

Jesus Never Lived!  
Volume 3 The Pagan  
Morals of Jesus Christ

LAURENCE E. DALTON  
SHIRLEY STRUTTON DALTON

---

JESUS NEVER LIVED!

VOLUME 3

THE PAGAN MORALS OF  
JESUS CHRIST

---



---

JESUS NEVER LIVED!

VOLUME 3

THE PAGAN MORALS OF  
JESUS CHRIST

---

Laurence E. Dalton

Shirley Strutton Dalton



Jesus Never Lived!  
Volume 3 The Pagan Morals of Jesus Christ

*Jesus Never Lived!*  
*Volume 3 The Pagan Morals of Jesus Christ*

Copyright © January 2014  
Laurence E. Dalton and Shirley Strutton Dalton

ISBN-13:  
ISBN-10:

[www.jesusneverlived.com](http://www.jesusneverlived.com)

Under Creative Commons public license [Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/) the copyright holders hereby grant a license to copy and redistribute the within material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. This license cannot be revoked as long as licensee follows the license terms. You must give appropriate credit and provide a link to the [license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/). No derivatives or adaptations are allowed. You may not remix, transform, or build upon the material; you may not distribute modified material. You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. This license does not reduce or restrict exceptions and limitations to copyright, such as fair use quotation, provided credit is given.



## Contents

Preface .....	9
PART 1 The Moral Teachings in the Gospels are not from Jesus .....	13
Chapter 1 Jewish Morals in the Gospels?.....	15
Parallels to the the Gospels.....	17
Chapter 2 The Moral Teachings of the Gospels Are Falsely Attributed to Jesus.....	35
PART 2 Christians on Pagan Philosophies.....	49
Chapter 3 Most ancient Christian Writers Believed That All Pagan Philosophies Have Some Christian Truth.....	51
Pagan Philosophy and Christians.....	51
Two Early Christians Who were Against Pagan Philosophy.....	59
EXCURUS .....	62
Christians who Accepted Pagan Philosophy as Truth.....	63
Pagans On Philosophy.....	76
Conclusion for This Chapter:.....	79
PART 3 Christian and Pagan Stoic Morals.....	87
Chapter 4 Jesus and Paul And Pagan Stoics On Sexual Morals.....	89
The Religion of Woman – An Historical Study.....	107
Chapter 5 Comments on Morals by Pagans and Jesus.....	131
Chapter 6 More Christian and Pagan Morals Compared.....	173
Chapter 7 The “Liberal” Image of Jesus.....	215
The Gospel of Mark .....	215





## PREFACE

---

The purpose of this Volume is to show that Christian ethics were derived from the pagan world – from Roman Stoicism. The argument that the "unique" moral teachings of Jesus can be traced back to an historical personage is false.

As the reader will see in what follows, the moral teachings attributed to Jesus are found in the pagan Stoicism of the Roman Empire. Stoicism was founded in Athens by Zeno about 308 BCE. The Stoic School was closed, along with all the other pagan schools of philosophy, in 529 CE by the order of the Christian Emperor Justinian. Roman Stoicism flourished from the first century CE, the same century in which Jesus was alleged to have lived.

We believe that Christian and Roman Stoic morals differ in two important ways. First, the Christians added eternal punishment in Hell to the Stoic philosophy. Secondly, the Roman Stoics taught universal love whereas the Christians restricted that love to members of the Christian religion (and only Orthodox Christians at that). (For more, see Runar Thorsteinsson's book, *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism: A Comparative Study of Ancient Morality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.)

Quotes on the Stoic influence on the New Testament:

Bruno Bauer argued that Christianity "is Stoicism in Jewish garb." *The Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* (1914) by Joseph McCabe.

According to Bruno Bauer, the writer of Mark's gospel was "an Italian, at home both in Rome and Alexandria"; that of Matthew's gospel "a Roman, nourished by the spirit of Seneca"; Christianity is essentially "Stoicism triumphant in a Jewish garb."

"Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient pagan world." *The Story of Civilization, Caesar and Christ*, Will Durant, Part III, 1944, p. 595)

"It is difficult," says Lightfoot, "to estimate, and perhaps not very easy to over-rate the extent to which Stoic philosophy had leavened the moral vocabulary of the civilized world at the time of the Christian era." *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age* by J. B. Lightfoot, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Lord Bishop of Durham

"The very same thing which now is called Christianity existed among the ancients and was not absent from the beginning of mankind until Christ appeared in the flesh, whence the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian." St. Augustine (354 CE – 430 CE) *Retractions*, Book One, Part 12, "One Book on the True Religion."

Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful. Seneca

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) wrote that Stoicism is "the only real alternative to Christianity in the Western world." *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 9.

Using the hope of heaven and the punishment of hell as the proper motives for virtue falls "...far below the best of the ancients (pagans)...." John Milton, *On Liberty*

“Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade forever from the imaginations of men.”  
*The Ghosts* by Robert G. Ingersol

Also, see *The Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* (1914) by Joseph McCabe, where the author attributes the teachings of Jesus to Pagan and Jewish sources.

Other books we found useful include:

*The Story of Religious Controversy* (1929) by Joseph McCabe

*The Religion of Woman – An Historical Study* (Chapters 2 through 6) by Joseph McCabe

*Woman, Church and State* (1893) by Matilda Electa Joslyn Gage; *Celibacy* (Chapter 2)

In what follows we will compare the ethics of the pagan Roman Stoic, Seneca (first century CE), with the morals of Jesus (died ca. 33 CE) and Paul (died ca. 62 CE).



PART 1 THE MORAL TEACHINGS IN THE  
GOSPELS ARE NOT FROM JESUS

---



## CHAPTER 1 JEWISH MORALS IN THE GOSPELS?

The Jewish Scriptures were written over a number of centuries and they developed from a relatively primitive set of ethics to a highly advanced moral system as the reader will see in the writing by McCabe below.

*The Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* (1914), by Joseph McCabe. Chapter 4 The Evolution Of Jewish Morality. Edited by Laurence E Dalton and Shirley Strutton Dalton

Micah and Isaiah, writing about 720 and later, have the same fierce denunciation of the sins of the rich, the general looseness of morals, and the widespread idolatry.

The second Isaiah, as he is misleadingly called, or the anonymous continuer of Isaiah, seems to have written nine chapters (xl-xlviii) a few years before the fall of Babylon, when Cyrus was advancing at the head of the Persians. It is the beginning of the vindication of Jahveh; he moves the armies of the world to deliver Judea. "The fury of his anger," which was quite just, is over. Now the blind shall see, and the deaf hear, and the lame walk, there will be a general amnesty for offenders, and a chance to recover grace. God is the God of pity, mercy, tenderness, concern for the downtrodden. The sentiments are relative; it is tenderness after righteous anger, and a tenderness for Israel only. But a later age will forget the historical setting, the relative application, and make Jahveh and his prophet the teachers of mercy and gentleness to the whole world. The time came, of course, when men conceived "Isaiah" as foreseeing Jesus of Nazareth literally healing the blind and deaf;



## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

but we are beyond that stage. The important point is that Jahveh is recovering, or even showing in vaster form, his power, and is becoming a tender, comforting father. There is still no question of a reward beyond the grave. The Jew knows nothing of it, or looks upon the future like the Chaldean, as a misty and repulsive region. Mercy and generosity on this earth are to be the signs of the restoration to favour.

Babylon falls, but the prophetic message has not a great effect.

Still, the Hebrew conception advances. God is a god of mercy, justice, tenderness for the destitute, and he presses these virtues above others.

But their teachers continued to develop the ethical message of the prophets, and at the very time when Christ is supposed to have been pitting his humane teaching against their arid ceremonialism we find that they were saying precisely those things, in precisely the same form (parable), which we are asked to take as the wonderful inventions of Jesus.

The Gospels, which are so little Jewish that they have to explain Jewish (or. Aramaic) words and Jewish customs to their readers, faithfully reflect the zeal for the law of the Pharisees, but represent Jesus as holding dialogues with them that are at times ludicrously impossible. The Essenes and their lofty standard of morals they entirely ignore. As a result, Jesus is depicted as bringing a new, more tender, and more human spirit into a world that is swathed in ceremonial observances and content with the letter of a ritual law. This is entirely inaccurate, and we have to see what knowledge we gain from other sources of the living morality of Judaea at the time.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Here it is enough to premise that there is not a moral or humane sentiment in the Gospels which was not familiar to the Rabbis and their pupils. Love of neighbours, and even love of enemies; tenderness to children and help of the helpless; purity of thought and intention as well as of conduct; respect for parents and humanity to all; the golden rule; even the counsel to turn the other cheek to the smiter all are familiar elements of the rabbinical exhortation. The description of the Jewish teachers in the Gospels is false in spirit and detail.

In its inception Christianity was a great improvement and purification of religion. But on the moral side it was a mere continuation of the development which we have found beginning in the early prophets, broadening in the later prophets and wisdom-writers, and faithfully elaborated by the Scribes and Pharisees of the first century of the Christian Era.

McCabe's writing shows the moral parallels of the Christian Gospels and the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament). For us the Talmud was written too late to have influenced the Gospels.

The gospel quotes are all from Matthew in order.

---

### PARALLELS TO THE THE GOSPELS

---

#### THE GOSPELS

Blessed are the meek;for they shall inherit the earth. MT  
5.5

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me to comfort all that mourn. Is., lxi, 1-2.

The meek shall inherit the earth. Ps. xxxvii, 11.

The Lord lifteth up the meek. Ps. oxlvii, 6.

The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord. Is, xxix, 19.

### THE GOSPELS

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. MT 5.6

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. MT 5.7

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. MT 5.8

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. MT 5.9

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree. Micah, iv, 3.

He that walketh righteously shall dwell on high. Is, xxxiii, 15.

Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. Ps. xli, 1.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. Ps. xxiv, 3-4.

Seek peace and pursue it: the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. Ps. xxxiv, 14.

### THE GOSPELS

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. MT 5.10-12

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. For even if in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality; and having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good, because God made trial, and found them worthy of himself. Wisdom, ill, 1-5.

### THE GOSPELS

### THE GOSPELS

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill;

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. MT 5.19-21

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which, if a man do, he shall live in them. Levit., xviii, 5.

### THE GOSPELS

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' MT 22.38-39

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit. xix, 18.

### THE GOSPELS

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. MT 5.27-28

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. Exodus, xx, 17.

Lust not after her beauty in thine heart. Prov., vi, 25.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job, xxxi, 1.

### THE GOSPELS

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all. MT 5.33-34

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Ex., xx, 7.

Accustom not thy mouth to an oath, and be not accustomed to the naming of the Holy One. A man of many oaths shall be filled with iniquity, and the scourge shall not depart from his house. Eccclus., xxiii., 9-11.

### THE GOSPELS

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. MT 5.38-39

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. Is., 1, 6.

Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him. Lament., iii, 30.

### THE GOSPELS

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. MT 5.42

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.

Turn not away thine eye from one that asketh of thee. Ecclus., iv, 5.

### THE GOSPELS

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. MT 5.44-45

FN: Nowhere in the Old Testament is a man told to hate his enemy, and a Jew can hardly have said or written this. McCabe

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee. Prov., xxv, 21-22

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Though one might recall passages of the Psalms, etc., where the Jew invokes a curse on his enemies (as Christ does on the Pharisees and on the cities which would not receive his followers). On the other hand, love of enemies is a common maxim of the Old Testament and the Talmud, and of all moralists of the time. McCabe

### THE GOSPELS

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? MT 5.46

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

This also were an iniquity if I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me. Job, xxxi, 28-9.

Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? MaL, ii, 10.

Upon whom doth not his light arise? Job, xxv, 3.

The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself. Levit., xix, 34.

### THE GOSPELS

The stress which Christ constantly lays on the reward of good deeds should be noted and contrasted with the exhortations of rabbis and pagans.

When thou hast shut thy doors and darkened thy closet, and when thou has shut the door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret ; and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. MT 6.6



## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

### THE GOSPELS

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. MT 6.9

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou, Lord, art our Father. Is., Ixiii, 16.

### THE GOSPELS

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. MT 6.11-13 1

The "Lord's Prayer" is much shorter in Luke, and is unknown in Mark. It is commonly regarded by theologians as a composition not due to Christ.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Forgive thy neighbor the hurt that he hath done thee, and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest. Seeks., xxviii, 2.

Thine, Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory. 1 Chron., xxix, 11.

### THE GOSPELS

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

where thieves do not break through nor steal ;for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. MT 6.19-21

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Labour not to be rich.... for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven. Prov., xxiii, 4.

Bestow thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall profit thee more than gold. Ecclus., xxix, 11.

### THE GOSPELS

The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? MT 6.22-23

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness. Ecchs., ii, 14.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Is., v, 20.

### THE GOSPELS

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. MT 6.26-29

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Ps. xxxiv, 10.

Who provideth for the raven his food ? Job, xxxviii, 41.

Who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. Ps. cxlvii, 8-9.

### THE GOSPELS

Judge not, that ye be not judged. MT 7.1

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Judge of thy neighbour by thyself: and be discreet in every point. Ecclus., xxx, 15.

### THE GOSPELS

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. MT 7.12

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

What thou thyself hatest, do to no man. Tobit, iv, 15.

### THE GOSPELS

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therein. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. MT 7.13-14

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

The way of sinners is made smooth with stones, and at the last end thereof is the pit of Hades. Eccclus., xxi, 10.

### THE GOSPELS

Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. MT 9.13

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice. Hosea, vi, 6.

What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah, vi, 8.

### THE GOSPELS

I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it. MT 10.35

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are those of his own house. Micah, vii, 6.

### THE GOSPELS

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. MT 11.25-26

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of babes to speak clearly. Wisdom, x, 21.

### THE GOSPELS

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. MT 11.4-6

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. Is., xxv, 5-6.

### THE GOSPELS

Take my yoke upon you; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. MT 11.29-30

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Draw near unto me, ye unlearned Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction. I laboured but a little, and found for myself much rest. Eccclus., li, 23-27.

### THE GOSPELS

If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice. Hosea, vi, 6.

### THE GOSPELS

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Daniel, xii, 3.

### THE GOSPELS

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? MT 16.26

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ? Eccles., i, 3,

For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. Ps.xlix, 8.

### THE GOSPELS

Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. MT 18.3

The references to the children's "belief," to scandals, etc., show that the writer in part, at least takes the word "children" in the not uncommon Jewish sense of converts. McCabe

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

My soul is even as a weaned child. Ps. cxxxix, 2.

Be not ashamed to instruct the unwise and foolish. Eccclus., xlii, 8.

### THE GOSPELS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Verily, I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. MT 19.20-22

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wakefulness that cometh of riches consumeth the flesh. Ecdus., xxxi, 1.

### THE GOSPELS

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. MT 22.37-39

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deut., vi, 5.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18.

### THE GOSPELS

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment,



## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone. MT 23.22-24

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

[Not speaking of scribes or Pharisees.]

When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.... Wash you, make you clean learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Is., i, 15-17.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed: to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless. Is., x, 1-2.

What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah, vi, 8.

### THE GOSPELS

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? MT 25.33-36

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Give thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked. Tobit, v, 16.

Be not slow to visit a sick man. Ecclus., vii, 34.

### THE GOSPELS

#### LUKE.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor : he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. LK 4.17-19

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord to comfort all that mourn. Js., lxi, 1-2.

### THE GOSPELS

Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. LK 12.15

## JEWIS MORALS IN THE GOSPELS

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gold hath been the ruin of many, and their destruction was present. Eccclus., xxxi, 6.

### THE GOSPELS

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. LK 14.12-14

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor. Job, xxix, 15.

He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want. Prov., xxii, 16.

## CHAPTER 2 THE MORAL TEACHINGS OF THE GOSPELS ARE FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS.

---

“Personality in the Gospels (Ch 10) from *The Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*, 1914), Joseph McCabe correctly argues that the moral teachings ascribed to Jesus are not unique to Christ. He argues that these morals were common in the ancient world.

The comparative scheme given in the previous chapter seems to be conclusive as regards the question of the originality of the Gospel ethic. There is no shade of moral idealism in the discourses attributed to Christ that had not found expression in the Old Testament centuries before, was not familiar among the Jewish teachers who spent their lives in meditation on the Old Testament, and was not put forward by some, if not all, of the great non-Christian and non-Jewish moralists of the time. Indeed, a fifth column might have been added to show that the sentiments were familiar in more ancient Persia, Egypt, and Babylonia; and a sixth to show their currency in India and China. What we have seen, however, suffices to discredit the claim that Jesus brought a single new element of moral idealism into the world. Whatever amount of distinctive phrasing or conceiving we may find in the Gospels, the moral sentiment which is put in these distinctive ways was common to the whole religious and ethical world of the time. There is no advance whatever upon current morality in the Gospels.

It is not necessary to show this in detail by examining the various claims that have been put forward. These claims are usually urged by men who do not trouble even to make a patient study of the morality of the Old Testament, to say nothing of the Talmud and the Greek

## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

moralists. There is, for instance, a stubborn belief that Christ was the first to deduce that subtle refinement of moral principle, the love of one's enemies, as the Gospel seems to claim. Whether Christ or any of his followers ever did, in the literal sense, love his enemies; how far the counsel is consistent with the precept to follow God as a pattern, who, on the Christian teaching, assuredly does not love his enemies; whether the maxim is of the least practical use -- these things we need not examine. It is enough to have shown that the counsel was not novel.

A learned Austrian Jesuit has recently written a work in defence of the old claim, and it is characteristic of "the will to believe." The most desperate efforts are made to show that Plutarch and Seneca may, in some mysterious way beyond the imagination of ordinary historians, have studied gospels which even Christian writers of their time never notice; or to persuade us that the rabbinical tradition was distorted into harmony with the teaching of Christ. Yet the plain words of Socrates and Plato, and the words of *Exodus*, of *Proverbs*, and other ancient Jewish writers, insist, centuries before the time of Christ, on the duty of kindly feeling and kindly action even towards one's enemies. If a quibbler be disposed to point out that the word "love" is not found in the parallel texts, I would remind him that the Christian injunction to love your enemies because you would be rewarded for doing so, and the belief that Christ himself, as God, condemned his enemies to eternal fire, would have revolted a pagan moralist.

The counsel to turn the other cheek to the smiter is in the same position. It goes back to *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* on the Jewish side, and it is expressly formulated by Plato, and was a common-place in Epictetus, on the pagan side. Even archbishops do not find the counsel

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

commendable in modern times, and the social historian might draw up an appalling indictment of its consequences (in the modified form in which the Church urged it on the oppressed) in Europe. Such as it is, however -- and few will fail to recognize the grace of personal character which the counsel involves -- it was a familiar teaching of moralists of the first century, and began much earlier.

That internal purity is as essential as outward conformity with law is another of the supposed distinctions of Christ's ethic. In this case the claim is flagrant. How any man can think that the older Jewish writers, to say nothing of Hillel and Shammai and their followers, or that Plato and Zeno, to say nothing of Plutarch and Epictetus, regarded an immoral desire as guiltless, is not easily understood. Persian and Buddhist, Greek and Jew, were clear and emphatic on the point. It is a moral truism in the only sense in which it is defensible; for to say that the desire of adultery is as bad as actual adultery, in the literal sense, is to ignore considerations of the gravest character.

However, the maxim was, as I have shown, general at the time, and the earlier chapters trace it in ancient Egypt and Babylon.

Humanity is said by others to be distinctive of Christ's message, and again the claim is monstrous. One finds incessant exhortations to humility, modesty, and meekness in the Old Testament and the pagan moralists, and in the rabbinical discourses it seems to have been one of the most familiar themes. It might be claimed that Christ is unique in commending children as a model (either because of their purity or their lack of self-consciousness, or both), but one sees at a glance that the well-known texts in which he refers to children

## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

are, at least in part, metaphorical. Love of children is hardly a distinction in a Jew. The wisdom-books of the Old Testament reflect those rich parental instincts which are found in the race. Indeed, apologists must be hard put when they lay stress on the mere fact that Jesus loved children! Nevertheless, it is clear that the words in the Gospels are largely metaphorical. To speak of children as "believing in me" and having received a revelation which was hidden from "the wise and prudent" is, if it be taken literally, nonsense. We recognize the hand of a later Christian writer who wishes to denounce those who scandalize converts. On the other hand, Christ has scarcely a word about the love of parents (probably because of his estrangement from his mother) and the respect due to the aged, which are so constantly and finely enjoined by all other Jewish moralists. His ascetic ideal, in fact, is destructive of family sentiment, and had disastrous consequences in Europe.

It may be said, in a word, that the most prominent elements of the Gospel ethic, sound or unsound, were the characteristic elements of that stage of moral development. Long before Christ's time they were preached and practised among the followers of Buddha and the followers of Pythagoras, among the Essenians and the Serapians; and the Stoic philosophy and the more austere rabbis impressed them on their pupils with no less sincerity than constancy. One does not need to wander over the whole literature of the time in search of parallels; from either Plutarch, or Seneca, or Epictetus alone, you can take a complete series, and there is every reason to think that the lost teaching of Pythagoras or of Apollonius would have been found to coincide.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

But the most important point to remember, and the one which I have taken especial care to establish, is that the supposed teaching of Jesus is no advance whatever on the later and finer teaching of the Old Testament. Glancing over the first two columns of the scheme in the last chapter, I find that the only sentiments to which the books of the Old Testament afford no parallel are the injunctions (1) to cut out an eye, or cut off a limb, which occasions temptation, (2) to let the dead bury their dead, and (3) to distribute all your goods to the poor. If these be literally urged, they form no part of a moral code. The only Christian who ever obeyed the first injunction, Origen, has been unanimously condemned by divines; and the pitiful story of medieval monasticism sufficiently condemns the other two. Insofar as these maxims are paradoxical expressions of a real moral or religious feeling, that feeling was well known both in Judaism and beyond. The second part of *Isaiah*, many of the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Wisdom*, and *Ecclesiasticus* contain and repeatedly impress all the sound moral maxims of the New Testament.

Nor can it be said that Christ at least differed from rabbis and philosophers in appealing to the outcast, the poor, and the sinner. Poverty excluded none either from the schools of the rabbis or the schools of the Stoics. Lowliness, unworldliness, and a genial attitude towards the poorest were enjoined by all moralists. Christians love to conceive the rabbis as learned and affluent gentlemen, like high-caste Hindus, who carefully preserved the fringes of their garments from contact with "the common people" and sinners. Compare with this the true picture of two of the most famous of the rabbis who earned a slender and laborious living (as many of them did) by making shoes, not disdaining to make the shoes of women who were sinners in the city, yet preserving a grave and gentle modesty in their



## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

relations with such customers. It seems, on the other hand, that the story of Christ's relations with the converted sinner, Mary Magdalene, is historically very doubtful, while the story of the woman taken in adultery is rejected outright by many theologians.

