became sole emperor (353–361). To him appears to be chargeable the deliberate assassination at one stroke of the two surviving brothers of his father and all their sons save two, Gallus and Julian (the sons of Julius Constans) and at his hands began at least the theoretical persecution of paganism on the eager pressure of the church which forty years before had been persecuted. It thus remains matter of history that, while many pagans had been in favor of tolerance before the establishment of Christianity, the Christians, who had naturally condemned all persecution while they suffered from it, were ready to become zealous persecutors as soon as they had the power.

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<sup>30</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/part2.htm>.

## JULIAN: THE LAST LIGHT BEFORE THE DARK AGES

After Constantine's son Constantius became emperor, an opportunity arose to avoid the Black Hole into which Christianity was dragging Europe. The opportunity was provided by the Roman emperor Julian (331–363 BCE),<sup>31</sup> who, although he was emperor for only 20 months, ranks with Marcus Aurelius (121–180) as one of the few emperors worthy of the rank. He died young (at the age of 31 or 32) from an arrow wound obtained while fighting the Persians, and with his death, Europe accelerated its descent into the Christian Dark Ages.

Christians called Julian (and still call him) “Julian the apostate”, because he rejected Christian (and Jewish) balderdash. As illustrations, consider the following samples of Julian's criticism, first of Judaism, from *Two Orations of the Emperor Julian*,<sup>32</sup> translated by Thomas Taylor in 1793.

Now it is true that the Hellenes invented their myths about the gods, incredible and monstrous stories. For they said that Kronos swallowed his children and then vomited them forth; and they even told of lawless unions, how Zeus had intercourse with his mother, and after having a child by her, married his own daughter, or rather did not even marry her, but simply had intercourse with her and then handed her over to another. Then, too, there is the legend that Dionysus was rent asunder and his limbs joined together again. This is the sort of thing described in the myths of the Hellenes. Compare with them the Jewish doctrine, how the garden was planted by God and Adam was fashioned by Him, and next, for Adam, woman came to be. For God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone. Let us make him an help meet like, him.” Yet, so far was she from helping him at all that she deceived him, and was in part the cause of his and her own fall from their life of ease in the garden.

This is wholly fabulous. For is it probable that God did not know that the being he was creating as a help meet would prove to be not so much a blessing as a misfortune to him who received her? Again, what sort of language are we to say that the serpent used when he talked with Eve? Was it the language of human beings? And in what do such legends as these differ from the myths that were invented by the Hellenes? Moreover, is it not excessively strange that God should deny to the human beings whom he had fashioned the power to distinguish between good and evil? What could be more foolish than being unable to distinguish good from bad? For it is evident that he [man] would not avoid the latter, I mean things evil, nor would he strive after the former, I mean things good. And, in short, God refused to let man taste of wisdom, than which there could be nothing of more value for man.

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<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_the\\_Apostate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_the_Apostate).

<sup>32</sup> From [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian\\_apostate\\_galileans\\_1\\_text.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/julian_apostate_galileans_1_text.htm).

*For that the power to distinguish between good and less good is the property of wisdom is evident surely even to the witless; so that the serpent was a benefactor rather than a destroyer of the human race. [Italics added]*

Furthermore, their God must be called envious. For when he saw that man had attained to a share of wisdom, that he might not, God said, taste of the tree of life, he cast him out of the garden, saying in so many words, “Behold, Adam has become as one of us, because he knows good from bad; and now let him not put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and thus live forever.” Accordingly, unless every one of these legends is a myth that involves some secret interpretation, as I indeed believe, they are filled with many blasphemous sayings about God. For in the first place to be ignorant that she who was created as a helpmate would be the cause of the fall; secondly to refuse the knowledge of good and bad, which knowledge alone seems to give coherence to the mind of man; and lastly to be jealous lest man should take of the tree of life and from mortal become immortal – this is to be grudging and envious overmuch.

