

## **No 4**

### **The Christian Apologists of the 2nd century**

During the first half of the 2nd century, some of the ablest Christian leaders produced apologies to make the Christian position clearer to the authorities and individuals, who were outside the church. They wrote to defend Christians against accusations made against them, arguing for tolerance under civil law. They set out to show that the Christianity was the only true religion, superior to other philosophies and religions, whether pagan or Jewish. Their defence was from two angles. On the one hand, they attacked the practice of pagan worship and on the other, they showed the high moral standard of Christian life.

Because their aim was to defend Christianity against the increased pressure from outside the church, they differ from our earlier readings which were written to believers to encourage church life. But this is not to say that their work was not highly valued amongst the Christians for it encouraged them that the faith could be so well defended. The writers were more philosophically trained than the earlier fathers so their material is of a different literary standard.

#### **Our readings**

There were a number of "apologists" but only fragments of their works are now available. In our readings we will only consider :

The letter of Mathetes to Diognetus

Aristides' Apology

Justin Martyr's 2 Apologies and his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew

Athenagoras' Plea for Christians

#### **\*\* The Letter of Mathetes to Diognetus**

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/diognetus.html>

An unknown author – Mathetes means "a disciple of the Apostles". Initially, it was thought that Justin the Martyr was the author but that is no longer accepted. So dating is vague – some think early AD130, others later c 200.

Even the person to whom it is addressed is unclear but there was a man called Diognetus who was a tutor of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and some think he may be the one to whom this written. Even though the particular author is unknown, it is a Christian piece worth reading.

#### **Its message**

He invites his reader to consider Christianity as superior to both pagan and Jewish religions. The pagans foolishly worship idols made by men from wood and clay and the Jewish religion is based on superstition that God needs men to observe certain offerings and practices. Christians live in the world as ordinary citizens while not being part of it. They understand that God, the Almighty Creator has loved the world and gave His Son, the Word, to save and redeem us. He uses the title Word (Logos) when referring to Jesus.

Of particular interest are chapters v & vi which describe Christian living 'in the world but not of it'. They are worth reading for their simple beauty, applicable today as much as they were when written.

### CHAPTER V -- THE MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS.

*For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.*

### CHAPTER VI -- THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANS TO THE WORLD.

*To sum up all in one word--what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world. The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians, though in nowise injured, because they abjure pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and [loves also] the members; Christians likewise love those that hate them. The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body; and Christians are confined in the world as in a prison, and yet they are the preservers of the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible [bodies], looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the heavens. The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better; in like manner, the Christians, though subjected day by day to punishment, increase the more in number. God has assigned them this illustrious position, which it were unlawful for them to forsake.*

### CHAPTER VII -- THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

*For, as I said, this was no mere earthly invention which was delivered to them, nor is it a mere human system of opinion, which they judge it right to preserve so carefully, nor has a dispensation of mere human mysteries been committed to them, but truly God Himself, who is almighty, the Creator of all things, and invisible, has sent from heaven, and placed among men, [Him who is] the truth, and the holy and incomprehensible Word, and has firmly established Him in their hearts. He did not, as one might have imagined, send to men any servant, or angel, or ruler, or any one of those who bear sway*

over earthly things, or one of those to whom the government of things in the heavens has been entrusted, but the very Creator and Fashioner of all things--by whom He made the heavens--by whom he enclosed the sea within its proper bounds--whose ordinances all the stars faithfully observe--from whom the sun has received the measure of his daily course to be observed--whom the moon obeys, being commanded to shine in the night, and whom the stars also obey, following the moon in her course; by whom all things have been arranged, and placed within their proper limits, and to whom all are subject--the heavens and the things that are therein, the earth and the things that are therein, the sea and the things that are therein--fire, air, and the abyss--the things which are in the heights, the things which are in the depths, and the things which lie between. This [messenger] He sent to them. Was it then, as one might conceive, for the purpose of exercising tyranny, or of inspiring fear and terror? By no means, but under the influence of clemency and meekness. As a king sends his son, who is also a king, so sent He Him; as God He sent Him; as to men He sent Him; as a Saviour He sent Him, and as seeking to persuade, not to compel us; for violence has no place in the character of God. As calling us He sent Him, not as vengefully pursuing us; as loving us He sent Him, not as judging us. For He will yet send Him to judge us, and who shall endure His appearing? ... Do you not see them exposed to wild beasts, that they may be persuaded to deny the Lord, and yet not overcome? Do you not see that the more of them are punished, the greater becomes the number of the rest? This does not seem to be the work of man: this is the power of God; these are the evidences of His manifestation."