There are two chief elements of freshness in the Gospels. The first is, as theologians justly claim, the insistence on "the kingdom of heaven." This phrase has given considerable trouble to students of the New Testament, and it is plainly used in several different senses. Broadly speaking, it has two main significations: the coming rule of the Messiah over a transfigured earth, and the internal conditions of virtue which entitle a man to a share in that kingdom. The second meaning is derivative, and may not have been used by Christ at all; though the point matters little. The chief and fundamental idea is, of course, a familiar Jewish idea; but it seems to me that theologians, in discussing it, do not sufficiently attend to Persian influence. The expectation of such a kingdom is plainly expressed in *Micah* (iv, 7) and *Zechariah* (xiv, 9), and it won universal acceptance in Judaism. We saw that there was just such an expectation among the zealots of the Persian religion, and at least three centuries before Christ the Persian religion had a deep influence on the Jewish. This intensification of the Messianic hope is especially apparent among the Essenians, and it is not improbable that Jesus received it from them. In any case, it was a common Jewish and Persian attitude to believe that God would not long delay the establishment of his "kingdom" on earth and the triumph of the good over the evil.

Jesus, like others, believed that the kingdom was close at hand, and it is this belief which gives a character to many of his sayings. He taught no new virtue, and no new moral heroism; but he (or the Gospel writer) taught

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

the familiar virtues in language which glows with the ardour of this false expectation. If there was to be in a few years a judgment of the whole earth, a sorting of the sheep from the goats, an assignment of positions for all eternity, it mattered little about worldly things. It was an excellent investment to sell all your goods, and offer the other cheek to the smiter, and disown your parents and brethren, and deny your body the most elementary gratification. There never was a more utilitarian ethic in history than that of Jesus; though his modern followers, who shrink from his heroic deductions, profess to scorn utilitarianism. There is not a page of the Gospels that fails to remind the reader of the vast reward in the world to come. Stoics rejected that idea of virtue, and even rabbis taught their followers that it was an inferior motive. But Jesus saw the clouds already breaking to let the fire of heaven upon the earth, and he rose to passionate excesses in the recommendation of virtue. He was not alone in this, as John the Baptist and the Essenes remind us; and it is profoundly interesting to see how a Pythagoras or an Epictetus reaches the same heroic conclusions without such a motive. However, it is this burning expectation, this utter error, which gives a kind of inspiration to some of the language of the Gospels, and enables the liberal-minded student to understand their excesses.

The second, and sounder, element of freshness in the Gospels is the revolt against an outworn creed. In this case, however, we have every reason to suppose that the actual Gospels go far beyond the teaching of Christ. When we find them affirming on one page that not a tittle of the law shall pass, or that the people must do all that the rabbis enjoin, and on another that Christ has come to teach a higher law; on one page that the disciples of Jesus do not keep the prescribed fasts, and on another that Jesus tells his hearers how to behave

## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

during the fasts; we can scarcely hesitate to judge the situation. Christ may have, like the Essenes, refused to offer sacrifice in the Temple, but he generally respected the Mosaic law. In the generation after Paul, when Christianity became a Gentile religion opposed to the Jews, the healthy energy of the revolt against a dead law was felt, and it inspires some of (from the literary point of view) the finer passages of the Gospels. Jesus is transformed into a God introducing a new dispensation, and appropriate language is put into his mouth. Every "reformation" has this inspiration.

These elements of freshness make the Gospels much finer reading than the Talmud, and even, in my opinion, than the works of the Stoics. I do not mean from the ethical point of view, for I agree with the ethic of neither. How many do to-day? But there is a vigour and originality of phrase in much of the Gospels which reconciles us to the exaggerations and aberrations more easily than we are reconciled to the similar exaggerations of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius. We feel that the Gospels are more logical than the philosophers. Their foundation is the hundred-fold reward in the approaching kingdom; the philosophers build on something equally erroneous, but less substantial in its error.

And here a last word must be said about the idea that, whether or no the Gospels bring a unique morality, they do reflect a unique personality, or a personality of great power and insight. This very common claim of liberal theologians can only be understood as the outcome of a desperate effort to recover something from the wreck of the Christian tradition. I see no reason why a non-Christian historian should have any bias, or even unconscious prejudice, against such an idea. Indeed, it is on general historical considerations that I feel that

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

the man who made this deep, if limited, impression on his fellows -- the man before whose memory the masterful Paul bowed to the dust -- the man about whom such a rich growth of legends gathered -- probably was a gifted and impressive personality. But to say that this personality is reflected in the Gospels is surely to play fast and loose with the results of research.

I would recall a few considerations from an earlier chapter. The canticles of Zecharias, Mary, and Simeon, in the early chapters of *Luke*, are literary pieces as fine as any in the New Testament. Even the orthodox believer will hardly suppose that they were really uttered, and taken down in shorthand; in the case of Mary, indeed, there was no hearer. They do not reflect three personalities, but one; and it is confessedly not the personality of Christ. Then there are all the anachronistic passages, and even long discourses, which I have previously mentioned. The lamentations over Jerusalem in *Matthew* and *Luke* are just as fine, but they were not spoken by Christ. The constant references to coming or actual persecution contain some of the finer sentences of the Gospels; yet it is an anachronism, to say the least, to ascribe them to Christ. The parables which refer to the execution of Christ by the Jews, or the substitution in God's favour of the Gentiles for the Jews, are not a whit inferior to the best of the other parables; and these again a purely historical consideration must dissociate from Christ. In fact, it is, historically, quite unreasonable to suppose that any lengthy discourse attributed to Christ in *Matthew* was really spoken and learned by heart, or committed at once to parchment; while of the short pregnant sayings one must surely say that they are not superior to the sayings of the unknown authors of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*, or the second part of

## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

*Isaiah*. Finally, the personality reflected in *Matthew* is not the personality reflected in *Mark*, and that set forth in *John* is still more diverse. In each case it is the personality of the author.

The conclusion is not a matter of prejudice, but of simple historical inference. If the same character is found in the later and the earlier elements of the Gospels, the things that Christ is supposed to have said and the things that he is not supposed to have said (or said with no human audience), it is useless to say that they reflect the personality of Christ. The limit I have conceived for this essay is reached, and I must invite the reader to examine the point for himself. Run through the Gospel sayings reproduced in the previous chapter (and there are further anachronisms among the doctrinal sayings), and ask yourself whether there is any difference between the sayings that might be of Christ and those that are not.

In point of fact, many theologians now admit that it is not likely that we have the actual words of Christ at all - a conclusion that would have been reached long ago if candid historical considerations had been applied to the matter. At the most, a few aphoristic sentences may survive with little or no change. The discourses are a later literary product: even short and detached discourses. One example may be given. There is the fine passage, so often quoted as most characteristic of Christ, in *Matthew* (xi, 28-30):

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

But we may say with confidence that Christ never spoke those words. The doctrinal implication of divinity is late: the words are inconsistent with his constant insistence that his burden is heavy and grievous (to sell all one's property, to separate from one's family, to take up one's cross, etc.); and, most decisive of all, the words are simply borrowed, with little alteration, from *Ecclesiasticus* (li, 23-27). The reader will notice many such in the previous columns. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to say anywhere that we have the actual words of Christ; and it is quite certain that many of the passages we cannot attribute to him are as fine and impressive as the doubtful passages. The attempt to build up the character of Christ from the Gospels is utterly futile. We can but say that the phenomenon of Christianity itself suggests a strong and eloquent personality, a kind of Essene without the robe, a man exalted by a firm conviction that the end of the world was at hand.

Instead of one personality, the Gospels, with their various strata yet similarity of tone, suggest a number of like-minded, exalted personalities; as in the work of the Esdras school. And our last consideration must be of the value of this Christian synthesis of the first or second century. Granted that it only gathers together the moral commonplaces of the age, what is the value of the synthesis as such? May we suppose that it is in itself an achievement which, apart from doctrine or from the question of a great human personality, gives a *raison d'etre* to Christianity in our own time?

It is difficult to see how any candid historian can claim for it more than an academic historical interest. It admirably preserves for us the notes of one of the stages in religious and moral evolution: it is just as clearly

## MORAL TEACHINGS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO JESUS

unsuitable for our age. The dominant conception of an impending end of the world, which energizes it, cannot be abandoned without weakening the whole structure. The counsels which were quite logical under that conception -- to cast away one's possessions, disown one's relatives, empty one's pockets to the thief, crucify the flesh, etc. -- are now so illogical that divines hardly know what to make of them. The modern divine scarcely even regards them as counsels of perfection; in spite of the moral genius he ascribes to Christ, he thinks that the prophet was quite mistaken in saying that, "if you would be perfect," you must live in abject poverty, not make any provision for the morrow, and not marry. Yet these are the most characteristic elements of the Gospel ethic. The remaining conceptions -- hospitality, brotherly love, conjugal fidelity, honesty, truthfulness, etc. -- are platitudes of the ethical life, as old as Ptah-hotep. The more important of them, such as justice, are least developed of all in the Gospels; the less important or more individual, such as humility and chastity, are preponderantly developed. The whole system, moreover, is informed by a mercantile spirit -- the reward in the life to come -- which is repugnant to the finer sentiment of our time, and which places the foundation of character in a hazardous speculation. How many educated people now believe in the naive heaven of Jesus?

Our age needs a new winnowing, and a new synthesis. Christ's conception of conduct is inaccurate, archaic, narrow, vexatious, and impracticable in a score of ways. The Gospels represent a distortion of moral development. By their fruits -- the Middle Ages -- you shall know them; I mean that the grossness and descent of the Middle Ages were an inevitable reaction on an impracticable standard, and an inevitable result of belittling culture and human interests. The imposition

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

of this archaic and erroneous code of morals on children is as stupid as it is mischievous. They learn its weaknesses in later years and despise their training. The modern world has no real sympathy with the system. It is defended for doctrinal and ecclesiastical reasons. Morality would perish in the twentieth century if we insisted on this ascetic code. Its errors, however, and its ineffectiveness do not properly concern me. It is enough to have shown its lack of originality and its failure to reveal to us the personality of the founder of Christianity.





PART 2 CHRISTIANS ON PAGAN  
PHILOSOPHIES

---

---



## CHAPTER 3 MOST ANCIENT CHRISTIAN WRITERS BELIEVED THAT ALL PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

---

---

“All Pagan Philosophies Have a Germ of Truth.” -- *The Christian*, Clement Of Alexandria

Nearly all ancient Christian writers argued that all truth comes from God – and so there is some Christian truth in all pagan philosophies.

---

### PAGAN PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANS

---

Many people know that educated Romans admired philosophy but the reader might wonder why we spend so much time arguing that Christians were strongly influenced by pagan philosophy. The reason is that most people assume that all ancient Christians hated everything pagan. This chapter will show that this is not true. The Stoic, Seneca, was much admired by the early Christians; some of whom wrongly thought that he was a secret Christian. That's how close his ethics were to those of the New Testament. (The Christians added Hell and Heaven.)

The Christian admiration for pagan philosophy was nearly universal, provided that it was subordinated to the teachings of the New Testament and the church. As evidence of this we will in this chapter take a look at the writings of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, etc., as well as the New Testament. The early Christian

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

writers believed that all pagan philosophies, though written before the coming of Christ, contained germs of Christian truth.

Before turning to Christians that admired, in a limited way, pagan philosophy, let us first look at those Christians who were against pagan philosophy.

## CHRISTIANS WHO WERE AGAINST PAGAN PHILOSOPHY

### JESUS

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise [philosophers and the educated] and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes (the uneducated). MT 11:25, cf LK 10:21

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. MT 13:17

Jesus thanks God that only the ignorant and foolish will listen to him.

### PAUL

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. COL 2:8

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.... 1 COR 1:22-23

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. (Become a Christian.) For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 1 COR 3.18-19

Other Christians:

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it was fifty thousand pieces of silver. ACTS 19:19

Paul's converts at Ephesus burned 50,000 pieces of silver worth of books.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God ... and it shall be given him. James 1.5

These Christian quotes appear to be quite anti-pagan philosophy. Next we will look at what Paul has to say about pagan philosophy. Then we will review Clement of Alexandria who believes that Paul defends "true" philosophy in so far as it defends the Faith.

PAUL

Paul in Athens Acts 17.15, 18, 22-24, 26-38::

And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens .... Acts 17.15

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? others said, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. Acts 17.18

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. Acts 17.22

[Paul, the man who raised people from the dead and drove out devils from people who touched his apron!]

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. [Epicureans were atheists and the Stoics were pantheists; they thought that God was Nature or Reason. Neither worshipped gods nor were they searching for Gods.] God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands .... Acts 17 23-24 [Educated Greco-Romans, especially philosophers, generally believed in one God with many names and they did not think that the gods dwelt in temples.]

(God) hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth .... Acts 17.26

[The Stoic philosophers believed in the kinship of all human beings. Christians believed that God created human beings (Adam and Eve). Nevertheless, they believed that God adopted the Christians. Thus, all outsiders were doomed to Hell.]

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Acts 17.27-28

[That we are the children of God (or Reason or Nature) was a common belief among Stoics.]

For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. Acts 17.29

[Epicureans, Stoics and other philosophers strongly criticized those who identified their God or gods with graven art.]

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent : Because he hath appointed a day, in which (Jesus) will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Acts 17.30-31

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. Acts 17.32

[Romans, especially educated Romans, found the idea of physical resurrection repulsive. This would include Epicureans or Stoics who rejected the idea of life after death.]

So, Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was



## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. Acts 17.33-34

### EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Acts of the Apostles, the Gospels and the letters of Paul all make a common attack on pagan religions. The Christians attacked the characteristics of religion as practiced by the masses with the approval of the state. Temples are condemned since the Christians at this early time could not afford to construct church buildings, but rather used home residences. They attacked blood sacrifices since they were poor and did not have the money for such expensive rituals. The pagan masses believed in many gods but educated Romans generally believed in one God with many names or no God at all.

In short, the New Testament attacks what educated Romans already criticized as superstition.

### CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

(c. 150 - c. 215 CE), A Christian writer

Clement's analysis of Colossians 2:4, 8 and Acts 17.18 as to the truth of pagan philosophy.

Quotes from *The Stromata* (Miscellaneous or Patchwork)  
The *Stromata* (Στρώματα) is the third in Clement of Alexandria's trilogy of works on the Christian life.

### Chapter 11. What Is The Philosophy Which The Apostle [Paul] Bids Us Shun?

This, then, the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and of those who are the wise the Lord knows their

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

thoughts that they are vain. 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 Let no man therefore glory on account of pre-eminence in human thought.

Colossians 2:4, 8 And again, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; Colossians 2:8 branding not all philosophy, but the Epicurean, which Paul mentions in the Acts of the Apostles, Acts 17:18 which abolishes providence and deifies pleasure, and whatever other philosophy honours the elements, but places not over them the efficient cause, nor apprehends the Creator. But seeking ends in finding, driving out the empty trifling, and approving of the contemplation which confirms our faith.

[Divine Providence: An important belief in Roman Stoicism. The Stoics believed that God (nature or reason) showers humanity only with good things. Clement here seems to be attacking atheistic Epicureanism which denied Providence, thinking that all things, good or bad, come from nature.]

### COMMENTS BY EDITORS

Clement and Paul in Colossians 2:4, 8 and in Acts 17.18, that all pagan philosophies have germs of truth

Being a Christian apologist, Clement distorts Colossians 2.4,8 and Acts 17.18 by implying that it is the Epicureans who are the bad philosophers. Actually, Colossians 2.4,8 does not mention Epicureans. And Acts 17.18 states that “some” Epicureans and Stoics thought he was a “babbling” and others that he seems “to be a setter forth of strange gods....” Verse 32 states: “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead,

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.” It is odd that even *some* “Athenians and strangers” would be responsive to Paul's idea of the resurrection of the dead since Greco-Romans in general would be repulsed by this idea.

In his writings Clement holds that pagan philosophers often prepare Christians for the Gospels, as he believed that there were germs of truth in all philosophies. For example, he believed (wrongly) that Plato had partial truth as regard the true God as he had read the Jewish Scriptures (the Old Testament). Some Christians believed that the Holy Spirit or the Logos had visited ancient pagans. Or, wrongly, that they had read the Old Testament.

Clement, strongly defends “true philosophy,” but equally condemns “bad or false” philosophy, and believes that Paul also does so. But it is hard to see where Paul defends “true philosophy.” Paul leaves the scene (verse 33). Verse 34 states that “certain men clave unto (Paul), and believed.” But it is not stated who they were: philosophers or those “in the market that met with him.” (v 17) . In any case, Paul is capable of using pagan sources when he wants to: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Acts 17.28

## Conclusions

Justin and Clement, etc., were pro-pagan philosophy in so far as it could be used to defend their Christian faith. Paul was less inclined to defend his faith in this way but he does sometimes. In this limited sense they were pro-pagan philosophy.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

However, they were all against real philosophy. Justin, Clement, Paul or any other Christians were not true philosophers since they were not engaged in an independent search for truth. If a statement was contrary to the Bible or church teaching, they rejected it as false.

---

### TWO EARLY CHRISTIANS WHO WERE AGAINST PAGAN PHILOSOPHY

---

TERTULLIAN (C. 160 BCE – C. 225 CE)

Tertullian was a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.

#### General character

Though thoroughly conversant with the Greek theology, Tertullian was independent of its metaphysical speculation.... He despised Greek philosophy, and, far from looking at Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers whom he quotes as forerunners of Christ and the Gospel, he pronounces them the patriarchal forefathers of the heretics (*De anima*, iii). However, note his praise for the pagan Stoic, Seneca. [Tertullian From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

#### *Apologeticus:*

The soul of man, which by nature is inclined to Christianity, bears witness. (Similarly, the pagan Stoics believed that humans were born with an inclination to a central Stoic tenet, namely that we should be good to humankind.) [newadvent.org]

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Tertullian is the church father who more than any other has been taken to epitomise the anti-intellectualism of the early Church. [earlychurch.org.uk:]

Tertullian wrote:

Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy... What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What has the Academy to do with the Church? What have heretics to do with Christians? ... Away with all attempts to produce a Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic Christianity! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after receiving the gospel! When we believe, we desire no further belief. For this is our first article of faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides.(12) Tertullian, *Heretics*, 7 (Stevenson, 166-167). ...

Tertullian himself made use of philosophical (particularly Stoic) ideas in his writings. He agreed with Plato on the matter of the immortality of the soul. He even claimed (as Philo and Justin Martyr had before him) that the philosophers borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures. [Tertullian, *Apology* 47.1; *Flesh* 9.2 Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3, 51-52, 531-532. Norris, 86.]

His principle for identifying the presence of allegory was that it was present if the literal sense resulted in nonsense; it is not present when the literal meaning makes sense. In this he did not differ significantly from Origen's principle. [earlychurch.org.uk]

Tertullian has been accused of going to an unhealthy extreme in his counsels of asceticism; for example, about ejaculatory orgasms he wrote: In that last breaking wave of delight, do we not feel something of

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

our very soul go out from us. [From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

HIPPOLYTUS (d. 240 CE)

He was as harsh and uncompromising a foe of philosophy as Tertullian. [earlychurch.org.uk]

Christian “praise” for pagan philosophy, provided that it was subordinated to the teachings of the NT and the Church:

“The very same thing which now is called Christianity existed among the ancients and was not absent from the beginning of mankind until Christ appeared in the flesh, whence the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian.” St. Augustine

Why did Augustine and many other ancient Christians believe that Christianity came before the coming of Jesus Christ? They believed this because they thought that God was eternal and therefore his truth had no beginning. Thus, Christianity would have existed long before Christ. Of course, the Christians believed that the full and clear meaning of it would have to wait for the revelation of the Son of God.

Well, how anti-pagan were the early Christians? Let’s look at the views of the ancient Christians from the 2nd century through the early 5th century CE, that is from Justin Martyr through St Augustine and Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428). Note, that the vast majority of these Christians believed that some germs of Christian truth were contained in all pagan philosophies prior to the coming of Jesus Christ!

EXCURUS

---

Philo of Alexandria (c.20 BC - c. AD 50)

[earlychurch.org.uk]

Although not a Christian, we have included Philo in this list of those who were friendly to pagan philosophy. We have done so as Philo was used by early Christians in the development of their theology.

Philo's works were not preserved by the Jews but were treasured by Christian writers who seized upon his concept of the *Logos*, thinking that it was the same as the *Logos* of the prologue of John's Gospel. To Philo the *Logos* was "the instrument by which God makes the world and the intermediary by which the human intelligence as it is purified ascends to God again". However, Philo's *Logos* is not Divine nor is it a person and it has no existence apart from the role it performs.

So important was Philo to the early church writers that some, such as Eusebius and Jerome even went so far as to claim that he was a (secret) Christian. Eusebius records a legendary (fictional) meeting between Philo and Peter in Rome and both writers argue that Philo's work concerning Jewish ascetics (*On the Contemplative Life*) is a first hand report of the church (and monasteries!) founded by Mark in Alexandria. It is true to say that by the fourth century "Pious legend would allow no writer so influential on early Christian exegesis to remain unconverted." (They were often considered secret Christians.) [earlychurch.org.uk]

Philo was deeply influenced by Middle Platonism, Aristotle, the Neo-Pythagoreans, the Cynics and the Stoics. He stood at the end of a long Jewish tradition whose thoughts he developed, as evidenced by his

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

references to the works of his predecessors. Like them he attempted to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures in such a way as to bridge the gap between Judaism and intellectual paganism rather than attempting to produce his own philosophical system. (Very much like early Christian writers.) [earlychurch.org.uk]

Philo (like the Christians) made extensive use of allegory in his writings ....

This appears most clearly in the *Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus*. In both of these works, literal and allegorical interpretations lie side by side. Philo is obviously more interested in the allegorical interpretation, but, for the most part, the literal interpretations are also considered valid and valuable (Unlike the Christians who often found allegory everywhere.) [earlychurch.org.uk]

Similarly, the Christian writers of the New Testament allegorized the OT, symbolically interpreting it. They needed to show that the Jewish Scriptures (which knew nothing about Christ) predicted the coming of Jesus Christ. For example, a tree predicted the death of Christ on a wooden cross, etc. The purpose was to show that because “the Jews” had engineered the death of Christ, Gentiles had replaced Jews as the chosen people of God, that Christianity had replaced Judaism. See our previous book, *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth - Evidence That Jesus Never Lived*.

---

### CHRISTIANS WHO ACCEPTED PAGAN PHILOSOPHY AS TRUTH

---

JUSTIN MARTYR (c.100-c.165)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Justin Martyr, also known as just Saint Justin (103–165), was an early Christian apologist. (Born at Flavia Neapolis, near Jerusalem.) Most of his works are lost, but two apologies and a dialogue did survive. He is considered a saint by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

### *Life*

(A Christian convert, he) arrived in Rome in the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161), where he started his own school.... Justin was tried together with six companions by Junius Rusticus, who was urban prefect from 163-167, and was beheaded, probably in 165.

