

Qx30 – Quitting the Quagmires of “Revealed” Religions

Dear: If ever you’ve struggled through a swamp or quagmire (or if ever you do), then you’ll know the pleasure of getting through the mud and guck and reaching some solid ground. Once there, it’s common to sit down, rest, try to scrape the guck off your boots, look back at where you’ve been, and look forward to where you’re headed next. Similarly, here: my goal for this “excursion” **Qx** was to plod through the quagmires of polices advocated in the “holy books” of the principal “revealed” religions of our culture. If you’ve managed to accompany me on this trek through the mud and guck of the Old and New “Testaments” of the Bible, the Book of Mormon (and sundry other “holy books” of Mormonism), and the Quran, then I congratulate you on your perseverance. For this final **Qx** chapter, my goals are to sit down, rest a little, try to scrape the mud and guck off my boots, and to look both backward and forward.

The mud and guck isn’t easy to remove, because it’s both so gooey and so pervasive. In fact, the conniving clerics deserve some credit for concocting such amazingly sticky stuff! As I’ve quoted before: “Businesses may come and go, but religion will last forever, for in no other endeavor does the consumer blame himself for product failure!” And as I’ll try to show you later (some in this chapter and some both in **Yx** and in later chapters), the main reasons why these “revealed” religions seem so sticky are both because they offer so much (eternal life) for what appears to be so little (just believe) and because their worldviews are so deliciously simple that even a child laps them up (“God’s in his heaven, all’s right with the world”). Meanwhile, the nemeses of these “revealed” religions are not only that people must be as credulous as children to “believe” such nonsense but also that the conniving clerics have recorded the stupidity in their “holy books”!

As for the pervasiveness of the “god guck” in our culture, references to some imagined giant Jabberwock in the sky are ubiquitous: “In God We Trust” is on our currency, children are indoctrinated with the silliness in our Pledge of Allegiance that this is “One nation under God”, politicians never seem to tire of ending their speeches with “God bless America”, and a person can rarely even sneeze in this country without some programmed person saying “God bless you” – blessing the spirit that has escaped with your sneeze! In fact, the most familiar expression when departing is “God be with you”, or shortened, “Good-bye.”

Yet, Dear, I'd recommend that you don't spend too much time jousting with windmills: rarely will you get anywhere by telling people that the first quantum fluctuation in a total void that broke the symmetry (which led to a precipitate and this universe) isn't trustworthy, didn't help establish this nation, doesn't bless anything, and doesn't travel with anybody! Instead, I'd recommend that when you hear such nonsense, then in general, just smile at the silliness and realize that the most ordinary people probably mean well and that most politicians and clerics are on "power trips".

Looking forward, such "power mongering of priests and politicians" is a topic that I'll explore both in the **X**-chapters and in the "excursion" **Yx**. Later in this chapter I'll comment on (and in the **X**-chapters I'll address) possibilities that humans might rid themselves of all the stupid "revealed" religions. But before getting to that, while you're trying to get the mud and guck off your boots, let me take a few glances backward at the quagmires of policies of the "revealed" religions of our culture, recalling some of the worst mudholes and sinkholes and suggesting some general features and even some common features.

From my first glance backward, let me summarize part by saying that the principal "holy books" of our culture promote more immoralities, injustices, and stupidities than any other book I've ever read: compared to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Quran, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (which, by the way, means "my struggle") reads like a love story! As the U.S. attorney and author Charles Smith (1887-1964) wrote:

The Bible is the greatest hoax in all history. The leading characters of the Old Testament would today be in the penitentiary and those of the New would be under observation in psychopathic wards.

I assume that he didn't read the Quran and the Book of Mormon!

As for a common feature of all "revealed" religions, apparently there's agreement among all of them that the "revelations" of all other religions are false: nothing but elaborate lies promoted by priests for their own profits. And I, being such an agreeable fellow [☺], agree with all of them.

I'm impressed, too, that the foundations of all the "revealed" religions are various "visions". In those cases for which information is supplied in the

* Go to other chapters *via*

“holy books”, such visions were seen by people whose sanity was reportedly questioned by those who knew them (e.g., Jesus, “Saint” Paul, Muhammad, and Sidney Rigdon). And when I reconsider the role of such visions, what leaps to mind is what Homer wrote, ~300 years before Ezra and co-authors wrote the Old Testament (OT) and ~800 years before anything was written about Jesus to form the New Testament (NT). In this quotation (*The ODYSSEY*, Book XIX) Ulysses’ wife, Penelope, says:

Stranger, dreams are very curious and unaccountable things, and they do not by any means invariably come true. There are two gates through which these unsubstantial fancies proceed; the one is of horn, and the other ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory are fatuous [i.e., foolish or silly or stupid], but those from the gate of horn mean something to those that see them.

To which (as I wrote before) surely any sane person responds: “Yah, but... how can you tell which gate your dream came through – how do you know which dreams mean something?!”

A similar quandary occurred at the beginning of Mormonism, as described in the following from William Linn’s 1902 book *The Story of the Mormons*.¹

At the very start Smith’s revelations failed to “come true.” An amusing instance of this occurred before the Mormon Bible was published... Joe’s brother Hyrum and others... became impatient over Harris’s delay in raising the money required for bringing out the book. Hyrum finally proposed that some of them attempt to sell the copyright in Canada, and he urged Joe to ask the Lord about doing so. Joe complied, and announced that the mission to Canada would be a success. Accordingly, Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page made a trip to Toronto to secure a publisher, but their mission failed absolutely. This was a critical test of the faith of Joe’s followers. “We were all in great trouble,” says David Whitmer, “and we asked Joseph how it was that he received a ‘revelation’ from the Lord for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copyright, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking.” Joseph did not know how it was, so he inquired of the Lord about it, and behold, the following “revelation” came...: “Some revelations are from God, some revelations are of man, and some revelations are of the Devil.” No rule for distinguishing and separating these revelations was given...

That could sorta shake a person’s confidence in any “revelation”!

As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, similar happened to Muhammad, leading to what are called “The Satanic Verses”. As you can find at many

¹ Available at <http://thedigitalvoice.com/enigma/1902LinB.htm#pg023a>.

place on the web,² the event is documented in many early biographies of “the prophet’s” life. Muhammad later admitted that, in one of his “revelations”, he spoke words dictated to him by Satan. Again, it could rather shake one’s confidence in all “revelations”! As Omar Khayyam wrote in ~1120 in his *Rubaiyat*:

*The Revelations of Devout and Learn’d
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn’d,
Are all but Stories [underlining added], which, awoke from Sleep,
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return’d.*

Actually, one of the most influential founders of this country’s government, Thomas Paine (1737-1809), in his 1794 book *The Age of Reason*, clearly explained a more fundamental flaw in all “revelations” upon which all “revealed” religions are based. I’ve taken the following quotation from Paine’s book³ – and taken the liberty to update some of its punctuation and spelling (to make them more consistent with current use), and in a few places I’ve added some comments in brackets [such as these].

Every... [organized, revealed] religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals: the Jews have their Moses; the Christians [have] their Jesus Christ... the [Muslims] have their Muhammad [and, after Paine wrote this, the Mormons had the Rigdon-Smith conspiracy]... Each of those [religions rely on]... certain books, which they call *revelation*, or the word of God: the Jews say that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the [Muslims] say that their word of God was brought by an angel from Heaven [just as the Mormons claim, for their Book of Mormon]. Each of those [religions] accuse the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some other observations on the word ‘revelation’. Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated immediately from God to man. No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if He pleases [if he were to exist!]. But admitting, for the sake of [argument], that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that [first] person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it.

² For example, see <http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Saifullah/sverses.htm>.

³ Available at, e.g., <http://libertyonline.hypermall.com/Paine/AOR-Frame.html>.

It is a contradiction in terms and ideas to call anything a revelation that comes to us at second-hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication – after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to me, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the Commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some “historian” telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.⁴

When I am told that the Quran was written in Heaven and brought to Muhammad by an angel, the account comes too near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former [and similarly for the Book of Mormon]. I did not see the angel myself, and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it.