*Roberts-Donaldson English Translation of the letter to Diognetus*

### **\*\* Aristides**

Eusebius claims that Aristides wrote his apology to Hadrian around AD125.

Others say it was presented to Antonius Pius about about 188

"Writing in a.d. 125, or even twenty years later, Aristides becomes an important witness as to the nature of early Christianity. His Apology contains no express quotation from Scripture; but the Emperor is referred for information to a gospel which is written. Various echoes of New Testament expressions will at once be recognized... Some topics are conspicuous by their absence. Aristides has no trace of ill-feeling to the Jews; no reference to the Logos doctrine, nor to the distinctive ideas of the Apostle Paul; he has no gnosticism or heresy to denounce, and he makes no appeal to miracle and prophecy. Christianity, in his view, is worthy of a philosophic emperor because it is eminently reasonable, and gives an impulse and power to live a good life.

*Roberts and Donaldson Introduction*

### **His writings**

1. He writes of the nature of God and how the Christians make a new nation. Compare what he writes about Christian life with that in the letter to Diognetus.

2. The early section of his description of Christians has similar wording to later creeds of the church.

### **\*The apology of Aristides the Philosopher of Athens**

Read his apology at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/aristides-kay.html>  
based on the translation from the Syriac Version by D.M. Kay

I The Nature of God

"I say, then, that God is not born, not made, an ever-abiding nature without beginning and without end, immortal, perfect, and incomprehensible. Now when I say that he is "perfect," this means that there is not in him any defect, and he is not in need of anything but all things are in need of him.

*And when I say that he is "without beginning," this means that everything which has beginning has also an end, and that which has an end may be brought to an end. He has no name, for everything which has a name is kindred to things created. Form he has none, nor yet any union of members; for whatsoever possesses these is kindred to things fashioned. He is neither male nor female. The heavens do not limit him, but the heavens and all things, visible and invisible, receive their bounds from him. Adversary he has none, for there exists not any stronger than he. Wrath and indignation he possesses not, for there is nothing which is able to stand against him. Ignorance and forgetfulness are not in his nature, for he is altogether wisdom and understanding; and in Him stands fast all that exists. He requires not sacrifice and libation, nor even one of things visible; He requires not aught from any, but all living creatures stand in need of him."*

II He divides humanity into 4 races of men – Barbarians, Greeks, Jews and Christians. he traces each of their origins and then gives a fuller critique of each race. The origin of the Christians

*"The Christians, then, trace the beginning of their religion from Jesus the Messiah; and he is named the Son of God Most High. And it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin assumed and clothed himself with flesh; and the Son of God lived in a daughter of man. This is taught in the gospel, as it is called, which a short time was preached among them; and you also if you will read therein, may perceive the power which belongs to it. This Jesus, then, was born of the race of the Hebrews; and he had twelve disciples in order that the purpose of his incarnation might in time be accomplished. But he himself was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven. Thereupon these twelve disciples went forth throughout the known parts of the world, and kept showing his greatness with all modesty and uprightness. And hence also those of the present day who believe that preaching are called Christians, and they are become famous."*

III-VII Barbarians – worship creatures and images, who are powerless, too weak to defend themselves. They worship the 4 elements - earth, water, fire and wind - which are created and able to be changed and ruined . Also they worshipped the sun and ancestors.

VIII- XIII The Greeks

Make gods of their own who do evil things, bringing men into immorality and defilement for they imitate them. He is amazed that such a reasonable people should go so far astray.

XIV the Jews-

Believe in a monotheistic God. They approach the truth in that they worship God and not his works. They care for people. But they too have erred for they do not worship God but his angels and their observances of laws is imperfect.

XV -XVI the Christians have found the truth. They trust in the God the Creator of heaven *and earth, the only God who commands them how to live and gives hope for the future world to come. They serve only God and are upright in their lives, loving towards others.*