### *Conversion and teachings*

Justin had, like others, the idea that the Greek philosophers had derived, if not borrowed, the most essential elements of truth found in their teaching from the Old Testament. But at the same time he adopted the Stoic doctrine of the "seminal word," and so philosophy was to him an operation of the Word—in fact, through his identification of the Word with Christ, it was brought into immediate connection with him. [He accepted the Old Testament and pagan philosophies as sources of truth.]

Thus he does not scruple to declare that Socrates and Heraclitus were Christians (*Apol.*, i. 46, ii. 10) [and over 300 years before Christ!]. His aim, of course, is to emphasize the absolute significance of Christ, so that all that ever existed of virtue and truth may be referred to (Christ). The old philosophers and law-givers had only a part of the Logos, while the whole appears in Christ.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

While the gentile peoples, seduced by demons, had deserted the true God for idols, the Jews and Samaritans possessed the revelation given through the prophets and awaited the Messiah. [The vast majority of the Jews were not expecting a Messiah. Neither Philo nor the first century Jewish historian, Josephus, make any mention of an expected Messiah.]

The idea of an economy of grace, of a restoration of the union with God which had been destroyed by sin, is not foreign to him. It is noteworthy that in the "Dialogue" he no longer speaks of a "seed of the Word" in every man, and in his non-apologetic works the emphasis is laid upon the redeeming acts of the life of Christ rather than upon the demonstration of the reasonableness and moral value of Christianity, though the fragmentary character of the latter works makes it difficult to determine exactly to what extent this is true and how far the teaching of Irenaeus on redemption is derived from him.

[Justin's early view seems to have been "the reasonableness and moral value of Christianity," the moral influence of Christianity saves Christians, not that Christ saves us from our sins through his death on the cross – as in Paul's letters.]

### *Doctrine of the Logos*

Justin's use of the idea of the logos has always attracted attention. It is probably too much to assume a direct connection with Philo of Alexandria in this particular. ... Philo's *Logos* is not Divine, nor is it a person and it has no existence apart from the role it performs.

Quotes from Justin

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

### *The First Apology:*

Chapter 14. The demons misrepresent Christian doctrine.

For we forewarn you to be on your guard, lest those demons whom we have been accusing should deceive you, and quite divert you from reading and understanding what we say.

Chapter 21. Analogies to the history of Christ

And when we say also that the Word, who is the first-birth of God, was produced without sexual union, and that He, Jesus Christ, our Teacher, was crucified and died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven, we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter. For you know how many sons your esteemed writers ascribed to Jupiter : Mercury, the interpreting word and teacher of all; Æsculapius, who, though he was a great physician, was struck by a thunderbolt, and so ascended to heaven; and Bacchus too, after he had been torn limb from limb; and Hercules, when he had committed himself to the flames to escape his toils; and the sons of Leda, and Dioscuri; and Perseus, son of Danae; and Bellerophon, who, though sprung from mortals, rose to heaven on the horse Pegasus. For what shall I say of Ariadne, and those who, like her, have been declared to be set among the stars? And what of the emperors who die among yourselves, whom you deem worthy of deification, and in whose behalf you produce someone who swears he has seen the burning Cæsar rise to heaven from the funeral pyre? [Justin flatly states that the Christians share many ideas with

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

the pagan mythologies, poets and philosophers, virtually all of which preceded Christianity.]

### Chapter 22. Analogies to the sonship of Christ

Moreover, the Son of God called Jesus, even if only a man by ordinary generation, yet, on account of His wisdom, is worthy to be called the Son of God; for all writers call God the Father of men and gods. And if we assert that the Word of God was born of God in a peculiar manner (virginal conception), different from ordinary generation, let this, as said above, be no extraordinary thing to you, who say that Mercury is the angelic word of God. ... And if we even affirm that He was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus. And in that we say that He made whole the lame, the paralytic, and those born blind, we seem to say what is very similar to the deeds said to have been done by Æsculapius.

### Chapter 54. Origin of heathen mythology

But those who hand down the myths which the poets have made, adduce no proof to the youths who learn them; and we proceed to demonstrate that they have been uttered by the influence of the wicked demons, to deceive and lead astray the human race. [Here, Justin proves that those Christian apologists who argue that the Christian myths were stolen by the pagans are not correct. The pagan myths may have been produced by demons but even Justin concedes that they existed before Christianity!]

### Chapter 59. Plato's obligation to Moses

And that you may learn that it was from our teachers—we mean the account given through the prophets—that

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Plato borrowed his statement that God, having altered matter which was shapeless, made the world ....

[Made, not created out of nothing? It was a common pagan belief in the ancient world that God or the gods *designed* the universe from pre-existing eternal matter, had not created it out of nothing. Also, no modern scholar believes that Plato read the Jewish Scriptures – the Old Testament. But that Plato and other pagans read the Scriptures was a common belief among ancient Christian writers. This explains why all pagan philosophies had germs of truth, according to the Christians. Another popular explanation was that the Word or Logos or the Holy Spirit visited these ancient pagans and gave them some Christian truths, as much as they could understand. Of course, the complete truth is understood once Christ arrived on Earth.]

### Chapter 60. Plato's doctrine of the cross

If you want to know how far allegory or symbolic interpretation of the OT can go, consider Justin's effort to find in Plato reference to a cross in the Old Testament that predicts the crucifixion of Jesus some hundreds of years in the future:

And the *physiological* discussion concerning the Son of God in the TIMÆUS of Plato, where he says, He placed him *crosswise* in the universe, (Plato) borrowed in like manner from Moses ... by the inspiration and influence of God, took brass, and made it into the figure of a cross, and set it in the holy tabernacle, and said to the people, If you look to this figure, and believe, you shall be saved thereby. [Stolen from the OT by Plato who had never read the Jewish Scriptures!]

*Second Apology:*

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### Chapter 9. Eternal punishment not a mere threat.

And that no one may say what is said by those who are deemed philosophers, that our assertions that the wicked are punished in eternal fire are big words and bugbears, and that we wish men to live virtuously through fear, and not because such a life is good and pleasant .... [Of course that is exactly what the Christian writers of NT write. They encourage "men to live virtuously through fear, and not because such a life is good." The Stoics taught that virtue was its own reward; they were not to do good out of fear of punishment or loss of rewards. The NT teaches that we should fear the loss of Heaven and eternal punishment in Hell.]

### Chapter 10. Christ compared with Socrates

For no one trusted in Socrates so as to die for this doctrine, but in Christ, who was partially known even by Socrates (for He was and is the Word who is in every man .... [Note, that Justin sees Socrates as partially knowing Christ for the Logos or "the Word is in every man." Also, Justin goes on to say that no one thought that Socrates would die for his doctrine but that everyone of all classes thought that Christ would die for his.]

### Chapter 5. The soul is not in its own nature immortal

(See the New Testament where some "perish" if they don't accept Jesus as their Savior.)

Chapter 70. So also the mysteries of Mithras are distorted from the prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah.

IRENÆUS (c.115-c.202)

[earlychurch.org.uk](http://earlychurch.org.uk) :

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Leaving Asia Minor for Rome (Irenaeus) joined the school of Justin Martyr before being made bishop of Lyons in Southern Gaul in about AD 178. In contrast to Justin - whose writings he used and respected - Irenaeus rejected the philosophical approach to Christianity, which for him as a child of the Church "rested on revelation, tradition, and on the power of the Holy Spirit." Despite this he did not abandon philosophy completely and many of his works are indebted to it.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (c.150 - c. 215)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Clement of Alexandria (Egypt), was a Christian theologian who taught at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. A convert to Christianity, he was an educated man who was familiar with classical Greek philosophy and literature. ... Clement was influenced by Hellenistic philosophy to a greater extent than any other Christian thinker of his time, and in particular by Plato and the Stoics....

Among his pupils were Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem.

Clement is regarded as a Church Father, and he is venerated as a saint in Orthodox Christianity, Eastern Catholicism and Anglicanism. He was previously revered in the Roman Catholic Church, but his cult was suppressed in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V due to concerns about his orthodoxy.

"Miscellanies" (STROMATEIS):

(Clement) starts with the importance of philosophy for the pursuit of Christian knowledge. ... He shows how faith is related to knowledge, and emphasizes the

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

superiority of revelation to philosophy. God's truth is to be found in revelation, another portion of it in philosophy. It is the duty of the Christian to neglect neither.

Clement was ready to find allegory everywhere. The facts of the Old Testament became mere symbols to him. ...

And here Clement's teaching is undoubtedly colored by Stoicism. [Catholic Encyclopedia]

Quotes from the *Stromata* [miscellaneous or patchwork]

The *Stromata* is the third in Clement of Alexandria's trilogy of works on the Christian life.

*All Sects of Philosophy Contain a Germ of Truth.*

Chapter 7. The Eclectic Philosophy Paves the Way for Divine Virtue

The Greek preparatory culture, therefore, with philosophy itself, is shown to have come down from God to men,....

Chapter 9. Human Knowledge Necessary for the Understanding of the Scriptures

Some, who think themselves naturally gifted, do not wish to touch either philosophy or logic; nay more, they do not wish to learn natural science. They demand bare faith alone .... [This sounds like the religious right wing fundamentalists in the United States today. All they need is the Bible.]



## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

So also here, I call him truly learned who brings everything to bear on the truth; so that, from [pagan] geometry, and music, and grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault.

Chapter 12. The Mysteries of the Faith Not to Be Divulged to All.

...so to deliver them to whom it is requisite; but not enjoining us to communicate to all without distinction, what is said to them in parables. [Jesus teaches in parables so people will not be converted and saved.]

Chapter 13. All Sects of Philosophy Contain a Germ of Truth

So, then, the barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth not from the mythology of Dionysus, but from the theology of the ever-living Word.

Chapter 19. That the Philosophers Have Attained to Some Portion of Truth

Greeks gave forth some utterances of the true philosophy

*The Stromata Book II*

Chapter 11. The Knowledge Which Comes Through Faith (is) the Surest of All

Chapter 18. The Mosaic Law the Fountain of All Ethics, and the Source from Which the Greeks Drew Theirs

[Untrue. The Greek philosophers had not read the Jewish Scriptures.]

*The Stromata (Book V)*

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Chapter 13. The Knowledge of God a Divine Gift,  
According to the Philosophers

Chapter 5. The Greeks Had Some Knowledge of the True  
God

Chapter 10. The Gnostic (the true Christian) Avails  
Himself of the Help of All Human Knowledge [Christian  
and pagan].

Chapter 11. The Mystical Meanings in the Proportions of  
Numbers, Geometrical Ratios, and Music

Chapter 13. Degrees of Glory in Heaven Corresponding  
with the Dignities of the Church Below

[As there are classes of people here on the Earth,  
Clement believed there are also divisions in heaven!]

Here follows a list of other Christian writers who praised  
Philosophy; provided, of course, that these pagan  
writings could be used to defend the faith, otherwise  
they were rejected as false.

ORIGEN (c.184/185-c.253/254)

Origen was an early Christian Alexandrian scholar and  
theologian, and one of the most distinguished writers of  
the early Church. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Editors: Origen was the most influential writer, exegete  
and theologian of the third century CE. He had an  
enormous influence on Augustine, Jerome and Rufinus.]

In Origen, Christianity blended with the pagan  
philosophy in which lived the desire for truth and the  
longing after God.

The Forged Pauline Letters. Origen.

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Eusebius, in *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.7, strongly implies Origen disputed the authenticity of the Letters of Paul when he wrote that Paul did not write to all the churches that he taught and even to the ones he wrote he only sent a few lines. [See the nineteenth century Dutch School who argued that all or most of the Pauline letters were late forgeries. See also our previous book, *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth - Evidence That Jesus Never Lived.*]

Many passages of the Scriptures are false. Origen

There are several specific reasons that we can deduce from Origen's writings that led him to the conclusion that the straightforward historical meaning of many passages of Scripture were simply not true.

Most can be found in Book 4 of *On First Principles*.  
earlychurch.org.uk

[Origen argues that the literal meaning of many passages in the Gospels is simply false. Allegory is in.]

METHODIUS (d. 311)

*The Symposium* was a manual of Christian doctrine styled as an imitation of one of Plato's dialogues.  
earlychurch.org.uk

LACTANTIUS (c. 250 -c. 325)

The stated purpose of Lactantius' writings was to present Christianity in a form that would be attractive to philosophical pagans. In practice this resulted in an

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

uneasy amalgam of Christianity, Platonism, Stoicism and Pythagoreanism. His views led to his posthumous condemnation as a heretic. [earlychurch.org.uk](http://earlychurch.org.uk)

HILARY, Bishop of Poitiers (315 – 367)

Hilary enjoyed fine facilities for education. In the introduction to his treatise on the Trinity he describes the stages a Pagan passes through in reaching the knowledge of God, which heathen philosophy reveals dimly, Christianity clearly. [earlychurch.org.uk](http://earlychurch.org.uk)

GREGORY OF NYSSA (330-394)

Firsthand study of the works of Plato and Plotinus. Gregory's theology was the result of a subtle blending of Platonism and the Scriptures.

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354-430)

Aurelius Augustinus was born in the town of Thagaste in North Africa, the son of Patricius and Monica. His father was a pagan until near the time of his death, but his mother was a devoted follower of Catholic Christianity.

Having left Africa for Rome, Augustine became increasingly dissatisfied with the teachings of the Manichees and turned instead to Neo-platonism.

However, attending the church (in Rome) brought him under the ministry of the bishop, Ambrose. Ambrose's allegorical and Platonising interpretation of the Scriptures in the tradition of Origen made a great impression on Augustine, who had been unimpressed by the literal interpretation practised by his mother .... [earlychurch.org.uk](http://earlychurch.org.uk)

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (present-day Annaba, Algeria, North Africa) (350-430 CE)

"The very same thing which now is called Christianity existed among the ancients and was not absent from the beginning of mankind until Christ appeared in the flesh, whence the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian." [He believed in the All Sects of Philosophy Contain a Germ of Truth School.] From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

---

### PAGANS ON PHILOSOPHY

---

The Syncretistic Seneca:

Syncretism ...is the combining of different (often contradictory) beliefs, often while melding practices of various schools of thought. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Note Seneca's severe criticism of the rational mysticism of Plato in the quote below. Nevertheless, generally Seneca wished to protect reason from attack, especially reason as found in philosophy.

Will Plato's imaginary ideas make me an honest man? There is neither certainty in them, nor substance. "A mouse is a syllable; but a syllable does not eat cheese: therefore a mouse does not eat cheese." Oh! these childish follies!" SENECA

Teach me my duty to Providence, to my neighbor, and to myself: to dispute with Socrates; to doubt with Carneades; to set up my rest with Epicurus; to master my appetites with the Stoics; and to renounce the world with the Cynic. SENECA

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

What a deal of business there is, first, to make Homer a philosopher; and, secondly, in what classes to range him! One will have him to be a Stoic, a friend to virtue, and an enemy to pleasure; preferring honesty even to immortality itself: another makes him an Epicurean; one that loves his quiet, and to spend his time in good company: some are positive in it that he was a Peripatetic [follower of Aristotle]; and others, that he was a Sceptic. But it is clear that, in being all these things, he was not any one of them. These divided opinions do not at all hinder us from agreeing, upon the main, that he was a wise man. SENECA *Philosophers* Epistle 7

The Stoic Musonius Rufus writes in *Must One Obey One's Parents Under All Circumstances?* (30-100 CE), "Your father forbids you to study philosophy, but the common father of all men and gods, Zeus, bids you and exhorts you to do so." He also says that if your father forbids you to study philosophy, you may disobey him. [Mt 10.37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Also, See Mt 12.46-49 where Jesus says that the members of his family are those that follow him, that is those who believe in what he teaches them.]

A wise man, in what condition soever he is, will be still happy; for he subjects all things to himself, because he submits himself to reason, and governs his actions by counsel, not by passion. SENECA *On a Happy Life* [Replace "submits himself to reason" with "submits himself to faith" and you get Christianity.]

It is agreed upon at all hands, "That right reason is the perfection of human nature," and wisdom only the dictate of it. SENECA *On a Happy Life*

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Let us not therefore follow, like beasts, but rather govern ourselves by reason, than by example. SENECA *On a Happy Life*

Nature has brought us into the world naked and unarmed; we have not the teeth or the paws of lions or bears to make ourselves terrible; but by the two blessings of reason and union, we secure and defend ourselves against violence and fortune. This it is that makes man the master of all other creatures.... SENECA *Of Benefits* 20-202-203

It is philosophy that must bring us to a contempt of death, which is the remedy of all diseases. In poverty it gives us riches, or such a state of mind as makes them superfluous to us. It arms us against all difficulties : one man is pressed with death, another with poverty; some with envy, others are offended at Providence, and unsatisfied with the condition of mankind; but philosophy prompts us to relieve the prisoner, the infirm, the necessitous, the condemned; to show the ignorant their errors, and rectify their affections. It is philosophy that gives us a veneration for God, a charity for our neighbor, that teaches us our duty to Heaven.... Seneca *On a Happy Life*

(PHILOSOPHY:) Not to make us live only, but to live happily. She teaches us what things are good, what evil, and what only appear so.... She clears our minds of dross and vanity; she raises up our thoughts to heaven, and carries them down to hell.... SENECA *On a Happy Life*

(Philosophy or reason) “retrieves the truth of all: she searches nature, gives laws to life.... It is not enough to know God, unless we obey him.” SENECA *On a Happy Life*

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

---

### CONCLUSION FOR THIS CHAPTER:

---

The reader should keep in mind that most ancient Christian writers did not hate everything pagan. Indeed, virtually all of them believed that there was a germ of divine truth in every pagan philosophy. If the reader keeps this in mind, he or she will find it easier to accept the thesis that the New Testament writers borrowed a good deal of stuff from pagans like Seneca and Plato.

---

### STOICISM AND THE THEOLOGY OF PAUL

---

Stoic morals equal that of the Christians who then added Hell and Heaven. Paul's theology is pagan.

Quotes on the Importance of Stoicism to early Christianity:

Bruno Bauer (1809-1882)

Christianity is essentially "Stoicism triumphant in a Jewish garb." *Christ & the Caesars: The Origin of Christianity from Romanized Greek Culture* by Bruno Bauer and Frank E. Schacht - Jan 1999.

“What is most remarkable about this book is that Bruno Bauer goes down to text-by-text comparisons of the New Testament and the Epistles of the great Stoic writer, Lucius Seneca (tutor to Nero Caesar), in order to research keywords and key phrases common to both. ...

However, Bruno Bauer cited the latest 19th century scholarship to show that if there were identical words and phrases between the writings of Seneca and the writings of the New Testament, the copying was all on



## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

the New Testament side, because Seneca wrote his Epistles a full generation before St. Paul wrote his.”  
Amazon.com - Customer review

Rudolf Bultmann argued that New Testament authors, including Paul, took a lot from Stoicism, as regard style as well as content. Seneca’s works were studied by everybody from Justin to Augustine of Hippo and Jerome.

Mithraism, Neoplatonism, Stoicism, Cynicism, and the local cults of municipal or rustic gods... these mystic ideas left their mark on the apostles Paul and John. (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization, The Age Of Faith*, ch 1, p 9)

Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it ... (The *Story of Civilization, Caesar and Christ*, Will Durant, Part III, 1944, p. 595).

Give or take Hell and Heaven, the Christians borrowed their ethics from the Roman Stoics. For that reason we need to review the beliefs of Roman Stoicism, which were essentially the same as classical Stoicism.

### *The Birth of Stoicism*

Wikipedia the free encyclopedia

With the fall of the Greek city states and the Alexandrian Empire, Stoics and the Cynics provided the individual with personal salvation.

Zeno of Citium (c. 334 BC–c. 262 BC) was a philosopher from Citium, a Greek city on Cyprus. Zeno was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, which he taught in Athens from about 300 BCE. Stoicism laid great emphasis on living in accordance with nature or

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

reason and thus achieving a life of virtue (by avoiding sin). It flourished as the dominant philosophy through the Roman era.

Zeno did not object to using the names of the traditional Greek gods. He simply argued that there was one God with many names. Thus, from the beginning, the stoics used common religious language, as regard prayer, etc.

### *Stoic Concepts:*

Conflagration *Ekpyrosis* (Ancient Greek ἐκπύρωσις *ekpurōsis*, conflagration) is a Stoic belief in the periodic destruction of the cosmos by a great conflagration every Great Year. The cosmos is then recreated (palingenesis) only to be destroyed again at the end of the new cycle.

Cosmos. In the general sense, a cosmos is an orderly or harmonious system. It originates from the Greek term κόσμος (*kosmos*), meaning "order" or "ornament" and is antithetical to the concept of chaos.

Logos... is an important term in philosophy, psychology, rhetoric and religion. Originally a word meaning "a ground", "a plea", "an opinion", "an expectation", "word," "speech," "account," "reason," it became a technical term in philosophy, beginning with Heraclitus (ca. 535–475 BC), who used the term for a principle of order and knowledge.

Natural law, or the law of nature (Latin: *lex naturale*), is any system of law which is purportedly determined by nature, and is thus universal. Classically, natural law refers to the use of reason to analyze human nature and deduce binding rules of moral behavior.

[The Roman Stoics were Pantheists. There was only one God which they called God, Nature or Reason. Roman

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

Stoicism confined itself almost entirely to the subject of ethics. Nature is kind to humanity so we should follow (obey) Nature and be kind to humanity, using reason and observation and conscience to determine what is right and wrong. Roman Stoics thought that the problem was how to minimize "sin." Editors]

### SENECA (1 CE - 65 CE)

Seneca, Lucius Aenaeus, philosopher. A wealthy Spanish Roman, high civic official and tutor of Nero, who in the end compelled him to take his own life. He is usually quoted as a Stoic but was guided in his well-known ethical treatises by the Roman blend of Stoicism and Epicureanism [atheism]. He has the greatest veneration for Epicurus, whom the Stoics detested, and constantly quotes him. Joseph MacCabe

#### *Note on Seneca and the New Testament*

As representative of Roman Stoicism we have used the writings of Seneca (ca. 1 BCE – 65 CE) as he was a highly influential pagan Roman Stoic philosopher, one much admired by ancient Christians.

In this book we do not claim that Seneca had any direct influence on the writings of the New Testament, as the Stoic philosopher was writing too late to have influenced the NT. However, Stoicism had been around for about 300 years before Seneca wrote and was a common influence on both Seneca and the early Christians.

#### *Religious Language*

From the beginning (ca. 300 BCE) stoicism caused some confusion due to its use of religious language. The stoics used religious language, perhaps to discourage the State from charging them with the criminal act of impiety

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

(denying the existence of the gods or disrespecting them). The rare use of language by Seneca pertaining to future life and prayer may have attracted a larger audience.

### *Seneca on God or Nature*

For most modern people the word *God* indicates a personal being, an all knowing, all intelligent, all powerful, all loving, who created the cosmos and us, who can answer prayers and provide an afterlife for human beings.

