

## Is Mormonism Christian? An Investigation of Definitions, part 3

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**Claim 12.** “The Christian position,” asserts “Dr.” Walter Martin, “has always been based upon a literal acceptance” of the virgin birth.<sup>436</sup> Certain early Mormon leaders speculated about the mode of Jesus’ conception along quite non-traditional lines. Therefore, Mormonism is not Christian.<sup>437</sup>

**Response.** We will ignore the fact that these scattered nineteenth-century speculations were never canonized by the Mormon Church, and that no comparable statements occur in Latter-day Saint scripture. We will pass over the unfairness of holding Mormons to statements that they and their own leaders have never deemed authoritative or binding (and we will deprive ourselves of the great entertainment that would ensue were we to call our Protestant critics to account for every speculation advanced by their pastors and reformers of the past five centuries).<sup>438</sup> We will ignore the fact that the New Testament is not specific about the mechanism of Jesus’ conception. We will decline to notice the fact that some denunciations of Mormonism seem to betray a Neoplatonic and gnosticizing disdain for the material cosmos, a discomfort with the body and with sexuality that is utterly foreign to the Bible.<sup>439</sup>

Is it not relevant that Mormonism resolutely proclaims the divine Sonship of Jesus? The speculations that most incense the critics are simply literalistic interpretations of the divine paternity alluded to in the title, “Son of God.” While certain early Mormon leaders may occasionally have reinterpreted the concept of “virgin birth,” they never for a moment suggested that Jesus was begotten by a mortal man, nor that his father was any other personage than God.

On the other hand, history is replete with such groups as the ancient Ebionites and the modern Unitarians, to whom both scholarly and common usage refer as Christian, who nonetheless reject the Virgin Birth and deny the divinity of Christ.<sup>440</sup> How can those groups be described as Christian, and the Mormons not? The professional anti-Mormon Robert McKay stumbles into this dilemma himself when he claims, first, that “belief in [the] literal virgin birth of Jesus Christ” is an “essential part of Christianity,” and then immediately declares that “historically the vast majority of Christians have believed this doctrine.”<sup>441</sup> While he clearly intends to isolate the Latter-day Saints from the Christian mainstream—no great achievement, of course, since most Latter-day Saints would enthusiastically agree that we are outside the mainstream—the clear implication of his statement that “the vast majority of Christians” have been believers in the virgin birth is that some Christians, at least, have *not* believed in it. And once this is admitted, there seems no justifiable reason to exclude Latter-day Saints from Christianity for a denial that has not excluded others. And for a denial, it cannot be repeated too often, that the Latter-day Saints have never accepted as official doctrine.

On the other hand, those who would deny the Christianity of Mormons for taking the divine Sonship of Christ too literally commit a monstrous irony, one which allows that unbelievers in the divinity of Christ can be Christians while certain believers in his divinity are not. This seems absurd. If they wish to avoid this absurdity, however, anti-Mormons must redefine the word. They must reject the consensus of historians of the Christian church and contradict normal English usage of the word “Christian.” This seems to be the path they have chosen. But it is important that neutral observers, Latter-day Saints, and the anti-Mormons themselves, be fully aware of the redefinition that is occurring.

**Claim 13.** The conspicuous absence of the cross from Mormon iconography constitutes an admission that Mormonism is not Christian. Indeed, it proves Mormonism to be a mere “superstition and cult.”<sup>442</sup> Critics cite such Mormon statements as that of Elder Robert E. Wells: “To us, the cross is a symbol of His passion, His agony. Our preference is to remember his resurrection. We seek to honor the living Christ who was brought forth in glory from the tomb on the third day. . . . We remember Him resurrected and glorified, having overcome death. We see Him as a strong, masculine, healthy Saviour of mankind, not an emaciated and suffering one.”<sup>443</sup> “One Mormon,” recalls *The Utah Evangel*’s Robert McKay, “said to me at the 1984 Utah State Fair that putting a cross on a church building is the same as giving a place of respect to a butcher knife that was used to murder one’s brother.”<sup>444</sup>

**Response.** It is possible to disagree with these Mormon statements. But is it reasonable to call those who make them “anti-Christian”? Is it reasonable to call people “anti-Christian” because, out of respect and love for Jesus, they are uncomfortable with the cross? If so, what are we to make of the most ancient Church? According to Colles and Child, “In the first three centuries A.D. the cross was not openly used as a Christian symbol, for the early believers looked beyond the Crucifixion to the Resurrection, and the emphasis was not on the cross of suffering and humiliation but on the Promise of Life with Christ here in the world and hereafter in the life beyond the grave.”<sup>445</sup>

Protestant theologian Lloyd Averill makes essentially the same point: “The power of salvation, Paul says, is not in the cross, as fundamentalist evangelists have claimed, but in the resurrection.”<sup>446</sup> “Christians preferred to glorify the founder of their faith rather than emphasize his shameful end.”<sup>447</sup> The similarity of early Christian attitudes, as sketched by these scholars, to contemporary Latter-day Saint opinions is almost uncanny. Were the Christians of the first three centuries really Christian? If they were, so are the Mormons.

**Claim 14.** Mormons are not Christian because they deny the doctrine of original sin.<sup>448</sup>

**Response.** This charge rests on an exaggeration. Latter-day Saint scriptures uniformly declare that the human condition has been one of sin and suffering since the fall of Adam.<sup>449</sup> The Mormon view resembles that held by the classical rabbis—who, after all, spent a great deal of time in meditation upon the text of Genesis. As S. G. F. Brandon summarizes their position, “Jewish Rabbinic thought traced man’s tendency to actual sin to Adam’s Fall, and explained death thereby.”<sup>450</sup> While the rabbis knew “actual” or “individual sin,” they seem to have known little or nothing of the notion of “essential sin”—something which anti-Mormon “experts” tell us is essential to Christianity. So too with the restored gospel. What Latter-day Saints reject is the full-blown doctrine of original sin as developed by such a relatively late Christian thinker as St. Augustine—a doctrine that so eminent a historian as W. H. C. Frend has characterized as “inhuman,” “obsessive,” and rooted in “persistent mistranslation.”<sup>451</sup>

But why single out the Mormons for condemnation on this issue? “In the history of the church, fierce controversy has raged about the doctrine of original sin.”<sup>452</sup> The Pelagians of the fifth and sixth centuries denied that doctrine, too, as did Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. A.D. 428).<sup>453</sup> Yet, as we have already seen, Theodore’s Christianity is never denied. And neither is that of Pelagius.<sup>454</sup> No real doctrine of original sin is detectible in either Justin Martyr (d. ca. 165 A.D.) or Tatian (c. 160 A.D.), although nobody would dream of denying their Christianity.<sup>455</sup> In fact, the notion of original sin as it is usually understood today is distinctly late, evolving out of the controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

J. N. D. Kelly, while he sees in certain Greek fathers “the outline of a real theory of original sin,” acknowledges that “it is easy to collect passages from their works which . . . appear to rule out any doctrine of original sin.”<sup>456</sup> Athanasius, for instance, “never hints that we participate in Adam’s actual guilt, i.e. his moral culpability, nor does he exclude the possibility of men living entirely without sin.” Indeed, he claims at one point that Jeremiah and John the Baptist actually did lead sinless lives. And Gregory of Nyssa (d. ca. 395 A.D.), Gregory Naziansen (d. 389 A.D.), and John Chrysostom “teach that newly born children are exempt from sin.”<sup>457</sup> Paul M. Blowers, writing in a recently-published reference work that bears official endorsements from both the American Society of Church History and the North American Patristic Society, offers a useful summary of the earliest situation: “There is little evidence among the Greek fathers for a notion of inherited guilt or physically transmitted sinfulness. With the apologists, culpability was principally a matter of the individual’s exercise of free will, of personal sins for which Adam’s disobedience was only a prototype. Greek writers consistently espoused the sinlessness of infants, thereby precluding original guilt as a basis for infant baptism. . . . Origen . . . stressed that individual souls were punished precisely according to their respective sins. This characteristic emphasis on personal responsibility, coupled with the belief that moral evil had no ‘natural’ status in creation but resulted only from human volition, continued to militate against a doctrine of genetically transmitted sin in the Christian east.” In the Latin West, Blowers admits, there evolved a somewhat “graver picture” of the question. But even in the West, the leading authors prior to the time of Augustine had “concluded that individuals were ultimately accountable only for their own sins.”<sup>458</sup> Tertullian (d. ca. A.D. 220), for instance, who was very concerned with the idea of individual sin, appears to know nothing of any doctrine of collective guilt deriving from Adam.<sup>459</sup> The early Christian position seems to have been, essentially, that “men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.” We are, of course, quoting from the second Article of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is difficult to see why the early Saints could hold such a view and remain Christians, while the Latter-day Saints are to be driven from Christendom for holding it today.<sup>460</sup>

Original sin, then, was an innovation. Early Christians did not know of it, and the Jews, who have known the story of Adam and Eve since long before the time of Christ, reject it still today.<sup>461</sup> The doctrine was not clearly enunciated until the time of Augustine. He elaborated it in his battle with the Pelagians, who found it abhorrent, and it can be securely associated with the Council of Carthage in A.D. 418. “Properly considered, Pelagian theology was the traditional one, especially in Rome. But the Africans, under the theological leadership of Augustine, managed to make their charge of heresy stick within the church, thereby establishing the Augustinian theology of grace as the basis of the Western tradition.”<sup>462</sup>

By Augustine’s time, the idea that some single great sin lay behind the visible decay of Roman society was common to both pagans and Christians, and the relatively late Christian doctrine of original sin appears clearly to have grown out of this overwhelming sense of malaise.<sup>463</sup> Augustine, indeed, may have been even more inclined toward it than most of his contemporaries because of his Manichaean past, which he never entirely outgrew. He was often accused, even after his conversion, of being still a Manichaean, rather than a Christian.<sup>464</sup> (Manichaeism, founded by the Persian prophet Mani [A.D. 215–277], held a dualistic view of creation, which it divided between light and darkness, and saw the physical cosmos as essentially evil.) Some modern scholars now argue that it was Augustine, “the paradigm of Western theology,” who introduced foreign notions into Christianity, and that it was he, and not Pelagius, who was the archheretic.<sup>465</sup> Augustine triumphed over his opponents. But it may well be that, on the question of original sin, it is the heirs of an ancient pagan Iranian heresy who denounce the Latter-day Saints for remaining true to original Christian belief. And, if the distinguished Protestant scholar Ernst Benz is to be believed,

it is very likely that Mormon views on this subject are closer to those of primitive Christianity than are those of Augustine and his disciples.<sup>466</sup>

J. N. D. Kelly offers a suggestion for understanding the early Greek fathers of the church that bears quotation here. He laments what he terms “the customary verdict” of scholars (that the Greek fathers lacked a notion of original sin), and remarks that it “seems unjust to the Greek fathers, perhaps because it depends on the assumption that no theory of original sin holds water except the full-blown Latin one [like that advanced by St. Augustine]. It is imperative to get rid of this prejudice. Admittedly there is hardly a hint in the Greek fathers that mankind as a whole shares in Adam’s guilt, i.e. in his culpability. This partly explains their reluctance to speak of his legacy to us as sin, and of course makes their indulgent attitude to children dying unbaptized understandable.”<sup>467</sup> So, too, is it unjust to condemn the Latter-day Saints for rejecting a theory that originated centuries after the death and resurrection of the Savior. It is imperative that such prejudice be rooted out or, at least, exposed for what it is.

**Claim 15.** “The only way to obtain salvation is by personally receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour.”<sup>468</sup> Mormonism is non-Christian because it rejects the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace alone, solafidianism, which is the core of Christianity.<sup>469</sup> Jan Karel van Baalen and G. H. Fraser even allege that Latter-day Saints deny the atonement of Christ.<sup>470</sup>

Response: As the most cursory glance at Mormon writings would indicate, this is a slanderous misrepresentation. (Latter-day Saints, for instance, believe that Christ’s grace is essential for salvation and is sufficient to atone for personal sins as well as Adam’s transgression.) We shall therefore not take this claim up in detail. Mormons simply do not view the atonement in precisely the terms to which Fraser and van Baalen are accustomed; the Latter-day Saint position probably diverges far less from normative Christianity than their portrayal implies. V. M. Bonniwell says Mormons “teach the heresy called Galatianism. ‘Galatianism’ is the false doctrine condemned in Galatians. It is mixing grace and works in salvation, the mixing of Jesus’s blood with our own merits in order to save us from our sins.”<sup>471</sup> This idea is sometime termed synergism, from the Greek words *syn* (“together with”) and *ergon* (“work”). It is opposed to “monergism,” (*monos*, “alone”). “Implicit in solafidianism is the doctrine of divine monergism, which declares that man’s salvation is totally dependent upon God’s activity and is in no way conditioned by the action of man.”<sup>472</sup> Mormonism is often linked as well, even by sympathetic observers, to the doctrines of the fifth-century British monk, Pelagius, who was fiercely combatted by Augustine and, finally, condemned by Pope Zosimus in A.D. 418.<sup>473</sup> Konrad Algermissen, a Catholic, sees in Mormon teaching “a Pelagianism . . . which devalues the significance of grace in justification and sanctification.”<sup>474</sup>

But are Mormons uniquely guilty here? “If anyone,” proclaimed the Catholic Counter-Reformation’s Council of Trent (1545–1563), “saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sin for Christ’s sake alone; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified, let him be anathema.”<sup>475</sup> Father Heribert Holzapfel noted years ago that the “Sekten” and the Catholics frequently share a common attitude on the question of justification, an attitude quite different from that of the churches of the Reformation.<sup>476</sup> The Catholic anti-Mormon, W. J. Whalen, revealingly remarks that the Latter-day Saints reject “the distinctive Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone.”<sup>477</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes a certain Bishop Montagu, from 1625: “In the point of Freewill the Church of Rome absolutely and wholly Pelagianizeth.”<sup>478</sup> To put it bluntly, if the Mormons are Pelagians, are not the Catholics, too?

Some Protestant fundamentalists are not at all shy about saying just that. “Catholicism teaches a salvation based on works in addition to faith,” notes a volume entitled *Exposing the Deceivers: Nine Cults and What They Teach*. This causes some to “question whether or not they are a New Testament church.”<sup>479</sup> Catholic doctrine on salvation “is an impostor. It is a counterfeit, a fraud, a hoax.” It is “of Satan.”<sup>480</sup> Our fundamentalist heresiographers routinely attack Rome for “legalism.”<sup>481</sup> H. A. Ironside accuses it of “the Galatian heresy”—just like the Latter-day Saints.<sup>482</sup> Roman Catholicism, says H. J. Berry in his *Examining the Cults*, “rejects the Bible’s teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.” “Such departures from the Scriptures . . . in the basic area of salvation blind the eyes of its followers to the grace of God which is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>483</sup> One ex-Catholic ex-Mormon now-Protestant anti-Mormon, relating his story, says that, as a Catholic, he was “religious but unsaved.” Catholicism is, he says, “a system of works.” And, like Mormonism, it is strongly implied to be both non-Christian and Satanic.<sup>484</sup> Other writers are more direct. The Roman Catholic Church, Alex Dunlap declares, “has no relationship at all with Jesus Christ, my Saviour.”<sup>485</sup> “I was a Roman Catholic,” reports Stella Ciampa of her early life, “but not a Christian.” Her onetime fellow Catholics, she laments, “are earnestly trying to merit eternal life through good works, but good works cannot save. . . . It is my desire to see them become true Christians.”<sup>486</sup> Leave “the papal system,” pleads Alex Dunlap. “Come to Christ.”<sup>487</sup> Catholicism is sometimes described as representing a subtle and nuanced synergism.<sup>488</sup> By the standards anti-Mormons use on the Latter-day Saints, the Church of Rome must therefore fall outside the bounds of Christendom.