And about the Christians, Julian wrote the following:

But as for the commandment “Thou shalt not worship other gods,” to this surely he [Moses/Ezra] adds a terrible libel upon God: “For I am a jealous God,” he says, and in another place again, “Our God is a consuming fire.” Then if a man is jealous and envious you think him blameworthy, whereas if God is called jealous you think it a divine quality? And yet how is it reasonable to speak falsely of God in a matter that is so evident? For if he is indeed jealous, then against his will are all other gods worshipped, and against his will do all the remaining nations worship their gods. Then how is it that he did not himself restrain them, if he is so jealous and does not wish that the others should be worshipped, but only himself? Can it be that he was not able to do so, or did he not wish even from the beginning to prevent the other gods also from being worshipped? However, the first explanation is impious, to say, I mean, that he was unable; and the second is in accordance with what we do ourselves. Lay aside this nonsense and do not draw down on yourselves such terrible blasphemy. For if it is God’s will that none other should be worshipped, why do you worship this spurious son of his whom he has never yet recognized or considered as his own?

But what great gift of this sort do the Hebrews boast of as bestowed on them by God, the Hebrews who have persuaded you [Christians] to desert to them? If you had at any rate paid heed to their teachings, you would not have fared altogether ill, and though worse than you did before, when you were with us, still your condition would have been bearable and supportable. For you would be worshipping one god instead of many, not a man, or rather many wretched men. And though you would be following a law [said to be the laws of Moses] that is harsh and stern and contains much that is savage and barbarous, instead of our mild and humane laws, and would in other respects be inferior to us, yet you would be more holy and purer than now in your forms of worship.

*But now it has come to pass that like leeches you have sucked the worst blood from that source and left the purer. [Italics added]*

Yet Jesus, who won over the least worthy of you, has been known by name for but little more than three hundred years, and during his lifetime he accomplished nothing worth hearing of, unless anyone thinks that to heal crooked and blind men and to exorcise those who were possessed by evil demons in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany can be classed as a mighty achievement. As for purity of life you do not know whether he so much as mentioned it; but you emulate the rages and the bitterness of the Jews, overturning temples and altars, and you slaughtered not only those of us who remained true to the teachings of their fathers, but also men who were as much astray as yourselves, heretics, because they did not wail over the corpse in the same fashion as yourselves. But these are rather your own doings; for nowhere did either Jesus or Paul hand down to you such commands. The reason for this is that they never even hoped that you would one day attain to such power as you have; for they were content if they could delude maidservants and slaves, and through them the women, and men like Cornelius and Sergius... But to tell the truth, you have taken pride in outdoing our vulgarity (this, I think, is a thing that happens to all nations, and very naturally) and you thought that you must adapt your ways to the lives of the baser sort, shopkeepers, tax-gatherers, dancers and libertines.

But that not only the Galileans of our day but also those of the earliest time, those who were the first to receive the teaching from Paul, were men of this sort, is evident from the testimony of Paul himself in a letter addressed to them. For unless he actually knew that they had committed all these disgraceful acts, he was not, I think, so impudent as to write to those men themselves concerning their conduct, in language for which, even though in the same letter he included as many eulogies of them, he ought to have blushed, yes, even if those eulogies were deserved, while if they were false and fabricated, then he ought to have sunk into the ground to escape seeming to behave with wanton flattery and slavish adulation. But the following are the very words that Paul wrote concerning those who had heard his teaching, and were addressed to the men themselves:

**“Be not deceived: neither idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And of this ye are not ignorant, brethren, that such were you also; but ye washed yourselves, but ye were sanctified in the name of Jesus Christ.”**

Do you see that he says that these men too had been of such sort, but that they **“had been sanctified”** and **“had been washed,”** water being able to cleanse and winning power to purify when it shall go down into the soul? And baptism does not take away his leprosy from the leper, or scabs, or pimples, or warts, or gout, or dysentery, or dropsy, or a whitlow, in fact no disorder of the body, great or small, then shall it do away with adultery and theft and in short all the transgressions of the soul?...