The stoics used a number of words for the deity: Nature, Reason, Zeus, God etc. However, the bulk of the writings of Seneca indicate an impersonal God: Nature or Reason.

Nature is an impersonal force; it is not a living entity; it has no gender, no consciousness and no intelligence. Nature designed but did not create the cosmos out of nothing nor human beings as a conscious act. Stars and human beings are the result of natural laws, of material cause-and-effect. This is the view of Epicurus, the atheist. It is also a view that is compatible with modern scientific theory. The only real difference between Stoicism and modern science is Divine Providence. Whereas the Stoics felt that nature was beneficent and bestowed nothing but good things on human beings, modern science, like ancient atheists, sees nature as neutral as regard human beings. But we'll get back to that later.

For the Stoics, Nature or God is unaware of human existence. It can not hear prayers, much less answer them. Future life contradicts the Stoic idea that the soul is mortal and comes to an end when the body dies.

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

There is no future life, no personal survival after death. Thus, Nature or Reason is a better term for the Stoic deity than God or Zeus.

However, whether Seneca believed in a personal God or not, would not affect the theme of this book, namely that the pagan philosophies of Stoicism and Platonism had a large influence on the New Testament and early Christianity. Roman Stoicism was the major source of New Testament moral thought. If one argues that the Stoics believed in prayer or life after death this would simply make this pagan philosophy even more attractive to early Christians.

### *Christian praise for Seneca*

Tertullian, an intensely anti-philosophy Christian, on the pagan, Seneca:

“The early Christian Church was very favorably disposed towards Seneca and his writings, and the church leader Tertullian called him "our Seneca". (Moses Hadas. *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca*, 1958. 1.)

Tertullian writes “Seneca... whom we so often find on our side.” ... He describes (Seneca) as 'almost one of us' (*De anima* 20).

Indeed, some of the Christian fathers even thought Seneca was a secret Christian! Modern scholars and most of the ancient Christian fathers rejected the idea that Seneca was a Christian but his ethics fit well with the New Testament -- if you add eternal punishment in Hell for most and the reward of Heaven for the few.

The only reference to a Seneca in all the works of Eusebius (Book 4, Chapter 5) is to a supposed 1st century Bishop Of Jerusalem – a curious name for a Jew, to be sure!

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### *Seneca and Jesus on Moralality*

Once again, we can see the influence of the Stoics on Christian ethics and theology. The German philosopher and Christian, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) argued that virtue or morality is good in and of itself. An action is moral because it benefits the recipient with no benefit to the giver. Kant is much like a Stoic. Intention is all that counts.

### *Neutrals or Indifferents*

If you die trying to save a child from drowning in a river that is a moral good; if you did so that you may get a reward from the mayor for rescuing the child, it is not a moral action. Neither is it a virtuous act if you do it to avoid punishment. Virtue is a good in and of itself. As a matter of fact, it is the only good; all else are neutrals. Intention to benefit the child is all that counts. This is the view of Seneca and other Stoics.

What else are moral neutrals or indifferents? Just about everything. It is not relevant whether you are sick or healthy, whether you lose your life or not, or whether you are free or are a slave, male or female, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, happy or not.

Virtue is accompanied by happiness but does not cause it. The evil person is unhappy, miserable.

EPICLETUS (ca 50 CE-135 CE)

A Stoic and a favorite among Christians.

(Epictetus was a) Phrygian slave who became one of the most notable of the many moralists of the Greek Roman world. The *Encheiridion* (Manual) and *Discourses* that we have were very probably taken down by a pupil, as shorthand was then well known. His teaching was

## ANCIENTS BELIEVE PAGAN PHILSOPHIES HAVE SOME TRUTH

ascetic and impracticable and in many respects very like the more ascetic counsels ascribed to Jesus (the golden rule, voluntary poverty, passive resistance, etc.) He belonged to the small religious wing of the Stoic movement and his extravagances of virtue illustrate again the danger of introducing any mysticism into ethics. The absurd suggestion that he borrowed from Christ is refuted by the dates. His chief interest is to remind us that all the moral sentiment attributed to Jesus in the gospels were familiar in the first century.

Joseph McCabe

## PART 3 Christian and Pagan Stoic Morals

---





## CHAPTER 4 JESUS AND PAUL AND PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS.

---

### Part 1 Does Sexual Morality Save? Family, Marriage and Sex

Many Christians and Stoics believed they were saved from sin because they felt that they had developed a supreme morality. Let us compare Christian and Pagan views on family, marriage and sex. (We will deal with other moral matters in later Chapters.)

#### *Family, Against The*

And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved. MT 10:21-22

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. MT 10.34-37

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother. MT 12.50

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

People have been saying that Jesus is crazy. The mother and brothers of Jesus attempt to reach him in order to restrain him. Mk 3.21

And he looked round about on the, which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. (MK 3:34-35)

Jesus insults his mother and family when he indicates that his real mother and brethren are his followers who do the will of God.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered (Peter) and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. MK 10:28-30

Those who abandon their wives and families will get great rewards.

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. MT 10.35

### *Males, the Holiness of*

As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that opens the womb (is born) shall be called holy to the Lord....) LK 2.23

To God males, not females, are holy.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### *Jesus and Paul on Sexual Morality*

Note: It should be noted is that while Seneca is reasonably consistent in his ethical thought, Jesus and Paul often speak in inconsistent or even contradictory ways. This is due to the fact that early Christians had a variety of moral beliefs which were often times inconsistent or even contradictory. They were not guided by God, the Holy Spirit, or the Son of God. Despite the praise that New Testament writers gave to those who follow the teachings of God, “not men,” nevertheless the writings of the New Testament make it quite clear that those sacred, holy writings were produced by human beings. We think this explains why the writings of the New Testament are plagued by so much controversy, inconsistencies and contradictions.

Some of the writers in the New Testament believed that Christ had resolved the problem of sin by delivering a set of moral values, a set which they considered vastly superior to that of the Stoics, indeed, a perfect morality which would save Christians. Let us compare Christian and Pagan views on family, marriage and sex.

*For Jesus’ teachings on sexual morality we have used Jesus as portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew, traditionally dated to about 85 CE.*

### Paul and his Letters

Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was an early Christian missionary; the Apostle to the Gentiles lived from ca 5 CE to ca. 67 CE.

The Letters of Paul: From *Jesus Christ : A Pagan Myth - Evidence That Jesus Never Lived*. Chapter 9

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

“Virtually all modern scholars believe that of the thirteen letters attributed to Paul, only seven are genuine: 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Philemon. Traditionally they are thought to have been written between 45 and 62 CE. These letters were edited, that is material was added to or subtracted from them as the needs of the church changed. In *The Journal of Higher Criticism*, Hermann Detering briefly reviews some of the evidence offered by the Dutch school in the 19th-century as regard the integrity of the Pauline letters.

“There are a number of anachronisms in Paul’s epistles. The highly-developed theology and international organization of the church which is apparent in Paul’s letters assumes “a *longer period of incubation* and could not possibly have been arrived at within two decades” of Jesus’ death (Detering’s ital.). Paul writes that he fought at Ephesus with wild animals (1 Cor 15.32), but we have no evidence that Christians were fed to the lions until the letters of Ignatius of Antioch written about 117 CE, more than 50 years after Paul’s death.

“There are other problems with the Apostle’s letters. Apologists argue that Paul wrote to individual churches, but 1 Corinthians is addressed to the church in Corinth at 1 Cor 1.2a, and to the churches “everywhere” at verse 2b. Also, scholars claim that Paul deals with specific problems of individual churches, but the subjects of his letters are universal in nature. The Apostle deals with faith versus works, morality, the theological meaning of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection; he writes of false apostles, false gospels and false “Christs,” and of the end times, divorce, and ascetic practices, among other broad subjects. These topics are so general in scope, they could have been addressed to the church in general and at any time.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

“Another problem with the historicity of Paul’s correspondence is that the situation in which the letters were produced is confused. Often we do not know when or why Paul wrote a given letter, whether he is in prison or not, etc. Paul claims to be Jewish, but his letters “have in many places a completely non-Jewish character.” Van Manen argued that Paul was a “Gentile Christian.”

“Nearly every subject that Paul writes about is treated in an ambiguous and often contradictory manner. For example, there have been two centuries of debate about who the opponents of Paul are in Galatians (54-55 CE). Some of the guesses are: 1) Jews, 2) Christians of Jewish background, 3) gentiles who observed the ritual laws of Judaism, 4) Gnostics of pagan background, 5) Gnostics of Jewish background, 6) spirit-filled enthusiasts. Another problem with Galatians is that the accounts of the Jerusalem meeting in Galatians 2 and Acts 15 have long been seen as inconsistent and even as fiction.

“1 Corinthians (ca 56-57 CE) is believed by some scholars to be a composite document that has been interpolated. (Most think that this is true of 2 Corinthians as well.)”

Paul's epistles are hard to understand. And those who try to understand them, as with the other scriptures, do so "unto their own destruction." 2 Peter 3.16

### MARRIAGE & DIVORCE

Jesus and Paul are not very consistent in their teachings on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. MT 19.5-6

(Jesus) says unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery: and who so marries her which is put away does commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. MT 19: 8-11

7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:  
7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 1 COR 7.10-11

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery. MT 5.31-32, MT 19.9

## REMARRIAGE

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Rom 7.2-3

### ADULTERY IN THE MIND

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (mind). MT 5.27-28

Paul and others

Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. But if they can not contain [abstain from sex] let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. 1 COR 7:8-9 [Let them marry to avoid the sin of sex outside of marriage.]

### WIFE SHOULD SUBMIT TO HUSBAND

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. EPH 5.22-24

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. COL 3.18

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to



## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. TITUS 2.4-5

### BE KIND TO EACH OTHER

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 1 COR 7.3

### SHOULD NOT WITHHOLD SEX FROM EACH OTHER

The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud (deny) you not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (abstinence). But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 1 COR 7.4-6

### CHRISTIAN-PAGAN MARRIAGES

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. [Pagan children are unclean unless the pagan parent is married to a Christian.] But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shall save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shall save thy wife? 1 COR 7:12-16

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

What happened to the hatred that Paul is said to have had for all things pagan? It is wrong for a Christian to marry a pagan. But you may sleep with one in marriage on the grounds that this person *may* convert to Christianity.

### HUSBAND: HONOR THY WIFE

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel.... 1 PETER 3.7

### NO MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. MT 22.30

### SEX

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.... 1 THESS 4:3

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. [Paul prefers that you be a celibate as he is.] 1 COR 7:1-2

For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after the manner, and another after that. I say therefore to unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. [Do not get married.] 1 COR 7.7-8

### VIRGINS AND CELIBATES

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 1 COR 7:25

But if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. 1 COR 7:28

But I would have you without carefulness (anxieties). He that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 1 COR 7:32-33

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 1 COR 7:34

And this I speak for your own profit (benefit); not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. 1 COR 7:35

So then he that gives her in marriage doeth well; but he that gives her not in marriage does better. 1 COR 7:38

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress (end times?) I say, that it is good for a man to be [a virgin or celibate.] Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 1 COR 7:26-27

But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remains, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passing away. 1 COR 7.29-31 [Did Paul think that the world was to end soon?]

### CASTRATION

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable to thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. MT 5.28-29 [The subject here is sexual lust. The solution as to sexual sin for males seems to be castration.]

### EUNUCHS

For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs [by] men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. MT 19.12 [Only some shall be castrated? The Stoics, like Romans in general, would have found this practice repulsive.]

### WOMEN

#### Women and the Church

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. 1 TIM 2.12-15

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 1 COR 14.34-35

### Women as Sexual Objects for Men

And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men.... ROM 1.27

### Women Submit to Men

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 1 COR 11:3

Was there a woman apostle? ROM 16:7

*"Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church."* ROM 16.1-2

The Revised Standard Version calls Phoebe a "deaconess", making her a church leader which contradicts Paul when he says that women must be silent in church. 1 COR 14.34-35

Honor the Widows: 1 TIM 5.3-10

You should help a widow only if she:

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

- Has no children or nephews at home
- Is desolate, trusts in God, and prays all the time
- Is not living in pleasure (a widow living in pleasure is the living dead)
- Is over 60 years old
- Had only one husband
- Has raised children
- Has lodged strangers
- Has washed the saints' feet
- Has relieved the afflicted
- Has diligently followed every good work

## PAGAN STOICS ON WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

### Women and religion

Roman women were present at most festivals and cult observances. Some rituals specifically required the presence of women, but their active participation was limited. As a rule women did not perform animal sacrifice, the central rite of most major public ceremonies. In addition to the public priesthood of the Vestals, some cult practices were reserved for women only. The rites of the Bona Dea excluded men entirely. Because women enter the public record less frequently than men, their religious practices are less known, and even family cults were headed by the *paterfamilias*. A host of deities, however, are associated with motherhood. Juno, Diana, Lucina, and specialized divine attendants presided over the life-threatening act of giving birth and the perils of caring for a baby at a time when the infant mortality rate was as high as 40 percent.

Literary sources vary in their depiction of women's religiosity: some represent women as paragons of Roman virtue and devotion, but also inclined by

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

temperament to self-indulgent religious enthusiasms, novelties and the seductions of *superstitio*. [Religion in ancient Rome; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

### The Vestals

The Vestals were a public priesthood of six women devoted to the cultivation of Vesta, goddess of the hearth of the Roman state and its vital flame. A girl chosen to be a Vestal achieved unique religious distinction, public status and privileges, and could exercise considerable political influence. Upon entering her office, a Vestal was emancipated from her father's authority. ... A Vestal's dress represented her status outside the usual categories that defined Roman women, with elements of both virgin bride and daughter, and Roman matron and wife. Unlike male priests, Vestals were freed of the traditional obligations of marrying and producing children, and were required to take a vow of chastity that was strictly enforced: a Vestal polluted by the loss of her chastity while in office was buried alive. Thus the exceptional honor accorded a Vestal was religious rather than personal or social; her privileges required her to be fully devoted to the performance of her duties, which were considered essential to the security of Rome. [Religion in ancient Rome; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

## PAGAN STOICS

### Adultery

It is infamous for a man to exact chastity of his wife and corrupt the wives of others. Seneca, *Letter xciv*, 26

### Adultery in the Mind

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

(He) knows well enough the injury he does his wife in the keeping of a wench, and yet has lust. Seneca *On the Happy Life* Chapter 5

It is the intention, not the outward act, which makes the wickedness. Seneca *On the Happy Life*, xvi.

If a man lie with his own wife, imagining her another, he is an adulterer. Seneca, *On Constancy*, vii, 4.

### Sins of the Flesh

The Stoics were mildly ascetic. They were against excessive emphasis on emotions, money, sex, power and so forth.

When we come once to value our flesh above our honesty, we are lost.... Seneca, *On the Happy Life*

### Philosophy, Women and Men

It is betwixt the Stoics and other philosophers as betwixt men and women; they are both equally necessary for society; only the one is born for government, and the other for subjection. Seneca Epistle 19

### Family

If such a thing as wife or child be granted thee, there is no objection; but if the Captain calls, run to the ship, and never look behind. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, vii. (Family is important provided it does not interfere with the pursuit of truth – philosophy.)

Demetrius, upon the taking of Megara, asked Stilpo the philosopher what he had lost. “Nothing,” says he, “for I had all that I could call my own about me.” And yet the



## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

enemy had then made himself master of his patrimony, his children, and his country: but these he looked upon as only adventitious goods, and under the command of Fortune. Seneca *On the Happy Life*

That is, the family is of value but fate decides when children are to suffer or die. We can only control virtue which is the only absolute good. The body of the slave belongs to the master but his or her mind (soul) belongs to the slave. Or, as a Christian might say, an enemy might kill your body but that does not determine the fate of your soul or for the Stoic, moral virtue.

Quotes from our previous book, *Jesus Never Lived: Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth*, Chapter 9:

Seneca writes that one should love one's country, father, and wife. He writes that the wise man "remains self-content even when he marries, even when he brings up his children." He would rather not live at all than to give up human companionship. Of Musonius Rufus (30-101 CE) it was said, "...he is the clearest of any ancient writer on the equality of man and woman (Frgs. Nos 3 and 4); he believed marriage to be a complete partnership" with sex being confined to marriage for the purpose of procreation.

Epictetus states that men get married and beget children because they wish to be happy. Family feeling is good and natural. He also says that the man who commits adultery destroys friendly feeling toward his neighbor, destroys friendship, and the country [cf. 1 Cor 6.9-12, adulterers will not inherit the kingdom.]

Judaism celebrates life. Stoic-Cynics varied as to the value they put on marriage but most accepted it if it was not perceived as an obstacle to the pursuit of virtue.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Paul's view on marriage is similar to Stoic-Cynics in that he does not explicitly forbid it, yet like some Stoics, he writes that the people should be celibate as he is (cf. 1 Cor 7.7-8) and that a man should not touch a woman (1 Cor 7.1). He also says that women should be silent in church and subordinate to the husband, a view that many Greco-Romans would find acceptable.

---

### COMMENTS BY EDITORS ON MARRIAGE AND WOMEN

---

It is not possible in the New Testament to find quotes on marriage as positive as the Stoic quotes above. It is hard to find anything in the Stoics that would compare to Paul's negative views on sex and marriage. For some Roman Stoics marriage would be a taboo if it would interfere with the pursuit of virtue or philosophy. But for Paul it is sex in and of itself which is sinful. You should get married lest the devil tempt you to fornicate. Paul accepts "sister marriages." Sex and other fleshy sins are big negatives as regards salvation. With Roman Stoics sex is not sinful. Some Stoics thought the duties involved with marriage (supporting children, etc.) might interfere with the search and practice of virtue. On the other hand, Seneca was married twice. Christian heroes in the New Testament and for several centuries afterwards were routinely pictured as unmarried. For about 1500 years marriage was considered inferior to the celibate state. Eventually, all Roman Catholic priests took vows of celibacy and could not marry; as they do to this day.

The Church taught that the sin of Adam and Eve, the Original Sin, was passed on to all of humanity through sexual intercourse. Sex even inside of marriage was a sin.

## CONCLUSIONS

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

Note the similarities between Seneca and New Testament morals -- except for the punishment in Hell and the rewards in Heaven in the afterlife. However, the Stoics came close to reward and punishment in that they believed that virtuous people lived happy lives and evil persons lived miserable lives of unhappiness. Unlike the Christians, the reward or punishment was not eternal and did not depend upon the sacrament of baptism or communion.

The quotations below from *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* [1914] by Joseph McCabe is meant to supplement our earlier work, *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth – Evidence That Jesus Never Existed* in which we argued that Jesus was a literary creation of the pagan world.

As we were concerned with the alledged events of his life, we did not examine his moral or ethical teachings. In *Sources*, McCabe's thesis is that the moral teachings of Jesus were not unique but common in the ancient world. We feel that his book presents good evidence for the influence of the Greco-Roman world on the creation of the Gospels, especially the influence of Roman Stoicism.

Thus, when we edited the book we kept the chapters on Greek and Roman morality and his chapter on the Gospels. We kept his chapter on the pagan parallels to the ethical teachings ascribed to Jesus in Matthew.

MaCabe lists about 100 moral teachings of Jesus taken mostly from the Gospel of Matthew. Along side these sayings he lists over 400 pagan parallel teachings, many from Roman Stoics.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

[As to why we omitted the Jewish parallels, see our previous book, *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth*, where we argue that a pagan background for the myth of Jesus is a better fit than a Jewish one.]

McCabe mainly derives the pagan ethical teachings from three Roman stoics: Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca. 4 BCE – 65 CE): the statesman and philosopher (born in Spain but arrived in Rome (ca. 5 CE) as a young boy), Epictetus (55 – 135 CE) and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE).

Modern scholars do not think that these Stoics borrowed from the Gospels nor that the evangelists borrowed from the stoics. Indeed, since Seneca died in 65 CE, the Gospel Writers and Paul would not have had much time to become familiar with the writings of the Stoic philosopher.

However stoicism preceeded Christ by nearly 300 years. The philosophy was founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium around 301 BCE and flourished in Greco-Roman culture long before the Christian era.

Christian writers have conceded that the Gospels and Paul were influenced by Stoicism. Augustine was greatly influenced by Stoicism. Tertullian called Seneca “our Seneca.” Before Augustine (fl 400 CE), ancient Christians forged letters between Seneca and Paul. Medieval writers falsely believed that Seneca was converted to Christianity by Saint Paul (who used much stoic technical language and a great deal of stoic teachings in his letters.) However, modern Christian writers ignore the connection between stoicism and the origins of Christianity.

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

(Chapters 2 through 6) by Joseph McCabe. Edited by the Daltons.

### CHAPTER II.

#### The Woman of Pagan Culture ...

##### Rome

Into the development of woman's position in Rome we must inquire more closely. It is here most precisely that the effect of the coming to power of Christianity will be felt, and where it has to be chiefly appraised. The majority of religious people know two things, and little else, about Roman life and thought in this connection. They know that in the stern, puritanic, earlier days of the Republic woman was the slave of her father until she married, and then the slave of her husband for the rest of her life; and they know that at the time of the coming of Christianity woman (and man, too) led a life of general and, in some respects, sordid licentiousness and cruelty. They vaguely ascribe the disappearance of both evils to Christian influence, and so look with suspicion on every proposal to subvert it. This is a familiar pulpit account of the moral history of humanity. It is a complete distortion of the facts.

Thus, long before there could be any question of Christian influence on Roman society or Roman law, woman had attained in the Empire a position of almost complete liberty and distinction. The woman of the wealthier class had practically no grievances, and she was conscious of a power to secure whatever further ambition she might entertain. It is, therefore, wholly absurd to speak as if Christianity had delivered her from the despotism of earlier Roman law. But we must go further. The Christian Church must tell us how it came about that, whereas we find woman in Rome

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

1,800 years ago on the eve of complete independence, we have had to fight the battle all over again in the nineteenth century; how it came about that in the intervening 1,800 years, and particularly during that period when the power of the Church was paramount — the Middle Ages — woman fell to a lower position in law than she had ever occupied under the Greek or Roman system.

The truth is, as I will show, that it is the explicit and emphatic teaching of the great Christian leaders that brought about this unhappy result. Woman was thrust back into the gynaeceum by the official action of the Church, under the clear direction of its most sacred writings.

Greek philosophy had, as I said, been transferred from Athens to Alexandria, and there it took almost the character and fervour of a religion. It had an appreciable influence, in this form of neo-Platonism, on the moral temper of the age. The Emperor Julian was a follower of it. Saint Augustine and several others found it the ante-chamber to Christianity. Its last great teacher, the brilliant Hypatia, shows that its spirit was one not only of abstract justice, but also of justice to woman. On the other hand, the Stoic philosophy was even more effective, both in improving the general moral temper of the Empire and in securing justice for the woman and the slave. Its chief Roman writers, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, are teachers for all time. It had completely altered the tone of Roman society before the middle of the second century. The vicious luxury and gluttony of the Augustan age, the crucifixion of slaves, the licentiousness of the emancipated women, and other disorders of the "pagan" world, were healed by purely pagan influences.