It may, of course, not bother some anti-Mormons to call Catholics non-Christians (although it most certainly will disturb most ordinary users of the word). But what will the anti-Mormons do with Luther’s close associate, Philipp Melanchthon, one of the founding fathers of Protestantism? He, for one, was disturbed by some of the implication of Luther’s extreme position on salvation by grace alone, and flirted with a doctrine of synergism, of works combining with faith in the attainment of salvation.<sup>489</sup> Was Melanchthon a Christian? We have found nobody who denies that he was. We cannot understand, therefore, how the Latter-day Saints can be purged from Christendom for holding a view rather similar to his.

Other believers in Jesus, besides the Catholics and leading reformers, are in danger of expulsion from Christendom for similar reasons. “Eastern Orthodox Christians,” for instance, “emphasize a unity of faith and works. For the Orthodox, being conformed to the image of Christ . . . includes a response of our faith *and* works.”<sup>490</sup> Where did they and the Catholics and Philipp Melanchthon get such a notion? To some, their position seems merely to represent the culmination of a historical trend toward ethical emphasis within Christianity, a regrettable tendency toward “moralism” and “legalism.” The Protestant scholar Justo Gonzales, with considerable distaste, identifies that tendency already in the early postapostolic Church. The situation was worst in the Roman West, he says, but it was bad everywhere. The Apostolic Fathers just don’t seem to have understood the Protestant doctrine of salvation by grace alone.<sup>491</sup> “It has often been remarked,” writes F. F. Bruce, “that the Biblical doctrine of divine grace, God’s favour shown to sinful humanity, so clearly (as we might think) expounded in the teaching of Christ and the writings of Paul, seems almost to go underground in the postapostolic age, to reappear only with Augustine. Certainly the majority of Christian writers who flourished between the apostles and Augustine do not seem to have grasped what Paul was really getting at. . . . Marcion has been called the only one of these writers who understood Paul, and even he misunderstood him.”<sup>492</sup>

Marcion!! Can this be the same heretic that Polycarp of Smyrna (d. 160 A.D.) called “the first-born of Satan”? Yes, indeed it is.<sup>493</sup> Marcion was a second-century Gnostic Christian who distinguished between the God of the Old

Testament—a mere demiurge, a kind of lesser supernatural craftsman—and the God of the New Testament, whom he termed “the Father.” Thus, he rejected the Old Testament utterly, as well as any New Testament writings too much “tainted” with Old Testament ideas. He produced a canon of Scripture—the first—which recognized no apostle of Jesus except Paul. (The other apostles were considered falsifiers of the Gospel.) With his rejection of the Hebrew Bible and the law, and his fixation on Paul, one is tempted to see in Marcion the first Protestant. Certainly it is intriguing that an evangelical Protestant like F. F. Bruce would, on the issue of faith and works, feel more comfortable with Marcion than with the Apostolic Fathers. (It is especially striking since Augustine, Prof. Bruce’s other authority, is now recognized by many scholars to have brought much of his own Manichaeic—i.e., quasi-gnostic—background with him into Christianity.)<sup>494</sup>

If Protestants like Gonzales and Bruce have pictured Christian thought as degenerating from an early grace-alone position to a later focus on “works-righteousness,” other scholarly observers, including Edwin Hatch, have identified the trend as leading in quite the opposite direction. To them, a growing emphasis on doctrine, on orthodoxy, came to supplant the ethical focus of earliest Christianity.<sup>495</sup> And it must be said that they have far better early examples for their position than Bruce’s Marcion. The famous *Didache*, for instance, otherwise known as the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, which dates back to before A.D. 70, is conspicuous for its “moralism and legalism.”<sup>496</sup> That extremely early and important text found echo in the writers of the next century, who, knowingly or not, carried on its ethical emphasis. The second-century *Shepherd of Hermas* contains twelve commandments, which “are a summary of the duties of a Christian, and Hermas affirms that in obeying them there is eternal life.” (This hardly sounds like salvation by grace alone.) Indeed, summarizes J. L. Gonzales, “it is possible to do more than the commandment requires, and thus to attain a greater glory.” Ignatius of Antioch, that centrally important Father of the early second century, downplays Jesus’ function as redeemer from sin, in order to emphasize the Son’s role as revealer of God. “In fact, in the epistles of Ignatius the word ‘sin’ appears only once.” On the other hand, Ignatius could advise Polycarp: “Let your works be your deposits, that you may receive the back-pay due to you.”<sup>497</sup> Clearly, the saint was not a born-again saved-by-grace Protestant. Was he a Christian? The great Greek church fathers John Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianzen both seem to have advocated a synergistic doctrine in which man’s effort to do good cooperates with God’s assisting grace.<sup>498</sup>

According to the illustrious Werner Jaeger, “The oldest datable literary document of Christian religion soon after the time of the apostles is the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, written in the last decade of the first century.” In it, “the special emphasis is on good works, as it is in the Epistle of James, which may belong to the same time and is so clearly polemical against Paul.”<sup>499</sup> Was Clement a Christian? Was James? The evangelical Protestant scholar James D. G. Dunn sees Jewish Christian loyalty to the Mosaic law, and thus to “works,” throughout large portions of the New Testament.<sup>500</sup> And the prominent philosopher-theologian Frederick Sontag argues eloquently that Jesus himself was interested not in words, and not even in theological dogma, but in action. For the Jesus of Matthew, he says, “action is more important than definition.”<sup>501</sup> Again we must ask, given the standards of the anti-Mormons, was Jesus a Christian?

One of the aspects of Mormonism which most upsets its critics in this regard is the insistence of the restored Gospel upon the ordinances of the priesthood as requirements for exaltation. Yet they have, in this regard, strong precedent in the beliefs of the ancient church. We will content ourselves with mentioning just one prominent Christian bishop, Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. A.D. 313–386), one of the so-called “Doctors of the Church.” Cyril insisted strongly on the necessity of rituals.<sup>502</sup> “If any man receive not Baptism,” he wrote, “he hath not salvation.”<sup>503</sup> Intriguingly, too, Cyril wrote of an ordinance called “anointing,” or “chrism.” This ritual is of great

interest, not only for the issue of faith and works but for the general subject of this essay since, in connection with it, Cyril offers an unusually precise definition of what it takes to be a Christian. "Having been counted worthy of this Holy Chrism," he says, "ye are called Christians. . . . For before you were deemed worthy of this grace, ye had properly no right to this title."<sup>504</sup> The roughly contemporary Valentinian compilation known as *The Gospel According to Philip* lays down a similar rule: "Chrism has more authority than baptism. For because of chrism we are called Christians."<sup>505</sup> This definition of Christianity is significant not only because it seems to require a "work," but also because of the nature of that work. While the Latter-day Saints possess an ordinance called "anointing," their fundamentalist adversaries know nothing of any such ritual. By Cyril's standard, then, the Mormons have a chance of being Christians, but anti-Mormons seem to have no chance at all.

Sometime between November 1512 and July 1513, after an intense preoccupation with Paul's teaching in Romans 1:17, Martin Luther came to his doctrine of *sola gratia*, salvation by "grace alone." But we have seen that there is evidence that many earlier Christians did not at all hold to such a position. E. P. Sanders, perhaps the foremost living authority on the great apostle, points out that Luther's view "has often been shown to be an incorrect interpretation of Paul," and cautions that "we misunderstand [Paul] if we see him through Luther's eyes."<sup>506</sup> We could go further, in fact, and argue that the notion of salvation by grace alone hardly existed in early Christianity until, devoured by his own well-earned moral guilt and under the sway of his Manichaean past, Augustine introduced it. And it is clear thereafter that the vast majority of Christians continued to hold to the view that good works were necessary to salvation. That, after all, is the position that Luther argued against, and that formed the background of his great "discovery."

However, we have shown clearly enough that important early Christian documents and personalities seem not to have shared the Protestant insistence on salvation by grace alone. Isn't it an odd use of the term "Christian" that might deny it to virtually all Christians before the sixteenth century, and to the great majority afterward? And does it seem that such a much-disputed question is a good one upon which to base the Mormons' summary excommunication from Christendom?<sup>507</sup>

Incidentally, since V. M. Bonniwell has compared the Latter-day Saints to the Galatians, it is worth noting that the eminent evangelical Protestant scholar, F. F. Bruce refers to them as "Judaizing Christians."<sup>508</sup> We are aware of no authority who denies their Christianity. Are Mormons, then, who allegedly share in the alleged heresy of Galatianism, to be termed non-Christians when the original "heretics" are not?

**Claim 16.** Mormonism is non-Christian because, having rejected justification by faith, its adherents cannot be confident of having salvation *now*.<sup>509</sup>

**Response.** But neither, apparently, could Ignatius.<sup>510</sup> Nor can Roman Catholics.<sup>511</sup> "Official RC dogma," complains Alex Dunlap, "declares a person who claims to know he is saved to be guilty of the sin of presumption."<sup>512</sup> "Most priests aren't saved!" exclaims Jimmy Swaggart. "The average priest has never met the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour."<sup>513</sup> And while most Roman Catholic authorities would probably resist Swaggart's formulation, they would certainly reject the implication that grace, having once entered into a person's life, guarantees that person's salvation regardless of the sins he or she may later choose to commit. "There is no salvation," writes the Jesuit Father Hardon, "for those who, though incorporated in the Church by baptism, fail to persevere in sanctifying grace and die in the state of mortal sin."<sup>514</sup>

Actually, of course, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that it is possible to have “the assurance that they [are] pursuing a course which [is] agreeable to the will of God.” They are convinced that each individual saint can have “actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God.” Such assurance is in fact the theme of the sixth Lecture on Faith, from which the preceding quotes have been taken.<sup>515</sup> Some anti-Mormons have sought to portray the Latter-day Saints as terrified of God’s judgment, unsure of their standing before the Lord, desperately and vainly trying to pile up good works in order to buy off his arbitrary wrath, utterly lacking the peace that only born-again Protestantism can offer. This is not, however, a picture that most Latter-day Saints would recognize. Mormons worship a loving Father, who cares for and forgives his children, who has provided a Savior for them and deeply desires that all should be saved. It is mainstream “orthodox” Christianity, not Mormonism, that gave the world Dante’s *Inferno* and the bottomless pit so luridly described by Jonathan Edwards.

**Claim 17.** “Christianity teaches Jesus is the only Son of God. But Mormonism proclaims that Jesus has a brother whose name is Lucifer.”<sup>516</sup> Therefore, the Latter-day Saints cannot be considered Christian.

**Response.** This is a classic instance of how failure to supply the context of a belief—or, perhaps more to the point, refusal to do so—can make that belief seem horrific or bizarre, when in fact it is not strange at all. Karl Keating reports similar tactics among anti-Catholics: “It must be admitted,” he writes, “they enjoy a certain tactical (if short-term) advantage in that they can get away with presenting bare-bones claims such as these; they wear out Catholicism’s defenders by inundating them with short remarks that demand long explanations.”<sup>517</sup>

Implicit in the anti-Mormon argument cited above is the assumption that it is impossible to affirm, at the same time, both the unique divine Sonship of Jesus Christ and Satan’s kinship to both Jesus and ourselves as a spirit brother. But anyone who has studied Mormon doctrine can readily see that, given their theological premises, Mormons can perfectly well affirm the latter statement while still agreeing with the first. Strictly speaking, there is no contradiction. Lucifer, Jesus, the angels, the entire human race—all are akin because all are the spirit children of God, our Heavenly Father. Thus, we are all brothers and sisters. But, in this world, Jesus Christ holds the utterly unique status of the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh. The contradiction assumed by our anti-Mormon critics on this point simply does not exist when the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints is examined fairly and on its own terms.

Besides, a rather similar doctrine to that of the Mormons was taught by the Latin father, Lactantius (d. A.D. 320), whom all affirm to be Christian.<sup>518</sup> “According to Lactantius,” as Giovanni Papini summarizes his position, “Lucifer would have been nothing less than the brother of the Logos. . . . The elder spirit, filled with every divine virtue and beloved by God above all other spirits, can easily be recognized as the Word, that is, the Son. But Lactantius’s story leads one to think that the other spirit, also endowed with every grace, was the second son of the Father: the future Satan would be, no less, the younger brother of the future Christ.”<sup>519</sup> If Lactantius could hold such a belief and still be a Christian, how can The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints be driven from Christendom for teaching a similar doctrine?

The idea that Lucifer is a spirit-child of God, gone wrong, seems to us no more obviously blasphemous, incidentally, than does the mainstream Christian notion that he is God’s creation from nothing. Consider the following question: Who is more blameworthy—a loving father whose son, departing from the teachings of his youth, grows up to be a murderer? Or a brilliant inventor who, knowing full well what he is doing, deliberately creates a murderous robot? The answer seems clear enough to us. Yet the very people who denounce Latter-day Saints for

saying that Lucifer is akin to God, although evil, seem to see no problem in affirming that an all-knowing, all-powerful, perfectly free God purposely created Satan out of nothing. We fail to see, however, in precisely what way such a view represents a vast improvement over Mormon teaching. Indeed, it seems to us that our critics' view involves God the Father in such matters as Auschwitz and the Cambodian massacres in a far more direct way than does that of the Latter-day Saints, just as the murderous robot's inventor is more directly implicated in its actions than is the disappointed father of a wayward son.

Bill Forrest offers yet another observation on this question, one worth noting here. Anti-Mormons, he points out, sometimes argue that Mormons have the wrong Jesus because their Jesus—unlike “the Jesus of the Bible”—has a spirit brother named Lucifer. But, Forrest points out, “it is just as logical to argue that Mormons have *the wrong Lucifer*, because *he* has a spirit brother named Jesus.” And indeed, since “the Mormon Jesus” seems, as we have seen, to match in so many clear ways the characteristics of “the Jesus of the Bible,” it would seem more plausible to say that the Latter-day Saints, if they are mistaken at all, have made their error in connection with the character of Satan rather than the person of Christ. But would such an error be weighty enough to expell millions of believers in Jesus from Christendom? Is Lucifer more important than God in the minds of some anti-Mormons?<sup>520</sup>

**Claim 18.** Mormons are not Christian. Instead, as St. Paul foretold in Galatians 1:6–9, they preach “another gospel.”<sup>521</sup>

**Response.** But, obviously, this “argument” assumes what it is intended to prove—and so proves nothing. Besides, such passages can be applied to anyone the critic chooses. This particular one is often applied to Roman Catholics. (“Professional anti-Catholics,” observes Karl Keating, “take the fundamentalist position as a given, the Catholic position as a usurpation, and their chief concern is to undermine the latter, not to justify the former.”)<sup>522</sup> The Chick Publications pamphlet “Are Roman Catholics Christians?” informs its readers that “Roman Catholics trust in ‘another gospel,’ a gospel of works with no assurance of salvation.”<sup>523</sup>

Latter-day Saints, too, can make use of this passage. After all, Protestant doctrine is precisely as far from Mormon doctrine, every bit as “different,” as Mormon doctrine is from Protestant doctrine. Latter-day Saints see the prophecy fulfilled in the rise of apostate Christianity, including fundamentalist Protestantism.<sup>524</sup> (And we might incidentally add that, as historians of religion, the Mormon concept of a universal apostasy seems to us an entirely plausible model of Christian history.)