But you are so misguided that you have not even remained faithful to the teachings that were handed down to you by the apostles. *And these also have been altered, so as to be worse and more impious, by those who came after.* [Italics added] At any rate neither Paul nor Matthew nor Luke nor Mark ventured to call Jesus God. But the worthy John, since he perceived that a great number of people in many of the towns of Greece and Italy had already been infected by this disease, and because he heard, I suppose, that even the tombs of Peter and Paul were being worshipped – secretly, it is true, but still he did hear this – he, I say, was the first to venture to call Jesus God...

Furthermore, Jesus prays in such language as would be used by *a pitiful wretch who cannot bear misfortune with serenity*, and though he is a god is reassured by an angel. And who told you, Luke, the story of the angel, if indeed this ever happened? *For those who were there when he prayed could not see the angel, for they were asleep.* [Italics added]

Listen to a fine statesmanlike piece of advice: “**Sell that ye have and give to the poor; provide yourselves with bags which wax not old.**” Can anyone quote a more statesmanlike ordinance than this? For if all men were to obey you who would there be to buy? Can anyone praise this teaching when, if it be carried out, no city, no nation, not a single family will hold together? For, if everything has been sold, how can any house or family be of any value? Moreover the fact that if everything in the city were being sold at once there would be no one to trade is obvious, without being mentioned.

Again, the above was written by no less than the emperor of the Roman Empire, Julian – but it was too little, too late. Similar to the Muslim world today, the Roman world had gone mad: the people apparently didn’t care that Julian might be able to save the Roman world from economic ruin; they had been convinced by Christian clerics that they already had a savior, who would save them, even in the world to come – if only the clerics were paid enough. Data-based Greek reason had thus been sacrificed on the alter of emotion-based Jewish superstition, and it required more than a thousand years of mayhem before reason could be resurrected.

Support for the above assessment is available from literally thousands of authors. One example appears in the Preface to d’Holbach’s brilliant 1761 book *Christianity Unveiled*.<sup>33</sup> The Preface is entitled “A Letter from the Author to a Friend”, a friend who apparently criticized D’Holbach’s book, similar to how Benjamin Franklin criticized<sup>34</sup> a draft version of Thomas

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<sup>33</sup> Available at [http://www.reasoned.org/dir/lit/cu\\_holb.pdf](http://www.reasoned.org/dir/lit/cu_holb.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=58>.

Paine's 1795 book *The Age of Reason*:<sup>35</sup> not for its content, but for the influence it might have on "the ignorant masses". d'Holbach's response to his friend includes the following.

I RECEIVE, Sir, with gratitude, the remarks which you send me upon my work. If I am sensible to the praises you condescend to give it, I am too fond of truth to be displeas'd with the frankness with which you propose your objections. I find them sufficiently weighty to merit all my attention. He but ill deserves the title of philosopher, who has not the courage to hear his opinions contradicted. We are not divines; our disputes are of a nature to terminate amicably; they in no way resemble those of the apostles of superstition, who endeavor to overreach each other by captious arguments, and who, at the expense of good faith, contend only to advocate the cause of their vanity and their prejudices. We both desire the happiness of mankind, we both search after truth; this being the case, we cannot disagree.

You begin by admitting the necessity of examining religion, and submitting opinions to the decision of reason. You acknowledge that Christianity cannot sustain this trial, and that in the eye of good sense it can never appear to be anything but a tissue of absurdities, of unconnected fables, senseless dogmas, puerile ceremonies, and notions borrowed from the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Grecians, and Romans. In one word, you confess that this religious system is only the deformed offspring of almost all ancient superstitions, begotten by oriental fanaticism, and diversely modified by the circumstances and prejudices of those who have since pretended to be the inspired ambassadors of God, and the interpreters of his will.

You tremble at the horrors which the intolerant spirit of Christians has caused them to commit, whenever they had power to do it; you feel that a religion founded on a sanguinary deity must be a religion of blood. You lament that frenzy, which in infancy takes possession of princes and people, and renders them equally the slaves of superstition and her priests; which prevents their acquaintance with their true interests, renders them deaf to reason, and turns them aside from the great objects by which they ought to be occupied. You confess that a religion founded upon enthusiasm or imposture can have no sure principles; that it must prove an eternal source of disputes, and always end in causing troubles, persecutions, and ravages; especially when political power conceives itself indispensably obliged to enter into its quarrels.