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

Then every other moral agency was swept out of Europe by a politically triumphant Christianity — and the hopes and ambitions of women were sealed up for 1,500 years in the tomb of paganism. Let us see how this dire result came about.

### CHAPTER III

#### WOMAN in the Early Christian Teaching

In the introduction to her *Woman's Bible*, Mrs. E. Cady Stanton says; "The canon and civil law, Church and State, priests and legislators, all political parties and religious denominations, have alike taught that woman was made after man, of man, and for man, an inferior being, subject to man."

Polygamy only began to disappear among the Jews in the fifth century B.C. And so curious was the influence of the Old Testament on the early Christian Church that several of the Fathers could not bring themselves to condemn it, and it was not officially suppressed by the Church until 1060 A.D. Luther and the Reformers allowed it even later. Yet polygamy was one of the surest signs of a disdain of woman, and had been rejected by Greeks, Romans, and barbarians long before the Hebrews began to perceive its enormity.

I have said that Christianity was not really in a position to influence the Roman social order until three centuries later. During those three centuries the Fathers raised the structure of Christian teaching which was to command the absolute allegiance of Europe until the Reformation at least. It is a matter of no less interest than importance to trace the growth of a religious contempt for woman through the patristic literature. But it is a sad page for any Christian woman to read. I begin with the Greek fathers, as these were not only

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

earlier in time, and therefore present the theory of woman's inferiority in a slight and immature form, but they were also, through Alexandria, in closer touch with the humanist culture of the neo-Platonists.

Clement of Alexandria, the subtlest of the school, exhibits the ordinary improved feeling of the educated Greek of his time, as regards women, when he writes as a philosopher. When he is asked if she may study philosophy like her brothers, he answers at once in the affirmative. She has the "same nature" as man. But as soon as he is confronted with the familiar texts from the Epistles of St. Paul, his humanism begins to waver. Moreover, we find already in Clement of Alexandria that contempt of marriage which was soon to become one of the great errors of the Church. It interests us because it ever either springs from or leads to a contempt of woman. He says in the Stromateis that "fornication is a lapse from one marriage into many."

The early Romans had themselves looked with disfavour on second marriages, but this was on the ground of sentiment and loyalty of memory — on principles which were in themselves most commendable. The Fathers renewed the attack on second marriage, but on grounds which were socially mischievous. They had granted a first marriage as a concession to the weakness of the flesh, and drew an ascetic line at second marriage. This not only encouraged immorality, but tended always to obscure the dignity of woman and her love.

The other great trio of the Greek Fathers was St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Gregory of Nazianzum.

St. Basil, of strong and trenchant mind, insists that woman is "man's equal in mental power, only less in bodily strength." When, however, he comes to deal with the Old Testament, he is prevented by his religious



## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

regard for all its books from setting its awful teaching aside. He can only murmur that its treatment of woman is "a mystery."

St. Gregory of Nyssa, though a married bishop, furnishes to the monasteries of a later date a great deal of that religious depreciation of marriage of which I have spoken. He dwells constantly and morbidly on the praise of virginity. It was no part of God's primitive design that the race should be continued by sexual union. Marriage is the outcome of sin.

St. Gregory of Nazianzum, the sweetest singer and most eloquent and emotional of the Greek Fathers, takes us a step lower in this devolution of Christian culture as regards woman. In his poem to Olympias he expresses the growing feeling of woman's inferiority. Shall the maid Olympias learn philosophy? By no means. "Woman's philosophy is to obey the laws of marriage." She must refrain even from going to weddings and christenings; must not give a thought to public affairs — "Let thy house be thy city." Then the usual concern for virginity appears: "Blessed is the one who leads a celibate life, and soils not the divine image within him with the filth of concupiscence." And it has the inevitable ending in a contempt of woman; —

"Fierce is the dragon, and cunning the asp;

But woman has the malice of both."

Finally, we have in St. John Chrysostom a continuance of this unhappy tendency. A great and popular preacher, with crowds of women always hanging on his lips in one of the chief cities of the Empire, he is nevertheless thoroughly Pauline. He sees symptoms of the feeble revolt that even Christian woman is ever raising against this new despotism of man, and he

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

insists that "she shall not demand equality, for she is under the head." But Chrysostom never breaks into expressions of contempt.

When, however, we pass from the Greek to the Latin branch of the Church, and examine the writings of those Fathers who were the absolute guides of opinion for the next thousand years, this pious misogyny at once takes a more sombre, though at times a most amusing, form. A gulf was beginning to yawn between profane culture and sacred culture. A constant brooding over the Scriptures was accounted the only desirable form of learning; and the consequences were disastrous for the cause of woman.

Tertulian, the first of the Latin Fathers, a sternly ascetic figure, opens the chapter with the most violent phraseology. The first sentence of his work, *On the Adornment of Women*, runs: "If your faith were as firm as its eternal reward, my beloved sisters, no one of you, after learning of the living God and her own condition as a woman, would dare to seek gay apparel, but would dress in rags and remain in dirt as a sorrowful and penitent Eve." "Thou," he says a few lines afterwards, "thou art the devil's gate, the betrayer of the tree, the first deserter of the divine law!" He, more than any others, praises virginity, until at length he is moved to tell the virgin that marriage is "not far removed from fornication." The second great African Father, St. Cyprian, is more moderate in his phrases, though he forbids women to teach when a fresh effort is made to secure that outlet for the activity of Christian women.

When we pass to St. Augustine, however, the tendency becomes at once painfully apparent.... Saint Augustine, by nature one of the most humane as he was one of the ablest of his day, never loses an opportunity to express his disdain for woman. "After the manner of her sex," he

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

observes in a sermon when speaking of a woman's anger. "What does it matter whether it be in the person of mother or sister; we have to beware of Eve in every woman," he writes to a youth who hesitates to join his monastery because his mother implores him to remain at home.

But it is chiefly in his final and mature commentary on Genesis that the working of St. Augustine's mind is seen. Why was woman created at all? he asks himself, and he can find no answer but the painful need to carry on the race. Perhaps, he suggests to himself, she was made to be a companion to man. No, he replies at once, for "how much better two men could live and converse together than a man and a woman." Later, however, he discovers a peculiar reason for the creation of woman. He asks himself how this glorious being, as he has described Adam, could be deceived by the clumsy trickery of the serpent. Possibly, he goes on, God created a being of inferior intelligence and will — woman — with a view to the carrying-out of this pre-arranged drama of the Fall. So it is when St. Augustine comes to deal with the polygamous lives of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. As a heretic, he had boldly ridiculed them as barbaric types. As a convert, he had taken refuge in the broad harbour of "mystery." Now, in his new conviction of woman's absolute inferiority, he sees polygamy to be a perfectly defensible arrangement. In one of his works (*De bono conjugali*) he is ready to allow a man a second wife in his own time if his first is barren, though still alive.

The two other leaders of Latin Christianity, St. Ambrose and St. Jerome, are little more favourable to woman. St. Ambrose does not, indeed, show any deliberate contempt. Woman must be obedient, but not servile, to her husband. In one place he makes an amusing attempt to find a ground for the restriction of her work

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

and education. She is more fitted for bodily work, he says, because "remember that God took a rib out of Adam's body, not a part of his soul, to make her." And when he is asked why she must veil herself in the churches, while her husband does not, he answers, because "she was not made to the image of God, like man."

St. Jerome, who through most of his life had a circle of noble Roman ladies in daily intercourse with him, has nevertheless a fine theoretical contempt for woman. A great Scriptural scholar, he never fails to endorse and amplify the disdainful references to woman in the Old Testament, such as that she is "the root of all evil." He points out with some complacency how rarely the saints of the Old Testament are described as having daughters, though they have many sons, and how the reverse is true of the wicked kings.

In his attacks on Jovinian — a Luther of the fourth century — he habitually depreciates woman for the purpose of discrediting marriage; "but marriage is good for those who are afraid to sleep alone at night," he says. In a letter to Heliodorus, who hesitates to join him in the desert, he says:

"Though thy father cling to thee, and thy mother rend her garments and show thee the breasts thou hast sucked, thrust them aside with dry eyes to embrace the cross." This letter is said to have been learned by heart by Jerome's lady pupils.

We thus see that while, as I described in the preceding chapter, a remarkable advance was being made in the cultured mind of the age with regard to the treatment of women, the Christian Church was preparing a terrible reaction. Stoic and neo-Platonist thinkers, and educated

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

Romans in general, were forming a more enlightened judgment.

By the end of the fourth century "paganism" was in its agony. By the middle of the fifth century it was dead, and Christianity was all-powerful. The writings of Augustine and Ambrose and Jerome ruled the life of Europe. Their ideas about women enter into the Church life and social life and the legislation of every country, as it settles down into orderly administration.

In the fifth century the Councils began to close the door of the ministry effectually against women. Few deaconesses can be found after that time. One by one the public functions were reserved for the clergy. Women were forbidden, successively, to teach, to baptise, to preach, or take any order whatever. Councils of bishops began to dispose of women in a curious fashion. At the Council of Macon, in 585, a bishop was found to hold the opinion that woman had no soul. He was immediately corrected, but the appearance of a bishop with such a theory is significant. At the Council of Auxerre, in 578, the bishops forbade women, on account of their "impurity," to take the sacrament in their hands as men did. On every side woman was forced to retire from the position she had won.

The dignity which the Stoics had at length granted her was flung to the winds once more. The whole of the ground won in Greece and Rome was lost. Woman, as Mr. Lecky says, sank to a lower legal position than she had ever occupied under paganism. "In this union of Church and State," says Mrs. Cady Stanton, "mankind touched the lowest depth of degradation."

It is true, again, that the Christian Church brought a severe ideal of marriage, and so far rendered a social service, and a service to woman. But the Church took

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

away with the left hand what it gave with the right. While sustaining the rigour it destroyed the dignity of marriage. It set itself, as St. Jerome expressed it, to "lay the axe of virginity at the root of the tree of matrimony." It never declared marriage sinful, but it went as near to such a declaration as was possible. It strongly and persistently, by all its great teachers, advocated abstinence from marriage. It denounced divorce with an irrational zeal — though the Fathers said it was not absolutely unjustifiable for the husband to re-marry when the wife had sinned — and it used violent language of second marriages. It represented sexual love to be an outcome of sin; strictly forbade indulgence in it, even for married folk, for its own sake, and on the eve of holy days; condemned it as incompatible with the holy office of the priest; and generally ascribed to it an odour of the pit. No great social service, and no advantage to woman, could result from a gospel which was marred by such eccentricities.

In this wise, therefore, came and passed a great crisis in the affairs of women, 500 years ago. We have seen that the notion of woman being uniformly oppressed or degraded under pagan ideas, and of her condition beginning to improve as soon as Christianity came to power, is the reverse of the truth.

The life of the Middle Ages has clothed it with idle weeds, so that we only recover it with difficulty to-day. Woman has had to wait for the new paganism of our time — our Condorcets, and Robert Owens, and J. S. Mills — to stretch a hand back across the gulf of the Christian domination, and take up afresh the work of Plutarch and Seneca and Hypatia.

## CHAPTER IV

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

### Woman in the Middle Ages ....

The period through which I am now going to follow the fortunes of woman, in so far as they were influenced by the Church, stretches from the fifth century to the fifteenth. Medieval Europe arose from the fusion of the dissolving Roman Empire with the invading Celts and Teutons. On both sides there was, to begin with, or before conversion to Christianity, a fair ideal of womanhood. What was the result of the fusion as regards the general esteem of woman and her work? And how far was the Church responsible for the result? After all that we have seen, from Sir Henry Maine and Mile. Chauvin and other legal writers, it is hardly necessary to linger over the question of woman's position in law. It became worse than it had been in any civilised nation for many a century.

By the end of the eleventh century the dominance of the Church or Canon Law was supreme, and it determined the common law, whose barbarities we have only lately repealed.

### *Nuns*

St. Jerome and St. Augustine had urged their friends to thrust aside their mothers with stern disdain. St. Catherine of Siena assured her contemporaries, who believed her to be inspired, that the blessed in heaven were so united with God that "if a father or mother sees her son in hell, or the son his father or mother, they will not be troubled." Often enough this kind of piety took the form of the patristic contempt of woman.

We have a letter (No. III) written by St. Bernard in the name of one of his monks to parents who were imploring him to return to them. There is no question but that it was written by St. Bernard himself, the

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

greatest spiritual ruler of the Middle Ages. It contains passages such as this: — What have I to do with you? What have I received from you but sin and misery? Only this corruptible body that I bear do I confess that I hold from you. It is not enough for you that you have brought me into this miserable world; that you, being sinners, have begotten me in sin, you have nourished me in sin; but you must envy me the mercy of God I have obtained, and wish to make me a son of hell? You may choose to neglect your own salvation, but why should you wish also to destroy mine?

### *Marital Sex*

Peter Lombard, one of the most weighty of the schoolmen, laid it down that it was a venial sin only for married folk to have intercourse, when children were impossible, for the purpose of avoiding incontinence, but a mortal sin to do it for the pleasure alone.

St. Thomas, and practically all the theologians, held (and hold to-day) that the pleasure attaching to procreation was not part of God's original design, but a direct consequence of sin. A woman was made to kneel outside the church to be "purified" after child-birth before she could again share in the worship. Naturally, the people at large felt this conception of love to be unnatural and untrue, and they followed their own inclinations. Prostitution assumed terrible proportions, and was virtually sanctioned by Church and State at times. Burckhardt says that there were found to be 6,800 prostitutes (besides innumerable concubines) in Rome alone in 1490. In German cities foreign princes were greeted with bands of them provided by the municipality; and the Church was content to enact that they must attend worship at times. When venereal disease was introduced from America, it spread through



## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

all classes, from pope to peasant, with the most appalling rapidity.

### *The licence of the Middle Ages :*

I am loth to enter in detail on the question of the unrestrained licence of the Middle Ages, but there are still one or two respects in which it concerns our subject — namely, the culpability of the Church and the mischief wrought by its reactionary conception of woman and the family. The first is the right of the baron, and at times of the ecclesiastical potentate, to the newly married woman for one or more days. The second important point was the enforcement of obligatory confession in the thirteenth century. It is unnecessary to enlarge on this. The third was the fateful and fatal enforcement of sacerdotal celibacy. Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy* must instruct those who desire fuller information about the effect of this. I will only quote the conclusion of Mr. Lecky, that "the writers of the Middle Ages are full of the accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of the vast multitude of infanticides within their walls, and of that inveterate prevalence of incest among the clergy which rendered it necessary again and again to issue the most stringent enactments that priests should not be permitted to live with their mothers and sisters."

When Hildebrand failed to induce the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to enforce celibacy among the clergy, he sent emissaries to stir up the people against them, and frightful disorders ensued. Urban II gave nobles permission to enslave the wives who would not surrender their priest-husbands. Other nobles levied a tax on the clergy of their districts under the title of permission to keep concubines. The whole proceeding was in itself a contempt of woman, and it had for one of its chief consequences an increase of her medieval

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

degradation. The terrible growth of unnatural vice among the clergy — described in a work of the eleventh century written by a cardinal and warmly commended by the pope — does not concern us.

But the growth of concubinage was a frightful comment on the Church's claim to have uplifted woman. Things came to such a pass that parishioners, for the protection of their own families, compelled their clergy to keep concubines. Even when the higher clergy met sometimes for ecumenical councils, the occasion was marked by a notable concourse of women.

### *Witches*

The subject would not be complete without a formal reference to the treatment of witches. It is possible to exaggerate the culpability of the Church in this matter. The age was intensely superstitious, and it was a part of the almost universal practice of men, in or out of Christian times, to regard an injury as the work of malicious deities, or evil genii, or devils. When Christianity had, as is usual with triumphant religions, turned all the old pagan deities into devils, this practice was inevitably increased without any direct encouragement; but that the distinctive teaching of the Christian Bible and Church was particularly responsible for this awful chapter of medieval history cannot be questioned.

Mrs. Hill goes so far as to claim that "the Church was largely responsible for the terrible persecutions inflicted on women, and chiefly on the poorest and most helpless, on the ground of witchcraft," through its "dissemination of the theory of woman's inherent vice." Most certainly this side of the teaching of the Church had a great deal to do with it. There is ample evidence for this in the language of the time. The painfulness of

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

the facts is not mitigated when we remember that these "witches" were among the very few who brought relief to the sick poor in those days.

### *Summary*

In summing up, therefore, we must say that through the whole of this strange and chequered period we find the patristic depreciation of woman sinking into the mind of Europe and breaking out in its social life. In the better features of the time women have, as a rule, no part. They are not benefited by the quest of the Holy Grail; they have very little share in the vivid intellectual movement of the twelfth century, and none in that of the thirteenth, or in the artistic movement that sprang up beside it and formed the chief glory of the Middle Ages. Like the Jews, they are gradually driven from every profession and public office.

Theologians and ecclesiastical jurists obtain supreme power, and these are the most deadly enemies of women. Life-long seclusion in the inner apartments of a man she has not chosen, or interment in a nunnery that is either degraded or unnatural, is the choice (within limits) of the daughter of the wealthy. Life-long drudgery, with few and coarse pleasures, with a long vista of sticks and whips, and scolds-bridles, and ducking-stools, with, perhaps, the brutal ordeal on the slightest suspicion, or the ghastly death of the witch, is the prospect of the daughter of the poor. Let us see what the next stage of Christian development will do for her.

## CHAPTER V

### The Effect of the Reformation ...

The fact is that, on the one hand, the Christian Church did nothing for woman which the Stoic and neo-Platonist moralists were not doing — except to build

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

nunneries; and, on the other, it re-introduced the ideas they were successfully uprooting, undid the whole of their reform of the law with regard to her, suffered the most violent and unjust usage of her to spread, and by its absurd conception of love and marriage and celibacy occasioned a vast amount of disorder.

By the fourteenth century woman (on the average) was not morally higher than in the fourth, and she was much lower in all other respects. We now begin to ascend once more from the valley of the Middle Ages, and we must see how much Christianity had to do with this tardy return to the path of progress.

The Reformation being above all a concentration on the Bible and a protest against paganism and philosophy, its general bearing on the woman-question can be almost determined in advance.

### *Protestantism*

Protestantism shrank in horror from the new Greek culture, or any culture that was not Biblical. Hence, as the New Testament laid down no principles on the subject, and certainly did not undo the harshness and injustice of the Old, it was to the very clear teaching of the latter that the Reformers turned. Luther had no personal vein of refinement to correct or moderate the impression of woman left by his assiduous study of the Old Testament. He was frankly contemptuous. "No gown worse becomes a woman than the desire to be wise," he said. So fully did he and the other reformers submit to the Old Testament, where the New did not expressly abrogate it, that they were willing to permit polygamy. Milton, on our side, pointed out that the New Testament had not withdrawn this privilege of the saints. It seems indisputable that the Reformers held that low estimate of woman in herself which we should naturally expect

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

their constant brooding over the Old Testament to engender.

But, partly owing to the perverse Biblical idea of woman, partly owing to economic changes which now set in, or were increased, woman does not seem to have gained much by the Reformation. Whether, as Professor Pearson goes on to say, it had the effect of driving more women than ever into public disorder is very much disputed. This, at least, is clear: it robbed the life of woman of much of its remaining colour and variety, and it reduced her to the position of a mere breeder of children. Moreover, with the closing of the convents, and the prohibition of earning money in respectable fashion, a larger number of women had to remain unmarried, yet dependent on their male relatives.

On the whole, then, the Reformation made little difference to the cause of woman, and it is a stern indication of its failure to do so that "for three centuries after the Reformation the history of woman in Germany was a blank," as Professor Pearson says. German women lagged far behind their English and American sisters in demanding justice, though they make up for that to-day.

But the coming of Puritanism again "obscured the clearer thought which the Renaissance had brought," as Mrs. Hill says. Once more the grim Biblical idea of woman prevailed. The Old Testament had greater influence than ever now that printing had been invented.

In every single instance of the improvement of woman's position during the Christian era the change was effected by a departure from the principles which men were understood to hold.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Anything more profoundly unsatisfactory and more mischievous socially it would be difficult to conceive. The attitude of man towards woman must be grounded on principle; and it must be a principle that admits the dignity and full humanity of woman. Throughout all these changes of outward bearing towards woman, the fact of her legal, civic, political, and professional inferiority remained unchanged. It may seem to many women who are happily married a sweet thing to depend wholly on the love of the stronger sex, but all men are not angels, and the temptation to selfishness is strong; nor can anyone question the evil of virtually compelling women to seek marriage as a livelihood, or reason away their desire to have a voice in public affairs. "I do not like women to meddle with politics," said Napoleon unctuously to Madame Condorcet. "You are right, General," she answered; "but in a country where it is the custom to cut off the heads of women it is natural that they should wish to know the reason why."

The transfer of inspiration from the Fathers and Schoolmen back to the Bible had made no difference to the cause of woman. The sex still waited for some strong voice to take up the cry where it had died away on the lips of the dying paganism. This was done in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. In country after country the strain was taken up. The old injustice must be abolished. The insult and the wrong of woman's legal and political disabilities must be righted, and the restrictions on her education and her activity must be swept away, or at least placed on that ground and in that measure which careful experience should recommend — if it recommended any restriction at all.

Was this long-delayed cry for reform due, in the cant phrase of our day, to the fact that the preceding seventeen centuries had misunderstood the Christian doctrine of woman, and the Christian Church of the

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

nineteenth century had tardily realised it? Did the clergy at last perceive and avow the injustice of their long-drawn error? Did they take up the new-born demand for truth and equity, and throw themselves with a moral zeal into the task of undoing the evil they had wrought? How far have the women of our day, who cling so strangely to the Churches, to thank them for the great advance made in the course of the nineteenth century? It is the last stage of the first part of my inquiry into the attachment of women to traditional religion, and I approach it in a fresh chapter.

### CHAPTER VI

#### The Churches and the Modern Woman Movement

The nineteenth century has been chiefly remarkable, on its moral or social side, for two tendencies — the decay of religion and the sturdy growth of justice and humanity. For the moment I do not say that these were connected tendencies; but of the fact that they are characteristic of "the wonderful century" it seems hardly possible to doubt. The proper authorities on each subject assure us of it. The clergy declare the one, and humanitarians gladly proclaim the other. These two tendencies are wholly concerned with the inquiry we now enter upon. For among the wrongs which the knights-errant of the last century set out to redress the subordination of woman was not the least.