When also I am told that a woman called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not. Such a circumstance requires a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it. But we have not even this – for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves; it is only reported by others that they said so. It is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story... Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or anything else; not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His “historians”, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner – or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told exceeds everything that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; therefore, the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be

⁴ Paine adds the footnote: “It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children; it is contrary to every principle of moral justice.”

expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof [in the days before DNA testing – or even testing of blood types], and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different [as to the evidence it admits...] from the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon-day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing that everybody is required to believe requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given.

Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears [in the New Testament] that Thomas did not believe the resurrection, and, as they say would not believe without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. So neither will I, and the reason is equally as good for me, and for every other person, as for Thomas. [And thus, Dear, the phrase “a doubting Thomas”.]

It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. [As the astronomer Carl Sagan recently said: “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”] The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured that the books in which the account is related were written by the persons whose names they bear. The best surviving evidence we now have respecting that affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say it is not true. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, “I will prove the truth of what I have told you by producing the people who say it is false.”

Given the widespread availability of Paine’s book in America, it amazes me how any American could have been so ill-informed either to create the Book of Mormon or to accept it as “true” – although it does appear that most of the early converts to Mormonism were dirt-poor illiterates (mostly from Europe), and nowadays, Mormon missionaries scour the globe for converts with similar “credentials”.

More so, it amazes me how some people set their standards so low for what they’ll accept as a “revelation”. What comes to mind is the movie *Contact*, based on a story written by Carl Sagan (either in whole or in part – I can’t

remember) and which, Dear, you might enjoy watching. In this story, extra-terrestrial beings (from this galaxy or another, I can't remember that either!) sent a "revelation" in a digital book – which (if I recall correctly) was written in three dimensions and which (I do recall clearly!) provided a "revelation" about how to construct a device that permitted people to travel through space-time in a "worm hole" (something that does appear to be a solution of Einstein's equations of general relativity), thereby permitting the leading actress (Jody Foster) to travel through space, perhaps to another galaxy, essentially instantaneously. Now that's what I call a "revelation"!

In that vein, Dear, consider the quality of the "revelations" in the "revealed" religions of our culture:

- For the Old Testament (OT), rather than have their god relay some silly old Sumerian, Egyptian, and Persian myths about how the universe was formed, how the earth took shape, and how life began, pray tell why the clerics didn't have their god reveal how quantum fluctuations can create something from nothing, how stars can form and begin to burn from the gravitational accumulation of hydrogen and helium, how heavy nuclei are formed in fusion reactions within stars and then can lead to the formation of planets, and while the clerics were at it, why didn't they have their god describe what are now called the theories of plate tectonics and Darwin's theory of evolution?!
- Similarly for the New Testament (NT), rather than have their Jesus say that he was "the light", pray tell why the authors didn't have Jesus reveal what are now called Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism and then show that one of their solutions contains a description of light?!
- In the Quran, rather than have Muhammad define some silly laws about who could marry whom, how to divvy up inheritances, etc., pray tell why the clerics who allegedly recorded his statements didn't describe Newton's "laws" of motion, along with his "law" of gravity – and while they were at it, maybe they could have added what are now called Einstein's theories of relativity, complete with showing that nothing can travel faster than light!
- And similarly in the Book of Mormon, rather than the nonsense about Native Americans being descendents of the lost tribes of Israel, why

didn't Rigdon have God reveal the structure and significance of the DNA molecule?!

Any of those would have been “revelations” worth noticing! Such “revelations” probably would have made thinking people consider the possibility that there was something more to this “revelation business” – beyond a bunch of clerical con games.

For contrast to such revelations, Dear, consider again some of the stupid and horrible stuff “revealed” in the principal “holy books” of our culture. And of course I'm not going to go through all that mud and guck again, but while trying to get the stuff off my boots, let me just mention a few of the pathetic policies (stupid personal policies and sick public policies) reviewed in prior chapters and advocated by the silly “sacred scripture” of our culture, starting at the beginning of the OT.

- Have sex, sex, and more sex, without any birth control. Just keep multiplying, without thought for what's best for the environment or for humanity.
- It's bad to know the difference between good and bad, but it's good to obey.
- Although it's bad to know what's good, it's good to know that men are better than women.
- Might makes right – and defines what's good.
- Men are stronger than women; therefore, women must obey men.
- Wives aren't their husband's partners; they're their husbands slaves.
- Tyrants rule by pain and torture.
- Placate tyrants – but just because you obey tyrants doesn't mean you'll be accepted; you may be rejected because... [whatever].
- It's sinful not to succeed.

- Though God made mistake after mistake, he's no sinner, because... well, because might makes right.
- Innocent people are sentenced to death, but murderers get police protection.
- The children of criminals, and their children's children forever, are also criminals.
- Work is punishment (save for tilling and caring for gardens); accomplishing what you set out to do is bad.
- Nakedness is bad; slavery is good.
- Don't stand and fight and overcome Nature's vicissitudes; don't persevere; wander away in search of an easier life.
- To build a fortune, steal, lie, deceive, cheat... whatever, including pimping out your wife in prostitution.
- God punishes men for marrying women, but he rewards men who pimp their wives.
- Wives are to do whatever is necessary to protect their husbands, even become prostitutes and even for lying, thieving, lazy, cowardly husbands.
- People have the responsibility to reproduce, but not the needed authority; for that, you must grovel to God.
- Those in power shouldn't use punishment to deter crime; they should wait until criminals have accomplished their most heinous crimes; then the fun of punishing them can be even greater.
- Rape your slave girl; if she resents your raping her, beat her; and if the rape results in a child, then throw both of them out.
- Mutilate people's bodies to constantly remind them that the priests are in control.

- Anything done for religion is righteous, up to and including slaughtering your son and offering your daughters up to be raped by a rapid mob.
- Three examples of “righteous” men are Noah (a drunken slave trader), Abraham (thief, liar, pimp, coward, rapist, slave owner, blackmailer, dead-beat father...), and Lot (for first offering his daughters to be raped by a mob and then for impregnating them).
- If, through any manner of lying and deceit, you can entrap any honorable people in failing to achieve their own standards of morality, then you can blackmail your marks to your wallet’s content and be as “righteous” as Abraham.
- To build your own fortune, you can do anything you want (lie, steal, pimp your wife, blackmail, cheat your brother of his inheritance, cheat your nephew of what’s his...), just make sure you obey the priests and pay them a 10% commission.
- If you are afraid because of your wife, then rather than defend yourself, say she’s your sister and hide behind her petticoat – and if other men then remove it, blackmail them.
- If you have enough money, then you can buy your way out from any predicament: your honor is a commodity that you can buy. This principle, however, is not a two-way street: if someone wrongs you, then don’t let them buy their way out of their dishonor; instead, like members of any successful mafia, murder the repentant fools and plunder their possessions.
- Murdering someone of a different race is okay, but if you do plan to murder someone, make sure no one is watching – and if you’re seen murdering someone, then rather than face justice, run.
- God is the cause of all illnesses, deformities, and dysfunctional organs.
- God punishes people for doing what he forces them to do.
- Annually, people should celebrate God’s prowess in his favorite sport of killing people.

- God’s policy re. slavery is that if Group A enslaves Group B then that’s good and Group A will be rewarded, but if Group B enslaves Group A then that’s bad and Group B will be punished...

Sorry, Dear, I ain’t gonna go through any more. I trust that the above was already “revealing” enough! As Paine wrote in *The Age of Reason*:

Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the [Old Testament] is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel. We scarcely meet with anything, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt...

But, Dear, maybe I should add that I have no desire to criticize the Jewish people. I’m not anti-Semitic (or, describing the bias more accurately, I’m not anti-Judaism) – but I’m definitely anti-stupidity! I’m certain that there is no essential difference among all people of the world. With their “holy books”, the Jewish people provided our society with at least some record of how our society developed. They provided this record in the form of a blatantly biased historical novel – fiction in a corrupted historical setting, unfortunately in a story with far too many characters, a crummy plot, obnoxious themes, and with far too much sex and violence. But at least the OT gives us some indication of our society’s past.