In fine, you go so far as to agree that a good Christian who follows literally the conduct prescribed to him as the most perfect by the gospel, knows not in this world anything of those duties on which true morality is founded; and that if he wants energy he must prove an useless misanthrope, or if his temper be warm, a turbulent fanatic.

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<sup>35</sup> Available at, e.g., [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/thomas\\_paine/age\\_of\\_reason/](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/thomas_paine/age_of_reason/).

## IN THE END...

Now, after my having included the above quotation from d’Holbach, the reader might expect me to turn to one or more obvious topics (such as warped ideas of Christian morality and family values, the horrible moral examples set by Christian clerics during the past 2,000 years, their obstruction of progress in education, democracy, workers’ rights and human rights, etc.), but although such topics are “ripe for review”, I admit to feeling similar to how Graham Lawrence must have felt when he reached a similar point in his book *The Fallible Gospels* and wrote (in the final chapter):<sup>36</sup>

This is hardly the “end” of the story, but there are too many other stories that cannot be told here... in the name of the wise and tolerant Jesus, people would be tortured or exploited, or forbidden to read newspapers or celebrate birthdays or to save the lives of their dying children if they needed a blood transfusion... However, my point has been made. The growth and development of the Christian Church has been demonstrated to have relied upon the manipulation of history, the distortion of truth, superstition and gullibility, creativity and expediency, baseless theory, rivalry and power, and intolerance and neurosis. Once we have left behind the fascination of those earliest years, and we are wading through the quicksand of theology and doctrine, I may not have lost interest; but I have certainly lost patience.

Nonetheless, one relevant topic that intrigues me is the economic strength of the resulting “Corporate Christ”, but adequate information seems unavailable. In his book *A Short History of Christianity* Robertson mentions:<sup>37</sup>

The play of economic interest in the establishment and maintenance of religions is one of the constant forces in their history. In the simplest forms of savage life, the medicine man or priest makes a superior living out of his function, and every powerful cult in antiquity enriched its priests. The developed worships of Assyria and Babylon, Phoenicia and Egypt, were carried on by great priestly corporations, with enormous revenues. Those of the Egyptian priesthood, in particular, being reckoned even in the Roman period at a third of the wealth of the nation.

I’ve been unable to find comparable information for Christianity, but I’d hazard the guess that, at the height of its power, the Catholic Church controlled at least two thirds of Europe’s economy, as I expect that “Islam Incorporated” currently does in Muslim countries still shrouded in their clerically imposed Dark Ages, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. In the West,

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<sup>36</sup> Most unfortunately, Lawrence’s book seems to be no longer available, either on the web or in print.

<sup>37</sup> From <http://englishatheist.org/killing/>.

thankfully, we've now managed to limit the control of our economies by "Christ Incorporated" to maybe 1–10% of our economies, and if pending lawsuits are successful, we may yet (in Voltaire's words) *écrasez l'infâme* ["**crush the infamous one**" (i.e., persecuting and privileged religion)].<sup>38</sup>

As for dealing with the huge topics of the moral and intellectual corruption and social stagnation caused by Christianity, earlier in my on-line book,<sup>39</sup> I already devoted its entire **Part 3** (consisting of 25 chapters) to the "pathetic personal policies and sick social policies" advocated in, especially, the Christian religion. In **Part 3x** are 10 chapters focused on the sick policies advocated in the NT, and most of the 35 "**X**-chapters" of **Part 4** deal with how religions have inhibited progress toward peace and prosperity throughout the world. Therefore, I plan to set aside further comments on such topics until the summary chapters of this series on "the Mountainous God Lie".