*"XV. But the Christians, O King, while they went about and made search, have found the truth; and as we learned from their writings, they have come nearer to truth and genuine knowledge than the rest of the nations. For they know and trust in God, the Creator of heaven and of earth, in whom and from whom are all things, to whom there is no other god as companion, from whom they received commandments which they engraved upon their minds and observe in hope and expectation of the world which is to come. Wherefore they do not commit adultery nor fornication, nor bear false witness, nor embezzle what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honour father and mother, and show kindness to those near to them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols (made) in the image of man; and whatsoever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others; and of the food which is consecrated to idols they do not eat, for they are*

pure. And their oppressors they appease (lit: comfort) and make them their friends; they do good to their enemies; and their women, O King, are pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest; and their men keep themselves from every unlawful union and from all uncleanness, in the hope of a recompense to come in the other world. Further, if one or other of them have bondmen and bondwomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. And whenever one of their poor passes from the world, each one of them according to his ability gives heed to him and carefully sees to his burial. And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity, and if it is possible to redeem him they set him free. And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. They observe the precepts of their Messiah with much care, living justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and every hour they give thanks and praise to God for His loving-kindnesses toward them; and for their food and their drink they offer thanksgiving to Him. And if any righteous man among them passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God; and they escort his body as if he were setting out from one place to another near. And when a child has been born to one of them, they give thanks to God; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who has passed through the world without sins. And further if they see that any one of them dies in his ungodliness or in his sins, for him they grieve bitterly, and sorrow as for one who goes to meet his doom.

XVI. Such, O King, is the commandment of the law of the Christians, and such is their manner of life. As men who know God, they ask from Him petitions which are fitting for Him to grant and for them to receive. And thus they employ their whole lifetime. And since they know the loving-kindnesses of God toward them, behold! for their sake the glorious things which are in the world flow forth to view. And verily, they are those who found the truth when they went about and made search for it; and from what we considered, we learned that they alone come near to a knowledge of the truth. And they do not proclaim in the ears of the multitude the kind deeds they do, but are careful that no one should notice them; and they conceal their giving just as he who finds a treasure and conceals it. And they strive to be righteous as those who expect to behold their Messiah, and to receive from Him with great glory the promises made concerning them. And as for their words and their precepts, O King, and their glorying in their worship, and the hope of earning according to the work of each one of them their recompense which they look for in another world,-you may learn about these from their writings. It is enough for us to have shortly informed your Majesty concerning the conduct and the truth of the Christians. For great indeed, and wonderful is their doctrine to him who will search into it and reflect upon it. And verily, this is a new people, and there is something divine (lit: "a divine admixture") in the midst of them. ....

Now the Greeks, O King, as they follow base practises in intercourse with males, and a mother and a sister and a daughter, impute their monstrous impurity in turn to the Christians. But the Christians are just and good, and the truth is set before their eyes, and their spirit is long-suffering; and, therefore, though they know the error of these (the Greeks), and are persecuted by them, they bear and endure it; and for the most part they have compassion on them, as men who are destitute of knowledge. And on their side, they offer prayer that these may repent of their error; and when it happens that one of them has repented, he is ashamed before the Christians of the works which were done by him; and he makes confession to God, saying, I did these things in ignorance. And he purifies his heart, and his sins are forgiven him, because he committed them in ignorance in the former time, when he used to blaspheme



*and speak evil of the true knowledge of the Christians. And assuredly the race of the Christians is more blessed than all the men who are upon the face of the earth.*

*Henceforth let the tongues of those who utter vanity and harass the Christians be silent; and hereafter let them speak the truth. For it is of serious consequence to them that they should worship the true God rather than worship a senseless sound. And verily whatever is spoken in the mouth of the Christians is of God; and their doctrine is the gateway of light. Wherefore let all who are without the knowledge of God draw near thereto; and they will receive incorruptible words, which are from all time and from eternity. So shall they appear before the awful judgment which through Jesus the Messiah is destined to come upon the whole human race.*

Those sections in italics are taken from:

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/aristides-kay.html>

### **\*\* Justin Martyr AD100 – 165,**

Read his works at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/justin.html>

#### **His life**

Born in Flavia Neapolis, modern Nablus [Shechem in the ancient Samaria] of pagan parents. Uncircumcised. Well travelled and educated; in search of truth and God through philosophy. Converted to Christianity about AD130; Spent time in Ephesus and went to Rome twice. He established a school in Rome; he influenced Irenaeus. He was martyred in Rome, along with six others, early in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, [161-181], under prefect Rusticus 161-168. Eusebius, a 4th century Christian historian, thought that Crescens, an opposing Cynic philosopher, was responsible for denouncing him to the authorities. He was beheaded.

He searched for truth in Philosophy, which he thought would be the way to happiness. Then, he met an old man who directed him to read the prophets of the Old Testament. In them, he found the love of Christ. He begins the Dialogue to Trypho with his personal story.

Justin was important in being one of the first to give an outline of a reasoned Christian faith.