**Claim 19.** Mormonism is non-Christian because, in the nineteenth century, it practiced the hideous doctrine of blood atonement—killing heretics, adulterers, and the like.<sup>525</sup>

**Response.** This accusation was denied by nineteenth-century Mormon leaders, and it is rejected by every reputable historian of nineteenth-century Mormonism.<sup>526</sup> On the other hand, there is no doubt at all that burnings and inquisitions abound in the history of Christendom, in Calvinist Geneva and Elizabethan London and colonial Salem, in Zwingli's Zürich as well as in Rome. As the *Catholic Encyclopedia* remarks, “it is well known that belief in the justice of punishing heresy with death was so common among the sixteenth-century reformers—Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and their adherents—that we may say their toleration began where their power ended.”<sup>527</sup>

Latter-day Saints know very well how traditional Christianity—emphatically not excluding clergy—can treat heretics. Much of nineteenth-century Mormon history is a desperate attempt to get away from murderous “Christians.”

**Claim 20.** Mormonism is non-Christian because it once advocated polygamy.<sup>528</sup>

**Response.** Frequently lurking behind such charges is a hostility among traditional Christian thinkers toward embodiment and sexuality—a hostility that reaches its most extreme form in such manifestations as anchorite asceticism and priestly celibacy, but which is certainly not limited to these. The great formulator of such Christian attitudes is Augustine, of whom Daniel Maguire states that, “On matters of sex and marriage . . . Augustine the Christian was never fully free of Mani.”<sup>529</sup> “Does Augustine’s understanding of sex and marriage,” wonders Eugene Hillman, “perhaps owe more to his own pagan background, and particularly to his Manichaean experience, than to his Christian faith?” It would be ironic, would it not, if it turns out that anti-Mormons are using a standard derived from pagans—from Manichaeans and Platonists (or even, most amusingly, from Hindus)—to determine the limits of Christianity on this issue?<sup>530</sup>

In fact, Christian history demonstrates beyond question that polygamy cannot be used as a club with which to drive the Mormons from Christendom. It is too blunt an instrument, and would chase too many obvious Christians from the fold as well.<sup>531</sup> The sixth century Arab Christian kings of Lakhm and Ghassan were polygamists, for instance, as were the contemporary Christians of Ethiopia.<sup>532</sup> Pope Clement VII, faced with the threat of a continent-dividing divorce, considered bigamy as a solution to the problem of Henry VIII. Was he, with such thoughts, flirting with becoming a non-Christian?<sup>533</sup> Did Martin Luther cease to be a Christian when he made the same suggestion, in September 1531, to King Henry’s envoy, Robert Barnes?<sup>534</sup> Nearly a decade later, Luther counselled Philip of Hesse to take Margaret von der Sale as a second wife. He justified the idea from the Old Testament, as the Mormons would in a later century. Furthermore, he suggested public denial. (Generally, he had written in an earlier letter, he favored monogamy, remarking that “a Christian is not free to marry several wives *unless God commands him to go beyond the liberty which is conditioned by love.*”)<sup>535</sup> But when Philip actually did marry Margaret in March of 1540, he did so—contrary to Luther’s counsel—publicly. Indeed, the marriage was performed by Philip’s Lutheran chaplain and in the presence of Luther’s chief lieutenants, Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Bucer. Needless to say, a storm of criticism broke out. Writing to John Frederick of Saxony on 10 June 1540, Luther declared, “I am not ashamed of the counsel I gave even if it should become known throughout the world. Because it is unpleasant, however, I should prefer, if possible, to have it kept quiet.”<sup>536</sup> Was Luther a pagan? Did his associates, Bucer and Melanchthon, leave Christianity when they joined in Luther’s advice?<sup>537</sup> Of course not. This was “Christian Polygamy in the Sixteenth Century,” as Elder Orson Pratt termed it in a well-informed 1853 article.<sup>538</sup> Citing the statement by Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer, to the effect that “the Gospel hath neither recalled nor forbid what was permitted in the law of Moses with respect to marriage,” Elder Pratt quite correctly concluded that the case of Philip of Hesse “proves most conclusively, that those Divines did sincerely believe it to be just as legal and lawful for a Christian to have two wives as to have one only.”<sup>539</sup>

Yet many Protestant Christians today are convinced that polygamy disqualifies Latter-day Saints from acceptance within Christendom. Why? “What is surprising,” notes Manas Buthelezi, “is that the Christian Church has raised this essentially cultural matter to the level of a soteriological absolute.”<sup>540</sup>

Many observers of Christianity in Africa, including the illustrious modern Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, have raised serious questions about whether Indo-European marital custom really belongs to the essence of being Christian.<sup>541</sup> “Let it be publicly declared,” writes H. W. Turner, “that a polygamous African church may still be classed as a Christian church.”<sup>542</sup> But if a “polygamous African church” can be called Christian, why cannot a once-

polygamous American church? Anti-Mormons would not, we assume, want to claim that the definition of “Christian” differs between Africa and North America? If so, they will have to pinpoint the precise longitude where the difference kicks in.

**Claim 21.** Mormonism is non-Christian because its theology is in error. Mormons are mistaken about the nature of salvation, and their prophets have sometimes misspoken.<sup>543</sup> “Mormonism is a cult [and, hence, not Christian] because it is wrong about God.”<sup>544</sup> The Mormon doctrine of deity is “such a confusion and contradiction that Mormonism’s view is seen as absolutely non-Christian.”<sup>545</sup>

**Response.** But this is rather strange even if one were to grant, for the moment, that such accusations are merited. Has confusion become the unpardonable sin? Must Christians be theologically error-free?<sup>546</sup> Does their Christianity depend upon adherence to Aristotle’s principle of non-contradiction?

What, then, of such a character as the famous Calvinist preacher-theologian Jonathan Edwards? There are profound differences between the God of his sermons and the God of his theoretical treatises. Of Edwards, A. O. Lovejoy could write that he “did not differ from most of the great theologians in having many Gods under one name.”<sup>547</sup> Do his inconsistencies expel him from Christendom? But we need not pick on Edwards, for the disagreements among the various denominations of Christendom (and, more and more, within them) are legendary. Is Arminianism correct, or strict Calvinism? They are mutually contradictory. Yet both are called Christian.

Similarly, the Quakers and Catholics cannot both be right. Quakers look to inner illumination for guidance, while Catholics rely on an infallible papacy. Protestantism, complains Father Holzapfel, is a “subjectivism, which recognized no infallible authority in religious things.”<sup>548</sup> Catholicism is a strongly liturgical tradition, but the Quakers have no liturgy at all. Which group—if either—is Christian?

At what precise point do mistakes disqualify someone from being a Christian? Who set the standard? And who granted the authority to do so? In fact, of course, theological error is very much a matter of opinion. So varied have been Christian beliefs through the centuries that it is sometimes tempting to see Christianity as “largely a unity of name.”<sup>549</sup> A Greek high school textbook notes that “extreme Protestant groups such as Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Mormons are the worst heretics.”<sup>550</sup> The Catholic Konrad Algermissen sees in Mormonism “a religious syncretism of the most varied heresies,” and cites among them a teaching on the sacrament supposedly derived from American Protestantism, a view of baptism purportedly taken from the Baptists, and a doctrine of repentance allegedly absorbed from Methodism.<sup>551</sup> (In fact, Catholics generally—including Pope John Paul II—tend to use the term “sect” to cover all non-Catholic groups, specifically including the Latter-day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and evangelical Protestants.)<sup>552</sup>

The question at issue is not whether Mormonism is true, and not whether it is theologically adequate. The question is, Is Mormonism Christian? If the critics want to argue that these are really one and the same question, they must do more than merely assume their conclusion.

**Claim 22.** Joseph Smith’s so-called “First Vision” utterly separates Mormonism from Christianity.<sup>553</sup> “For most of its 155 year history . . . Mormonism has denied being Christian.”<sup>554</sup> Indeed, it has generally denounced

Christianity.<sup>555</sup> Its “nationwide effort to be known as Christian” is a campaign of only recent vintage.<sup>556</sup> Even now, though, Mormons never call themselves Christians.<sup>557</sup>

**Response.** This is plainly untrue. What is more, it is inconsistent with other allegations made by anti-Mormons. At the very least, our “experts” would seem to be divided against themselves. For if, as we have seen above, they charge that even the Articles of Faith represent a “deliberate attempt to deceive,” the alleged Mormon campaign to feign a belief in Christ must have begun already by 1842! “We believe in God, the Eternal Father,” says the well-known first Article of Faith, “and in His Son, Jesus Christ.”

But the accusation that Latter-day Saints do not claim to be Christians simply cannot be sustained. Any number of statements from leaders of the Church throughout its history tell quite a different story.<sup>558</sup> Joseph Smith’s statement of 8 May 1838, already quoted more than once in this essay, deserves repetition yet again: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”<sup>559</sup> This hardly sounds like a denial or a denunciation of Christianity. Nor does the account of Captain Moroni in the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, where that great Nephite hero “prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren, so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land—For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God, called by those who did not belong to the church; . . . yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ. . . . And therefore, at this time, Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians . . . might be favored” (Alma 46:13–16).

The Church’s newspaper in Nauvoo, *Times and Seasons*, reported in 1845 that “an imperial edict has been issued in China, giving Christian missionaries liberty to preach, and the Chinese freedom to embrace Christianity. . . . This will open the door for the Elders of the Latter-day Saints.”<sup>560</sup> Why, if the Mormons did not consider themselves Christian, would they have expected any benefits from such an edict? Furthermore, the *Times and Seasons* occasionally recorded the excommunication of members of the Church for “unchristian conduct.”<sup>561</sup> Why would they do such a thing, if they did not think themselves to be Christian? (Are Catholics excommunicated for “unbuddhist conduct”? Are Muslims punished for “conduct unbecoming a Hindu”?)

Joseph Smith’s successor in the presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was just as emphatic as the founding prophet had been. “The moment the atonement of the Savior is done away,” said Brigham Young, “that moment, at one sweep, the hopes of salvation entertained by the Christian world are destroyed, the foundation of their faith is taken away, and there is nothing left for them to stand upon. When this is gone all the revelations God ever gave to the Jewish nation, to the Gentiles and to us are rendered valueless, and all hope is taken from us at one sweep.”<sup>562</sup> “We hold the doctrines of Christianity,” President Young told Horace Greeley on 13 July 1859.<sup>563</sup> “We are Christians professedly,” he said in 1876, “according to our religion.”<sup>564</sup> Even in somewhat bitter remembrance of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum later in 1859, President Young aligned himself and his people with Christianity, referring with black humor to “our brother Christians who have slain the Prophets and butchered and otherwise caused the death of thousands of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>565</sup> It is this sense of injury at the hands of other Christians—well justified, it must be said—that misleads our critics into the supposition that Mormons denounce Christianity. However, positive evaluations of Christianity were also made in comments addressed to audiences of Latter-day Saints. “We call ourselves Christians,” Elder John Taylor, soon to become the

third president of the Church, said in an 1873 address to the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward. “That is, we Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians and ‘Mormons,’ we all call ourselves Christians. Well, perhaps we are, and then, perhaps we are not; it is a matter that would bear investigation, I think.” His own investigation, he reported, showed that the Latter-day Saints have received the ancient gospel as taught to the first Christians.<sup>566</sup> This was the religion that John Taylor and other early Latter-day Saint converts had long sought. “We want no religion,” wrote Elder Parley P. Pratt in his 1840 pamphlet “Plain Facts,” “but pure Christianity.”<sup>567</sup> Louis Alphonse Bertrand, in his autobiography *Mémoires d’un Mormon*, published in Paris in 1862, agreed: “Mormonism, it cannot be overemphasized, is merely Christianity enhanced by additional, timely revelation.”<sup>568</sup> Then as now, the Latter-day Saints were<sup>568</sup> convinced they had found “pure Christianity.” In the words of a pair of contemporary scholars, nineteenth-century Mormons “saw their church as quintessentially Christian.”<sup>569</sup>

There seems to be no evidence that leaders or members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have ever preferred to think of themselves as strangers to Christianity. Rather, as historian Klaus Hansen observes, they “have always emphatically insisted . . . that they are indeed Christians.”<sup>570</sup> Wilford Woodruff, who would succeed John Taylor in the presidency of the Church, gave a conference speech on 9 October 1874 at the tabernacle in Salt Lake City, in which he equated “Christianity” with “the work of the Lord.”<sup>571</sup> George Q. Cannon, who served as a counselor in the First Presidency to Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow, spoke of the Church as promulgating “a code of moral law by which the modern world, under the light of Christian truth, may achieve social redemption and be forever purified.” In the same work, originally written in 1888, Cannon was quite content to cite with approval a journalist who, among other things, termed the Latter-day Saints a “sect of Christians.”<sup>572</sup> During the annual conference of April 1916, Elder George F. Richards of the Council of the Twelve implicitly identified Mormonism as Christian.<sup>573</sup> In April conference of 1920, Anthon H. Lund of the First Presidency expressed surprise that some would consider the Latter-day Saints non-Christians.<sup>574</sup> Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency was indignant at the same accusation during the annual conference of 1926. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” he declared, “is a Christian Church in the fullest sense of the word.”<sup>575</sup> This was echoed on the next day by Elder Rudger Clawson of the Twelve, who declared, “We are decidedly a Christian church; . . . we are Christians.”<sup>576</sup> In 1931, the seventh president of the Church, Heber J. Grant, expressly condemned claims that Latter-day Saints are not Christians.<sup>577</sup> His successor, George Albert Smith, in a 1945 address in Washington, D.C., also identified Mormons as Christians.<sup>578</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth president of the Church, taught that Mormonism was “true Christianity,” or “Christianity, pure and undefiled,” as did his predecessor, David O. McKay.<sup>579</sup> President McKay explicitly blamed denials of Mormon Christianity on “bigotry” and “prejudice,” declaring that the goal of Latter-day Saints was to “Christianize” the world. “It is my sincere belief and testimony,” he said in 1927, “that the Latter-day Saints commonly called Mormons are Christians in the truest and fullest sense of the term.”<sup>580</sup> “We are Christians,” he repeated in 1952.<sup>581</sup> Such affirmations have continued to issue from Latter-day Saint leaders in more recent years. “Mormons are Christians,” the late Elder Bruce R. McConkie, of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, declared in 1970, “and they have the only pure and perfect Christianity now on earth. Indeed, Mormonism is pure, unadulterated Christianity, restored anew in all its grandeur and glory.”<sup>582</sup> Elder Robert E. Wells of the Seventy wrote an entire book on the question, entitled *We Are Christians Because . . .*, in 1985.

As we noted above, some vocal anti-Mormons claim that “Mormonism has denied being Christian” for “most of its . . . history.”<sup>583</sup> The anti-Mormon *Evangel* often informs its readers that Latter-day Saints rejected the title of Christian for more than a century.<sup>584</sup> When? Where, from 1830 to the present, is there room for this alleged century of denial? Where is there room for any denial at all?