And as for the most obvious topic that deserves to be addressed at this juncture, namely, the depth to which the Western World sunk during the Dark Ages caused by Christianity, I'll rely on the reason (or excuse!) that I mentioned at the start of these three posts on Christianity. That is, if readers desire further information about the horrors that descended on Europe (and elsewhere, including the Americas) because of Christian dogma, then rather than reading anything that I (not a historian) might write, I recommend that readers consult any of hundreds (if not thousands) of books by competent historians, philosophers, and ex-theologians. Here, therefore, to conclude this post and these posts dealing with Christianity, I'll just mention and provide some quotations from a few such books (all available on the web) that I found particularly interesting.

One such book,<sup>40</sup> which I've quoted many times in these posts, is *The Story of Religious Controversy* by the ex-Franciscan monk Joseph McCabe (1867–1955). Some of the chapter titles, alone, are informative:

Chapter XVIII - The Degradation Of Woman  
Chapter XIX - Christianity And Slavery  
Chapter XX - The Church And The School  
Chapter XXI - The Dark Ages

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<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.interfaithforums.com/voltaire/2792-voltaire-overview.html>.

<sup>39</sup> At <http://zenofzero.net/>.

<sup>40</sup> Available, e.g., at [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph\\_mccabe/religious\\_controversy/](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_mccabe/religious_controversy/).

Chapter XXII - New Light On Witchcraft  
Chapter XXIII - The Horrors Of The Inquisition

My first illustrative quotation is contained within the 1933 book<sup>41</sup> by D.M. Brooks entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, in turn quoting Dr. William J. Robinson:

We are told by the Church apologists that during the Middle Ages the priests and monks kept up the torch of learning, that, being the only literate people, they brought back the study of the classics. Historically speaking, this is about the most impudent statement that one could imagine. It was the Church that retarded human progress at least one thousand years, it is the Church that put a thick, impenetrable pall over the sun of learning and science, so that humanity was enveloped in utter darkness, and if the priests and monks later learned to read and write (from the Arabs, Jews, and Greeks exiled from Constantinople after 1453), it is because they wanted to keep the power in their hands; the people they did not permit to learn either to read or write. (Even the reading of the Bible, bear in mind, was considered a crime.)

We are told that the priests and monks built hospitals and gave alms to the poor. Having gotten enormous tracts of the best land into their hands, so that the people were starving, they were willing to throw a bone occasionally to the latter. It cost them nothing and it gave them a reputation for charity. They built enormous monasteries with well-filled cellars, and lived on the fat of the land, while the people lived in wretched hovels, working their lives away for a crust of bread. The beasts, the domestic animals lived a more comfortable life than did the men, women, and children of the people. And the Church never, never raised a finger to ameliorate their condition. It kept them in superstitious darkness and helped the temporal lords – for a long period the spiritual were also the temporal lords – to keep them in fear, subjection and slavery.

My second illustration is from Robertson, whose book<sup>42</sup> I've quoted many times in this post.

What had socially happened was essentially an economic process, howbeit one set up by a religious credence. Paganism as a public system disappeared because it was deprived of all its revenues; Christianity as a system finally flourished because the church was legally empowered to receive donations and legacies without limit, and debarred from parting with any of its property. Any corporation whatever, any creed whatever, would have flourished on such a basis, while only a priesthood capable of building up a voluntary revenue as the Christian church had originally done could survive on pagan lines after the Christian creed had been established...

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<sup>41</sup> Available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20248/20248-8.txt>.

<sup>42</sup> Available at <http://englishatheist.org/killing/part1.htm>.

The summary of seven hundred years of Christian expansion in northern Europe is that the work was, in the main, done by the sword, in the interest of kings and tyrants, who supported it, as against the resistance of their subjects, who saw in the church an instrument for their subjection. Christianity in short was as truly a religion of the sword as Islam...