Men were busy undoing the industrial evils which the creation of machinery had caused. They were looking abroad to the condition of the blacks; they were shuddering at the horrors of warfare; they were stooping to consider the lot of the lower animals; they were setting the Turk's house in order; they were flashing the new search-light of a zeal for justice on the Hill-tops and

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

in the deep valleys everywhere. And suddenly a voice rang out with the peal of the clarion: —

The social subordination of women stands out as an isolated fact in modern social institutions; a solitary breach of what has become their fundamental law; a single relic of an old world of thought and practice exploded in everything else, but retained in the one thing of most universal interest; as if a gigantic dolmen, or a vast temple of Jupiter Olympus, occupied the site of St. Paul's, and received daily worship, while the surrounding Christian churches were only resorted to on feasts and festivals.

Then men turned their search-light upon their own homes, and a long struggle began. It is not my place to study the new woman or the advanced woman, or in any way the discrepancy of ideals among the women of our time. I have to deal with the generally admitted fact that a great injustice has been partly remedied, and to determine the part the clergy have played during the fight. No doubt there are few who will expect to find that this great reform was initiated or very strongly supported by the clergy. A few years ago the Women's Suffrage Society published a little work that was made up of quotations from eminent living clerics in favour of women's suffrage. A very interesting companion volume might be issued containing the expressions of the clergy of fifty years ago. However, the little work was instructive enough. It assumed that there is still a widespread feeling among Christian women that the clergy object to their having a voice in the appointment of the administrators of their country.

The first part of my inquiry is at an end. I have investigated the ground for the contention that Christianity has laid on woman a burden of gratitude, and that we may find in this some explanation of her



## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

peculiar clinging to its hierarchy and its institutions. I have examined the position that woman occupied in Europe, and the prospect that lay before her at the time when Christianity began to influence legislation and the social order. I have studied closely the conception of woman's nature and education and work which the most influential leaders of the Church presented. I have sought the immediate effect of this teaching on the position and ambition of the women of Europe, and I have traced the development of its influence as the centuries passed and the power of the Church rose to absolute despotism. Finally, I have described the tardy revolt against the long injustice, and determined the part which the Church played in relation to it. It seems fair to give this summary of the story.

### *Summary*

In what is called the "pagan" world the position of woman, which had fallen low, was steadily and solidly improving. The pagan moralists had come to recognize and proclaim that woman was unduly subordinated. Public opinion at Rome was strongly against the old restrictions on her life. The jurisconsults and legislators were removing the old disabilities. The Empire had passed beyond the period of licence, and in its more sober mood still upheld the reform. But the old religion was quite dead as a moral force, and had clearly to be replaced. A half-dozen religions, all spiritual and elevating, were ready to take up the moral and social action it had ceased to exercise. All of these, except Christianity, seemed to be in sympathy with the new turn of woman's fortunes. They had issued from Greece, or Persia, or Egypt, while Christianity came forth from a country where woman was despised. But Christianity contrived to win the power, and it used the military force of the converted emperors to crush the last pulse of life out of its rivals.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Meantime its leaders had erected the inspiration of the Old Testament into a dogma, and the shadow of the Hebraic ideal fell upon Europe. The efforts of the pagan moralists were decried and rejected; the excellent ideal of the Teutonic tribes was allowed to perish.

From the chaotic mixture of the disrupted Empire and the invading peoples emerged at last the strange and semi-barbaric structure of feudal and Christian Europe. From the new legal system the elements which had been more favourable to woman in the Germanic customs and the later Roman code were gradually expelled. Woman fell to a lower position in law than she had occupied in Greece and Rome, or in the Germanic systems. Competent authorities like Sir Henry Maine attribute this to the influence of Church law, which was grossly unjust to and biassed against woman. Monastic and priestly writers and the decrees of episcopal councils had the same influence on public opinion and social life.

The increasing stress laid by the Church on asceticism and celibacy, with the widespread disorder which followed by a very natural reaction, still further prejudiced the position of woman. The theological theory of her inferiority became a fixed principle in the law and literature and life of Europe. Here and there her lot was relieved for a time by the gaiety of troubadours, or the devotion of knights-errant, or admission into the medieval guilds and crafts, or a share in the growing culture or the glamour of court-life. These were hours of sunshine in a long, grey day. They were always won in defiance of the ruling creeds, and generally associated with a relaxation of morals or a revival of pagan culture.

### *The Reformation*

## JESUS, PAUL, PAGAN STOICS ON SEXUAL MORALS

The Reformation brought no material change in her condition. Her insulting legal disabilities, her habitual exclusion from the means of self-support and of culture, and her utter exclusion from civic or political rights, lasted from the sixth to the nineteenth century.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth a determined attack was made on the unjust system of disabilities. In nearly every case the campaign was begun by radical heretics or Freethinkers. In no case was it begun by clergymen. In most cases the clergy gave no word of sympathy until the first odium and bitterness of the struggle had been lived down.

In all countries the opposition was largely placed on religious grounds, and was, to a painful extent, led by the clergy; though the question then was of little more than a vague and elementary claim on the part of women to draw public attention to their position and discuss the justice or injustice of it.

To-day, although even Christian scholarship has denuded the Old Testament of all authority to rule us, there is an extraordinary unwillingness among the clergy to undo what remains of the evil that their groundless dogmas had caused.

### *Conclusion*

I conclude that the suggestion that gratitude is due to the Church from women is little short of grotesque. Only a reckless perversion of their social history could suffer it to be entertained for a moment. The clergy have been the worst enemies of women. ... Women are their best friends to-day.

If women lent them no more support than men do, they would cease to be a serious influence in Europe. ...

## CHAPTER 5 COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

---

We hope what follows will help the reader see the connection between Roman stoicism and early Christianity.

### ADULTERY

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not commit adultery. MT 5.27

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. MT 5.28

It is the intention, not the outward act, which makes the wickedness. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xvi

Live as if God beheld thee. Seneca, *Letter x*

If a man lie with his own wife, imagining her another, he is an adulterer. Seneca, *On Constancy*, vii, 4

### ALMS

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. MT 6.1-4

He who hath done some good and laudable action, and then telleth it to others, showeth that he still looketh without, and desireth glory, and hath not yet a true vision of virtue. Plutarch, *On Progress in Virtue*, x

Whatsoever I do, either by myself or with some other, ought to be directed to this -- only to that which is useful and well suited for society. How many, after being celebrated by fame, have been given up to oblivion? M. Aurelius, vii, 5-6

How sweet and precious a thing it is if a giver will take no thanks, and hath already, in giving, forgotten his deed. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 6

MACCABE: The stress which Christ constantly lays on the reward of good deeds should be noted and contrasted with the exhortations of rabbis and pagans.

### ANGER

And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. MT 5.22

Anger at another's sin is base and petty: virtue will never imitate the vices she reproveth. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 6

Yield not to hatred and anger. Epictetus, i, 63

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Let us not moderate anger, but suppress it entirely; for how can there be moderation of an evil thing? Seneca, *On Anger*, iii, 42

Nature doth produce two, or three, or more brothers from one seed and principle, not that they may quarrel and dispute, but that they may give each other assistance. Plutarch, *On Fraternal Love*, ii

It is forbidden to hurt a man; for he is thy fellow citizen in the city of the world. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 31

Wilt thou not bear with thy own brother, who hath God for his Father? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 52

### CHARITY

And he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said: Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. LK 21.1-4

The good who offer but a little flour and a vessel are held to be religious: the wicked escape not impiety, if they deluge the altars with blood. Seneca, *On Benefits*, i, 6

It is the part of a great mind to despise injury. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 32

When Diogenes was asked, How shall I avenge myself on my enemy? he said, By living virtuously and honestly. Plutarch, *On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iii

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

### CONSCIENCE

Conscience giveth joy, even when it is oppressed. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 21

No man seemeth to me to have a higher regard for virtue, none to be more devoted to it, than he who hath forfeited the repute of a good man in order to save his conscience. Seneca, *Letter lxxxii*, 20

### DEATH

May not he who is truly a man cease to care about living a certain time? ... He leaveth all that with God. Plato, *Gorgias*, 51

### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Therefore I say unto you take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? MT 6.31

I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. Plato, *Apology*, 30

Make not an idol of thy clothes, and thou wilt not be enraged with the thief. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 64

Despise the flesh as if thou wert now dying. M. Aurelius, ii, 2

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. MT 6.26-29

Must a philosopher be more helpless and anxious than the brute-beasts? each of which is self-sufficient, and wants neither proper food, nor any suitable and natural provision. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 35

Any one thing in creation is sufficient to demonstrate a Providence to a humble and grateful mind. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 16

It is a mark of want of intellect to spend much time in things relating to the body Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xli

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? MT 6.30

Does any good man fear that food shall fail him? It doth not fail the blind; it doth not fail the lame. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 115

There is not anything necessary to us but we have it either cheap or gratuitous: and this is the provision which our Heavenly Father hath made for us. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xv

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God



## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. MT 6.31-34

Keep thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately. M. Aurelius, iii, 12

In contemplating thyself never include the vessel which surrounds thee, and these instruments which are attached to it. M. Aurelius, x, 38

When thou hast had enough to-day, thou dost sit weeping about to-morrow, in regard to how thou shalt get food. Why, if thou hast it, slave, thou wilt have it; if not, thou wilt go out of life. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 36

He who hath great riches hath likewise need of many things and the richest must be in the worst condition, since they seem to be most in want of such things. Plato, *Eryxias*, 406

It is shameful that man should begin and end where the irrational creatures do. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 6

## DIVORCE

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. MT 5.31-32

It is infamous for a man to exact chastity of his wife and corrupt the wives of others. Seneca, *Letter xciv*, 26

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Live as if God beheld thee. Seneca, *Letter x*

If a man lie with his own wife, imagining her another, he is an adulterer. Seneca, *On Constancy*, vii, 4

### FAITH

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. MT 5.3

What disease shall we say that the rich man suffereth from but spiritual poverty? Plutarch, *On Covetousness*, iv

Any person may live happy in poverty, but few in wealth and power. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxxviii

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. MT 7.6

Do not make much talk among the ignorant about thy principles, but show them by thy actions. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xlvi

### FAMILY

I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it. MT 10.33-?

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother. MT 12.50

### FAST

Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Mt 6.16-18

Many people shed tears only in order that they may show them. Seneca, *On Tranquillity*, 15

The reality, and not the appearance, of virtue is to be followed above all things, as well in public as in private life. Plato, *Gorgias*, 527

### FLESH

In this present life I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body ... but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. Plato, *Phædo*, 67

### FORGIVENESS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. LK 7.47

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, and he forgiveth sins. *Ecclus.*, ii, 11

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. LK 23.34

I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them [Socrates to his judges]. Plato, *Apology*, 41

### GOD

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Mt 5.48

God ought to be to us the measure of all things He who would be dear to God must, as far as possible, be like Him and such as he is. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 716

The good man is the pupil and follower, and real child of God. Seneca, *On Providence*, i, 5

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. MT 6.24

If thou findest in human life anything better than justice, truth ... turn to it with all thy soul ....If nothing appears to be better than the deity which is planted in thee, give place to nothing else. M. Aurelius, iii, 6

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. MT 11.28-30

Do not return to philosophy as if she were a master, but act like those who have infirm eyes. M. Aurelius, v, 9

It is the nature of the gods to be meek and placid. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 27

The gods are not fastidious: they lend a hand to the man who would rise. Seneca, *Letter lxxiii*, 15

Leave me to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads. Plato, *Crito*, 54

Great is the mind that is wholly subject to God. Seneca, *Letter cvii*, 12

### GOLDEN RULE

Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. MT 7.7-12

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18

God hath not merely provided for our needs; we are loved even to delight. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 5

Doing this, and living after this manner, we shall receive our reward from the Gods and those who are above us. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 718

The Gods like good parents who smile at their ill-natured children, cease not to heap benefits even on them who doubt the existence of their benefactors, but scatter their favours with equal hand among all nations. Seneca, *On Benefits*, vii, 31

If thou wouldst be well spoken of, learn to speak well of others. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, vi

What thou avoidest suffering thyself, seek not to impose on others. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xxxviii

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. MT 22.37-40

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deut., vi, 5

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18

What is sufficient? Why, what else than to venerate the Gods and bless them, and to do good unto men. M. Aurelius, v, 33

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

Reverence the Gods, and help men. Short is life. M. Aurelius, vi, 30

Think of God oftener than thou breathest. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxiv

Thou must live for another, if thou wouldst live for thyself. Seneca, *Letter* xlvi, 2

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. MT 5.43-45

MACCABE: “Nowhere in the Old Testament is a man told to hate his enemy, and a Jew can hardly have said or written this. Rodrigues calls it ‘a lying interpolation.’”

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18

Nothing is nobler than magnanimity, meekness, and philanthropy. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xlvi

It is peculiar to man to love even those who do wrong. M. Aurelius, vii, 22

Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it. But I will be meek and benevolent towards every man. M. Aurelius, xi, 13

GOOD WORKS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Therefore whoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it. Mt 7.21-27

The good man will stand firm, and bear, not only patiently but gladly, whatever happens; he will know that every adversity is a law of nature; and, just as the good soldier bears wounds and counts his scars, and even in death loves the emperor for whom he falls, he will ever bear in mind that old precept: Follow God. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xv

It is the part of a great man to conquer the calamities and terrors of morals. Seneca, *On Providence*, iv, 1

He that lifteth himself above great adversity, and beareth the evils which crush others, is consecrated by his sufferings. Seneca, *To Helvia*, xiii, 6

All good men will show mercy and humanity. Seneca, *On Clemency*, v

Man is formed by nature to acts of benevolence. M. Aurelius, ix, 42

HELL

Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many



## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. MT 7.13-14

Wherefore I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who, having cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body has arrayed the soul, not in some foreign attire, but in her own proper jewels, temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth in these adorned, she is ready to go on her journey to the world below. Plato, *Phædo*, 115

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. MT 7.15-20

MACCABE: These and the following are obviously not words of Christ; they are related to the later dissensions among his followers.

If the companion be corrupt, he who converses with him will be corrupted likewise. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii

Virtue looketh with unfaltering eyes on the torments that are prepared for her: she betrayeth no change of countenance whether fortune offer prosperity or adversity. Seneca, *On Constancy*, v, 5

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The unholy do only waste their much service upon the Gods. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 717

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. MT 25.37-46

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

### HOLINESS

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.  
MK 5.8

Those who have been pre-eminent for holiness of life are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home, which is above. Plato, *Phædo*, 114

### HOSPITALITY

How a man ought to order what relateth to his descendants, his kindred, his friends, and his fellow-citizens, and the rights of hospitality taught by Heaven ... these things the laws will accomplish and will thus render the State, if the Gods co-operate with us, prosperous and happy. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 718

The stranger who cometh from abroad shall be received in a friendly spirit he shall depart, as a friend taking leave of friends, and be honoured by them with gifts and suitable tributes of respect. These are the customs according to which our city should receive all strangers of either sex showing respect to Zeus, the God of hospitality. Plato, *Laws*, xii, 953

The evil are won by persistent goodness. Seneca, *On Benefits*, vii, 31

### HUMILITY

Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. MT 23.8-12

What is the first business of a man who studies philosophy? To part with self-conceit. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 172

God only is wise. Plato, *Apology*, 23

Admit that you are nobody, and know nothing. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 1

Let us satisfy our consciences, and do nothing for the sake of reputation. Seneca, *On Anger*, iii, 41

Seek not good from without; seek it within yourselves, or ye will never find it. Epictetus, *Discourses*, iii, 24

Nothing is so much to be avoided in doing good as pride. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 11

When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat, lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. LK 14.8-11

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

Is anyone preferred before you at an entertainment? If these things are good, you ought to rejoice that he hath them. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxv

Two things must be rooted out in men: conceit and diffidence. Epictetus, *Discourses*, iii, 14

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.  
MT 5.5

I will be meek and yielding to my enemies. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xx, 5

### HYPOCRISY

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. MT 23.23-28

Why do we deceive ourselves? Our evil is not external: it is within us, in our very hearts; and so we shall hardly attain unto health, for we know not that we are sick. Seneca, Ep. 1, 4

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Fraud appeareth with the pleasant face of virtue, and a benignant countenance concealeth depraved thoughts. Seneca, *Fragments*, xcvi

God saith: What complaint against me have ye who follow righteousness? Others I have surrounded with false goods, and have deluded their vain minds with a long and deceptive dream but within they are miserable, sordid, base, adorned only outwardly like their walls. Theirs is not a solid and genuine happiness: it is encrusted, and that but thinly. Seneca, *On Providence*, vi, 3

### JUDGEMENT

If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. MT 18.15-17

Show him his error, admonish him. If he listeneth, thou wilt cure him, and there is no need of anger. M. Aurellus, v, 28

My love breedeth another love: and so, like the stork, I shall be cherished by the bird whom I have hatched. Plato, *Alcibiades* 1, 135

Thou oughtest not to be affected contrary to nature by the evil deeds of another; pity him rather. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 18

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

An adviser ought in the first place to have a regard to the delicacy and sense of shame of the person admonished. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cl

How much finer it is to show a gentle and paternal mind to the erring: not to reprove them, but to lead them back. Seneca, *On Anger*, i, 15

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. MT 7.1-5

When thou art offended with any man's transgression, presently reflect upon thyself, and consider what thou thyself art guilty of in the same kind. M. Aurelius, x, 30

Take care that thou be far removed from the things thou findest fault within another. Plutarch, *On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iv

Whenever Plato was among evil-doers, he was wont to ask himself: Do I myself perchance have the same vice? Plutarch, *On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iv

Thou wilt commit the fewest faults in judging if thou art faultless in thy own life. Epictetus, *Fragments*, lviii

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

If we would be righteous judges, let us first persuade ourselves that none of us is blameless. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 28

### LOVE

Love is a mighty god, wonderful among gods and men the source of the greatest benefits to us. Plato, *Symposium*, 178

The immortal Gods love us, and -- which is the greatest honour we could have -- have placed us next to themselves. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 29

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Mt 5.46-48

How many men are unworthy of the light, yet the sun riseth on them. Seneca, *On Benefits*, i, 1

If thou wouldst imitate the gods, render service even to the ungrateful; for the sun riseth on the wicked. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 26

To forgive an enemy, when a man hath the opportunity to avenge, is a token of magnanimity; but who doth not love for his humanity, and admire for his probity, the man who showeth mercy to an enemy in affliction, who helpeth him when he is in want, and giveth aid to his children and family in adversity? Plutarch, *Of The Use of Enemies*, ix

He is an ungrateful man, ... yet I will not give more grudgingly on that account, but more generously. Seneca, *On Benefits*, vii, 32



## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

The stranger, having no kindred and friends, is more to be pitied by gods and men. Plato, *Laws*. v, 729

He who conferreth benefits, imitateth the gods: he who seeketh them, the traffickers. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iii, 15

### MERCY

If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath day. MT 12.7-8, 11-12

The idea is inconceivable that the Gods have regard, not to the justice and purity of our souls, but to costly processions and sacrifices. Plato, *Alcibiades II*, 150

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. MK 5.7

It is the mark of a generous and lofty mind to give aid, to do service. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iii, 15

Forgiveness is better than punishment: for the one is a proof of a gentle, the other of a savage, nature. Epictetus, *Fragments*, lxiii

### OATHS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne. MT 5.33-34

Be neither a man of many words, nor busy about too many things ... having need neither of oath nor of any man's testimony. M. Aurelius, iii, 5

Avoid taking oaths, if possible, altogether; at any rate, as far as thou art able. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii

We need not raise our hands to heaven, nor beseech the keeper to admit us to the ear of the image, as though thus we might be better heard; God is near thee, is with thee, is within thee. Seneca, *Letter xli*, 1

## OUTCASTS

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. LK 4.18-19

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord to comfort all that mourn. Is., lxi, 1-2

The wise man will give hospitality to the exile and alms to the needy; he will restore children to their weeping

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

mothers, loose the chains of the captive, release the gladiator from his bondage, and even bury the body of the criminal. Seneca, *On Clemency*, vi

### PEACE

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. MK 5.9

A wise and good person neither quarreleth with any man, nor, as far as is possible, suffereth another to do so. The life of Socrates giveth is an example of this, as of other things; since he did not only avoid quarrelling himself, but did not even suffer others to quarrel. Epictetus, *Discourses*, iv, 5

### PRAYER

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. Mt 6.5-8

Cannot He who made and moveth the sun perceive all things? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 54

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

We prefer to invoke the Gods, to whom we make fitting supplication, silently and in our hearts. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 1

Wait not for applauses, and shouts, and praises, in order to do good. Epictetus, *Fragments*, lxxxiii

Make thyself worthy of the help of the divinity. M. Aurelius, xii, 14

When thou hast shut thy doors and darkened thy room, remember never to say that thou art alone. God is within, and thy genius is within; and what need have they of light to see what thou art doing? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 54

God seeth the minds of all men bared of the material vesture. M. Aurelius, xii,

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. MT 6.9-10

We ought not to pray at all, or we ought to pray in this simple and noble fashion. M. Aurelius, v, 7

Wilt thou not feel thyself to be ennobled on knowing thyself to be the son of God? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 2

Have no will but the will of God, and who shall restrain thee? Epictetus, *Discourses*, I, 17

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen. MT 6.11-13

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

MCCABE: The "Lord's Prayer" is much shorter in Luke, and is unknown in Mark. It is commonly regarded by theologians as a composition not due to Christ.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mt 6.14-15

Virtue cometh to the virtuous by the gift of God. Plato, *Meno*, 100

### REWARDS

When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours: lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. LK 14.12-14

It is a base traffic to expect a return for a benefit. Seneca, *On Benefits*, i, 2

Some there be who, when they have done a good turn to any, are ready to set them on the score for it, and to require retaliation thou must be one of those who, what they do, do without further thought, and are in a manner insensible of what they do. M. Aurelius, v, 7

When thou art feasting at table, thou shouldst give among the servants part of what is before thee. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xxx

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Like wise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do. LK 17.10

As a horse when he hath run, and a dog when he hath tracked the game, or a bee when it hath made honey, so a man when he hath done a good act doth not call out for others to come and see, but goeth on to another act. M. Aurelius, V, 6

### RIGHTEOUSNESS

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled. MT 5.6

He who doeth well must of necessity be happy and blessed. Plato, *Gorgias*, 507

Virtue alone bringeth secure and perpetual joy. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xx, 5

### RITUALS

Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead. MT 8.22

Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. MT 9.13

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice. Hosea, vi, 6

It was vain for them to sacrifice and offer gifts, seeing that they were hateful to the Gods, who are not, like vile usurers, to be gained by bribes. Plato, *Alcibiades*, ii, 149

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. MT 15.19-20

God is not worshipped by the slain bodies of bulls, nor by offerings of gold and silver, nor by the squandering of treasures, but by a pious and upright will. Seneca, *Letter cxv*, 5

### RULERS

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. MT 20.25-28

Nothing is more becoming in a ruler than to despise no one, and never to be insolent. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxxvii

He who is lifted up with pride, or elated by wealth or rank or beauty is left deserted by God. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 716

If thou dost happen to be placed in some high station wilt thou not remember what thou art, and over whom thou bearest rule that they are by nature thy relatives, thy brothers that they are the offspring of God? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 14

### SIN

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. MT 18.3-7

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. Mt 18.10-11

The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? MT 6.22-23

If thou dost act unrighteously, thy eye will turn to the dark and godless, and, being in darkness and ignorance of thyself, thou wilt probably do deeds of darkness. Plato, *Alcibiades*, i, 134

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable to



## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. MT 5.29

Is it for one paltry leg, wretch, that thou dost accuse the universe? Canst thou not forego that, in consideration of the whole? Canst thou not gladly yield it to Him who gave it? Epictetus, i, 49

### SOUL

The soul doth not apprehend God unless it be pure and holy. Seneca, *Letter lxxxvii*, 21

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. MT 16.26-28

The soul doth not apprehend God unless it be pure and holy. Seneca, *Letter lxxxvii*, 21

Consider that thou dost not thrive merely by the food in thy stomach, but by the elevation of thy soul. For the former is evacuated, and carried off altogether; but the latter, though the soul is parted, remains uncorrupted through all things. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xxvi

Souls find their way easiest to the Gods when they have been withdrawn early from the society of men, for they are the least soiled. Seneca, *To Marcia*, xxiii

### SPIRITUAL TREASURES

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. MT 6.19-21

Know that thief and robber cannot reach the things that are properly thy own. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 18

What tyrant, what robber, what thief, or what court can be formidable to those who count the body and its possessions as nothing? Epictetus, *Discourses*. i, 35

The perfect man, full of divine and human virtues, can lose nothing: his goods are guarded by solid and unshakable walls. Seneca, *On Constancy*, vi, 8

## SUFFERING

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. MT 5.4

Shall not the having God for our maker, and father, and guardian, free us from griefs and alarms? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 9

## SUFFERING-PERSECUTION

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. MT 10.16

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

you ... but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.  
MT 10.19-20, 22

MACCABE: The lengthy speech preparing the disciples for persecution is clearly a later composition, based on experience.