But it is not merely an occasional quotation which serves to illustrate the devotion of leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the founder of Christianity. While presiding over the Church, John Taylor chose as the title of his 1882 book on the *Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* a phrase which clearly indicates his feelings on the subject. Is there anything remotely un-Christian, or anti-Christian, evident here? And such literary productions have continued to issue from leaders of the Latter-day Saints. Commissioned by the presiding officers of the Church, James E. Talmage, of the Council of the Twelve, published his study of the life of *Jesus the Christ* in 1915. It has gone through scores of editions, and is one of the most beloved books in Mormondom, enjoying an almost quasi-canonical status. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church for twenty-eight years and one of the most powerful men in twentieth-century Mormondom, labored long to produce his harmony of the gospels and 3 Nephi, which was finally published in 1954 as *Our Lord of the Gospels*. In none of these books is there the slightest hint of a campaign to deceive.

Bruce R. McConkie expressed something of the reverence that true Latter-day Saints feel for the title of “Christian” in a 1978 book, *The Promised Messiah*, directed to members of the Church. “Family members bear the family name; by it they are known and called and identified; it sets them apart from all those of a different lineage and ancestry. Adopted children take upon themselves the name of their newfound parents and become in all respects as though they had been born in the family.” Having set up that general principle, he continued on to make its specific application: “And so it is that the children of Christ, those who are born again, those who are spiritually begotten by their new Father, take upon themselves the name of Christ. By it they are known; in it they are called; it identifies and sets them apart from all others. They are now family members, Christians in the real and true sense of the word.” They “carry his name and are obligated to bear it in decency and dignity. No taint of shame or disgrace, no sliver of dishonor must ever be permitted to attach itself to that name ‘which is above every name,’ for ‘at the name of Jesus every knee should bow’ (Philippians 2:9–10) and pay homage to him who is above all save the Father only. The saints of God must remember who they are and act accordingly.”<sup>585</sup> Thus, although, like all human beings, they probably want to be liked and known for what they are, Latter-day Saints do not care to be known as Christians merely for the sake of association with other believers in Christ. It is to prevent misunderstanding and denial of their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ that they protest claims that they are not Christian.

Such quotations and examples could be multiplied as long as patience and paper continue. But there is really little point in doing so, since the claim that Mormons have only recently begun to pretend that they are Christians is so manifestly without merit. There has never been a period when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has declined to call itself Christian; there has been no time when it has not declared the sovereignty of Christ. One writer, in fact, could allege with mild amusement in 1897 that Mormons seemed to think they were the *only* Christians. However misguided such an idea might be, it certainly indicates—if he is reporting accurately—that the Latter-day Saints he had spoken with had a high opinion of the title of “Christian.” Why else would they want to claim it exclusively for themselves?<sup>586</sup>

In order to establish their assertion that the relationship between Mormonism and Christianity is adversarial, anti-Mormons routinely distort the message Joseph Smith was given in the grove in 1820. Robert McKay serves nicely

to illustrate such distortion. He speaks, for example, of “many hateful denunciations of Christianity made by past [Mormon] leaders, one of which has become canonized scripture.”<sup>587</sup> What the other “hateful denunciations” might be, McKay does not tell us. On the other hand, it is almost certain that, by “canonized scripture,” he refers to the 1838 account of Joseph Smith’s First Vision. But is that account really “hateful”? (We find it difficult to imagine a Latter-day Saint denunciation of Christianity that could possibly exceed in hatefulness some of the statements quoted at the beginning of this essay.) Most of the negative statements in the First Vision appear to be quotations from biblical prophets—prophets venerated by Robert McKay no less than by the Latter-day Saints.<sup>588</sup> “In this official account of the First Vision,” McKay tells his readers, “Joseph wrote that God told him that all Christian churches were wrong and all Christian beliefs ‘were an abomination in his sight’ . . .”<sup>589</sup> This is not true. Neither the 1838 nor any other account of the First Vision says that “all Christian beliefs” are an “abomination.” No thinking Latter-day Saint, and certainly no Latter-day Saint leader, has ever claimed for a moment that all the beliefs of other Christians were completely wrong. How could we possibly hold to such a view, when we agree with our fellow Christians on so very much? “In reality and essence,” said Joseph Smith, commenting on the relationship between Mormons and other Christians, “we do not differ so far in our religious views, but that we could all drink into one principle of love.”<sup>590</sup> Have Latter-day Saints ever taught that Protestant or Catholic belief in Jesus as Redeemer was an abomination? Have we ever denounced their veneration of the New Testament? Do we find their belief in the existence of God abominable?

Quite the contrary. “The Catholics have many pieces of truth,” noted John Taylor.<sup>591</sup> Joseph Smith felt the same way, and denounced anti-Catholic bigotry with both eloquence and passion.<sup>592</sup> Protestant anti-Catholics are illogical, he told his followers, and, to compound their error, they fail to recognize the great worth of “the old Catholic church traditions.” “If the whole tree is corrupt,” the Prophet demanded, “are not its branches corrupt? If the Catholic religion is a false religion, how can any true religion come out of it? If the Catholic church is bad, how can any good thing come out of it?” But, in fact, the Catholic church is neither entirely bad nor wholly false. “The character of the old churches [has] always been slandered by all apostates since the world began.”<sup>593</sup>

But the respect of Mormon prophets and apostles is by no means confined to the Church of Rome. “Have the Presbyterians any truth?” asked the Prophet Joseph Smith. “Yes. Have the Baptists, Methodists, etc., any truth? Yes.”<sup>594</sup> “The Latter-day Saints recognize and appreciate the great work accomplished by the Christian churches of the world since the Reformation,” President Anthony W. Ivins said in April 1926. “For all the good which such an organization may accomplish the Lord will give them credit, and they will be rewarded for their efforts to establish faith in the hearts of people, I believe far beyond their expectations, for everything that is good, and persuadeth men to do good, cometh from God. The Latter-day Saints wish all people who are thus striving God-speed.”<sup>595</sup> He was even willing to speak well of churches that oppose and denounce The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “We encourage and bless them in their righteous efforts, and the Lord will bless them for all the good that they accomplish.”<sup>596</sup> Thus, when Robert McKay announces that “Mormonism, to be completely honest, must either repudiate its claim to being Christian, or cease to attack Christianity,” we can easily see that his announcement rests upon an untruth.<sup>597</sup>

For Mormonism does not attack Christianity as such, nor does it assert that other Christian churches are entirely wrong. When it criticizes other faiths at all, which is very rare, it laments only the corruptions that, it has been informed by the Lord, have crept into the churches that claim to follow Jesus of Nazareth. More typically, the Latter-day Saints simply attempt to share the additional light that God has given them. “We are asking you,” President George Albert Smith told a Presbyterian minister in England, “to keep all the truths you have acquired in

your churches, from the scriptures and from your educational institutions. Keep also the fine characters you have developed and the love and beauty that are in your hearts. . . . Keep all this. It is a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then let us sit down and share with you some of the things that have not yet come into your lives that have enriched our lives and made us happy. We offer you these things without money and without price. All we ask you to do is hear what we have to say, and if it appeals to you, accept it freely. If it does not, then we will go our way to somebody else that we hope will be more fortunate.”<sup>598</sup> The Prophet Joseph Smith had made much the same point years earlier. “If I esteem mankind to be in error,” he said, “shall I bear them down? No. I will lift them up, and in their own way too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by the force of reasoning, for truth will cut its own way. . . . Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst.”<sup>599</sup>

James K. Walker offers an interesting justification for the denial that Latter-day Saints are Christian.<sup>600</sup> “Traditional Christians,” he observes, “say the Mormon Church is not truly a Christian church. Is that really so different from Mormons saying that the LDS Church is the only true Church?” As a matter of fact, it is. To say that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church is quite a different proposition from saying that other churches are not Christian. Therefore, it is unlike the critics’ claim that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a Christian church. Consider a few analogies: If Fred the economist claims that his theory is the only fully adequate or true theory of business cycles, is he thereby claiming that there are no other such theories? Hardly. And Fred’s claim would scarcely justify rival economists in contending that his is not a theory of business cycles at all. Likewise, if Katharine the physicist says that her depiction of subatomic reality is true, and better than any alternative, is she asserting that nobody else has such a picture at all, or that competing theories are really about crop rotation or tennis? Certainly not. Should dissenting scientists claim that her theory is absolutely unrelated to subatomic physics? If they did, it would seem a rather strange response. And when Boris, blissfully hunched over his bowl of tomato soup, declares that tomato is the best of all soups, should his friend Ivan, who prefers clam chowder, seriously reply that tomato soup is not soup at all, but rather a form of ice cream or a type of salad?

Walker goes on to declare that there is “something wrong” with saying that “all Christian churches are wrong” while claiming, at the same time, to be a Christian church. “By its own claims Mormonism cannot be a Christian church too. If all professing Churches are false, Mormonism must be Christian *instead*. There is no middle ground. . . . Why is it wrong to say, ‘Mormonism is Christian?’ It is because to say Mormonism is a true Christian church is to admit that no other church is.” And, truly, there would be “something wrong” with such a declaration. But Walker has provided no evidence that any Latter-day Saint has ever said such a thing. Nor has Robert McKay given us any reason to accept his cute syllogism, offered as a demonstration of alleged Latter-day Saint inconsistency on this issue: “1. Christian churches are false. 2. But Mormonism is Christian. 3. Therefore Mormonism is false.”<sup>601</sup>

What the Lord told Joseph Smith in the grove was that the churches and creeds of 1820 were defective and distorted by error. He did not say that they were entirely and utterly wrong (since they preserved much truth), nor did he say that each and every Christian church would always be wrong. Nor did he include the as-yet-unorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in his judgment. He did not say that Christianity, as such, is false. There is nothing logically wrong with saying that the churches of 1820 were incorrect on important issues (“corrupt”), and then saying that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (organized in 1830) is true. If such a statement were logically unacceptable, then so would be the assertion that Einstein’s special theory of relativity is a superior theory in physics to, or “truer than,” the Newtonian theory that preceded it. Yet historians of science routinely say precisely that, and Einsteinians never say that physics, as such, is false. Inadequate scientific theories

can still be scientific, just as inadequate Christian theologies can still be Christian. The Copernican notion of the solar system is a more adequate astronomical theory than the Ptolemaic view, and Kepler's theory is even better. However, all three theories are theories of the solar system. They are all astronomical theories, just as Catholicism, Methodism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Mormonism are all Christian theologies.

To say that Mormonism is Christian is not, as such, to endorse its specific historical or doctrinal claims. Logically, as we have seen, it is quite possible for a denomination to be Christian while being, simultaneously, mistaken on one or more theological points. This is, in fact, presumably how various Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox groups view each other. What is more, this is how Latter-day Saints have historically viewed the Christians who disagree with them. Mormons have not, generally if ever, seriously denied that other churches were Christian. "We have no need," Joseph F. Smith, sixth president of the Church, said in April 1917, "to tear down the houses of other people (using this expression as a symbol). We are perfectly willing that they should live in the homes they have erected for themselves, and we will try to show them a better way. While we will not condemn that which they love and cherish above all other things in the world, we will endeavor to show them a better way and build them a better house, and then invite them kindly, in the spirit of Christ, of true Christianity, to enter the better dwelling."<sup>602</sup> Thus, "to say Mormonism is a true Christian church," is *not* to say that "no other church is." Even to say that Mormonism is true in all its historical and doctrinal claims is not to make such a statement, for it is not a part of official Mormon doctrine to deny the Christianity of others. And, logically, it is quite conceivable that a fully adequate ("true") Christian denomination might be surrounded by other, less adequate ("true") Christian denominations.

Latter-day Saints have never regarded themselves as enemies of Christianity. If anything, theirs seems often to be a case of unrequited love.

## Conclusion

So where do we stand? We have examined numerous arguments designed to show that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands beyond the limits of Christendom. We have, we hope, given them fairly and accurately. We have referred to various figures and documents from several periods across the history of Christianity. Where does this fairly complex and dense analysis leave us?

We have seen critics of Mormonism declare that the standard for denying the name "Christian" to Mormons is the Bible. Yet we have found that the Bible not only contains no definition of the word, but, in fact, hardly mentions it. Nor does earliest Christianity provide any clear guidance. So, while they deny it, the critics are thrown back necessarily on extrabiblical criteria for judgment that they then attempt to read into the New Testament canon.<sup>603</sup> However, we have seen that these criteria, if consistently applied, would lead to results that most people—if perhaps not our "experts"—would recognize as absurd. But the criteria are not even consistently applied, and arbitrariness reigns. (In 1986, the Protestant magazine *The Christian Century* quoted television evangelist Jerry Falwell's criticism of former President Jimmy Carter for sponsoring the Salt II and Panama Canal treaties. Anyone who would do so, Falwell declared, "is not a Christian.")<sup>604</sup> If there is any one constant, it can be formulated in the following rule: "If we don't believe it or do it, it isn't Christian." The *Evangelist's* Robert McKay, at least, is refreshingly frank about his approach to the question. "Having assumed that what I believe is Christian doctrine," he remarks, "any doctrines which contradict mine are by definition not Christian."<sup>605</sup>

However, this is a far cry from the boast of the critics that they are conveying objective information by their refusal to grant Mormons the (pagan-invented) title of "Christian." All their refusal really seems to convey is how little they

perceive Mormonism to resemble their own beliefs, which have somehow become the cosmic standard. It means that Mormons are not like them. Many anti-Mormons come, in fact, to sound very much like Henry Fielding's fictional Parson Thwackum: "When I mention religion," he says, "I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England."<sup>606</sup>

Implicit in the refusal to admit that Mormons are Christians is an attempt to impose a bogus uniformity on what has historically gone under the name of "Christian." This attempt flies in the face of "the notorious fact that persons who have equally professed and called themselves Christians have, in the course of history, held all manner of distinct and conflicting beliefs under the one name."<sup>607</sup> "Christians have argued, often passionately, over every conceivable point of Christian doctrine from the *filioque* to the immaculate conception," observes David Steinmetz, Kearns Professor of the History of Christianity at Duke University. "There is scarcely an issue of worship, theology, ethics, and politics over which some Christians have not disagreed among themselves."<sup>608</sup> By what authority, then, does any single group arrogate to itself the right to bestow or deny the title of "Christian"? No informed observer would deny that there are striking differences between Mormonism and traditional Christianity. Mormons proclaim this themselves when they speak of "The Great Apostasy." But there is a vast difference between acknowledging differences, noting that Mormonism is "not really based upon the teaching of the Bible *as understood and interpreted by the historic Christian church*," and denying that Mormons are Christians at all.<sup>609</sup>

Yet such a denial, according to James Spencer, not only represents the consensus of informed orthodox Christians on Mormonism, but is their unanimous judgment.<sup>610</sup> Even if Spencer's claim were true, of course, it would signify nothing in itself. "Informed opinion" in Salem knew that witchcraft was a serious community problem. "Informed opinion" in 1929 knew that prices on the stock exchange would continue to soar. "Informed" Roman opinion knew the early Christians to be a dangerous threat to society. Truth is not established by opinion polls, and not even by surveying "experts." As the great medieval rabbi Moses Maimonides expresses this point, "when something has been demonstrated, the correctness of the matter is not increased and certainty regarding it is not strengthened by the consensus of all men of knowledge with regard to it. Nor could its correctness be diminished and certainty regarding it be weakened even if all the people on earth disagreed with it."<sup>611</sup> Rather, it must be demonstrated by its intrinsic reasonableness and by its consistency with the evidence. Such is precisely the case here. We have seen that the standards by which Mormons are denied the title of "Christian" rest on illusion and lead to absurdity, so that even a unanimous verdict of experts would have to be characterized as simply wrong.