The heathen, broadly speaking, were never persuaded, never convinced, never won by the appeal of the new doctrine: they were either transferred by their kings to the church like so many cattle, or beaten down into submission after generations of resistance and massacre. For a long time after the German conquest, any Slav found away from home was liable to be executed on the spot, or killed like a wild beast by any Christian who would. And centuries after the barbarian heathenism of Europe was ostensibly drowned in blood, Christian Spain, having overthrown the Muslim Moors, proceeded in the same fashion to dragoon Muslims and Jews into the true faith, baptizing in droves those who yielded or dissembled, and driving out of the country myriads more who would not submit. The misery and the butchery wrought from first to last are unimaginable...

If the merits of Christianity as a civilizing force are to be in any way determined by its influence in working bloodshed, its record in the matter of witch-slaying alone would serve to place it, in that regard, lower than any other creed. Classic paganism knew no such infamy. All the horrors which Christians are wont to cite as typically heathen... dwindle beside the dreadful sum of evil set forth in the past of their own faith. For the Protestant lands burned at least as many hapless women for the imaginary crime of witchcraft as the Inquisition burned men for heresy. Most of the victims were women whose sole offense had been to have few friends. To be left a childless widow or an old maid was to run the risk of impeachment as a witch by any superstitious or malevolent neighbor, and the danger seems to have been actually doubled when such a woman gave herself to the work of rustic medicine-making in a spirit of goodwill to her kind. Lonely women who suffered in their minds from their very loneliness were almost sure to be condemned, and in cases where partial insanity did not lead them to admit the insane charges against them, torture easily attained the same end...

The intellectual fatality of the Reformation was that it set up against the principle of papal authority, not that of private judgment, but that of revelation, and thus still made ancient ignorance the arbiter in the deepest problems. It is indeed vain to say, with Erasmus and with Goethe, that Luther did ill to force a crisis, and that the reform of the Church should have been left to time and the process of culture. No culture could have reformed the papacy as an economic system: the struggle there was finally not between knowledge and ignorance but between vested interests and outsiders' rights. In the Rome of Leo X... there were 2500 venal offices, half of them created by Leo to raise funds for the building of St. Peter's, and probably most were cultured men. What they fought for was not dogma but revenue; Luther when among them had been scandalized by their irreligion, not by their superstition...

The net gain from Protestantism thus lay in the disruption of centralized spiritual tyranny. The rents in the structure made openings for air and light at a time when new currents were beginning to blow and new light to shine. Twenty years before Luther's schism, Columbus had found the New World. Copernicus, dying in 1543, left his teaching to the world in which Protestantism had just established itself. Early in the next century Kepler and Galileo began to roll back for men the old dream-boundaries of the universe. The modern era was in full progression, and with it, Christianity had begun its era of slow decline.

My third illustration is from Ingersoll's 1872 book<sup>43</sup> *The Gods*.

During that frightful period known as the "Dark Ages", faith reigned, with scarcely a rebellious subject. Her temples were "carpeted with knees", and the wealth of nations adorned her countless shrines. The great painters prostituted their genius to immortalize her vagaries, while the poets enshrined them in song. At her bidding, man covered the earth with blood, the scales of justice were turned with her gold, and for her use were invented all the cunning instruments of pain. She built cathedrals for God and dungeons for men. She peopled the clouds with angels and the earth with slaves. For centuries the world was retracing its steps – going steadily back toward barbaric night...

The thoughts of man, in order to be of any real worth, must be free. Under the influence of fear the brain is paralyzed, and instead of bravely solving a problem for itself, tremblingly adopts the solution of another. As long as a majority of men will cringe to the very earth before some petty prince or king, what must be the infinite abjectness of their little souls in the presence of their supposed creator and God? Under such circumstances, what can their thoughts be worth?...

For ages all nations supposed that the sick and insane were possessed by evil spirits. For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in frightening these spirits away. Usually the priests would make the loudest and most discordant noises possible. They would blow horns, beat upon rude drums, clash cymbals, and in the meantime utter the most unearthly yells. If the noise remedy failed, they would implore the aid of some more powerful spirit.

To pacify these spirits was considered of infinite importance. The poor barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of the most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilized now – one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood.

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<sup>43</sup> Available at [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert\\_ingersoll/gods.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/robert_ingersoll/gods.html).