Suppose that men kill thee, cut thee in pieces, curse thee. What then can these things do to prevent thy mind from remaining pure, wise, sober, just? M. Aurelius, viii, 51

Dare to look up to God, and say, Make use of me for the future as thou wilt. I am of the same mind: I am one with thee. Lead me whither thou wilt. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 16

When the good man seeth his faith tried by the torments of perfidy, he descendeth not from his height, but riseth above his torment, and saith: I have what I willed, what I sought: I withdraw not, and will not withdraw. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 21

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. MT 10.24-33

Be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

after death. He and his are not neglected by the Gods.  
Plato, *Apology*, 41

Why may not such an one call himself ... a son of God?  
And why shall he fear anything that happens among  
men? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 9

God neglecteth not one of the smallest things. Epictetus,  
*Discourses*, iii, 24

If thou dost always remember that God standeth by as a  
witness of whatever thou dost either in soul or body,  
thou wilt never err, either in thy prayers or actions, and  
thou wilt have God abiding with thee. Epictetus,  
*Fragments*, cxv

### THOUGHTS AND WORDS

Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else  
make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree  
is known by his fruit. Generation of vipers, how can ye,  
being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance  
of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the  
good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things;  
and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth  
evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that  
men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the  
day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be  
justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.  
MT 12.33-37

Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the  
character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by its  
thoughts. M. Aurelius, v, 16

This thought will suffer nothing sordid, nothing base,  
nothing cruel, to remain in the mind. The Gods are

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

witnesses of all things, and before them we are on trial.  
Seneca, *Letter* cii, 29

These [vices, etc.] can be no otherwise expelled than by looking up to God alone as our pattern. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 17

The body must be treated with severity, lest it obey not the mind readily. Seneca, *Letter* viii, 5

What is once said and done thou canst not recall.  
Epictetus, *Fragments*, xcvi

Let us speak what we think, and think what we speak; let our speech accord with our life. Seneca, *Letter* lxxv, 4

### TRUTH

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. MT 10.24-?

What madness it is to fear a charge of infamy from the infamous. Seneca, *Letter* xci, 20

One would not think that ye would need an instructor to rear up young men of such a spirit that, knowing their affinity to the Gods, and that we are, as it were, fettered by the body and its possessions they should resolve to

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

throw them all off, and depart to their divine kindred. Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 9

We must live as if we were ever in sight: our minds must be as though someone could ever penetrate to our inmost thoughts. And this is so. What avails it that something be hidden from men? From God nothing is concealed. Seneca, *Letter lxxxiii*, 1

### TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. MT 5.38-41

When Cato was struck on the mouth, he was not angry, and sought no vengeance: he denied the deed. Seneca, *On Constancy*, xiv, 3

The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrong-doer. M. Aurelius, vi, 6

Never mind if someone doth despise thee as a fool, and insult thee, if he hath a mind; let him strike thee, by Zeus, and do thou be of good cheer, and do not mind the insulting blow, for thou wilt never come to any harm in the practice of virtue. Plato, *Gorgias*, 527

There is this fine circumstance connected with the character of a Cynic that he must be beaten like an ass, and yet, when beaten, must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 12

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

### VIRTUE

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. MT 5.14

Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. MT 5.15

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. MT 5.16

Virtue, however obscure, cannot be hidden; it giveth proof of itself. Seneca, *On Tranquillity*, iii, 7

Live as on a mountain....Let men see, let them know a real man who liveth according to nature. If they cannot endure him, let them kill him. For that is better than to live as others do. M. Aurelius, x, 15

If you always remember that God standeth by as a witness of whatever you do, either in soul or body, you will never err. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxv

### WEALTH

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. Mt 19.21

Democritus cast aside his wealth, deeming it a burden to the good mind. Seneca, *On Providence*, vi, 2

Poverty will bring thee joy, as thou wilt be free from many cares. Plutarch, *On Covetousness*, iv

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Verily, I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Everyone that hath forsaken homes, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. MT 19.23-24, 29-30

Very rich and very good at the same time a man cannot be. Plato, *Laws*, v, 742

It is a great thing not to be corrupted by the nearness of wealth: great is the man who is poor amid wealth. Seneca, *Letter xx*, 10

Riches are not among the number of things which are good..... It is difficult therefore for a rich person to be modest, or for a modest person to be rich. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xviii

Wealth is dangerous to the foolish, since vice groweth with wealth. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xciv

No one who is a lover of money, a lover of pleasure, or a lover of glory, is likewise a lover of mankind. Epictetus, *Fragments*, x

Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. LK 6.24-26



## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. Amos, vi 1

Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. Is., lxxv, 13

Avarice is the worst pest of the human race. Seneca, *To Helvia*, xiii, 2

Let parents bequeath to their children, not a heap of riches, but the spirit of reverence. Plato, *Laws*, V, 729

Fix thy desire or aversion on ... health, power, honours, thy country, friends, and children ... and thou wilt be unfortunate. But fix them on Zeus, on the Gods ... and how canst thou be any longer unprosperous? Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 17

Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. LK 12.15

Covetousness is the root of all evil. Seneca, *On Clemency*, i

It were better to die of hunger, exempt from grief or fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xii

### MISC

Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat [hire]. MT 10.9-10

No mind is good without God. Seneca, *Letter lxxiii*, 16

Provide things relating to the body no further than absolute need requireth. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii

Why must I any longer seek good and evil in externals? Epictetus *Discourses*, iii, 20

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. MT 10.33-42

The rites of hospitality are taught by Heaven. Plato, *Laws*, iv, 718

The stranger who cometh from abroad shall be received in a friendly spirit ... showing respect to Zeus, the god of hospitality. Plato, *Laws*, xii, 953

What sort of a man is he who giveth the name of brother to his friend and will not walk the same way with him? Plutarch, *On Fraternal Love*, iii

The wise man will stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked, and will give hospitality to the exile and alms to the needy. Seneca, *On Clemency*, vi

## COMMENTS ON MORALS BY PAGANS AND JESUS

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. MT 11.5-6

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. MT 11.25-26

What is the first business of a man who studieth philosophy? To part with self-conceit. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 172

I am a sort of gad-fly, given to the State by God [Socrates]. Plato, *Apology*, 30

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. MT 13.43

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. MT 15.11

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. MT 16.24

Nothing is more unhappy than the man who hath never known adversity. Seneca, *On Providence*, iii, 3

We have to struggle against this flesh with all pure minds. Seneca, *To Marcia*, xxiv, 5

Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to suspect, to curse, to act the hypocrite. M. Aurelius, iii, 8

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Simple and modest is the work of philosophy. Draw me not aside to insolence and pride. M. Aurelius, ix, 28

Keep thyself simple, good, pure, serious, free from, affectation, a friend of justice, a worshipper of the Gods, kind, affectionate, strenuous in all proper acts. M. Aurelius, vi, 30

Who is there whom bright and agreeable children do not attract to play, and creep, and prattle with them? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 216

A sensible legislator will rather exhort the elders to reverence the younger, and above all to take heed that no young man sees or hears one of themselves doing or saying anything disgraceful. Plato, *Laws*, v, 729

The Gods are not fastidious: they lend a hand to the man who would rise. Seneca, *Letter lxxiii*, 15

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. MT 18.19-20

If such a thing as wife or child be granted thee, there is no objection; but if the Captain calls, run to the ship, and never look behind. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, vii



## CHAPTER 6 MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

---

### ANGER TO WAR

Most ancient Christians did not believe that ethical behavior itself would lead to salvation.

### JESUS

O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I suffer you? MT 17.17

And when he (Jesus) had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. Mark 3:5

### PAGAN

Let us not moderate anger, but suppress it entirely; for how can there be moderation of an evil thing? Seneca, *On Anger*, iii, 42

We are here to encounter the most outrageous, brutal, dangerous, and intractable of all passions (anger) ; the most loathsome and unmannerly; nay, the most ridiculous too; and the subduing of this monster will do a great deal toward the establishment of human peace. Seneca, *On Anger* Ch 1

When Diogenes was asked, [while angry] How shall I avenge myself on my enemy? he said, By living

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

virtuously and honestly. Plutarch, *On the Usefulness of Enemies*, iii

A good and a wise man is not to be an enemy of wicked men, but a reprover of them; and he is to look upon all the drunkards, the lustful, the thankless, covetous, and ambitious, that he meets with, not otherwise than as a physician looks upon his patients; Democritus laughed, and Heraclitus wept, at the folly and wickedness of the world, but we never read of an angry philosopher. Seneca, *On Anger* Ch 5

Anger at another's sin is base and petty: virtue will never imitate the vices she reproves. Seneca, *On Anger*, ii, 6

Show him his error, admonish him. If he listens, thou wilt cure him, and there is no need of anger. M. Aurellus, v, 28

How much finer it is to show a gentle and paternal mind to the erring: not to reprove them, but to lead them back. Seneca, *On Anger*, i, 15

In what form or degree however it appears, all anger, without exception, is vicious. Seneca, *On Anger* Ch 5

Justice cannot be angry; nor is there any need of an angry magistrate for the punishment of foolish and wicked men. The power of life and death must not be managed with passion [excessive, destructive emotion]. Seneca, *On Anger* Ch 5

There is no surer argument of a great mind than not to be transported to anger by any accident. And whoever considers the foulness and the brutality of this vice, must acknowledge that there is no such monster in

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Nature as one man raging against another .... Seneca,  
*On Anger* Ch 6

A wise and good person neither quarrels with any man, nor, as far as is possible, suffers another to do so. The life of Socrates gives us an example of this, as of other things; since he did not only avoid quarrelling himself, but did not even suffer others to quarrel. Epictetus, *Discourses*, iv, 5

Yield not to hatred and anger. Epictetus

When Cato was struck on the mouth, he was not angry, and sought no vengeance: he denied the deed. Seneca, *On Constancy*, xiv, 3

Never mind if someone doth despise thee as a fool, and insult thee, if he hath a mind; let him strike thee, by Zeus, and do thou be of good cheer, and do not mind the insulting blow, for thou wilt never come to any harm in the practice of virtue. Plato, *Gorgias*, 527

## CHARITY AND REWARDS

### JESUS

...and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.  
MT 10.41

### PAGAN

The Stoics, unlike Jesus and Paul, taught that virtue was its own reward. They believed neither in Hell or Heaven.



## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

It is a mean and dishonorable thing to give for any other end than but giving's sake. He that gives for gain, profit, or any by-end, destroys the very intent of bounty (charity).... Seneca, *On Benefits*

He that does good to another man does good also to himself; not only in the consequence, but in the very act of doing it: for the conscience of well-doing is an ample reward. Seneca, *On Benefits*

If we give only to receive, we lose the fairest objects for our charity: the absent, the sick, the captive, and the needy. Seneca, *On Benefits* Ch 5

Hercules conquered nothing for himself, but made his business to vindicate and to protect the miserable, without any private interest or design.... Seneca, *On Benefits* 6-78

It is a mean and dishonorable thing to give for any other end than but giving's sake. He that gives for gain, profit, or any by-end, destroys the very intent of bounty [charity].... Seneca, *On Benefits*

## GIVE PUBLICLY

### JESUS

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. MT 5.16

### PAGAN

How sweet and precious a thing it is if a giver will take no thanks, and hath already, in giving, forgotten his deed. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 6

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Virtue, however obscure, cannot be hidden; it gives proof of itself. Seneca, *On Tranquillity*, iii, 7

If you always remember that God stands by as a witness of whatever you do, either in soul or body, you will never err. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxv.

### GIVE PRIVATELY

#### JESUS

Take heed that ye do not [give] your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. MT 6.1-4

#### PAGAN

He who hath done some good and laudable action, and then telleth it to others, shows that he still looks without, and desires glory, and hath not yet a true vision of virtue. Plutarch, *On Progress in Virtue*, x

### GIVING MUCH

#### JESUS

And he looked up and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said: Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had. LK 21.1-4

#### PAGAN

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

The good who offer but a little flour and a vessel are held to be religious: the wicked escape not impiety, if they deluge the altars with blood. Seneca, *On Benefits*, i, 6

### CONSCIENCE

#### Christian

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. John 8:9

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men. Acts 24:16

#### Paul

Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness .... Rom 2:15

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost .... Rom 9:1

If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. 1 Cor 10:27

Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 1 Tim 3:9

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Tit 1:15

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to toward you. 2 Cor 1.12

So powerful is virtue, and so gracious is Providence, that every man has a light (conscience) ...within him for a guide (to moral action); which we do all of us both see and acknowledge, though we do not pursue it. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

### ENEMIES

#### JESUS

But those mine enemies, which would not that I should rule over them, bring them here, and slay them before me. LK 19:22, 27

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. MT 5:44-45

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; (This is not in the OT) but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

unjust. MT 5.43-45 (Rain falling on both the just and unjust, is a central Stoic teaching.) How many men are unworthy of the light, yet the sun riseth on them. Seneca, *On Benefits*, i, 1

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. MT 5.38-41

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.... MT 5.43-44

## JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Levit, 19.18

The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself. Levit, 19.34

## PAGAN

There is this fine circumstance connected with the character of a Cynic that he must be beaten like an ass, and yet, when beaten, must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 12

## FORGIVENESS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### JESUS

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mt 6.14

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. MT 12.31-32 The early church taught that God speaks through the church via the Holy Spirit. Thus, one could not challenge the teachings of the church.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus says to him, I say not to thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. MT 18.21-22 [Telling Christians to love one another or forgive one another encouraged unity in the churches but what happens to non-christians? Hell.]

(Jesus on the cross says) Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. LK 23.34

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mt 6.14-15

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered at once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Hebrews 9:12

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. Heb 9:15

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb 9:22

[God will not forgive anyone unless there is a bloody sacrifice.]

### PAGAN

The humanity and excellence of this virtue (clemency or forgiveness) is confessed at all hands, as well by the men of pleasure, and those that think every man was made for himself, as by the Stoics, that make "man a sociable creature, and born for the common good of mankind:" for it is of all dispositions the most peaceable and quiet. Seneca, *On Clemency*

We must be careful not to confound clemency with pity; for as religion worships God, and superstition profanes that worship, so should we distinguish betwixt clemency and pity.... Seneca, *On Clemency*

We should have neither judges nor accusers; none either to grant a pardon or to ask it. More or less, we are all sinners; and he that has best purged his conscience, was brought by errors to repentance. Seneca, *On Clemency*

Let him so deal with his own subjects as he desires God should deal with him. If Heaven should be inexorable to sinners, and destroy all without mercy, what flesh could be safe? But as the faults of great men are not presently

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

punished with thunder from above, let them have a like regard to their inferiors here upon earth. He that has revenge in his power, and does not use it, is the great man. Seneca, *On Clemency*

I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them (Socrates to his judges). Plato, *Apology*, 41

### JUDGMENT

#### JESUS

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Mt 7.1

#### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Judge of thy neighbor by thyself and be discreet in every point. Ecclus., xxx, 15

#### GLADIATORS AND DEATH

There are a sort of men that take delight in the spilling of human blood, and in the death of those that never did them any injury, nor were ever so much as suspected for it. ....The whole business was only murder upon murder: the (gladiatorial) combatants fought naked, and every blow was a wound. They do not contend for victory, but for death; and he that kills one man is to be killed by another. By wounds they are forced upon wounds which they take and give upon their bare breasts. Burn that rogue, (the crowds). Seneca



## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Luxury runs into avarice, and when the reverence of virtue is extinguished, men will stick at nothing that carries profit along with it. Man's blood is shed in wantonness, his death is a spectacle for entertainment, and his groans are music. Private cruelties, it is true, cannot do much mischief, but in princes they are a war against mankind. Seneca

GOLDEN RULES:

LOVE YOUR NEIGHTBOR AS YOURSELF

JESUS

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Mt 22.37-40

How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. Mt 7.7-12

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou, shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Mt 22.35-40

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Mt 5.46-48

Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses MT 18.33-35

For I (Jesus) say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:20

## JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Levit., xix, 18

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deut., vi, 5

## PAUL

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Rom 13.9

## PAGAN

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Thou must live for another, if thou wouldst live for thyself. Seneca, *Letter* xlvi, 2

What is sufficient? Why, what else than to venerate the Gods and bless them, and to do good unto men. M. Aurelius, v, 33

Reverence the Gods, and help men. Short is life. M. Aurelius, vi, 30

What thou avoid suffering thyself, seek not to impose on others. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xxxviii

Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it. But I will be meek and benevolent towards every man. M. Aurelius, xi, 13

It is peculiar to man to love even those who do wrong. M. Aurelius, vii, 22

GOVERNMENT--Support the State

## JESUS

Jesus tells Peter to pay (their taxes) with a coin he'll find in the mouth of the first fish that he catches from the sea, "...lest we should offend them (the rulers)...." Mt 17.24-27 [Not a rousing example of patriotism.]

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Mt 22.17-21

### PAUL

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is not power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (Hell) Rom 13.1-2

Pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers.... Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour (is due). Rom 13.6-7 [Pay tribute and honor the Emperor Nero for he was ordained by God!]

### PAGANS

A prince should behave himself generously in the power which God has given him of life and death .... Seneca, *On Clemency*

All governments tend to favor morals which encourage harmony within a society. So, the laws make criminal actions like murder, theft, taking the law into your own hands against your neighbors, etc. Philosophies and religions also teach us to obey the rulers, pay taxes and so forth. Encouraging civil harmony can lead to exaggerations. For example we see Jesus and others teaching turn the other cheek, love your enemies, etc.

### GRIEF

### JESUS

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Mt 5.4

### PAGAN

Some accidents there are, which I confess may affect him, but not overthrow him; as bodily pains, loss of children and friends; the ruin and desolation of a man's country. One must be made of stone, or iron, not to be sensible of these calamities; and besides, it were no virtue to bear them, if a body did not feel them. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

The Stoics, according to their critics, discouraged any emotions. This is not true; they were simply against passion, that is, excessive, destructive emotions.

How can that man resign himself to God, or bear his lot, whatever it be, without murmuring, and cheerfully submit to Providence, that shrinks at every notion of pleasure or pain? It is virtue alone that raises us above griefs, hopes, fears, and chances; and makes us not only patient, but willing, as knowing that whatever we suffer is according to the decree of Heaven. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

He that lifteth himself above great adversity, and beareth the evils which crush others, is consecrated by his sufferings. Seneca, *To Helvia*, xiii, 6

The good man will stand firm, and bear, not only patiently but gladly, whatever happens; he will know that every adversity is a law of nature; and, just as the good soldier bears wounds and counts his scars, and even in death loves the emperor for whom he falls [dies], he will ever bear in mind that old precept: Follow God. Seneca, *On the Happy Life*, xv

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

It is the part of a great man to conquer the calamities and terrors of morals. Seneca, *On Providence*, iv, 1

### HUMILITY OF JESUS

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Mt 5.5

The meek shall inherit the earth. Ps 37.11

And said, Verily I (Jesus) say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. Mt 18:3-5

And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick. Mt 14.14

Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Mt 11.28-30

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Mt 20.25-28

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. Mt 23.8-12

### NON-HUMILITY OF JESUS

(Jesus to Jews): Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Mt 23:33

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Mt 7.6

### NON-HUMILITY AND OTHER TRAITS OF PAUL

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. 1 Cor 11:1 [Followers of Paul, not Christ?]

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 2 Thess 3.14

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached (by) me is not (from) man. For I neither received it (from) man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Gal 1.11-12

For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chief apostles. 2 Cor 11.5

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. [Go to Hell.] Gal 1.6-9

To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 1 Cor 9.22

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Gal 4:1

From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Gal 6:17 [No, we don't know what this means.]

"Being crafty, I (Paul) caught you with guile." 2 Cor 12.16

I robbed other Churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. 2 Cor 11:8

And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. Acts 13.11-12 [Paul physically blinds a man to convert another.]

## PAGAN

Nothing is so much to be avoided in doing good as pride. Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii, 11



## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Admit that you are nobody, and know nothing. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 1

Let us satisfy our consciences, and do nothing for the sake of reputation. Seneca, *On Anger*, iii, 41

Simple and modest is the work of philosophy. Draw me not aside to insolence and pride. M. Aurelius, ix, 28

An adviser ought in the first place to have a regard to the delicacy and sense of shame of the person admonished. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cl

Nothing is more becoming in a ruler than to despise no one, and never to be insolent. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxxvii

## JUDGING

### JESUS

Do not be Judgemental

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Mt 7.1-2

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Mt 7.3,5

Be Judgemental

Beware of false prophets ... which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ... Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Hell). Wherefore by their

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

fruits ye shall know them. Mt 7.15-20 [A bit judgemental.]

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven. Mt 7.21

And whosoever shall not receive you (apostles), nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. Mt 10.14-15

Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Mt 11.20

And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.... Mt 11:23 [Jesus damns whole cities to Hell because they did not repent.]

Jesus preaches: "He that is not with me is against me." Mt 12.30

Jesus teaches: "He that believes (in me) and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." Mk 16:16

He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Jn 3:18

He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abide on him. Jn 3:36

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Jn 14:6  
[Non-Christians go to Hell.]