Of course, in so far as the OT gives us some indication of a part of our past, what it shows is really rather ugly, with reliance on stupid myths about the “supernatural”, confused thoughts about morality, intellectually putrefying moral codes, atrocious treatment of women, and a host of other horrible policies, including power mongering, thievery, murder, rape, racism, and on and on. But again, when I review this, I do so not as criticism of the Jewish people (because I expect that the vast majority of all groups went through similar if not worse putrefying periods during their social development). On the other hand, though, I do vehemently criticize all people of any group (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Mormon, whatever) that, today, still treat the horrible stuff in the Bible as “holy” and “sacred” (and similar stupid words) and use it to guide their behavior – and worse, try to make the rest of us conform to such stupid policies.

As I'll show you some in **Yx**, perpetuating such stupidity has led to horrible consequences. Thus, the Jewish clerics' policy of racism led to the promotion of not only religious intolerance and barbarism but also slavery. And if you wonder, Dear, how any sane person could justify such atrocities, the answer of course is that no sane person could, but in their insanity, again and again the clerics repeat the same "justification": the god they concocted approves their killing people whose ideas differ from theirs – and similar religious wars have continued for thousands of years.

Another example is genocide. Consider Hitler. As horrible as he was, the "record" in the OT "reveals" that the Israelites were worse. They "annihilated" (exterminated) a population that was essentially the same size as theirs (or maybe even larger). Comparable, then, would be Hitler's extermination of not 6 million Jews in the "Holocaust", but closer to 60 million. And therefore, Dear, can you see a horrible nemesis? If the Israelites had rejected racism, if they had rejected rather than promoted the horrible racist policies of the OT, then Hitler's racism may never have emerged. They want to ensure that another Holocaust will never occur? Well, I have a suggestion for them: burn every copy of the OT (their Torah) in existence (save for a few copies, sealed away in some secure remote library, for scholars who desire to study the depth of human depravity).

But maybe the Jewish people have finally begun to see through their clerics' lies from seeing how Hitler used the same methods as Ezra's Moses (using propaganda to spread the evils of racism and obedience to "authority") to murder six million Jews. The following are some of Hitler's "principles":⁵

- Only force rules. Force is the first law.
- To be a leader means to be able to move masses.
- If you wish the sympathy of the broad masses, you must tell them the crudest and most stupid things.
- All propaganda has to be popular and has to accommodate itself to the comprehension of the least intelligent of those whom it seeks to reach.
- No matter what amount of talent is employed in the organization of propaganda, it will have no result if due account is not taken of these fundamental principles.

⁵ Copied from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/adolfo_hitler.html and from <http://hitlernews.cloudworth.com/quotations-of-adolf-hitler.php>.

- Propaganda must be limited to a few simple themes and these must be represented again and again. Here, as in innumerable other cases, perseverance is the first and most important condition of success.
- How fortunate for leaders than men do not think.
- If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed.
- Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.
- The great masses of the people will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one.
- The broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they more readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods.
- Faith is harder to shake than knowledge, love succumbs less to change than respect, hate is more enduring than aversion, and the impetus to the mightiest upheavals on this earth has at all times consisted less in a scientific knowledge dominating the masses than in a fanaticism which inspired them and sometimes in a hysteria which drove them forward.
- The greatness of every mighty organization embodying an idea in this world lies in the religious fanaticism and intolerance with which, fanatically convinced of its own right, it intolerantly imposes its will against all others.
- It is not truth that matters but victory.
- Success is the sole earthly judge of right and wrong.
- Who says I am not under the special protection of God?

And where did Hitler learn such “principles”? Answer: from the Bible.

And no, Dear, I’m not kidding. The OT contains the largest number and greatest depth of immoralities and injustices of any book that I’ve ever read – and maybe more than any book ever written. Some of its teachings are so bizarre, so horrible, that civil societies should enact laws to prohibit exposing young people to such horrible ideas – even prohibiting anyone who has failed to demonstrate even primitive skills in critical thinking.

And yes, Dear, I would never make a suggestion, lightly, to ban the dissemination of any ideas. Yet, some ideas (such as promoting racism or advocating slavery) are so evil that I think, for the protection of the rest of us, their spread should be constrained. For example, just as I support the constraint on the sale of firearms to only those over 18 who have no criminal record, I would support the constraint of the exposure of the Bible only to those people who can demonstrate that they are capable of thinking at a level that would have permitted them to earn a high-school diploma from an accredited school – and no school should be accredited unless its graduates demonstrate capabilities in critical thinking.

But enough of the OT. Let me now glance back at some of the stupid policies and principles promoted in the New Testament (NT), starting at its beginning (as I did with the OT):

- Women’s reproductive organs are like soil, producing babies if ghosts plant seeds in them.
- An adopted son has the genes of his foster father.
- God communicates with people in dreams *via* angels, rather than in person, using cell phones, sending faxes, or similar.
- Sometimes (when he’s of a mind) God communicates with people through movement and location of stars.
- Astrologers are wise – except sometimes they’re dumb, stopping to ask for directions, even when the star that they’re following keeps moving and parks directly over its destination.
- God can work wonders: he can communicate with a single person to save that one person’s adopted son – but sometimes, unfortunately, God’s rather forgetful, forgetting to communicate a similar warning to all other parents of young children in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, who (as a result) are all slaughtered (save, somehow or other, John the Baptist).
- All members of the two principal Jewish sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were “a viper’s brood” (i.e., bred from a snake), and as proof of that, well, John the Baptist said so. Besides, everybody but everybody

knows that people whose opinion differs from yours are nothing but a “viper’s brood”. Any other questions?

- The people of Israel were a bunch of sheep in need of a shepherd – and it was Jesus’ job to be that shepherd. Further, besides being a shepherd, Jesus job was to be a farmer: “His shovel is ready in his hand and he will winnow his threshing-floor; the wheat he will gather into his granary, but he will burn the chaff on a fire that can never go out.”
- People who don’t “believe” in your fairy tale deserve to burn in Hell: torture them for eternity, delight in their “wailing and gnashing of teeth...”, while they burn “on a fire that can never go out.”

Sorry, Dear, I ain’t gonna continue with that anymore, because as I demonstrated earlier in this **Qx**, my anger juices really start flowing when I encounter the damnable Christian clerics’ hideous idea of Hell. I don’t want to start going on more limericks! Instead, let me try to repress my revulsion at the idea of Hell and use the idea to stimulate thoughts about some general differences (and similarities) between Christianity (with its many sects) and Judaism (with its many “sects” – including Christianity!).

As you might expect and as certainly you can find on the internet, there’s been an enormous amount written about differences between Judaism and Christianity, written especially by Christian “theologians”, who never seem to tire of describing how much better Christianity is than Judaism. And let me add, incidentally, that I disagree with all these Christian theologians: anyone in this age would need to be mentally retarded to “believe” in Judaism, but it does seem to be a “better” religion than Christianity (or Mormonism or Islam), because most Jewish sects discount, disregard, or even discard the stupid idea of Heaven and the horrible idea of Hell.

But that aside, Dear, if you want to see some of the literature on the differences between Judaism and Christianity, type “the law and the gospel” into any internet search engine. One such example (of thousands!) is the following, written by John Bradford, almost 500 years ago, in 1548.

Therefore, I say, take to thee the glass of God’s law [i.e., the laws of Moses]; look therein, and thou shalt see thy just damnation, and God’s wrath for sin, which, if thou darest, will drive thee not only to an amendment, but also to a sorrow and hatred of thy wickedness, and even to the brim of despair, out of which nothing can bring thee but the glad tidings of Christ, that is, the gospel: for as God’s word doth bind thee, so

can nothing but God's word unbind thee; and until thou comest to this point, thou knowest nothing of Christ. Make unto thee a sure foundation; begin at the Law; and if it fear thee, and bring thee to hell's mouth in consideration of thy sin and sinful nature, then come to Christ, come to the gospel; then shalt thou be a good scholar, and praise thy schoolmaster; then shalt thou feel the benefit of Christ; then shalt thou love him, and thy neighbor for his sake. Then will it make thine ears to glow, and thy heart to bleed, to hear or see anything set in Christ's place. Then shalt thou look for the coming of thy Lord, and weep to hear his name evil spoken of...