Two things attracted Justin to Christ.

(i) He found in Christianity the truth and saw it as the only true philosophy, giving knowledge of God, what really exists and the truth. In it, he was both inspired and found rest. He continued to wear his philosopher's gown after his conversion to signify that he attained the one true philosophy.

(ii) And he was impressed by the fearless way Christians faced death under persecution [Apology 2. 12]. Christians' constancy and honesty impressed neighbours.1.16

#### **His writings:**

There are 2 Apologies, often linked together. 1st written c150;

2nd c163 to Marcus Aurelius

#### **\* His First Apology**

was addressed to the secular authorities, the Roman Emperor, Antonius Pius, and his sons and the senate and the whole of the Roman people.

He set out to defend Christianity, arguing that Christians should be given the same tolerance as that afforded to other religious philosophies.

### What were his arguments?

Christians are treated unjustly for they live good lives, with no criminal charge against them, except bearing the name Christian. [ii-vi/ 2-6] He cites examples of this in Rome [2. xii/12]

He refutes the accusation of atheism, saying they worship the true God, the Creator and Jesus, not idols made by men. [v&vi/5&6; xiii/13] They allow themselves to be killed rather than deny their God and refuse to worship idols [ix,xii] They are peaceful citizens who look for a kingdom made by God – not an earthly one so they are not a threat to the ruling Roman powers.

### About Christians:

Christians are 'sober-minded', rational men, not madmen. They believe in God the Maker of Universe, who provides all and about whom Jesus teaches. Jesus is an historic person, crucified under Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea and Son of the true God himself. Along with Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings God's word xiii/13

He argues that demons lead men astray by misrepresenting Christians and so he sets out to show the truth of Christian belief, based on Jesus' teaching and the difference He makes to the moral lives of Christians xiv/14. Jesus' teaching covered chastity, a love of enemies, giving to those in need and obedience to civil authorities, care for others and peace-making. [xv-xvii/15-17]. (This is very similar to the Sermon on Mount in Matthew's Gospel 5-7).

He explains that other beliefs of Christians include their belief in the resurrection of the body, which means they are not frightened by death and are sure they face God after death. This influences the way they live for they are under God's eye, so they will face either punishment if wicked or salvation if virtuous. [xii/12].

He summarises his argument: in xxiii /23

*"And that this may now become evident to you—*

*(firstly) that whatever we assert in conformity with what has been taught us by Christ, and by the prophets who preceded Him, are alone true, and are older than all the writers who have existed; that we claim to be acknowledged, not because we say the same things as these writers said, but because we say true things:*

*and (secondly) that Jesus Christ is the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten, and power; and, becoming man according to His will, He taught us these things for the conversion and restoration of the human race:*

*and (thirdly) that before He became a man among men, some, influenced by the demons before mentioned, related beforehand, through the instrumentality of the poets, those circumstances as having really happened, which, having fictitiously devised, they narrated, in the same manner as they have caused to be fabricated the scandalous reports against us of infamous and impious actions, of which there is neither witness nor proof--we shall bring forward the following proof."*

These are the basis of Christian belief and conviction. He stresses that these are true, based on historic events, and not fables as pagan stories are [which incidentally never have a reference to a cross in them][liv-lv/54-55]

In his defence, he also replies to the accusation that the Christians do not worship idols, like others who worship false gods. These men do evil things but are not prosecuted, whereas Christians who live caring for others are persecuted. Xx –xxi/ 20-21; xxv-xxx/25-30

He uses as evidence of Christian truth that Jesus in his life, death and exaltation fulfils the prophecies made by the Jewish prophets in the OT.[xxxi-liii /31-53]

He describes the Christian practices of Baptism, Eucharist and Sunday meetings as examples of the way they are dedicated to God and have been made new through Christ. He is dispelling some of the incorrect stories circulating about Christian practices. [1.lxi-lxvii/ 61-67]

(Interesting for us, Christians in the 21st century, to read of their practices.)

His final appeal is that they would not decree death against those who have done no wrong. He invites them to do that which is pleasing to God and warns them they will face God's judgment if they continue in their injustice. He attaches several letters from Emperors written on behalf of Christians that speak about Christians being wrongly accused and punishment for those who bring untrue accusations.

### **\* 2nd Apology**

Justin is roused up against the unjust treatment of a woman and her defenders, who were wrongly accused and killed. He expects a similar accusation to be made against himself by a man called Crescens, whom he describes as ignorant and boasting – not a true philosopher.