### *The Lord's Prayer (Matthew)*

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Mt 6.9-10

Give us this day our daily bread. Mt 6.11

### Jewish Scriptures

Thou, O Lord, art our Father. Is., Ixiii, 16.

Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Ps. cxv, 3

Feed me with food convenient [properly, apportioned] for me. Prov., xxx, 8.

### OATHS

### JESUS

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne....Mt 5.33-34

### PAGANS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Be neither a man of many words, nor busy about too many things ... having need neither of oath nor of any man's testimony. M. Aurelius,. iii, 5

Avoid taking oaths, if possible, altogether; at any rate, as far as thou art able. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii

## OUTCASTS

### JESUS

(Jesus, teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth) And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Lk 4.16-19

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Mt 11.5-6

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord to comfort all that mourn. Is lxi, 1-2

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. Is., xxv, 5-6

### PAGANS

The wise man will give hospitality to the exile and alms to the needy; he will restore children to their weeping mothers, loose the chains of the captive, release the gladiator from his bondage, and even bury the body of the criminal. Seneca, *On Clemency*, vi.

Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Mt 5.9

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree. Micah, iv, 3.

Seek peace and pursue It: the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. Ps. xxxiv, 14

Peace of Mind

Paul

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ .... ROM 5.1

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. PHIL 4.7

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ROM 8.6

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. ROM 15.13

### PAGAN

He that has dedicated his mind to virtue, and to the good of human society, whereof he is a member, has consummated all that is either profitable or necessary for him to know or to do toward the establishment of his peace. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

Tranquillity is a certain quality of mind, which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress enjoys a perpetual calm he has a benevolence in his nature; ... he squares his life according to reason; and draws to himself love and admiration. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations; to understand our duties toward God and man: to enjoy the present without any anxious dependence upon the future. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

[But Christians seem to be anxious about whether they will go to Heaven or Hell after death.]

Liberty and serenity of mind must necessarily ensue upon the mastering of those things which either allure or affright us; when instead of those fleshy pleasures. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

He that can look death in the face, and bid it welcome; open his door to poverty, and bridle his appetites; this is the man whom Providence has established in the

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

possession of inviolable delights. ... " The foundation of it is wisdom and virtue; the knowledge of what we ought to do, and the conformity of the will to that knowledge. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

## PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING

### JESUS

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. MT 5.10-12

While Stoics taught that one ought to be willing to suffer or even die for one's beliefs, note that the Christians made a virtue out of persecution and suffering and death (martyrdom). Also, as opposed to the Stoics, note the emphasis by Jesus on rewards. For the Stoics, virtue is its own reward.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. Mt 26.36-38

Jesus speaking to disciples: But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. MT 13:9

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Mt 5.4

### Other Christians

The apostles left the council and were happy, because God had considered them worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus. Acts 5.41

You don't gain anything by being punished for some wrong you have done. But God will bless you, if you have to suffer for doing something good. 1 Peter 2.20

### PAUL

Even until this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace.... And labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we (do kind deeds): we are (seen) as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. 1 COR 4:11-13

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.... 1 COR 4:11:26

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings... By pureness, by



## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned .... 2 COR 6.4-6

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep....

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 2 COR 11.23-25, 27

## JEWISH SCRIPTURES

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me to comfort all that mourn. Is., lxvi, 13

## PAGAN

Suppose that men kill thee, cut thee in pieces, curse thee. What then can these things do to prevent thy mind (soul) from remaining pure, wise, sober, just? M. Aurelius, viii, 51

I know it is my duty to be content in all conditions .... Seneca, *On A Happy Life* 3-244

Why may not such a one call himself ... a son of God? And why shall he fear anything that happens among men? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 9

If thou dost always remember that God stands by as a witness of whatever thou do either in soul or body, thou wilt never err, either in thy prayers or actions, and thou wilt have God abiding with thee. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxv

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Dare to look up to God, and say, Make use of me for the future as thou wilt. I am of the same mind: I am one with thee. Lead me whither thou wilt. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 16

When the good man sees his faith tried by the torments of perfidy, he descends not from his height, but rises above his torment, and saith: I have what I willed, what I sought: I withdraw not, and will not withdraw. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 21

Conscience gives joy, even when it is oppressed. Seneca, *On Benefits*, iv, 21

Shall not the having God for our maker, and father, and guardian, free us from griefs and alarms? Epictetus, *Discourses*, i, 9

After seven-and-twenty years spent in arms, (Socrates) fell under a slavery to the thirty tyrants, and most of them his bitter enemies: he came at last to be sentenced as "a violater of religion, a corrupter of youth, and a common enemy to God and man." After this he was imprisoned, and put to death by poison, which was all so far from working upon his mind, that it never so much as altered his countenance. Seneca, *On A Happy Life*

[Like Jesus, Socrates dies a stoic death to save the souls of his followers, that is to help them achieve moral virtue.]

A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials. Seneca

*Persecution of Pagans by the Christian Roman Empire:*

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

The first episodes started late in the reign of Constantine the Great (early fourth century CE), when he ordered the pillaging and the tearing down of some pagan temples. The first anti-Pagan laws by the Christian state started with Constantine's son Constantius II, who was an unwavering opponent of paganism; he ordered the closing of all pagan temples, forbade Pagan sacrifices under pain of death, and removed the traditional Altar of Victory from the Senate. Under his reign ordinary Christians started vandalizing many of the ancient Pagan temples, tombs and monuments....

Under Ambrose's zealous pressure, Theodosius issued the infamous 391 "Theodosian decrees," a declaration of war on paganism, the Altar of Victory was removed again by Gratian, Vestal Virgins disbanded, access to Pagan temples prohibited. [Religious persecution in the Roman Empire; From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia]

## (THE) RICH AND THE POOR

### JESUS

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. MT 19.23-24

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. Mt 19.21

The rich man says that he has observed ... moral laws from his youth. Jesus tells him to go and "sell what you

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

own and give the money to the poor....” The man goes away grieving: “for he had great possessions.” MK 10.20-22 The Marcan Jesus and his disciples seldom give money to the poor, and this is one of the few times where Jesus advises anyone to do so. See chapter 5 of our *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth - Evidence That Jesus Never Lived*.

Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses. LK 12.15

Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. LK 6.24-26

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Mt 6.24

But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! Mark 10.24

## JEWISH SCRIPTURES

He that loveth gold shall not be justified: and he that followeth corruption shall have enough thereof. Eccclus., xxxi, 5.

...for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven. Prov., xxiii, 4

Give to him that asketh thee, and Turn not away thine eye from one that asketh of thee. Eccclus., iv, 5

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

### PAGAN

To a wise man poverty is rather a blessing than a misfortune. Seneca, *On A Happy Life* Chapter 23

Covetousness is the root of all evil. Seneca, *On Clemency*, i

Provide things relating to the body no further than absolute need requires. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xxxiii.

It were better to die of hunger, exempt from grief or fear, than to live in affluence with perturbation. Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, xii.

Fix thy desire or aversion on ... health, power, honours, thy country, friends, and children ... and thou wilt be unfortunate. But fix them on Zeus, on the Gods ... and how canst thou be any longer unprosperous? Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii

Avarice is the worst pest of the human race. Seneca, *To Helvia*, xiii, 2.

Democritus cast aside his wealth, deeming it a burden to the good mind. Seneca, *On Providence*, vi, 2

Poverty will bring thee joy, as thou wilt be free from many cares. Plutarch, *On Covetousness*, iv

No one who is a lover of money, a lover of pleasure, or a lover of glory, is likewise a lover of mankind. Epictetus, *Fragments*, x

Very rich and very good at the same time a man cannot be. Plato, *Laws*, v, 742

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

It is a great thing not to be corrupted by the nearness of wealth: great is the man who is poor amid wealth. Seneca, *Letter xx*, 10

Riches are not among the number of things which are good..... It is difficult therefore for a rich person to be modest, or for a modest person to be rich. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xviii

Wealth is dangerous to the foolish, since vice grows with wealth. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xciv

What disease shall we say that the rich man suffers from but spiritual poverty? Plutarch, *On Covetousness*, iv

Any person may live happy in poverty, but few in wealth and power. Epictetus, *Fragments*, cxxviii

He that is not content in poverty, would not be so neither in plenty; for the fault is not in the thing, but in the mind [soul]. Seneca, *On A Happy Life* Chapter 25

It is not the augmenting of our fortunes, but the abating of our appetites, that makes us rich. Seneca, *On A Happy Life* Chapter 25

It is a shame to place the happiness of life in gold and silver, for which bread and water is sufficient .... Seneca, *On A Happy Life* Chapter 25

For the honor of poverty, it was both the foundation and the cause of the Roman empire; and no man was ever yet so poor but he had enough to carry him to his journey's end. Seneca, *On A Happy Life* Chapter 25

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

### SICKNESS: CAUSED BY SIN

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. MT 9.2

### SIN

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Mt 6.22-23

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the fool walketh in darkness. Ecchs., ii, 14

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Is., v, 20

### SINLESS (PURE)

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Mt 5.8

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart. Ps. xxiv, 3-4

### SLAVERY

### JESUS

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus cures the centurion's slave. LK 7.2-10 [No objection is made to slavery by Jesus.]

### PAUL

Servants (slaves), obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Col 3.22-24

[The apostle does not object to slavery but rather says the slave should do what he is ordered to do "heartily." And then you will get the reward: inheritance (eternal life).]

Let as many servants (slaves) as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 1 Tim 6.1

Art thou called being a servant (slave)? care not for it (stay a slave): but if thou may be made free, use it rather. 1 COR 7:21 [God calls people to be slaves!]

Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. 1 COR 7:24 [God calls (forces) people to be slaves. God, his son and Paul approve of slavery and Christians will do so for more than 1500 years.]

Approving of slavery, Paul returns the runaway slave (Onesimus) to his master. Philemon. 1, 10, 12

### PAGAN



## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

(Conduct) yourself humanely and tenderly toward your servants (slaves). It is the part of a wise and a good man, to deal with his inferior as he would have his superior deal with him; for servants are not only men, but a kind of humble friends.... Seneca *Epistle 19*

But we live as if a servant were not made of the same materials with his master, or to breathe the same air, or to live and die under the same conditions. The body of a servant may be bought and sold, but his mind is free. Seneca *Epistle 19*

(The slave's) body, it is true, is his master's, but his mind is his own: and there are many commands which a servant ought no more to obey than a master to impose. Seneca *On Benefits*

## TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

### JESUS

Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two. MT 5.38-41

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. MT 5.43-45

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### PAUL

Paul writes to “overcome evil with good” Rom 12.17,19-21

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him. Lament, iii, 30

### PAGANS

There is this fine circumstance connected with the character of a Cynic that he must be beaten like an ass, and yet, when beaten, must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all. Epictetus, *Discourses*, ii, 12

When Cato was struck on the mouth, he was not angry, and sought no vengeance: he denied the deed. Seneca, *On Constancy*, xiv, 3

Never mind if someone doth despise thee as a fool, and insult thee, if he hath a mind; let him strike thee, by Zeus, and do thou be of good cheer, and do not mind the insulting blow, for thou wilt never come to any harm in the practice of virtue. Plato, *Gorgias*, 527.

We should give good for evil. Plutarch (45-125 CE)

### VIRTUE

### JESUS

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? MT 16.26

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

### PAGAN

The Stoic distinction between valuable and good things is at the center of Seneca's Letters. So-called preferred indifferents—health, wealth, and so on—have *value* (their opposites, dispreferred indifferents, have *disvalue*). But only virtue is *good*. All else is determined by fate.

What is good is that *I choose well* (*Letter* 92.11-12). In response to the question ‘What is virtue?’, Seneca says “a true and immovable judgment” (*Letter* 71.32; tr. Inwood). Attributing any real importance to indifferents, Seneca argues, is like preferring, among two good men, the one with the fancy haircut (*Letter* 66.25).

To the Stoic it is not the transfer of an object that is justly called a *beneficium*. Rather, the favor consists in the state of mind of the giver—that he wants to benefit us.

### PAUL

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdome of God. GAL 5:21

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Flee fornication. COR 6:9-10, 18

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ROM 7:18-19

...there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ROM 3.12

### WAR

Jesus

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. MT 10:33-34

Then (Jesus) said to (his disciples), But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. LK 22.36

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. MT 5.9

### PAGAN

To take a farther view, now, of the miserable consequences and sanguinary effects of this hideous distemper (anger); from hence come slaughters, and poisons, wars, and desolations, the razing and burning of cities; the unpeopling of nations, and the turning of populous countries into deserts .... Seneca, *On Anger* Chapter 5

### MISCELLANEOUS

## MORE CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MORALS COMPARED

### JESUS

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Mt 15.11

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. MT 15.18-20

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Mt 7.6

### PAGAN

Consider that thou dost not thrive merely by the food in thy stomach, but by the elevation of thy soul. For the former is evacuated, and carried off altogether; but the latter, though the soul is parted, remains uncorrupted through all things. Epictetus, *Fragments*, xxvi

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. Prov, xxiii, 9

### JESUS

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Mt 7.15

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet.  
Deut, xiii, 3

### JESUS

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Mt 23.23

### JEWISH SCRIPTURES

When ye make many prayers, I will not hear your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Is., i, 15-17.



## Chapter 7 THE “LIBERAL” IMAGE OF JESUS

---

All quotes are the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

The liberal image of the loving Jesus is quite admirable. Maybe that is why your humble editors get along so well with some liberal Christians.

There is, of course, one fundamental problem with this loving Jesus. Does he bear any resemblance to the Jesus of the Gospels?

---

### THE GOSPEL OF MARK

---

To answer this question we have largely used the Gospel of Mark. We have used this Gospel as it is the earliest narrative, having been written about 70 CE, about 40 years after the supposed death of Jesus.

Mark was the source material for the Gospels of Matthew (ca 80 CE), Luke (ca 85 CE) and John (ca 90 - 100 CE). Thus, the latter three Gospels are likely to contain material added to the Jesus myth of Mark. Nobody knows who the author was of any of the Gospels.

In Mark 16.9-20, the resurrected Jesus appears to people after his death. These verses were added to Mark in the second century CE or later.

For the historicity of Mark's Gospel, etc., See Volume 1 *Jesus Christ: A Pagan Myth (3rd expanded edition)* of this series on the nonexistence of Jesus.

Let us compare the liberal image of the loving Jesus with that of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.



## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

### *Jesus Does Not Love Everyone*

Liberal Christians today picture Jesus as loving and inclusive. Who does Jesus say goes to Hell? Nearly everyone. Most Orthodox Christians, all heretics, and all non-Christians!

Mt 11.27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

1 Cor 12.12-13 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Jews and pagans can be saved – if they convert to Christianity. Otherwise, they get a trip to Hell. This includes un-baptized babies.

When defending universal salvation, most people use John 3.16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Well, God may have loved the world but was not willing to save them from Hell unless they became orthodox Christians. See John 3.17 ... *he that believeth not is condemned ....* It would have been simpler for an all

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

forgiving and all loving God with infinite power to forgive all and send all to Heaven.

Mk 10.45 has Jesus say but Christ came “to give his life, a ransom for many,” not for all.

As for orthodox Christians, Jesus said only a few people will be saved.

Matthew 22.14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Mk 6.11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Any city that does not receive the followers of Jesus will be punished worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. The followers of Jesus would be a reference to early Christian missionaries. The Gospel writers sought to justify many of the later beliefs and practices of the early church.

Mk 8.1-2 In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat...

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

This is a really rare occasion when Jesus says he has compassion for anyone.

The modern "Liberal" Image of Jesus Christ is seen as a loving human being. He is all inclusive. Jesus loves women, the poor, the ill (lepers etc.) those possessed by Devils. Despite the Gospels, some Christians say that he also loves Jews!

### Publicans and Sinners

Mk 2:15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

Mk 2:16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

### The Poor

Mk 14.3-7 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. (Lepers were not allowed within cities.)

And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

This is the only passage that indicates that Jesus or his disciples gave any money to the poor. In the rich man story Jesus merely indicates that he should give his money to the poor and then follow Jesus, not that the money should be given to the group who would then give it the poor.

Mk 14.6-7 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

The poor will always be with you; there is here no concern for eliminating poverty. Anointing Jesus is more important than feeding the poor.

### Children

Mk 9:36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

Mk 9:37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

Mk 9:42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Mk 10:13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

Mk 10:14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Mk 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Mk 10:16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Apologists have long used these passages about children so that children could be seen as among the special people loved by Jesus. However, for a long time children had been used as symbols for religious purity.

### Women

#### Women and the Empty Tomb

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

Mk 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

This is sometimes used by liberals and feminists to show the prominent role that women played in early Christianity.

But look at the next verse:

Mk 16.8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.

True, at Mk 16.9 we see that Jesus first appears to Marry Magdalene. But as we pointed out above, 16.9-20 was not written by Mark. Also, it is impossible to reconcile the resurrection appearances of the four Gospels (Mk 19.9, Mt 28.1,9, Lk 24.13-31, Jn 20.11-14) to say nothing of Paul in 1 Cor 15.4-5.

### Jesus Sends People to Hell

Liberals don't talk much about the fascination of Jesus with Hell; some even deny the existence of Hell. Some liberals even maintain that non-Christians go to heaven. We do not know if they believe that atheists go to Heaven. We asked a fundamentalist Christian whether atheists would go to Hell. She merely said that would be up to God.

Mk 4:10-12 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God:

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.  
Mk 10-12

[Jesus deceives people so they will go to Hell.]

Mk 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. [Hell]

Mk 9:47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

Mk 9:59 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The Morals of Jesus:

### *Anger*

Mk 9.17-19 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith (of the disciples), O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

### *Animals*

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. Mk 5.13 (Mk 5.11-17). [Eds. Rough on animals.]

### Charity

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living. Mk 12:41-44

### Family

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. Mk .31-35 [Rough on mothers and other family members.]

### Forgiveness



## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. Mk 3:28-29

Jesus on sending out his disciples with power over unclean spirits: And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. Mk 6:11-12

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. Mk 11:25-26

### The Greatest Commandment

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. Mk 12:28-31

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### The Rich

10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

10:19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, *Defraud not*, Honour thy father and mother.

10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

10:23 And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

10:24 the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

10:26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

10:27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

10:28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. Mk 10:17-30

[A hundred mothers? Eternal life? So, are all souls mortal? Do all souls perish or go to Hell if they do not convert to Christianity?]

Sex, Marriage, Divorce

No sex or marriage in heaven.

Mk 12.25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

Mk 6.3b Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. (But the Catholic church holds that Mary was a perpetual virgin.)

Divorce

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

### No Divorce:

Mk 10.11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Mk 10.12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Mt 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Lk 16.18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

### Divorce only when wife commits adultery:

Mt 5.32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away *his wife*, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Mt 19.9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

### Pagan/Christian Marriage:

1 Cor 7.15 But if the unbelieving (pagan) depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Note in verse 14 that the Christian partner in the interfaith marriage makes the children of such a marriage clean. I guess that makes pagan children unclean.

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

And (Jesus) answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

What therefore God had joined together, let not man put asunder.

And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. Mk 10:2-11

### Jesus on the State

And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's.

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him. Mk 12:16-17

### One Last Moral Issue

Jesus on Jews and the rest of non-Christians

#### Criticism of Jews

And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils. Mk 3:22

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. [After he cures the man with the withered hand.] Mk 3:6

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. Mk 7:1-2

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Mk 7:5-7

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own

For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death. [Mk 7.9-10: "Jesus criticizes the Jews for not killing their disobedient children according to Old Testament law." SAB]

And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation [of Jews] seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. Mk 8:11-12

### Fate of Jews

And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. Mk 12:38-40

Killing God: The Mission of Jesus

Jews, by engineering the death of Jesus in Jerusalem, will cause the replacement of Judaism by Christianity (Supersessionism).

The Third Prediction by Jesus of His Death.

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again. Mk 10:32-34

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Jesus is fulfilling biblical prophecy by writing an ass etc. Thus, the people are tricked by Jesus into believing that he is the expected Messiah and is a political one, a king.

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. Mk 11:9-10 Supersessionism



## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

### *The Parable of the Vineyard Mk 12.1-11*

Jesus is a supersessionist; he has come to replace Judaism with Christianity. When the Jews engineer the death of Jesus, non-Jews will replace them as the people of God. This is God's plan which Jesus is carrying out. Mk 12.1-11

And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.

And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come,

And they took him, and killed him, and cast and cast him out of the vineyard.

What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

And they [... the scribes and chief priests Mk 11:18] sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way. Mk 12:1-12

The End of the World. When ?

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. Mk 9:1

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. Mk 13:32-37

Last Supper

The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Mk 14:21-24

Spiritual cannibalism. His bloody death on the cross is the ultimate blood sacrifice. In any case, the humble Jesus has gone. This sort of God creates the sacrament which Christians will observe at the holy mass.

### The Nature of Jesus Christ

#### Humanity of Christ

In Mark, unlike Matthew and Luke, there are no birth scenes indicating that Jesus is a semidivine being, has a divine father. The Markan Jesus has a mother and father and several brothers and sisters. In Mark there is no virginal conception. The Holy Spirit is not the father and thus Jesus is not divine or semi-divine.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? Mk 8:30 [Jesus is not divine since his not all-powerful. And he is not all knowledgeable because he has to look around to find out who touched his clothes.]

Because of the weak faith of the people in his hometown, Jesus ... could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. Mk 6:1-5

And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist (risen from

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

the dead); but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. Mk 8:27-29

And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?  
And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

### Divine or Semidivine

Some liberal Christians deny the divinity of Jesus as did Isaac Newton.

And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. Mk 2:4-12

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.  
Mk 2:28

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. [Jesus cures the man on the Sabbath thus "breaking the law of God" by curing on the Sabbath. Actually, in Judaism there is no law against curing a person on the Sabbath.] Mk 3:1-3, 6

And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.  
Mk 3:11

... the country of the Gadarenes.

And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit ... .

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. Mk 5:1-8

Was Jesus God?

YES

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of

## THE PAGAN MORALS OF JESUS CHRIST

grace and truth. [The only begotten of the Father - a second God? The second person of the Trinity?]

John 10:30 I and my Father are one.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God.

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

NO

Mk 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Mk 15:34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mk 16:19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

We hope that this chapter has made it clear that one should not project the modern image of Jesus back nearly 2000 years into the past into the gospel of Mark.

## THE "LIBERAL" IMAGE OF JESUS

Conclusion: Christian ethics were derived from the pagan world – from Roman Stoicism. There is no reason to posit the existence of Jesus Christ in order to explain the morals of the Gospels.



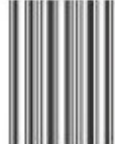
Fatne  
e and  
as put  
lestro  
nder  
hing  
the

It is sow  
piritual b  
d there is  
And so  
dam beca

ISBN 9781497329515



90000 >



9 781497 329515