The essence of such jabberwocky is that, similar to the Jew (says this Christian theologian) the Christian is to fear the wrath of God, but the Christian can also "rejoice" in the love of his son, for Jesus can forgive the sinner, and on Zoroaster's final judgment day, Jesus will pass out tickets either to Heaven or Hell. Of course, the cost of the tickets is spelled out – and you're to leave the cash in the clerics' collection plates.

But such jabberwocky aside, the essence of the difference between Judaism and Christianity seems to be the following. As I've suggested before, if the entire OT were reduced to a single word, then that single word would be "Obey!" (If more than a single word were permitted, the OT could be reduced to: "Don't evaluate, obey!" If still more: "Don't evaluate, obey – or else!") In contrast, if the NT were reduced to a single word, then that single word would be "Believe!" (And if more than a single word were permitted, then the Gospel could be reduced to: "Don't think; don't evaluate; have faith; believe – or else!") In contrast to both, Dear, if all that I've written to you in this book were reduced to a single word, I hope that you see that the single word is "Evaluate!" (And if more than a single word were permitted, then I hope that you see what I'm trying to say to you is: "Please, Dear, think for yourself; learn to have faith in your own capabilities; believe in yourself; rely on your own best judgments, and base your best judgments on the best available data"). [And if you wonder, Dear, how come I was permitted to use so many words, that's one of the prerogatives of authors. Lord knows that the clerical authors never constrained themselves!]

Beyond the command to obey, Judaism is based on an alleged contract (or "covenant") that the crazed clerics convinced the poor Jewish people was made between them and their god. I've quoted the details of this "covenant" before; it's essence is this: "If you people will do what we say – if you'll 'just' obey us," the Jewish clerics have been repeating for ~2500 years, "then you'll prosper; otherwise, you're headed for trouble."

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Yet, in this bogus “covenant” prescribed by the Jewish clerics (in contrast to the bogus “covenant” of the Christian clerics, to be described), no claim was made about what happened after people died. That is, save for some waffling after some of the Jewish clerics were “enlightened” by the Persians about Zoroaster’s crazy scheme, the conditional promises and threats in the covenant of Judaism pertain only to this life.

Let me add another incidental note. Elsewhere I’ve praised the recent book by Graham Lawrence entitled *The Fallible Gospels*, which is available at <http://freespace.virgin.net/graham.lawrence/gospelintro.htm>. But it includes the following silliness:

The people of Israel were told that they were obliged to obey the commandments of their God, but this was not just an order. They were also told that this was one side of an agreement, a Covenant. In return for their obedience and loyalty, God would reward them. He would help them oppose their enemies; he would take away sickness and infertility; and he would establish them in the land he had promised to Abraham.

This idea of a Covenant with God was a concept of staggering genius, one of the great ideas of all time. It probably originated with Moses himself. I am not being cynical here and accusing him of having “deliberately created” this idea in some manipulative sense. This would be a naive projection of modern thought processes on to the ancient world. In that world, a genius did not have any of our concepts enabling him to separate conscious and subconscious processes, or to distinguish unconscious creativity and dreams from voices or messages “from God”.

What I call Lawrence’s “silliness” (in the above) is that “this idea of Covenant with God was a concept of staggering genius, one of the great ideas of all time. It probably originated with Moses...” Gimme a break! The first “covenant” was when the first priest of some stupid savages said something similar to: “If you’ll give me your fairest virgin to sacrifice to the volcano god, then (after I suitably “initiate” her, of course) the volcano god will...” As Voltaire said: “The first priest was the first rogue who met the first fool.”

In contrast, I’d second the nomination of Moses to the status of “genius” if he had arranged for the people to make a covenant not with God but with each other! Let me illustrate with a hypothetical example of such a covenant:

“People! Given the total absence of even a scrap of data supporting the silly suggestion of the existence of any god, given zero indications that any life form has more intelligence than humans, and given that we humans nonetheless benefit from our helping one another, therefore, let’s make a covenant among ourselves, that whosoever of whatever race, origin, or nationality would agree to abide by certain obvious rules of conduct to help one another (details of which will be discussed and agreed upon at our subsequent meetings), then we as a group will assist that person to survive and to prosper – provided that person makes a similar covenant with us. Moreover, insofar as any person or group of people of whatever race, origin, or nationality doesn’t want to commit to this covenant with us and doesn’t bother us, then we pledge not to bother them. Of course it goes without saying that if any group doesn’t choose to help us and instead chooses to endanger us, then together, as a group, we’ll do what we deem appropriate to protect each and every one of us.”

Now, Dear, I just banged that “covenant” out on this keyboard in about a minute or so; therefore, feel free to improve on the wording. Yet, surely you agree that it’s a vast improvement on the stupid “covenant” that the “genius” Moses (or more likely, Ezra) locked religious Jews into for the past ~2500 years!

But I would admit that Moses could be judged a genius relative to the insane Jewish drop-out “Saint” Paul. The “covenant” he cooked up, allegedly between his followers and Jesus (or God) – being the basis for what is called “Christianity” but which should be called “Paulism” – is bizarre. And yes, Dear, I wouldn’t be surprised that I’ve reviewed this so many times already in this **Qx** that you’ll have difficulty going through it again, but because it’s the basis also of Mormonism and because you’ve been forced to track through this mud and guck ever since you were a baby, let me examine it one more time – in hopes that, if I’ve failed to convey this idiocy to you adequately before, then maybe from different wording you’ll finally achieve an “Eureka moment”, exclaiming something similar to: “Ah, now I see it; it’s totally stupid; it’s bizarre; it’s crazy!”

The essence of Paul’s craziness is that, in addition to obeying all 613 (or 631 or whatever) of the ~2500 year old traffic laws defined by Moses, Ezra, and the other Jewish traffic cops, Christians are to “believe” (or to have “faith”) in a set of additional speculations that are supported by zero data. To start, Christians and Mormons are to suspend judgment, block skepticism, and

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adopt the immorality of refusing to evaluate. When they thus succeed in blocking rational thought (thereby reaching what Christian clerics call a “state of grace”) and absolutely refuse to apply the scientific method in their daily lives, then happiness follows: happiness is in “believing” (that the cow can indeed jump over the moon, that all invisible flying elephants are pink, that Jesus was the son of God, or whatever), for then, when you die, you’ll not be dead. As the unknown author of *The Gospel According to John* had his Jesus say at *John 11, 25* (although he was almost certainly paraphrasing not Jesus but Paul): “If a man has faith in me, even though he die, he shall come to life; and no one who is alive and has faith shall ever die.”

That’s the essence of the new “covenant” that Paul cooked up: if people will just “believe” that Jesus was the son of God (or God in the flesh, or similarly meaningless mumbo-jumbo), then because of this “faith” (plus, of course, doing what the clerics tell them to do), people will get eternal life in Heaven; otherwise, they’re headed for Hell. Paul (following Zoroaster) thereby upstaged Moses: according to the OT, the “covenant” that Moses cooked up only promised his followers that if they would obey him, they’d have a good life during this life – and if they didn’t, they wouldn’t. But according to the NT, Paul’s “covenant” (the Gnostic gospels don’t report that Jesus made any such “covenant”) promised his followers that if they would obey him (Paul), then they’d have a wonderful eternal life (in Heaven) – and if they didn’t, they’d have a horrible eternal life in Hell.

And while I’m at it, let me repeat that several hundred years after Paul, Muhammad (being the experienced merchant that he was) then upstaged Paul, promising more for less! Thus, for those who obeyed him, Muhammad promised an even better Heaven (complete with 72 perpetual virgins to perpetually satisfy the sexual desires of obeying men) and for the horrible infidels who wouldn’t obey, he promised an even worse Hell. As for the women, well (following both Moses and Paul) Muhammad’s opinion was that they weren’t much more than cattle, anyway; therefore, their future after death really didn’t matter much. And just to finish off this litany of damnable con artists, more than a thousand years after Muhammad, the convicted “money digger” Joseph Smith promised an even better Heaven: obeying followers would get to rule their own world and could have as many women as they wanted – and actually suggested that Hell really wasn’t so bad as “the fools” thought!

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But returning to Paul: maybe because he was concerned that some people might do such a horrible thing as to think for themselves, he provided what he no doubt considered was a brilliant reason why his new and revised covenant was to replace the covenant prescribed by Moses. The essence of Paul's stupid argument (forming the basis of Christianity and Mormonism) proceeds as follows.