But there is no unanimous verdict of experts to the effect that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is non-Christian. Spencer's claim is not true. Many authorities on Mormonism—even those who are most critical of it—acknowledge its Christianity.<sup>612</sup> An even larger group of writers on Mormonism fails to address the question, almost certainly because—and rightly so—the issue never occurs to them.<sup>613</sup>

There is, after all, something rather peculiar about the assertion that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not Christian. This is not a self-evident truth, and would even seem to contradict obvious fact. (This is presumably why it is so frequently announced with an air of breathless discovery.) Mormons declare themselves Christian, and are astonished to be told they are not. They belong to a Church in which every prayer is uttered, every sermon is given, and every ordinance is performed literally in the name of Jesus Christ. Their hymns—the devotional heart of their Sunday worship—sing of Christ and his atonement. At Christmas and Easter, they join with hundreds of millions of Christians around the world in a celebration of his life. In baptism and in the weekly

communion they know as “the sacrament,” they testify that they are willing to take upon themselves his name (D&C 20:37, 77).<sup>614</sup> Their first Article of Faith announces their belief in “God the Eternal Father, and in His son, Jesus Christ.” The Book of Mormon closes with an exhortation to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). One of the high points of the Doctrine and Covenants is a stirring testimony of Jesus (D&C 76:22–24). Their story begins with the claim of a young boy to have seen the Father and the Son. That young boy later claimed to be a prophet, defining “the spirit of prophecy” as “the testimony of Jesus.”<sup>615</sup> His successors, likewise regarded as prophets, are assisted by a presiding quorum of “Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23).

Is it plausible to describe such people as “non-Christian”? It would hardly seem so, unless one is prepared to follow the idiosyncratic usage of the term that permits statements like, “I have been an active and committed Lutheran since my earliest youth; I became a Christian last July.”<sup>616</sup> But language is a social construct, and meaning must be shared to be intelligible. To use terms in extraordinary ways, almost solipsistically, without alerting an audience, is confusing at best, as it is in the dialogue—if it can be called that!—between Humpty Dumpty and Alice. As illustrated by the case of certain Islamic zealots—who, when they accuse a woman of being a prostitute, really mean that she goes out in public without a veil—it can be distinctly dangerous. Yet most (if not all) of the arguments that claim to demonstrate that Mormonism is not Christian have, as we have seen, relied on private understandings of common words.<sup>617</sup> Indeed, the denial that Mormons are Christians is, in and of itself, a massive instance of the elementary fallacy of equivocation, using—as it does—a very common word in a very peculiar sense.

Needless to say, if the current flood of anti-Mormon radio and television programs, films, pamphlets, cassettes, and books were merely an inexhaustible source of quaint specimens for a class in practical reasoning, there would be no cause for concern. But they are not. Instead, they are often the vehicles of a religious intolerance that is genuinely frightening. A certain nationally-syndicated “Christian” radio talk show, for instance, devoted an entire program in August of 1990 to the question of whether witchcraft and occult movements should be constitutionally protected. It was the opinion of the show’s host that, if American law were properly formulated, “false religions” would not be so protected.<sup>618</sup> And if some Mormons are tempted to shrug such discussions off as posing no conceivable threat to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, dangerous only to real bad guys like Satanists, we would remind them that, to many vocal anti-Mormons, Mormonism is “Satanist witchcraft” and an “occult religion.” There is abundant evidence, in fact, which we unfortunately cannot treat here, that certain American anti-Mormons feel themselves unfairly restrained in their holy crusade by constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion. There is even evidence to suggest that, in countries where such freedom is not legally protected, enemies of the Church are quite willing to make use of government coercion to combat Mormonism.<sup>619</sup> *The Utah Evangel* has continuously suggested that Latter-day Saints should not hold political office, and that they should be deprived of academic employment and the privilege of speaking at certain college campuses solely because of their religious beliefs.

Of course, the threat to the Latter-day Saints is not primarily legal. The majority of us, presumably, and for the foreseeable future, are quite safe behind constitutional guarantees of human rights and freedom of religion. However, Prof. Gordon Thomasson has written a sobering paper, as yet unpublished, describing the potential threat posed even to the *lives* of Mormons in the Third World, where principles of human rights are not always so well-established, by incendiary films like *The God Makers*. (In our opinion, the sequel, *Temples of the God Makers*—which Thomasson had evidently not seen—is even more dangerous. Perhaps deliberately so.) And even the history of the United States, including the not too distant past, has seen unpleasant ethnic and religious conflicts escape the bounds set by law.

More than one Latter-day Saint has attended an anti-Mormon rally only to emerge deeply shaken by the passions on display, by the fierce rhetoric of denunciation, by the frequently charismatic but also manipulative character of the orchestrators of these meetings, by the almost palpable hostility directed against Mormon beliefs and—inescapably, if always denied by the fomenters of such emotions—against the Mormons themselves. (We have already cited mainstream Protestant writer and social worker Lloyd Averill's perception of "frustration, outrage, desperation, and latent violence" in the rhetoric of anti-Mormonism.)<sup>620</sup> Dr. D. Brent Collette, director of the Church's Institute of Religion adjacent to the campus of the University of California, at Berkeley, will serve to illustrate the experience of not a few Latter-day Saints who could tell similar stories: Seeing an anti-Mormon meeting advertized in a local newspaper, he decided out of curiosity to attend. However, instead of the fairly small gathering he had expected, he found himself in the midst of a sizeable and distressingly hostile rally. As the speakers went on and on about the Satanic character of Mormonism, about its true conspiratorial nature, about its threat even to the lives and property of those around it, he found himself growing ever more upset. Finally, a woman sitting ahead of him leaned over to her husband and whispered rather loudly that "this," by which she meant the treacherous Mormon conspiracy, "was just like the Nazis." Brother Collette could no longer restrain himself. "Yes," he said, leaning forward, "this is just like the Nazis. And I'm the Jew."

It is not mere paranoia on the part of Latter-day Saints that makes them fear the violence that anti-Mormon crusades can stir up. One professional anti-Mormon based in South America, Dean Helland, has recently expressed the opinion that Ed Decker's sensationalistic campaigns there "may have been partially responsible for the continual bombings of Mormon churches by political extremists in Chile." He thereby acknowledges that anti-Mormon activity can place Latter-day Saint buildings, missionaries, and members at serious physical risk. Helland's admission is an interesting one, however, for the manner in which it is phrased. He does not criticize Decker's distortions and misrepresentations, nor his inflammatory sensationalism. Indeed, in Helland's view, although their violent actions were wrong, the Chilean bombers were not fundamentally mistaken in their view of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He speaks gently of "this unanticipated participation by terrorists in combating Mormonism"—almost as if they were simply overenthusiastic allies in a common cause. Indeed, the real fault here lies, as always, with the Latter-day Saints themselves. Decker's agitation in Chile had involved not inaccurate claims, not demagoguery of the worst kind, not the deliberate whipping up of hatred against the Latter-day Saints, but merely "the exposure of Mormon secrets." The terrorists were upset "at least in part by some of the things which were exposed in Decker's teachings." It was imprudent, Mr. Helland, implies, to reveal these horrifying things. Perhaps, he suggests, to minimize death and destruction in the future, anti-Mormons should be more cautious in their disclosures of the sordid and appalling truth about the Latter-day Saints. Helland recommends that a more subtle procedure be used to combat Mormonism "in volatile parts of the world . . . where anti-American political sentiments have been manifested repeatedly in violent ways."<sup>621</sup> Presumably, though, the same old sensationalism, the same tired untruths and half-truths, will continue to serve just fine in areas where violence is less common. (We have no reason to suppose, by the way, that Ed Decker has agreed even to Mr. Helland's minimal moderation.)

Mainstream Christians and Christian organizations who stand by as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is gang-assaulted by heresy hunters may well be, in Thomas Merton's memorable phrase, "guilty bystanders." Sometimes, by joining in or by making their facilities available to anti-Mormons—however uncomfortable they may feel with anti-Mormon "excesses," however ill at ease they may be with hatred as a spiritual tool—they think that they serve God. As one very prominent anti-Mormon put it, when confronted with irrefutable evidence of his own dishonesty, "When you're fighting the Devil, any means are fair."<sup>622</sup> But these fellow-travelling anti-Mormons may also be self-deceived, vainly imagining that militant fundamentalism will sate

itself on the Latter-day Saints, and leave them alone. Instead, it may simply eat them last. Already, to be sure, it does not limit its appetite or its sometimes disreputable tactics to the Latter-day Saints. Karl Keating's experience suggests that, for some militant Protestants, the Church of Rome, too, is a victim whom no rules of fair play are to protect: "The claim of leading fundamentalists that their attacks on the Catholic religion are made out of love for individual Catholics loses much of its credibility because they are unwilling to decline the use of unfair tactics. One might say they are unwilling to wage a just war; they want to do battle, and they do not hesitate to use any weapon at hand, no matter how foul."<sup>623</sup>

Surely the experience of our sad century should have taught us the importance of rules of law and fairness. Constitutional guarantees of free speech and freedom of religion were not designed to protect *popular* opinions, but *unpopular* ones. But in so doing, they protect all opinions from the fickleness of majority fashions. It is in the interest even of popular thinkers and dominant religions to insist that laws and principles of fairness be impartially applied, for the rules that protect their adversaries may one day protect them. An exchange from Robert Bolt's famous screenplay, *A Man for All Seasons*, makes this point eloquently. It features Sir Thomas More and his zealously righteous son-in-law.

*Roper*: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!

*More*: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

*Roper*: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

*More*: (Roused and excited) Oh? (Advances on Roper) And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you—where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat. . . . Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake."<sup>624</sup>

We have in mind here not only the sorts of laws enacted by legislatures and enforced by police. Surely, it is also in the interest of all to ensure that discussions of religious issues are carried out fairly and without misrepresentation, that words are not arbitrarily redefined in order to exclude and victimize less powerful and less popular groups, that Christian history is not distorted in order to banish those who choose not to conform to the consensus of the hour. Surely even non-"cultists" should see that it is in their interest to speak up when they see those rules trampled upon in a zealous attempt to combat "false religion." "In Germany they came first for the Communists," Pastor Martin Niemoeller is reported to have said, "and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up."<sup>625</sup>

If Mormons are banished from Christendom, will other denominations and individuals long be absent from the agenda of triumphant fundamentalism? Will all Christians be pressured to toe the extreme Protestant line? Robert McKay serves notice that groups beside the Latter-day Saints could become his prey, when he casually speaks of "other churches, both Christian and non-Christian."<sup>626</sup> (Mosques we know, and synagogues we know. Even *stupas*. But what is a non-Christian *church*?) Loraine Boettner, using language sadly familiar to Mormons, calls Roman Catholicism "anti-Christian."<sup>627</sup> Already, Dave Hunt, co-author of *The God Makers*, has moved on to attack his fellow Evangelicals in volumes bearing such titles as *The Seduction of Christianity*. The theological bloodlust visible

in much anti-Mormonism is not easily controlled, and will not easily be channeled. In a recent book entitled *Witch Hunt*, Bob and Gretchen Passantino plead with their fellow conservative Protestants to recognize that “different” is not “wrong.” But their plea is unlikely to calm the supercharged, inquisitorial atmosphere that they themselves, as vocal anti-“cultists,” have most assuredly helped to create.<sup>628</sup>

Humpty Dumpty was right: It really is a question of power. And in the struggle of ideas, as George Orwell knew, control of the dictionary is no small thing.<sup>629</sup>

So how are we to determine who is Christian and who is not? It is not altogether clear that we have any responsibility, or any right, to make such a determination. “For any one branch of the church to claim that those within its fold alone constitute the body of true Christians,” writes Loraine Boettner [!] “is both crude and impudent, and is inconsistent with the principles of love and charity so clearly commanded in the Scriptures.”<sup>630</sup> Christendom has known (and rejected) such claims in the past: Lucifer of Cagliari, the fourth-century bishop of that Sardinian city, was fond of calling his opponent “pagans,” and of describing their meeting places as “camps of the devil.” Luciferians, sounding much like Dave Hunt and his language of “seduction,” denounced those whose doctrines differed from theirs by charging that, because of dogmatic deviations, “the Church has become a brothel.” As W. H. C. Frend notes, Lucifer’s view reduced the church to “the real salt of the earth, namely Lucifer and his followers.”<sup>631</sup>

The Christian world as a whole has never felt comfortable with such an intolerant and exclusive view, and should not. Probably the best way to deal with the question of who is and who is not Christian is simply to believe what people say when they claim to be Christians.<sup>632</sup> The Lord will judge their hearts.

If anyone claims to see in Jesus of Nazareth a personage of unique and preeminent authority, that individual should be considered Christian. Such is the consensus of both scholarly and everyday usage. It is the only understanding of the term that accounts for the way it has actually been used, as well as the way it continues to be used by most speakers of English and other languages today. (This does not mean, of course, that we must recognize every Christian theology as accurate and adequate. Debates can and probably should continue on such issues.) Only this understanding of the term can make sense of the fact that, through history, such disparate groups as the Ebionites, the Marcionites, and the Mormons, have been classed under it. And—an added demonstration of its ability to account for the data—this understanding clearly excludes movements such as Islam and Manichaeism, which, while viewing Jesus as a prophet, regard him as neither unique nor preeminent—and whose adherents do not in any case aspire to be known as Christians.<sup>633</sup>

“‘What think ye of Christ?’ (Matthew 22:42) is still the supreme test of orthodox Christianity,” writes G. H. Fraser in his book, *Is Mormonism Christian?* “The Lord accepted Peter’s confession, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ and on the basis of this confession, the structure of the Church is built (Matthew 16:15–18).”<sup>634</sup> This is precisely the confession made by Mormons in testimony meetings and missionary lessons every day around the world. Why, then, having acknowledged that Peter’s confession was good enough for Jesus, does Fraser demand yet more of the Latter-day Saints? And from whom do he and his allies receive their authority to do so?

Einar Molland, having surveyed the difficulties in defining the term “Christian,” concludes that, “There is really only one characteristic that must be present in any community which should be recognized as Christian: belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God, as Lord and Saviour. Any faith which rests upon and is permeated by this belief must be said to lie within the limits of Christendom, while any faith which rejects or is inconsistent with the Divinity of

Christ is beyond the pale.”<sup>635</sup> Mormonism unabashedly “rests upon and is permeated by” belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God, as Lord and Savior. Why, then does Einar Molland deny that Mormons are Christian?<sup>636</sup> What powerful extrabiblical force makes even some otherwise reputable scholars violate their own clearly enunciated principles, in order to banish The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from Christendom?