The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellowman a cringing hypocrite and slave.

And my fourth and final quotation is from Gerald Massey (1828–1907) who wrote the following for his 1887 lecture<sup>44</sup> *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*:

The Christian Cult has fanatically fought for its false theory, and waged incessant warfare against Nature and Evolution... and against some of the noblest instincts, during eighteen centuries. Seas of human blood have been spilled to keep the barque of Peter afloat. Earth has been honeycombed with the graves of the martyrs of Freethought. Heaven has been filled with a horror of great darkness in the name of God...

The Christian Theology was responsible for substituting faith instead of knowledge; and the European mind is only just beginning to recover from the mental paralysis induced by that doctrine which came to its natural culmination in the Dark Ages. The Christian religion is responsible for enthroning the cross of death in heaven, with a deity on it, doing public penance for a private failure in the commencement of creation. It has taught men to believe that the vilest spirit may be washed white, in the atoning blood of the purest, offered up as a bribe to an avenging God. It has divinized a figure of helpless human suffering, and a face of pitiful pain; as if there were naught but a great heartache at the core of all things; or the vast Infinite were but a veiled and sad-eyed sorrow that brings visibly to birth in the miseries of human life...

But “in the old Pagan world men deified the beautiful, the glad”; as they will again, upon a loftier pedestal, when the fable of this fictitious fall of man, and false redemption by the cloud-begotten God, has passed away like a phantasm of the night, and men awake to learn that they are here to wage ceaseless war upon sordid suffering, remediable wrong, and preventable pain; here to put an end to them, not to apotheosize an effigy of Sorrow to be adored as a type of the Eternal. For the most beneficent is the most beautiful; the happiest are the healthiest; the most God-like is most glad.

In the end, Christianity is doomed – as are all organized religions (Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, etc.) based on the silly idea that “gods” exist.

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<sup>44</sup> From [http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/dpr\\_01\\_historical\\_jesus.htm](http://gerald-massey.org.uk/massey/dpr_01_historical_jesus.htm).

As I tried to demonstrate in Chapter **II** (entitled “Indoctrination in Ignorance”),<sup>45</sup> the most certain knowledge that humans have been able to gain, even more certain than the knowledge that we exist (for we may all be just simulations in some humongous computer game!), is that gods don’t exist (and never have existed). All “god ideas” were just speculations by simpletons. As Freud wrote in his 1932–39 book *Moses and Monotheism*:<sup>46</sup>

While the different religions wrangle with one another as to which of them is in possession of the truth, in our view the truth of religion may be altogether disregarded. Religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world, in which we are placed, by means of the wish-world, which we have developed inside us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. But it cannot achieve its end. Its doctrines carry with them the stamp of the times in which they originated, the ignorant childhood days of the human race. Its consolations deserve no trust.

Experience teaches us that the world is not a nursery. The ethical commands, to which religion seeks to lend its weight, require some other foundations instead, for human society cannot do without them, and it is dangerous to link up obedience to them with religious belief. If one attempts to assign to religion its place in man’s evolution, it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity.

As people learn more science, they’ll come to see that the universe apparently created itself (e.g., by a symmetry-breaking quantum-like fluctuation in a total void)<sup>47</sup> and, much later, life slowly evolved, both (of course) without the help of any (nonexistent!) god or gods. As Mangasarian said (paraphrased):<sup>48</sup>

Religion is the science of children; science is the religion of adults.

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<sup>45</sup> At <http://zenofzero.net/docs/IIIndoctrinationinIgnorance.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> Available at <http://archive.org/details/mosesandmonothei032233mbp>.

<sup>47</sup> See <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Awareness.pdf> and [http://zenofzero.net/docs/Z\\_The\\_Zen\\_of\\_Zero.pdf](http://zenofzero.net/docs/Z_The_Zen_of_Zero.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> From [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/m\\_m\\_mangasarian/truth\\_about\\_jesus.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/m_m_mangasarian/truth_about_jesus.html).