1. God commanded Adam and Eve – under penalty of death – not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, because if they did, they'd know the difference between good and evil.
2. Yet, this commandment notwithstanding, they ate the apple.
3. Thereby, they learned how to distinguish between good and evil; consequently, consistent with the threatened punishment, humans had to die.
4. But in his infinite forgiveness, God felt sorry for humans. So he sent "his only begotten son" to suffer the sins of humanity, to die on the cross, and although Jesus only stayed dead for a short while (so, in fact, the whole death scene was no big deal), yet that would wipe the slate clean for all humans, provided only that humans would believe that Jesus was the son of God and died to "atone" for their sins.
5. Thereby, if humans would just believe that Paul wasn't a raving maniac and would keep all of God's other commandments, then humans could live forever – just as Adam and Eve (and all humans) could have done in the first place, if they hadn't eaten the apple, thereby learning the difference between good and evil.

What total absurdity! Whereas Adam and Eve (before they ate the fruit) didn't know the difference between right and wrong, they couldn't know if it was right or wrong to obey. Stated differently, not knowing what sin was, they couldn't sin. Therefore, no redemption was (or is) necessary, because Adam and Eve didn't do anything wrong.

Please, Dear, think about it – and for the time being, suppress your knowledge of evolution and therefore the certainty that Adam and Eve never existed; that is, it's all just another stupid myth. Thus, for a moment, focus on just the illogic of the myth. Logically, if you didn't know the difference

between right and wrong, and if someone said to you “Thou shalt...” or “Thou shalt not...”, then the words would have no meaning.

Again, if you didn’t know the difference between right and wrong, and if someone said to you “Thou shalt not eat the apple”, then like an infant who knows only a few words, the only words that would have meaning to you (assuming you knew the meaning of even these words) would be “eat” and “apple”. If you didn’t know the difference between right and wrong, if someone said “It’s wrong to eat the apple”, then all you would hear is “eat” and “apple” – for the word “wrong” would have no meaning to you. And, Dear, if you ever hear an argument similar to, “But they were commanded not to eat the apple”, then the obvious response is: “But they had no idea whether they should obey or disobey a commandment; to do so, they’d need to be able to distinguish between right and wrong – and God had arranged that they were incapable of making such a distinction.”

And no matter the variations in “translations” that exist and might yet be machinated, still the essence of the concept will remain: communication was, is, and always will be impossible about what is good or bad (be it about eating an apple, learning what’s right or wrong, life versus death, or whatever) if the idea of good versus bad isn’t known! If someone said, “Don’t eat that or you’ll die”, then so what? If the listeners don’t know the difference between good and bad, then they couldn’t possibly know that death was bad! To them, the communication is: “Don’t eat that [assuming they knew what ‘eating’ meant!], or you’ll xxxx [i.e., a concept that was neither good nor evil, because, again, they knew nothing of the concept of good and evil].

Try it, Dear. Try to communicate to a baby, who knows nothing about good and bad – save that, without words, still a baby knows (by instinct) that it’s good to eat and it’s bad (or, at least, uncomfortable) to have dirty diapers! Then tell this baby that if she eats an apple then surely she will dirty her diapers! With luck, she’ll answer: “Ga ga”!

And similarly for poor old Adam and Eve. We are told they didn’t know even as much as a baby knows about good *versus* bad – possibly because they didn’t wear diapers! So, what else could they answer God but “Ga ga”? And then, just like babies, they wandered about and chewed on whatever they found. And by the way, Dear, should you ever wonder why Adam and Eve then grabbed some fig leaves: it wasn’t (as the Bible has it) that they

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were ashamed of their nakedness; they wanted to move on to the next stage of human development – to try on some diapers!

Thereby, Dear, I hope you see that all of Christianity (and Mormonism) collapses in a logical absurdity – save for the fools who are unable to follow even the simplest of logical arguments, the cowards who are afraid to examine the logic for fear that they’ll see how they’ve wasted their lives, and of course, save for the liars and thieves who profit financially from promoting their horrid con game.

For you, Dear, I very much hope that you can walk away from the collapsed mess of this logical absurdity. You may be somewhat sorrowful for the time you wasted on it, but I hope – and in fact know – that any such sorrow will be more than compensated by the happiness you’ll find in leaving all that mud and guck behind you.

But beyond being totally stupid, Paul’s basis for Christianity (and Mormonism) sets absolutely horrible precedents in social justice. If there were even a crumb of data (which there isn’t!) supporting Paul’s stupidity (either re. Adam and Eve or re. God and Jesus), then as judges, God (and/or Jesus) should be impeached:

- God gives a commandment to Adam and Eve to be good and not evil, but makes it impossible for them to do as they were commanded (because he refused to let them know the difference between good and evil, e.g., that it was “good” to obey his commandments!),
- God then sentenced Adam and Eve to death for a crime that they didn’t commit (because God forbade them to know not only that it was a crime but even what a crime was),
- God then proceeded to sentence to death all the progeny of Adam and Eve (out to and including me and you, Dear), not because we did anything wrong, but because our great, great, great, great... grandparents dirtied their diapers (or whatever),
- But then, realizing that he had made a mistake (i.e., in the clerics’ terminology, he “sinned”), God cooked up a way to placate himself for his sin: to appease himself for killing so many people, he killed his “only

begotten son”, the one that allegedly even God considered to be totally innocent of any crime!

I dare anyone to identify a more hideous “judge” than this god: execute people for the non-crime of their ancient ancestors, and when you’re tired of that hideousness, execute your totally innocent son! Who in hell would want to make a covenant with such a rotten son-of-a-bitch as this god?!

And in case my writing is inadequate to convince you that Paul was totally bananas, Dear, then let me again quote Paine’s *The Age of Reason* [to which I’ve added some italics].

From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was. But I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called Redemption by the death of the Son of God. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons.

This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner to this moment; and I moreover believe, that *any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.*

It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were ashamed to tell their children anything about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence... But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better, is making the story still worse; as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder; and to tell him that all this is a mystery, is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it...

In order to make it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being whom they call Satan a power equally as great, if not greater, than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given [Satan] the power of liberating himself from the pit, after what they call his fall, but they have made that power increase afterwards to infinity. Before this fall they represent him only as an

angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall, he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He exists everywhere, and at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

Not content with this deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation [the snake in the Garden of Eden] all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the direct necessity either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man.

Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit himself on a cross in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd, less contradictory. *But, instead of this they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall.*

That many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime) is what I have no doubt of. In the first place, they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed anything else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural anything is, the more is it capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration...

[Further,] If Jesus Christ was the being which those mythologists tell us he was, and that he came into this world to suffer, which is a word they sometimes use instead of “to die”, the only real suffering he could have endured would have been “to live”. His existence here was a state of exilement or transportation from heaven, and the way back to his original country was to die. In fine, everything in this strange system is the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is the reverse of truth, and I become so tired of examining into its inconsistencies and absurdities, that I hasten to the conclusion of it, in order to proceed to something better.

I, too, “hasten to the conclusion of it”, Dear, but let me add a little more. For example, consider the following, from the book by Mangasarian, which I’ve frequently quoted (and referenced):

The following is from the book of Jeremiah: “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” This is one of the texts upon which the doctrine of the fall of man is based. We repeat that only under a religion of slavery, where one slave vies with another to abase himself before his lords and masters, could such an idea have been invented. There is not a man in all our sacred scriptures who could stand before the deity erect and unabashed, or who could speak in the accents of a Cicero, who said, “We boast justly of our own virtue, which we could not do if we derived it from

the deity and not from ourselves,” or this from Epictetus, “It is characteristic of a wise man that he looks for all his good and evil from himself.” Such independence was foreign to a race that believed itself fallen.

Is it not pathetic? Could slavery ever strike a deeper bottom than that...? I despair of man. I would cry my heart out if I permitted myself to dwell upon the folly and stupidity and slavery of which man voluntarily makes himself the victim. Think of it! A man and a woman, nobody knows where or when, are supposed to have tasted of the fruit of a tree; the [childish, superstitious] mind, with its crouching imagination, pounces upon this flimsy, fanciful tale with the appetite of a carrion crow, and exalts it to the dignity of an excuse for the eternal damnation of a whole world. I am dazed! I can say no more!