Protestant thinker Frederick Sontag argues that “perhaps the most authentic definition of ‘Christian’ would be: One who feels himself called to serve Jesus or to follow him as master.” Anti-Mormons, however, refuse to accept this definition, at least when it comes to the Latter-day Saints. No matter how devoted to the Savior he or she may be, it seems that no Latter-day Saint can satisfy the inquisitors of anti-Mormonism. Why? Professor Sontag may be able to suggest a reason: “Although both simple and biblical, the problem with this definition—and perhaps the reason both church officials and theologians have been unwilling to settle for it—is that it is subjective and non-exclusive.”<sup>637</sup>

The problem, in other words, is that the simple definition of a Christian as someone who “feels . . . called to serve Jesus or to follow him as master” is of little use in excluding people who do not wish to be excluded. It cannot serve the interests of those whose own sense of value derives wholly or in part from their delicious awareness of the valuelessness of others. But this is to deprive fallen humanity of one of its acutest and least Christ-like pleasures, for in-groups define themselves largely by those whom they exclude. In this game of one-upsmanship, of which C. S. Lewis spoke so insightfully in his essay, “The Inner Ring,” for someone to win, it is essential that someone else must lose.<sup>638</sup> Sadly, such considerations may have particular relevance to the conservative Christians who make up the overwhelming majority of vocal anti-Mormons. Lloyd Averill has lamented the fact that, “in fundamentalist hands, being ‘saved’ or ‘born again’ is . . . often seized as a mark of spiritual and moral superiority over the ‘unsaved,’ that is, those—whether nonfundamentalist Christians or non-Christians—whose experience differs from that of the fundamentalists. Indeed, for some fundamentalists, being ‘saved’ confers legitimacy on the use of the most violent and unloving rhetoric in denouncing and damning the ‘unsaved’ and on taking delight in contemplating the destruction that is presumed to await them in the providence of an irreconcilable fundamentalist God.”<sup>639</sup> Averill points to what he terms fundamentalism’s “apparent eagerness for schism.” Indeed, he calls the movement “inherently schismatic.”<sup>640</sup> “Its tests for Christian fellowship become so severe,” says Edward J. Carnell, former president of the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary, “that divisions in the Church are considered a sign of virtue.” And this, notes Carnell, seems essential to fundamentalist identity. “Status by negation must be maintained,” he observes, “or the *raison d’être* of fundamentalism is lost.”<sup>641</sup>

Yet Frederick Sontag’s simple definition is probably the only one that can account for the way the word “Christian” is actually used.<sup>642</sup> We have seen that the oldest and probably the original meaning *Christianoi* was nothing more complicated than “Christ’s people,” or perhaps “partisans of Christ.” And “Christ’s people” describes precisely what members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel themselves called to be.

It is a pity that the common loyalty implied in the term “Christian” seems unable to unify the followers of Christ in a struggle against the powerful foes who menace them all. In a world of violence and hatred and hunger and wretched addiction, it is tragic that “Christ’s partisans” often prefer to regard each other as the enemy. Surrounded by materialism and immorality and unbelief, many Christians have their guns trained on one another. Yet, in a world where most still do not know Christ, the common love that his people feel toward him as their Redeemer surely should weigh at least as heavily in the scales as their doctrinal differences. “The Kingdom of God,” said Martin Luther, “is like a besieged city surrounded on all sides by death. Each man has his place on the wall to

defend and no one can stand where another stands, but nothing prevents us from calling encouragement to one another.”<sup>643</sup>

Doctrinal disagreements, we hasten to point out, are not unimportant. “A” and “not-A” are unlikely to be simultaneously true, and it is important that we devote our attention to sifting truth from error. Debate and discussion are not of themselves evil. If they are conducted fairly, without anger and evil contention, with an eye to truth rather than to self-gratifying “victory,” they can serve important and indeed vital ends. Followers of Christ can profit from differing experiences and insights. But dogmatic disputes should be kept in their proper perspective. “There is every evidence,” states Professor Sontag, “that Jesus was primarily interested in one’s sense of calling and gave little attention to theological debates.”<sup>644</sup>

Who should be our model? Jesus? Or Lucifer of Cagliari? Eugene England’s admonition deserves consideration: “It would be tragic,” he writes, “if we Christians, standing each in our different places, were to desert our place on the wall against death—against our true enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil—and, accepting spectral evidence from the father of lies, were to turn on each other. We have no business but to call encouragement to each other.”<sup>645</sup> Latter-day Saints would do well—on grounds of history and theology, as well as for reasons of simple tolerance and good human relations—to take the advice Karl Keating gives to Catholics facing a fundamentalist. “Allow him the title of Christian,” says Keating, “even if he will not return the favor.”<sup>646</sup>

In the 1980s, a committee of scholars and teachers from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Harvard Divinity School, and the Divinity School of the University of Chicago carried out a five-year examination of the role of religion classes in the undergraduate college curriculum. Among the products of that collaboration was a pamphlet posing questions and offering suggestions for introductory courses in religious studies. Certain of the questions posed (and left unanswered, for the reader’s reflection) are directly relevant to our concerns in this essay: “Is a religion,” the pamphlet asks, “presented from the perspective of a privileged elite? Are there unexamined decisions made about what is orthodox and what is not? The Mormons, for example, wish to be called Christians. . . . Are [they] labeled Christian because they say they are, or is there another criterion used to exclude them? Are the criteria for such judgements clearly articulated and consistently applied?”<sup>647</sup>

We are now in a position to answer these questions. Our survey of the arguments and the evidence has, we believe, shown that anti-Mormon arguments on this subject have rarely if ever been clearly articulated, and that consistent application of them leads to absurd and unacceptable results. We have discovered that anti-Mormon denials of Latter-day Saint Christianity are indeed tangled up with “unexamined decisions . . . about what is orthodox and what is not,” and that those decisions do not, in fact, bear close examination on historical and logical grounds. We conclude that there is no “privileged elite” to whose judgment we must defer on this question. There is only the broad and deep stream of common usage, reflecting the judgment of millions, if not billions, of ordinary people since the time of Christ, including scholars and peasants, theologians, insiders and outsiders, believers and unbelievers. This stream can, of course, be turned. New meanings and new usages can be created by forceful thinkers and clever poets. But the stream has not yet been turned, and it will take more than the weak and inconsistent arguments offered so far to change the meaning of the term “Christian” and thrust the Latter-day Saints outside its confines. In point of fact, the Mormons are Christians precisely because they sincerely say they are. No other criterion is needed—for the Latter-day Saints or for anyone else. No other coherent criterion has been offered, and it is doubtful that any other can be.

“It is not necessarily theology which makes us Christian,” Rev. Roger Keller reminded us some years ago, “but rather our common confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. That confession in the early Church preceded all sophisticated theological discussions, and it is that same confession today that identifies us as Christian. The confession that Jesus is Lord is as central to the Mormon faith as it is to that of the Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, or Baptists.”<sup>648</sup>

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436. Martin (1985): 214; cf. *The Utah Evangel* 31 (March 1984): 8.

437. So, for example, *The Utah Evangel* 31 (January 1984): 12; 31 (February 1984): 3; 33 (July/August 1986): 4; *The Evangel* 37 (November 1990): 1; Decker, “Petition”; P. B. Smith (1970): 68; Robertson (1983): 7; J. O. Sanders (1962): 109, 115–16; Decker and Hunt (1984): 199–201 (vs. Scharffs [1986]: 258). Martin (1955): 53, finds these rare and isolated speculations “shocking and vile,” and makes the obligatory allusions to Greek mythology. He alleges that such ideas spring from the immoral and sensual character of Mormonism and its leaders; cf. pp. 50, 53–54.

438. S. E. Robinson (1991): 9–21, is worth consulting on this sort of thinking, which he labels “exclusion by misrepresentation.”

439. Orson Hyde speculated that Jesus was married. Robertson (1983): 17, finds the suggestion “horrificing.” Gnosticism would respond so, as would a Christianized Neoplatonism. But where in Judeo-Christian scripture is such a horror of sex and materiality to be found? If Mr. Robertson takes the Incarnation seriously, he must allow for some pretty gritty physiological attributes—at least as much so as sexuality—to be predicated of Jesus. If he does not, he is a Docetist. And Docetism is the one heresy that our ancient sources might justify us in expelling from Christianity. Hayman (1991): 6, 14, points out that, in popular Jewish belief (as held by “many, perhaps the majority, of ancient Israelites”), God himself had a female consort.

440. On “Jewish Christianity,” which includes the Ebionites, see, for example, Bruce (1979): 255; Ferm (1945): 241; Frend (1981): 353; Bauer (1957): 201, 243. References could be multiplied indefinitely. The standard work on the subject is H.-J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judenchristentums*. See also J. Danielou, *Théologie du judéo-christianisme*. Cf. also J. O. Sanders (1962): 17, who attacks the Judeo-Christians. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, perhaps the ultimate arbiter of English usage, explicitly terms the Unitarians “Christian.” We have in mind, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* necessarily did as well, more the Unitarians of several decades ago. Some contemporary Unitarians probably cannot be described as Christians in any meaningful sense. But—and this is crucial—many of these people no longer claim to be Christians.

441. *The Utah Evangel* 34 (July–August 1987): 8.

442. *The Evangel* 37 (November 1990): 1; cf. *The Utah Evangel* 33 (May 1986): 8. Cf. Decker and Hunt (1984): 136 (and the rebuttal by Scharffs [1986]: 193–94); “Introducing Ex-Mormons for Jesus.” With equal hostility, but for quite another purpose, Fraser (1977): 144, tries the following argument: “We would hasten to remind Mormons that the cross on which the Saviour died was a palus, or pole, without a transom member. The classical cruciform developed later in Christian art.” In other words, one set of anti-Mormons assaults the Latter-day Saints for the failure to use a symbol that another prominent anti-Mormon rejects as inauthentically biblical. The left anti-Mormon hand knoweth not what the right one doeth.

443. Wells (1985): 24. This is partially cited by *The Utah Evangel* 33 (May 1986): 8. It is likely that, in the last sentence, Elder Wells has in mind the Catholic crucifix, so common in Latin America where he has spent much of his life.

444. In *The Utah Evangel* 33 (May 1986): 8.

445. Child and Colles (1971): 10; cf. Kirschbaum (1970): 2:571; *Newsletter*, The Conversion Center (March/April 1989). Miller (1956): 26, finds possible evidence of the use of the cross in Syria by the beginning of the third century; cf. also Boettner (1986): 286–87, assaulting the Catholics. No Mormon is more hostile to the cross than Rev. Boettner. We know nothing whatsoever of Christian art before A.D. 200, and precious little of it during the third century; cf. Janson (1969): 158. The very close relationship between pagan art, on the one hand, and early Christian art and iconography, on the other, is well portrayed in *la Croix and Tansy* (1980), 212–26, and Janson (1969): 157–69. It is impossible, in the earliest centuries, to speak of one single “Christian” artistic tradition.

446. Averill (1989): 88.

447. Miller (1956): 25.

448. Lanczkowski (1972): 210. Eggenberger (1969): 58, hints only vaguely at the same position, but he made the charge explicitly during a conversation with one of the authors in Zürich, Switzerland, in early 1974. This accusation may be a purely European fashion, although the pamphlet “Is Mormonism Christian?” published in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1989, makes an implicitly related point.

449. As at 1 Nephi 10:6; Mosiah 3:11, 16, 19; 4:5, 7; 16:3–4; Alma 12:22; 22:12–14; 34:9; 42:2–26; Helaman 14:16; Mormon 9:12; Ether 3:2; D&C 20:18–20; Moses 6:48–49, 53–55.

450. Brandon (1970): 481.

451. Frend (1981): 206–7.

452. C. G. Kromminga, “Sin,” in Harrison, Bromiley, and Henry (1960): 488; Kelly (1978): 168.

453. Rahner (1968–70), 4:329; Cross and Livingstone (1983): 1011.

454. Frend (1981): 205. On the Pelagians, see Bruce (1979): 371 (although Bruce comes perilously close to excommunicating Pelagius at p. 336); Kraft (1966): 415–16; Manschreck (1985): 73; D. F. Wright, “Pelagianism,” Douglas (1978): 760–61; O’Brien (1970): 385–87. Rahner (1968–70): 4:384, claims that “Pelagius appears as a Christian still under the spell of the Old Testament.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* does not deny that Pelagians were Christian.

455. Kelly (1978): 167–68.

456. Kelly (1978): 351, 349.

457. See, for Athanasius, the two Gregorays, and Chrysostom, Kelly (1978): 347–49.

458. Blowers, "Original Sin," in Ferguson (1990): 669; cf. also Cross and Livingstone (1983): 1010–11; Placher (1983): 96–97; Kelly (1978): 354–55. We have omitted the extensive listing of patristic references supplied by Blowers; cf. also E. Ferguson, "Baptism," in Ferguson (1990): 133, with references.

459. Although Kelly (1978): 175, thinks he was "close."

460. The comments by Roman Catholic theologian Herbert Haag, in Haag (1969): 107, are strongly reminiscent of the second Article of Faith: "No man enters the world as a sinner. As the creature and image of God he is from his first hour surrounded by God's fatherly love. Consequently, he is not at birth, as is often maintained, an enemy of God and a child of God's wrath. A man becomes a sinner only through his own independent and responsible action."

461. The doctrine's absence from the Dead Sea Scrolls was noted by Gaster (1964): 19–20.

462. Brox (1983): 141 (translation ours). Note Prof. Dr. Brox's specification that, even triumphant, Augustine's innovation became only "Basis der westlichen Tradition" (emphasis ours). For brief accounts of Augustine's development of the doctrine, and of some of the opposition it aroused, see Placher (1983): 115–18; Kelly (1978): 361–66; Frend (1981): 205.

463. P. Brown (1969): 388.

464. See P. Brown (1969): 203–4, 370–71, 386, 393–94; Frend (1981): 207. Teske (1986): 233–49, discusses the vastly important role played by Manichaeism in the intellectual development of Augustine—and, thus, in the development of Christianity. On p. 240, n. 20, Teske quotes Prosper Alfaric on Augustine, to the effect that "moralement comme intellectuellement c'est au Néoplatonisme qu'il s'est converti, plutôt qu'À l'Évangile" (morally and intellectually he was a convert more to Neoplatonism than to the gospel). Alfaric had special reference to the question of anthropomorphism.

465. See Phipps (1980): 124–33, with accompanying references. The quotation is from Manschreck (1985): 67.

466. Benz (1978): 216.

467. Kelly (1978): 350.

468. Berry (1973): 18. So too Gruss (1975): 56–62; Martin (1985): 216–26; Berry (1973): 14–18; Breese et al. (1985): 49. *The Utah Evangel* is fond of referring to the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead as "dead works for dead people"; cf. the tract, "Baptism for the Dead."

469. Thus Rowe (1985): 26–31; "The Mormon Church and the African"; Fraser (1977): 112–23, 171, 188; P. B. Smith (1970): 70; Spittler (1962): 24, 27; J. O. Sanders (1962): 16, 109, 117–18, 121; *The Utah Evangel* 31 (January 1984): 12, and (February 1984): 4; *The Utah Evangel* 34 (July–August 1987): 8; *The Evangel* 37 (October 1990): 4; *The Evangel* 38 (April 1991): 4, 8; *The Evangel* 38 (October 1991): 10; Tope, "Faith without Works"; Tope, "Would You Risk"; J. L. Smith, "Mormonism Has Another Jesus"; Decker, "To Moroni with Love," 10–19; B. McKeever; "What Is a Cult?"; J. K. van Baalen (1983): 151; "Those Plain & Precious Things"; Decker (1979): 13–14, 15, 21–23; "Jesus Is Sufficient!"; A. A. Hoekema, "Mormonism," in Douglas (1978): 678; "What the Mormon Church Teaches about Jesus Christ"; Tope, "Are You REALLY Good Enough"; Decker, "Petition"; Witte, "And It Came to Pass"; Decker and Hunt (1984): 54, 135–36, 138, 178–79, 210. (Decker [1979]: 23: "That basically is

the difference between Mormonism and Christianity.”) Once again, Forrest, “Are Mormons Christian?” contains a brief summary of the charge, and a concise but effective reply. See also Scharffs (1986): 18–19, 21–22, 39, 96, 191–95, 198–200, 241–42, 275. Pressau (1977): 1, is apt here: “It is a scandal that the widest credibility gap among Christians is caused by the many meanings of this central doctrine of ‘the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.’ It’s ironic that the salvation understanding gap generates so much condescension and pride from some Christians and so much suspicion and ill will from others when *both* were exhorted to ‘love one another.’”