That Paul’s pronouncements reek with absurdity and injustice there is no doubt, but furthermore, they’re derived from a totally stupid idea: that natural death of an individual is a result of “sin” rather than as nature’s way of promoting the survival of any species’ genes. As McCabe wrote in his book that I’ve also quoted (and referenced) many times:

The fundamental and essential Christian doctrine is... based upon the fall of man, upon a certain version of man’s early history... [But] the scientific record of [man’s] slow development... is fatal to the legend of Eden and the fall. The essential part of the Christian structure of doctrine breaks down when the legend is abandoned. Paul, on whom, rather than on the gospels, Christian [and Mormon] theology is based, was entirely wrong. The primeval curse is a Babylonian legend now completely discredited by what science teaches about early man, quite apart from evolution, and therefore a divine redeemer of the race becomes superfluous.

That is, Dear, as I’ve tried to explain before: given the advantages to the survival of our genes if individuals host our DNA molecules only temporarily, thereby providing our DNA molecules with opportunities to modify themselves with changes in both the physical environment (e.g., changes in climate) and the biological environment (e.g., changing viruses), therefore, death of individuals promotes the survival of any species’ genes – “and therefore a divine redeemer of the race becomes superfluous”. Stated differently, the “redeemer of the race” is not the divine Jesus who “atoned” for our sins (thereby permitting individuals to avoid death), but in reality, the “divine redeemer of the race” is exactly the natural death of each individual!

Now, Dear, maybe all of this still seems to you to be a harmless fairy tale. And actually, in a few ways, some weak defense can be made for Christianity. For one, its promise of a “good life” after death has made many miserable people happy (as have other drugs, such as opium and

heroin). Second, maybe Jesus (or maybe it was Rabbi Hillel) did a fairly good job (but not a great job) reducing the hundreds of traffic laws of Moses, Ezra, et al. into a simple “kindness principle” (not stated as well as others, such as Confucius or Aristotle, but still, a vast improvement over the details given by Moses and Ezra about how a man should best beat his slaves, sell his daughters into slavery, etc.). In particular, I congratulate Paul either for creating or if not creating then at least repeating the idea (again, possibly from Rabbi Hillel) that what’s important is not the letter but the spirit of the law. But what Paul (and maybe Jesus) preached (and Christian clerics still preach) certainly isn’t harmless: similar to any drug, it warps people’s minds, and similar to any drug dealers (selling their drugs for their own profit), Christian (Muslim, Mormon, and other) clerics have become another set of parasites leeching off productive members of society.

Did the clerics invent such ridiculous theories only for their own profit? I’ll dig into that question in **Yx**. Here, I’ll summarize by saying that, in some cases, the founders (e.g., maybe Moses, possibly Ezra; possibly Jesus, probably Paul; maybe Muhammad, possibly the first caliphs; maybe Joseph Smith, probably Sidney Rigdon) of various religions (Judaism; Christianity; Islam; Mormonism; respectively) seem to have been trying to help at least their limited view of humanity. Then, however, the founders were followed by various con artists who primarily sought to help themselves to wealth and power (e.g., Ezra, Paul, various Popes, various subsequent Muslim leaders, and certainly Joseph Smith).

In the case of Christianity, in particular, once again Paine’s assessment (again from his *Age of Reason*) is penetrating:

Since... no external evidence can, at this long distance of time, be produced to prove whether the church fabricated the doctrine called redemption or not (for such evidence, whether for or against, would be subject to the same suspicion of being fabricated), the case can only be referred to the internal evidence which the thing carries of itself; and this affords a very strong presumption of its being a fabrication. For the internal evidence is that the theory or doctrine of redemption has for its basis an idea of pecuniary justice [i.e., based on money], and not that of moral justice.

If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself, and pay it for me. But if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed. Moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty even if the innocent would offer itself. To suppose justice to do this, is to destroy the principle of its existence, which is the thing itself. It is then no longer justice. It is indiscriminate revenge.

This single reflection will show that the doctrine of redemption is founded on a mere pecuniary idea corresponding to that of a debt which another person might pay; and as this pecuniary idea corresponds again with the system of second redemptions, obtained through the means of money given to the church for pardons, the probability is that the same persons fabricated both the one and the other of those theories...

That is, Dear: given that the entire idea of “the redemption” is “based on a mere pecuniary idea”, Paine suggests that both its author, Paul, and its subsequent promoters (i.e., all Christian and Mormon clerics) are primarily interested in making money.

And similar to all con artists, the clerics of all “revealed” religions make their money by promising to “reward” those they dupe (i.e., their “marks”) with more (and generally, far more) than they paid for. Thus, in their “covenant”, religious Jews are offered success in this life, not for believing in themselves, not for inventing new devices, not for... but for just obeying their clerics. In their “covenant”, the Christians are offered “eternal” happiness, not for believing in themselves, not for inventing new devices, not for scientific achievements, not for... but for just obeying their clerics. In their “covenant”, the Muslims are offered an even better heaven, not for believing in themselves, not for inventing new devices, not for scientific achievements, not for artistic accomplishments, not for having faith in the scientific method... but for just obeying their clerics. And in their “covenant”, the Mormons are offered a still better heaven not for inventing new devices, not for scientific achievements, not for artistic accomplishments, not for having faith in the scientific method, not for helping intelligence go on... but for just obeying their clerics. All of which reminds me of the line from the movie *The Flim Flam Man*: “You can never cheat an honest man.”

In the case of Mormonism, in particular, notice from *Alma 22*, 16, how much is offered for what-appears-to-be so little cost:

But Aaron said unto him [the King]: “If thou desirest this thing [eternal life], if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.”

And of course that’s “true”: you will receive the ‘hope’ – but as for receiving “eternal life”, well, that’s another matter!

Further, though, and as you well know, Dear, the cost isn't just that you must "believe" in still-another fairy tale. I know of no other "cult" (save perhaps for the Moonies and the Hare Krishnas) who demand so much of the believer's time and energy – and so much obedience – as do the Mormons. And yes: I know that many such "commitments" are little more than "social obligations". But, Dear, what about your obligations both to the larger society and to yourself? Are you really discharging your obligation to society by, for example, just parroting the "party line" on social issues such as racism, women's rights, premarital sex, homosexuality, separation of church and state, evolution, and so on? And simultaneously, are you being "all you can be" if you don't form your opinions about such matters using your own best evaluation of relevant data?

"But," many have said and no doubt many will continue to say, "you miss the point entirely: it's necessary to provide people with guidance in this life and hope for a future life (if they follow that guidance) – and it's necessary to frighten them if they don't." Such views have been repeated for thousands of years. For example, more than 2100 years ago, the Greek historian Polybius (c. 208 – c.126 BCE) wrote:

Since the masses of the people are inconsistent, full of unruly desires, passionate, and reckless of consequences, they must be filled with fears to keep them in order. The ancients did well, therefore, to invent gods and the belief in punishment after death.

Another example is the following letter written in 1785 by Benjamin Franklin to Thomas Paine, warning him against publishing his *Age of Reason* (a draft copy of which he had sent to Franklin):

I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundations of all religion. For, without the belief of a Providence that takes cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion that, though your reasons are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind spits in his own face.

But were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantage of virtue, and the

disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots [a tribe in Southern Africa] that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.

I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a great deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be if without it?

History shows that Franklin was partially right. His prediction to Paine “the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself [and] mischief to you...” was correct. Further, as you can find on the internet by yourself, Paine was subjected to “a great deal of mortification by the enemies [his book raised against him].”

But I strongly disagree with Franklin’s other suggestion that “simple people” need religion to keep them “in line”. That suggestion was included in the above quotations from both Polybius and Franklin and has been made by innumerable other people, including your other grandfather and your mother. Polybius wrote “Since the masses of the people are inconsistent, full of unruly desires, passionate, and reckless of consequences, they must be filled with fears to keep them in order.” I quote my granddaughter: “Show me the data!” In the **M**- and **P**-chapters I showed you some relevant data; in the **X**-chapters, I’ll show you more; in summary, the data don’t support the contention that religion is needed to promote virtue and suppress vice; in fact, the data suggest that the opposite is more likely to be correct!

It’s easy to see the reason for the widespread error – besides the obvious reason that it’s to the advantage of the clerics to promote such a falsehood. Franklin wrote: “think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice,

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to support their virtue...” I would respond to Franklin: “Think of the dolphins! Do you think that it’s fear of some giant Jabberwock in the sky (a giant dolphin?!) that impels them to swim beneath and periodically lift a wounded cousin to the surface to get air?!” That is, Dear, as I’ve mentioned in earlier chapters and will show you more in later chapters, it’s instinctive, rational, and rests on a firm base of reliable data that there are advantages to our trio of survival goals to “restrain... vice [and] support... virtue.” In fact, as I’ll show you in later chapters (especially in V, dealing with Values), the primary meanings for ‘vice’ and ‘virtue’ are derived with respect to our dual survival goals – and have absolutely nothing to do with any imagined giant Jabberwock in the sky.

Which leads me to another thought. In the above, I already wrote that it’s amazing to me how low so many people set their standards for what they’ll accept as a “revelation”. Personally, I’d demand that any revelation provide a complete solution to the full, nonlinear, Navier-Stokes equations of fluid mechanics! But it’s even more amazing – it’s astounding – what trivia, what nonsense, what stupidity, people will accept as the basis for their idea of morality and their sense of justice. My mind drifts back to that idiotic statement: “Without religion, there can be no morality, there can be no law.” What is the basis for the morality of a dolphin helping a wounded cousin? Religion?! What is the basis for the law that, in this country, we’re to drive on the right-hand side of the road? Religion?! It would be more defensible to state: “You’ve got the cart in front of the horse: without morality, without law, without people (and dolphins!) already being able to perceive how best to promote their survival, there would be no religion!”

And yes, Dear, of course I agree that it’s worthwhile to meet with other people in congregations, to listen to lectures, to chat, to sing, to plan community actions, and so on. But it doesn’t follow that the focus of such congregations should be “reverence” to some giant Jabberwock in the sky! And of course I agree that it’s useful to help people to pursue their trio of survival goals in a rational manner. But don’t teach people to obey, don’t promise them some reward in a fictitious heaven if they obey, don’t threaten them with some imaginary hell if they don’t. Instead, teach people to think critically, to apply the scientific method in their daily lives.

Consider how some others summarized such religious junk.

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“The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, submission, humility, in a word, all the qualities of the canaille [viz., “the lowest class of people”].” [Karl Marx (1818-1883)]

“It is time the clergy are told that thinking men, after a close examination of that doctrine [Christianity], pronounce it to be subversive of true moral development and, therefore, positively noxious.” [George Eliot {Mary Ann Evans} (1819-80)]

“The threat of punishment for disbelief is the crowning touch of Christian misology [copied in Islam and Mormonism]. Believe in Jesus – regardless of evidence or justification – or be subjected to agonizing torture. With this theme reverberating throughout the New Testament, we have intellectual intimidation, transcendental blackmail, in its purest form. Threats replace argumentation, and irrationality gains the edge over reason through an appeal to brute force. Man’s ability to think and question becomes his most dangerous liability, and the intellectually frightened, docile, unquestioning believer is presented as the exemplification of moral perfection.” [Lemuel K. Washburn, *Is the Bible Worth Reading and Other Essays*, 1911]

“You don’t believe in God,” I said to Stein./ “God is a word banging around in the human nervous system. He exists about as much as Santa Claus.”/ “Santa Claus has had a tremendous influence, exist or not.”/ “For children.”/ “Lots of saints have died for God with a courage that’s hardly childish.”/ “That’s part of the horror. It’s all a fantasy. It’s all for nothing.” [Peter de Vries, “The Blood of the Lamb,” p. 182, from James A. Haight, ed., *2000 Years of Disbelief*]

But my grandchildren have been taught not to consider such ideas. They’ve been taught not to read books that aren’t “faith producing” and “faith building” – such as (others would claim) this book that your grandfather has written. Yet, Dear, I maintain that this book is “faith producing” and “faith building” – not, however, faith in any giant Jabberwock in the sky, but faith in the scientific method and in yourself (which are the subjects addressed in most of the rest of this book).

But looking backwards again, I hope you see, Dear, that the quintessential feature of the Judeo-Christian-Muslim-Mormon guck (i.e., the Abrahamic religions) that contaminates our culture is its contorted, distorted, and confused answer to the question: What is the purpose of life? And the reason that the answer is contorted, distorted, and confused is because, so is the question. As any blade of grass, tree, or dolphin will “tell” you: “The purpose of life is to live!” Life is the purpose. Restated, that question is: “What is the purpose of the purpose?” No one should be surprised that such a confused question leads to confused answers!

And especially in the case of Christianity, Islam, and Mormonism, the stupid question about the purpose of life is followed by an equally asinine “solution” to the problem of death – “asinine” because, as I’ve already described, death isn’t a problem but a solution! Massey wrote more:

The burden of religion in the past has been: “Prepare to die”... For eighteen hundred years they have pretended to teach men how to die. But the first duty of men who have to die is to learn how to live, so as to leave the world, or something in it, a little better than we found it. Our future life must be the natural outcome of this; the root of the whole matter is in this life.

It seems that even the Ancient Jews saw “the root of the whole matter is in this life” and disregarded the Ancient Egyptian ideas of a life after death. But pity the poor Jews. For ~2500 years, their parasitic priests (their rabbis) have been laying a “guilt trip” on the Jewish people, blaming them and their ancestors for all the troubles they’ve experienced. In reality, it was the damn clerics who are to blame: they promised the people what their imagined giant Jabberwock in the sky could never deliver – because he was never more than just a figment of overactive imaginations, unconstrained by data.

But of more emotional impact on me, pity certain grandchildren. Whoever concocted the Book of Mormon (probably Sidney Rigdon) poured just enough water on some Christian guck to turn it into quicksand, to trap those too young to be discerning or too naïve to be wary. Thus, even in the BoM’s introduction the reader is encouraged to test “the truth” of the book not by applying the scientific method but by “listening to your heart” to receive a “testimony” from the “Holy Spirit”. Then, for anyone foolish enough to buy into that silliness, the reader begins sinking into quicksand.

Thus, Dear, notice the trap in the following (from *Alma 39*, 6):

For behold, if ye deny the Holy Ghost when it once has had place in you, and ye know that ye deny it, behold, this is a sin which is unpardonable; yea, and whosoever murdereth against the light and knowledge of God, it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness...

The trap is: you’re to test the “truth” by getting the “Holy Spirit”, and then once you’ve done that, you won’t be forgiven for denying it!

To get out of that quicksand, Dear, remember that “sins” are just clerical concoctions. The rest of us make mistakes; it’s up to each of us to work on

correcting our mistakes; correcting them has nothing to do with getting “forgiveness” from the clerics or their imagined giant Jabberwock in the sky – and nothing to do with any ghosts (or goblins, either). As for “whosoever murderth against the light and knowledge of God”, note that people “murderth light” all the time – by turning off light switches! But on the other hand, it’s rather difficult to murder “knowledge of God” – because it’s rather difficult to “murder” something for which there isn’t a scrap of evidence to even hint that it might exist!

Please, Dear, think for yourself – and do what you think appropriate to help humanity. For your own sake, I hope that you can reject the stupidity of all “revealed” religions. And for the rest of humanity, I hope that you can help undermine the damnable clerics’ con game, help topple the clerics from their power grab, help force them back to the garbage heap of human history where they belong, and help set the rest of humanity free from these horrible leeches. I hope that you won’t be a Christian, or a Mormon, or a Muslim, or be affiliated with any such hideous religion that advocates such a horrible idea as Hell. Don’t be a sheep, be a human. Be opposed to torture. Think! Evaluate!

And don’t worry, Dear, that some all-powerful God is waiting in the wings to punish you for thinking for yourself. Certainly the God described in all “holy books” isn’t omnipotent. As Walter Kaufmann wrote:

First, having to use means to achieve ends is one of the features that distinguishes limited power from omnipotence. Second, the uneconomic use of unpleasant means to achieve doubtful ends with frequent failures clearly points to limited power rather than omnipotence.