470. Van Baalen (1983): 159; Fraser (1977): 59. Sometimes this charge is associated with a claim that Mormons place unbiblical limits on the efficacy of Christ’s atonement—a rather self-contradictory association, by the way. Without debating that particular issue, we might note the controversies in the early church on the limits of forgiveness; cf. Brox (1983): 124–32.

471. In *The Utah Evangel* 31 (May 1984): 5. It is highly ironic that Martin (1955): 103–05, 113–14, seems to make one single exception to his rule that salvation is by grace without works: Agitation against “cults” is a positive requirement of true Christianity. Martin denounces a publisher who would not assist him in his crusade: “Here was a man who ignored the commands of Scripture without blinking, and yet expressed as his motto complete trust in the promises of God.” (See p. 105. This could, incidentally, serve as a Mormon’s description of a fundamentalist!) “The Christian today who . . . refuses to engage in apologetics when he realizes its import, is in direct disobedience to the revealed will of God and cannot forever escape judgment of a severe nature” (p. 114).

472. Elwell (1983): 1032.

473. So, for example, McMurrin (1965), foreword: “Mormon theology is a modern Pelagianism in a Puritan religion.”

474. Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 12, in Algermissen (1962): 7. It should be noted, however, that Algermissen does *not* deny Mormon Christianity.

475. Cited by Boettner (1986): 261.

476. Holzapfel (1925): 10–11.

477. Whalen (1963): 167.

478. The *Oxford English Dictionary* also quotes one H. Burton, who wrote, in his 1629 *Truth’s Triumph*, of “those Pelagianizing enemies of the grace of God.”

479. Breese et al. (1985): 56; cf. Green (1984b); Green (1984c). Cattau (1986): 8–10, describes what a thorny issue this has been in Lutheran-Catholic dialogue. Yet he does not label Catholicism a “non-Christian cult.” Our “experts,” on the other hand, are not always so circumspect. For quotations from the Council of Trent containing Roman Catholic denunciations of Protestant teachings on salvation by grace alone, see Zacchello (1984): 99–100.

480. Dunlap, “Alex Dunlap Answers Roman Catholic Priest,” 9.

481. So Ridenour (1979): 27–51; cf. Zacchello (1984): 172.

482. Ironside (1982): 16–17; cf. 24, 32–40.
483. Berry (1979): 98, 99; cf. Zacchello (1984): 76, 86–90, 102–111; Spittler (1962): 109, 112, 116; Boettner (1986): 254–69.
484. Ed Kelly, in *The Utah Evangel* 33 (July/August 1986): 6.
485. Dunlap, “Alex Dunlap Answers Roman Catholic Priest,” 8.
486. Ciampa, “Catholic or Christian?”
487. Dunlap, “Alex Dunlap Answers Roman Catholic Priest,” 10–11.
488. For example, by Harvey (1964): 233.
489. Brauer (1971); 799–800.
490. Rusch (1986): 12 (emphasis ours). This view is reminiscent of the Book of Mormon, at 2 Nephi 25:23.
491. Gonzales (1970): 1:94–96.
492. Bruce (1979): 334.
493. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III, 3, 4, translated at Roberts and Donaldson (1981): 1:416.
494. See Phipps (1980); also Teske (1986): 233–49.
495. See Hatch (1970): 1, cited above; cf. Brox (1983): 138.
496. See Gonzales (1970): 1:69.
497. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to Polycarp* 6:2. English translation in Lake (1970): 1:275.
498. Kelly (1978): 352. This, too, in the context of salvation understood as deification.
499. Jaeger (1961): 12, 15–16.
500. Dunn (1977): 245–52.
501. See Sontag (1986), especially 116–18. The quotation is from p. 116.
502. Not unlike the Catholic idea of “sacramental grace.” Which is, itself, not altogether different from Mormon notions.
503. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture* III, 10. English translation in Schaff and Wace (1978): 7:16. He excepts “only Martyrs, who even without the water receive the Kingdom.” Roman Catholics, too, hold that baptism is essential to salvation; cf. *This We Believe* (1962): 261; Zacchello (1984): 194; P. B. Smith (1970): 26–29, denounces Rome on this score. Irvine (1921): 29–33, inveighs against belief in “baptismal regeneration” as a

“Roman heresy” which somehow has crept into the Church of England prayer book. He would be no fonder of Mormon beliefs on the subject.

504. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture XXI*, 5. English translation in Schaff and Wace (1976): 7:150. On the anointing, see 1 John 2:20, 27. The words “chrism,” “Christ,” and “Christian” all derive from the Greek verb *chrío*, “to anoint.”

505. *The Gospel According to Philip* 74:12–15. English translation in Layton (1987): 346.

506. J. O. Sanders (1991): 49; cf. 44, 48.

507. After all, the criticisms can go both ways. Mormons tend to suspect their adversaries of preaching what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “cheap grace,” or, in a phrase quoted by Pressau (1977): 38, “a theologically thin, no-sweat Christianity.” But Mormons don’t deny the Christianity of those who disagree. For a good summary of the Catholic position, see Pohle, “Grace,” in Herbermann (1909): 6:689–714. It should perhaps be clear from these articles that there is more that could be said on this matter than the often simplistic presentations of fundamentalist anti-Mormons would seem to allow; cf. for example, Macquarrie (1973): 144–49, for a Protestant view in the Bultmanian tradition. (Would anti-Mormons call Bultmann Christian? He seems to agree fairly closely with them on this issue.) E. P. Sanders (1991): 37, 44–76, 84–116, 121–122, offers an analysis of Paul’s thought on grace and works that will give little comfort to Protestant anti-Mormons. And, indeed, a recent article by Snodgrass (1986), entitled “Justification by Grace—to the Doers,” argues for an interpretation of Paul that is quite close to the Mormon stance. Likewise, the prominent evangelical preacher John F. MacArthur, Jr., has cast doubt upon simplistic teachings of salvation by grace alone in a book which has lately been at the center of a notable controversy among conservative Protestants; cf. MacArthur (1989).

508. Bruce (1979): 108.

509. See, as an example, Rowe (1985): 30–31; Decker (1979): 22; Fraser (1977): 14–15, 188. For Zacchello (1984): 108, this is one of the marks of “a true Christian.” So, too, for Green (1984c) and Ransom, “It’s Great to KNOW You’re SAVED!”

510. This seems to be implied at Ignatius, *Romans* 3:2.

511. Ironside (1982): 14–15; Zacchello (1984): 108; Green (1984c); P. B. Smith (1970): 34–35; Boettner (1986): 264, 267–69.

512. Dunlap, “Alex Dunlap Answers Roman Catholic Priest,” 9.

513. Swaggart (1985b): 39.

514. Hardon (1981): 98.

515. Lecture 6, paragraphs 3 and 5. The text is that given in Dahl and Tate (1990): 91–92.

516. *The Utah Evangel* 31 (January 1984): 12; cf. Decker, “Petition”; Decker and Hunt (1984): 199–201 (vs. Scharffs [1986]: 258).

517. Keating (1988): 75.

518. See Lactantius, *Divine Institutions* II, 9. Among those who term Lactantius Christian are Brauer (1971): 481; Holzapfel (1925): 9; Cross and Livingstone (1983): 791; Brox (1983): 155; C. P. Williams, "Lactanius," in Douglas (1978): 575; Meagher, O'Brien, and Aherne (1979): 2:2018; Kraft (1966): 337–40.

519. Papini (1984): 81–82. Papini admits that he has found no similar belief in any other Christian theologian.

520. See Forrest, "The Wrong Jesus?" in *Mormon Issues* 1, p. 3.

521. See, for example, J. O. Sanders (1962): 120; "What Is a Cult?"; Decker, "To Moroni with Love," 21–22; "Questions and Answers"; "The Mormon Church and the African"; and "Mormonism: Christian or Cult?" The passage is quoted in the form-letter sent to all who request information from the Southern California chapter of Ex-Mormons for Jesus.

522. Keating (1988): 67.

523. Chick Publications February 1990 Retail Catalog, 8.

524. E.g., in W. Thompson, "What We Should Know about Roman Catholicism"; Breese et al. (1985): 49; Ironside (1982): 4; Irvine (1921): 144; Boettner (1986): 10. Note the title of the work by P. B. Smith, which covers Catholicism. (For a Catholic response, see Holzapfel [1925]: 22–23.)

525. See "Blood Atonement and the Mormon Church." Also Fraser (1977): 20; Whalen (1963): 170–71; Decker and Hunt (1984): 232–33 (vs. Scharffs [1986]: 334–36).

526. See, for example, Brigham Young's denial in his interview with Horace Greeley, 13 July 1859 (Greeley [1968]: 9:132–35). A sampling of historians: Kimball (1981): 209–10; Arrington and Bitton (1979): 54, 353; Allen and Leonard (1976): 121–22; Sessions (1982): 124–30, 391; Arrington (1985): 250, 253; Bringham (1986): 36, 130. There is a strand of Latter-day Saint thought, it is true, that resembles something we might call "blood atonement," though it is light-years removed from the murderous fantasies ascribed to Mormons by some of their critics. E. P. Sanders (1991): 106–107 indicates that similar thinking underlies 1 Corinthians 5:4–5.

527. Blötzer, "Inquisition," in Herbermann et al. (1910): 8:35.

528. Martin (1955): 51; cf. van Baalen (1983): 152–60; Johnson (1983): 434. Johnson's brief treatment of Mormonism is a great disappointment in an otherwise superb book, and especially so to admirers of his *Modern Times*.

529. Maguire (1970): 8; cf. P. Brown (1969): 369; Feucht (1961): 51–53.

530. Not a few scholars have argued for India as the ultimate source of Christian monasticism as well as Islamic Sāḥism. Asceticism may well have its earliest recorded manifestation among the early non-Aryan populace of the Indian sub-continent.

531. For a somewhat similar argument to what follows, see S. E. Robinson (1991): 91–96.

532. Margoliouth (1905): 38, 160.

533. See Holst (1967): 212, n. 2.

534. For the Latin texts of two letters to Barnes related to this issue, with notes, see Enders (1903), 9:80–99.

535. From a letter of 1526, in Tappert (1955): 276 (emphasis ours). The parallel to Jacob 2:27–30 should be obvious.

536. An English translation of the letter is found in Tappert (1955): 288–91. For a brief account of the incident, see Bainton (1950): 373–75.

537. See the annotated German text of a letter from Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer, given in Enders (1903), 12:319–28. Compare Stupperich (1960): 95; Holst (1967): 212, n. 2; Manschreck (1985): 261–70. Later, in the eighteenth century, Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia took plural wives on at least two occasions, citing Luther's counsel to Philip of Hesse as a precedent and with the approval of his own Lutheran court chaplain; cf. Heinrich (1981): 257.

538. Pratt (1853): 177–83.

539. Pratt (1853): 179, 182.

540. Buthelezi (1969): 69.

541. See Hillman (1975), Buthelezi (1969), and Holst (1967).

542. Turner (1966): 321.

543. These views are stated, in an especially naive manner, in an April 1986 letter to one of the authors from a minister in Colorado.

544. *The Utah Evangel* 31 (March 1984): 8. "Christian" and "cult" are very frequently used by anti-Mormons as antonyms. (See, for example, Ed Decker's "The Mormon Dilemma: Christian or Cult?" which, incidentally, never really addresses the question it poses.) There is no justification in the lexicography of standard English for such a view.

545. Robertson (1983): 13.

546. S. E. Robinson (1991): 59–60, offers a brief discussion of this issue.

547. Lovejoy (1964): 44.

548. Holzapfel (1925): 10. Fundamentalists will respond that they do indeed have an infallible authority—the Bible. But Holzapfel has some rather penetrating criticisms of that position. In any case, the important point here is that this is the Catholic position, a position quite contrary to the Protestant one.

549. As Lovejoy (1964): 6, in fact does.

550. Cited by John Carr, in the *Wall Street Journal* (16 June 1986).

551. Algermissen (1962): 47: “einen religiösen Synkretismus verschiedenster Irrlehren.” Cf. Heribert Holzapfel’s Catholic critique of the Baptists, at Holzapfel (1925): 35–45. Significantly, though, Catholics tend not to label those who disagree with them “non-Christian,” as Molland (1959): 355, notes. Neither do Mormons.

552. See Maust (1990): 60–61.

553. Decker, “To Moroni with Love,” 4–5, 18–19. This passage is rather opaque; cf. also Tucker (1989): 49, 91; Decker and Hunt (1984): 125; contrast Scharffs (1986): 182.

554. *The Utah Evangel* 33 (April 1986): 8; *The Evangel* 38 (April 1991): 4; *The Evangel* 36 (December 1989): 3. See Scharffs (1986): 86–87, for the incoherence of a similar charge made by the authors of *The God Makers*. The basis of this accusation is usually to be found in some such passage as Orson Pratt’s remarks in *JD* 6:167. Tope, “Who’s Persecuting Who? [sic],” has assembled a number of allegedly damning Mormon comments about Christianity. It would require more space and time than we have available here to respond on this issue. Suffice it to say that the critics pull such statements utterly out of context, making no effort to put them in what the theologians like to call their *Sitz im Leben*. The misinterpretation is so profound that it is, frankly, difficult to imagine that it is not intentional.

555. Decker and Hunt (1984): 245–46. But see Scharffs (1986): 352–53.

556. *The Utah Evangel* 31 (January 1984): 9, 12; (May 1986): 5; Decker and Hunt (1984): 199; contrast Scharffs (1986): 257.

557. Decker and Hunt (1984): 40, 46.; cf. Scharffs (1986): 86–89, 121.

558. Some examples, chosen at random: Brigham Young, *JD* 14:198; Lorenzo Snow (fifth president of the Church), *JD* 4:239–40 (1 March 1857); Joseph F. Smith (sixth president of the Church), *JD* 23:169–75 (18 June 1882). The pamphlet by Forrest, “Are Mormons Christians?,” is very short but recommended and contains several more useful and enlightening quotations. Forrest and his colleague, Van Hale, have also reprinted some statements about Christianity by early Mormons in their *Scrapbook of Mormon Polemics*, No. 1. In most of these, a claim to be Christian must be inferred. It was not an issue for these men; they knew they were Christians. But the claim is clearly implied.

559. *HC* 3:30. This is reminiscent of the simple summaries of Christianity given by Paul and Ignatius, as well as the Apostles’ Creed. *TPJS*, 314, records a discourse of 9 July 1843, in which Joseph Smith implies that Latter-day Saints are Christians.

560. *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 November 1845): 1031.