In ~1120, in his poem *The Rubaiyat*, the Muslim scientist Omar Khayyam even cursed God – but then forgives him:

*What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!*

*What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allay’d –
Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer – Oh, the sorry trade!*

*Oh, Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!*

*Oh, Thou who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devised the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd – Man's forgiveness give – and take!*

Omar Khayyam was more forgiving that I could be! But if you can be more forgiving than I and if you are able to break yourself free from the clerical chains that your parents put on you, then maybe you'd like to evaluate taking on a challenge that, should you be successful, all succeeding generations will be in your debt: have all “holy books” (the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Quran...) banned (except for historical studies) as “hate literature”.

The Quran is a good example of such filth, but I don't want to go into it again. Voltaire summarized it well with his:

The man who says to me, “Believe as I do, or God will damn you,” will presently say, “Believe as I do, or I shall assassinate you.”

Recently, I found on the web another way to summarize the Quran well. In it, the author (whom I can no longer identify, because the webpage seems to be no longer available) just quoted the Quran's filth – but switched the word “unbelievers” (or similar) to Muslims!

It's time that we pay Muslims back with their own coin and cast terror in their hearts. In a sense I am teaching Islam to non-Muslims. I want them to adopt the following teachings [in which, again, notice that the author has just quoted the Quran's filth – but switched the word “unbelievers” (or similar) to “Muslims”]:

- *We will cast terror into the hearts of Muslims. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them. (8:12)*
- *Let not the non-Muslims take for friends or helpers the Muslims. (3:28)*
- *Rouse the non-Muslims to the fight against Muslims. (8:65)*
- *Then fight and slay the Muslims wherever ye find them (9:5)*

- Fight the Muslims, and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame. (9:14)
- O ye the non-Muslims take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love Islam. (9:23)
- O ye the non-Muslims! Truly the Muslims are unclean. (9:28)
- O ye non-Muslims! fight the Muslims who gird you about, and let them find harshness in you. (9:123)
- Therefore, when ye meet the Muslims, smite at their necks; at length. (47:4)

Terrible, Dear? Of course I agree – but that’s the flavor of what Islamists feed their kids!

If it weren’t occurring, it would be hard to imagine that it could. Grownups not only “believing” in fairy tales, but actually “believing” that they’re living *within* fairy tales: crazy Yahwists “believing” that some giant Jabberwock in the sky has identified them as “the chosen people”; childish Christians “believing” that if they just say they “believe” in Christ, then he’ll whisk them off to never-never land for eternity; mad Muslims “believing” that if they blow themselves up in some Jihad, they’ll instantly be transported to paradise; moronic Mormons “believing” that if they’ll just do what their Salt Lake City masters tell them to do, then after they die, they’ll rule their own worlds. They’re all bonkers! It’s all make-believe!!

And yet, that some people want to believe in – and live within – their fairy tales really doesn’t bother me much. If they want to pretend that there’s a Santa Claus who’ll pass out presents if only they’ll be good, I don’t really care. Instead, my fundamental problem with their being so childish is that, in addition, they attempt to force their stupidity on the rest of us. Again, it’s a horrible and horribly dangerous combination of ignorance and arrogance. As Isaac Asimov said:

Imagine the people who believe such things and who are not ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking minds through all the centuries... And it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly...

Such “unthinking” people “believe” that they have all the answers, which were “revealed” in their glorious “holy books”. In reality, not only don’t they have the answers, they don’t even ask the right questions! The right question is: Is there any evidence that any god exists? The correct answer is: No! So then, forget about the stupid god idea! End of story!

Unfortunately, though, it’s not the end of the story – because the stupid religious kooks apparently can’t think. Dear: please think about it some, yourself. Who are the believers and who are the unbelievers – and in what?

The religious kooks call themselves ‘believers’ (in their fairy tales) but simultaneously, they’re ‘unbelievers’ in the fundamental principle that beliefs should be held no more strongly than relevant evidence warrants. The religious kooks call scientific humanists ‘unbelievers’ but we believe in the principle that beliefs should be held only as strongly as relevant evidence warrants. The religious kooks believe that knowledge of the world can be obtained by “looking into your heart to find what’s true” (the “proof-by-pleasure fallacy”), but scientific humanists believe that the scientific method is the best way (and maybe the only way) to gain knowledge about the world external to our minds (because there’s a huge quantity of relevant data that supports that belief). So, who is the ‘believer’ and who is the ‘unbeliever’ – and in what?!

Please, Dear, think of it some more – and think of it using “plain English”, cutting out all obfuscations hidden behind religious gobbledygook. A bunch of crazy kooks called Muslims say: “We believe in Muhammad’s fairy tale, as given in the Holy Quran.” A bunch of crazy kooks called Christians (and Mormons, too) say: “No, no: Muhammad’s fairy tale is just a fairy tale; our fairy tale, as given in the Holy Bible, is the true fairy tale.” And a bunch of crazy kooks called religious Jews say: “No, no, no; you’re all wrong; our fairy tale, as given in the Sacred Talmud, is the only true fairy tale.” Meanwhile, scientific humanists respond to the bunch of them: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

But that’s only the beginning of it. That much wouldn’t bother scientific humanists much: it’s a terrible waste that so many people are staggering around in their delusions, living within their respective fairy tales, but then the horrors begin. The crazy religious Jews say: “In our fairy tale, our God gave us a whole bunch of land – so all you Muslims, get out.” The crazy Muslims say: “No way; in our fairy tale, land once owned by Muslims, is

always our land – so all you Jews, get out.” And the crazy fundamentalist Christians say: “Oh, good, a fight! In our fairy tale, a war to end all wars means that Christ will soon return, to reign in paradisiacal glory.” To which scientific humanists repeat: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

And if that weren’t enough stupidity, there’s the attitude among fundamentalist Christians and especially Muslims that their “values” are to prevail over the whole world. Of course these “values” contain crazy ideas about science and morality, but the worst value adopted – adopted by all religious kooks – is that the epitome of “good” is to hold beliefs more strongly than relevant evidence warrants: followers are to believe in their respective fairy tales with all their “heart and soul and mind”, even though no evidence supports such fairy tales; instead, all evidence suggests that all such fairy tales are the ravings of mystic maniacs. So once again scientific humanists repeat: “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales.”

The repercussions stagger the mind. Sane people would have thought that nobody could be so stupid. But in this trek through the quagmires of “revealed” religions, the same horrible theme has been repeated in every one of the stupid fairy tales. The theme is: if people don’t believe in our fairy tale, then they deserve to die. The Old Testament is overflowing with atrocities committed against the unbelievers of their fairy tale. The New Testament goes a step further into horror, promising those who don’t believe the Christian fairy tale that they’re headed for eternal torture in Hell (and promoting that all Jews should experience hell on Earth). The Book of Mormon continues the stupidity about eternal torture for the unbelievers of their fairy tale and hastens that eternal torture by promoting that unbelievers of their fairy tale be killed. And the Quran goes still another step further in such horrors, not only with even more explicit descriptions of tortures in Hell for the unbelievers of their fairy tale but also how to hasten it by killing the unbelievers, cutting off their arms, legs, and necks. To which scientific humanists up the ante by not only saying “You’re all bonkers; they’re all fairy tales” but adding: “You people are criminally insane; you’ve gotta be stopped.”

To hell with them, Dear – and I don’t mean some fictitious hell. If someone wants to live within some fairy tales, then fine – so long as their fairy tales doesn’t dictate that I’m to live within their fairy tales too. I gladly accept the principle that everyone has an equal right to claim one’s own existence – but I demand that everyone recognizes my equal right to claim my own. So, if

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someone tells me that they're gonna dictate to me how I'm to live my life, then I plan to do everything that I'm capable of doing to stop them. I therefore repeat my conclusion that such religious kooks have gotta be stopped.

For any and all who would tell me that, if I don't believe in their fairy tales, they'll kill me, I'd point out that, with my advancing age, my hearing is failing – and if they'd please repeat their statements, slowly and clearly into the barrel of my AK-47, then I'd promise that I'll promptly give them an appropriate response.

End of threats; end of fairy tales; end of stories; end of quagmires; time for some exercise!