561. As in *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 September 1844): 655.

562. *JD* 14:41. Note Brigham’s implicit assignment of Mormonism to “the Christian world.” Compare the remark of Joseph F. Smith, sixth Mormon prophet, that “without Christ, revelation would not avail” (Smith and Kenney [1981]: 87). This was in a personal letter dated 14 July 1905, to his missionary son, George C. Smith—hardly part of some cynical public relations campaign.

563. Greeley (1968): 9:132.

564. *JD* 18:231 (17 September 1876). Compare his implication at *JD* 15:82 (2 June 1872).

565. *JD* 7:289.

566. *JD* 16:305–312 (16 November 1873).

567. Pratt (1990), 80.

568. “Le ‘mormonisme,’ nous ne saurions trop le redire, n’est autre chose que le christianisme complété par un supplément de révélation venu Ã son heure”; Bertrand (1862): 310 (our translation).

569. Bunker and Bitton (1983): 3.

570. Hansen (1981): 84.

571. *JD* 17:245.

572. Cannon (1986): 438, 378.

573. Report of the Eighty-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1916): 53–54.

574. Report of the Ninetieth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1920): 16.

575. Report of the Ninety-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1926): 20; cf., generally, pp. 14–34; cf. also Pres. Ivins’s remarks during the October conference of 1923.

576. Report of the Ninety-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1926): 139.

577. Grant (1941): 98.

578. G. A. Smith (1948): 194, 206.

579. McConkie (1956): 3:290–91 (April 1924); 2:80 (April 1943); D. McKay (1953): 66, 91, 105 (representing statements made, respectively, in 1923, 1927, and 1934).

580. He also made statements to this effect in 1923 and 1927. D. McKay (1953): 112, 120, 520–22.

581. D. McKay (1953): 533. President McKay implied the Christianity of Latter-day Saints in statements made in 1910, 1920, 1944, and 1947; cf. D. McKay (1953): 337, 294, 63, 275.

582. McConkie (1970): 2:113. Compare the strong assertions that Mormons are Christians in McConkie (1966): 132; Kimball (1982): 434.

583. *The Utah Evangel* 33 (April 1986): 8.

584. See, for instance, *The Evangel* 38 (April 1991): 4; *The Evangel* 36 (December 1989): 3.

585. McConkie (1978): 363.

586. Utter (1897): 13–32. It should be noted that such an exclusive claim to the title of Christian is not, and has never been, the official position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

587. *The Evangel* 38 (October 1991): 3.

588. Compare Joseph Smith—History 1:19 to Isaiah 29:13; Colossians 2:22; Titus 1:14; 2 Timothy 3:5.

589. *The Utah Evangel* 34 (May–June 1987): 6.

590. *HC* 5:499.

591. *JD* 1:154–156; 12 June 1853.

592. As at *HC* 2:465 and *TPJS*, 375, 313.

593. *TPJS*, 375; cf. Ehat and Cook (1980): 381–82.

594. *HC* 5:517.

595. Report of the Ninety-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1926): 23–24; 18–19.

596. Report of the Ninety-Seventh Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1926): 14.

597. See *The Utah Evangel* 34 (May–June 1987): 6.

598. Cited at Pusey (1981): 272.

599. *HC* 5:499.

600. Walker (1992).

601. *The Evangel* 38 (November 1991): 3.

602. J. F. Smith (1949): 256.

603. We would, in fact, be more than willing to argue that many of these criteria are even opposed to biblical teaching. Unfortunately, treatment of this topic is beyond the scope of the present work. However, examples might include Platonic and Neoplatonic views of deity and of the material cosmos, as well as Augustine’s Manichaeian doctrine of “original sin,” discussed above; cf., on the latter, Phipps (1980): 124–33.

604. *The Christian Century* (1 October 1986): 833.

605. *The Evangel* 38 (September 1991): 8. Compare the characterization by Pressau (1977): 65, of what he refers to as the “conventional” mind-set: “A ‘Biblical’ church is one that thinks and therefore acts as we do.” S. E. Robinson (1991): 1–7, offers a cogent Latter-day Saint response to this sort of thinking, which he terms “exclusion by definition.”

606. Fielding (1952): 39.

607. Lovejoy (1964): 6; cf., too, E. P. Sanders (1991): 22, 26, who, having listed five “fundamental convictions” expressed in the early Christian message, notes that all but two of them “became the subject of debate or even hostile controversy *among Christians*” (emphasis ours).

608. As quoted by S. E. Robinson (1991): 36–37.

609. The quotation—emphasis ours—is from G. L. Archer’s “Translator’s Preface” to Ahmanson (1984): 8. G. L. Archer is one of those who make this leap. It is instructive to watch the (apparently unconscious) process in Burrell and Wright (1983), by which “mainstream Christianity” becomes first “orthodox Christianity” and then “Christianity” *simpliciter*. Rev. John L. Smith, writing in *The Utah Evangel* 34 (April 1987): 5, declares it “obvious . . . that in the traditional sense, Mormonism is not Christian.” Of course, no intelligent Latter-day Saint would dispute for even a moment that Mormonism differs radically from “traditional” Christianity. But it seems, since Rev. Smith and *The Evangel* routinely deny Mormonism to be Christian in any sense at all, that he and his associates do not admit that anyone can be a Christian in anything *but* “the traditional sense.”

610. Spencer (1984): 138.

611. Maimonides (1963): 2:290.

612. See, e.g., Shipps (1985): 187, n. 24 (Shipps, a Methodist, is probably the leading non-Latter-day Saint authority on Mormonism); cf. the citation of Shipps in Oman (1982): 9–10; Siedenschnur, “Mormonen,” in Brunotte and Weber (1958): 2:1453; McLoughlin (1978): 16–17; Charlesworth (1983), 1:xxiv; Heinerman and Shupe (1985): 96; Eble (1986): 116; Benz (1978): 215; Eggenberger (1969): 3; Beaver et al. (1982): 417, who are Evangelicals, term Mormonism an “unorthodox Christian sect”; Algermissen (1962), whose very hostile book ranks Mormons among “Juden und Nichtkatholische Christen”; McDannell and Lang (1990); Barley et al. (1987); E. K. Thompson (1957): 204–5; *Das Bertelsmann Lexikon*. D. J. Davies, a Church of England minister as well as an anthropologist, identifies Latter-day Saints as Christians on pp. 1, 23, 60, 71, and 99 of his study on *Mormon Spirituality*. The *Handbuch: Religiöse Gemeinschaften*, which, as its title implies, is a handbook for German clergymen, has always counted Mormonism as Christian, although its latest edition (p. 299) announces an intention to look at the question again. Mormons are classed as Christians by Brunkow (1983): 293–304; Coxill and Grubb (1967): 267, 300, 325; Gründler (1961): 1:328–36. To Holzapfel (1925): 9–10, 14–15, *all* of the “*Sekten*” are Christian; indeed, they are Protestant! Bartley (1989): 9, operating from a very hostile British Catholic position, locates the Latter-day Saints among “American fundamentalist sects.” Rev. Roger R. Keller, a Presbyterian who had briefly been a Mormon in his youth, wrote a pamphlet arguing that Mormons are Christians. (Two Protestant journals refused to run the piece as an article.) Following that, Keller (1986b) wrote a book entitled *Reformed Christians and Mormon Christians: Let’s Talk*, which obviously holds to the same opinion. (Shortly following the completion of his book, Dr. Keller was reconverted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This does not lessen the value and relevance of his opinions, however. Quite the contrary. Coming as they do from a scholar who knows both Reformed Protestantism and Mormonism intimately, from within, Dr. Keller’s views possess a unique authority.) A number of other sources strongly *imply* the Christianity of Mormonism, but without stating it explicitly. Among

these are Crim (1981); Parrinder (1971), where the Baha'is are present but the Mormons are conspicuously absent; Mead (1985); Heyer (1977); Christie-Murray (1989); Douglas, Elwell, and Toone (1989): 257; the *Encyclopedia of World Religions* (1975); Sandeen and Hale (1978). Barrett (1982): 57–58, classes Mormons under “*marginal Protestantism* (para-Christian, quasi-Christian, or tangentially Christian deviations from mainline Protestantism.” It is difficult to see how he justifies such stand-offishness in the light of his own definition on p. 47.

613. Thus, a quick survey of encyclopedias finds no denial of Mormons' Christianity in the following: *World Book*, *Americana*, *Britannica*, *Collier's*, *Compton's*, *Chambers's* (which is very hostile), *Brockhaus Enzyklopaedie*, *Grosses Duden Lexikon*. Nor is there any denial to be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, nor in such standard reference works on Christianity and religion as those of Cross and Livingstone (1983); Brandon (1970); Weir (1982); Ferm (1945); Meagher, O'Brien, and Aherne (1979): vol. 2; Hinnells (1984); Campenhausen (1960). Even when Mormon divergence from traditional Christianity is explicitly noted, Mormon Christianity is tacitly acknowledged: Mead (1985): 135, is aware that “certain aspects of Latter-day Saints' theology depart from the traditional orthodoxy of Catholic and Protestant churches.” Mormonism, writes Broderick (1976): 401, “is not a church in the mainstream of Protestant thought.” Holzapfel (1925): 79–87, and Hutten (1953): 417–53, offer very sharp criticism, but somehow fail to notice that Mormons are not Christians.

614. See numerous related references in the Index to the Latter-day Saint “Triple Combination.”

615. Citing Revelation 19:10; cf. *HC* 3:38, 5:427.

616. A similar statement was made recently to the authors. Compare P. B. Smith (1970): 55.

617. Anti-Mormons seem prone to jargonizing and equivocation even when such word games are not directly useful in mauling Mormons. Ed Kelly's use of “religion” and “Christianity” as lexical opposites is typical; cf. *The Utah Evangel* 33 (July/August 1986): 6. The same sort of thing goes in on anti-Catholicism; cf. Keating (1988): 89; Sciampa, “Catholic or Christian?”

618. Averill (1989): 124, speaking in an American context, notes fundamentalist Protestantism's “hostility toward some of our most basic political institutions, including judicial independence, constitutional liberties, social and religious pluralism, and the equal access to the political process that is promised to all citizens irrespective of ideology.” See also Averill (1989): 97.

619. Conversations with certain officials of the Church, as well as a close observation of anti-Mormon activities for many years, leave no doubt in our minds that this is so. Enemies of the Church have attempted to use government authority to block Latter-day Saint missionary activities in Kenya and Chile, for example. Furthermore, the enforced suspension of Church activities in Ghana, in June 1989, came because, as one well-placed observer puts it, senior officials of the government “had been misled by professional revilers of the Church into believing scurrilous lies about the Latter-day Saints and their beliefs.” See Morrison (1990): 117; cf. remarks of Emmanuel Abu Kissi, in LeBaron (1990): 31–32. That suspension has since been lifted.

620. Averill (1989): 107.

621. Helland (1990): 2–3, and unpaginated abstract. This dissertation is, incidentally, a perfectly dreadful piece of work, and reflects no credit upon the school that, accepting it, granted its author a doctorate.

622. The remark was made in conversation with an acquaintance of ours.

623. Keating (1988): 59.

624. Bolt (1962): 56 (act 1, scene 6).

625. This famous passage is attributed to Niemoeller, a hero in the German Christian resistance to Hitler, but the source is unclear.

626. In *The Utah Evangel* 33 (July/August 1986): 1. Bellah and Greenspahn (1987) offer useful perspectives on historic and contemporary interreligious hostility in American society.

627. Boettner (1986): 458; cf. 459. On p. 71, he cites Lucien Vinet to the same effect.

628. Passantino and Passantino (1990).

629. Keating (1988): 81: "As in so many matters, fundamentalists and Catholics are at loggerheads because they define terms differently."

630. Boettner (1986): 26.

631. On the aptly named Lucifer, see Frend (1981): 557–58.

632. This is one of the definitions proposed by D. B. Barrett, who was faced with the vexing task of generating global statistics on Christianity: "Christians' means all those who profess to be Christians in government censuses or public-opinion polls, i.e., who declare or identify themselves as Christians, who say 'I am a Christian,' 'We are Christians,' when asked the question 'What is your religion?' " He sees biblical support for this in Matthew 10:32 and Romans 10:9; cf. Barrett (1982): 47. The Society of Christian Philosophers uses the same method: "Membership is open to any person who classifies himself/herself as both a philosopher and a Christian," says the inside back cover of *Faith and Philosophy: The Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers* 9 (January 1992).

633. Some idea of the broad sense which a *real* expert, like the eminent Peter Brown, is willing to give to the term "Christianity" is apparent in the fact that he describes even the Manichaeans as "radical Christians." See P. Brown (1969): 43–44, 55, 58. Prof. Brown possibly follows St. Augustine on this point, for that great Christian-turned-Manichaean-turned-Manichaean-Christian apparently regarded Manichaeism as Christian too; cf. Teske (1986): 236 n. 5, 237, 240 n. 20, 242 n. 23. We are little inclined to go so far, but Prof. Brown's view does clearly imply how little support anti-Mormons are likely to get from genuine scholars in their effort to monopolize the word "Christian" for fundamentalist Protestantism. Similarly, Julian Baldick's ingenious contention that Islam is really a form of Christianity is stimulating, but must ultimately be rejected; cf. Baldick (1989): 2, 169.

634. Fraser (1977): 55.

635. Molland (1959): 356–57. He continues, asserting without any evidence whatsoever, that, "The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is organically related to the Divinity of Christ." Does he intend to say that one must accept fourth-century Hellenistic metaphysics to be a Christian?

636. At Molland (1959): 355.

637. Sontag (1986): 113–14.

638. See C. S. Lewis (1965): 55–66.

639. Averill (1989): 165. Of course, in reading of the obvious failings of some of their critics, Latter-day Saints must resist the strong temptation to commit the same smug error. On p. 123, Averill quotes Christopher Lasch, who describes fundamentalist religiosity as “self-righteous and idolatrous. It perceives no virtue in its opponents and magnifies its own.”

640. Averill (1989): 10, 39; cf. 98, 110–18.

641. Averill (1989): 52. Keating (1988): 25, cites Peggy L. Shriver, assistant secretary general of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States, as saying that “because an insecure ego can be supported by the scaffolding of a fundamentalist faith, it is not surprising that many people who are ‘marginal’ to society are drawn to fundamentalism.” However, Keating prudently rejects this as a potentially dangerous argument.

642. In *The Evangel* 38 (October 1991): 4, Robert McKay attacks the notion that anyone who believes in Christ is a Christian as “a very shallow definition of what a Christian is.” “Going by this definition,” he points out, “Moslems could almost be called Christians. By this definition, Jews could almost be called Christians.” However, McKay’s use of the word “almost” is extraordinarily important, for even he can’t quite bring himself to the full measure of what he seems to want to imply. In fact, Muslims are *not* referred to as Christians. Jews are *not* referred to as Christians. McKay goes on to contrast the views of Christ held by Jehovah’s Witnesses, New Agers, and the Worldwide Church of God (Armstrongites), and then asks if they can all be considered Christian. “The idea is ridiculous,” he says. But is it? Excepting only the New Agers—for the simple reason that they probably would not describe themselves as Christians—we think not.

643. Cited by England (1984): 185–86.

644. Sontag (1986): 114.

645. England (1984): 186.

646. Keating (1988): 316.

647. K. M. Brown, “Thinking about the Introductor Course: Some Preliminary Questions,” in Juergensmeyer (1988): 9.

648. Keller (1986a): 9; cf. Sontag (1986): 114. As noted, Dr. Keller is now a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.