After someone says that Christians should kill themselves he deals with Christian attitude to death.

(i) It would be wrong to kill oneself for that is against the will of God, who desires Christians to testify about Him. iv/4

(ii) Christians in fact preserve the world by their presence. God could have destroyed the world because of the wickedness of men, which was a product of the work of wicked angels and demons. Angels were meant to care for men but they disobeyed God and sowed wickednesses within men. God sent the Word, who is His Son, to destroy the power of the demons and to save men. Christians preserve the world.

(iii) Men do not act by fate, as Stoics believe, but are held responsible for their actions for God gave them free will to decide whether they will follow virtue which brings everlasting grace and blessedness or vice which passes away. [vii, xi]. Justin believes very firmly in judgment and eternal punishment of the wicked. [ix]

(iv) Death comes to all men but Christians are not frightened by death. It was the way that Christians faced death, even though unjustly slandered that influenced Justin in converting to Christianity. [xii]

Justin makes reference to various philosophies - Stoics, Socrates, and Plato in particular- who may have spoken well on some things but are deficient in heavenly wisdom and the true knowledge from God and His Word [Logos]. He does not use the name of Jesus but refers to him as the Son and Word of God who became man, took part in our suffering and brought healing.

He prays that his appeal may be published wider.

### **\* Dialogue with Trypho**

Written about 155-161 in Ephesus.

It is the first elaborate exposition of the reasons for regarding Christ as the Messiah of the Old Testament, and the first systematic attempt to exhibit the false position of the Jews in regard to Christianity. It is an account of a discussion with Trypho, a Jewish rabbi, and his friends, so it is not concerned with defending Christianity to the secular powers but in making an argument to Jews about Jesus and his claims. Justin notes that it took place over 2 days.

**It is a very long dialogue. For our study it may be helpful to divide it into sections:**

1. The **introduction and his personal account of his conversion** [i-viii /1-8]

Justin describes his chance meeting with Trypho and his friends, who were attracted by his



philosopher's garb and so wanted a philosophical discussion. He gives them a personal account of his conversion to the Christian faith, the true philosophy, the source of happiness. He recounts his search through the Greek philosophies to find God. He had investigated the Stoics but the teacher did not know God; the Peripatetics but the teacher asked for money; the Pythagorians but the teacher required he know other disciplines such as geometry, music, art, astronomy before study of philosophy and dismissed him when he found that Justin was ignorant; and the Platonists, who perceived the immaterial, and he began to study with them. But at that time he had an encounter with an old man, who suggested to him that he read the prophets of the Old Testament, who predated the philosophers he was studying and knew "the beginning and end of those things that a philosopher ought to know"; "they glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things and His son the Christ." The soul could not arrive through human knowledge at God. It needed to be instructed by the prophets who had known God and could make Him known.

When Justin read the prophets of the OT as the old man suggested to him he found the love of the Saviour, the love of Christ. To find truth was for him the source of greatest happiness, which gives a different perspective of happiness to the search for happiness of today!

### 2. Justin sets out **his aim in the discussion**

*"Although men's reproaches be heaped upon us, although the most terrible tyrant compel us to deny him I shall prove to you ... that we have not believed in empty fables or words without foundation but words filled with the Spirit of God and big with power and flourishing with grace"[ix]. There is one God of all men, Jew and Christian. God gives a new covenant and new law, which puts an end to the old covenant and is "a light for all nations". Men now approach God through the name of Him who was crucified, Jesus Christ, and abide by their confession even unto death and maintain piety. He is the new law and the new covenant and the expectation of those who out of every people wait for the good things of God. For the true spiritual Israel and descendants of Judah Jacob, Isaac and Abraham are we who have led to God through this crucified Christ". [xi]*

The Jews are the ones who spread lies about Christians and cause them to be persecuted

### 3. He critically looks at the **Law of the Jews** [viii/8 - xlvii/47]

Trypho suggests to Justin that he follow all the things written in the Law and then he would receive mercy from God. Thus begins the discussion about the Law [viii]

Justin argues that the Jews have violated the Law; giving it only outward observance of rites rather than a change of heart. He then outlines the true purpose of the laws, mentioning, fasting, circumcision, Sabbath observance, dietary laws [xv -xxiii; xliii-xlvii]. These laws were given because of the hardness of heart of the Jews and they do not contribute anything to righteousness. In contrast, Christians observe the true righteousness and are the sons of Abraham through Christ [xxiv-xxx] for he is the fulfilment of the law[xliii]

### 4. Justin takes **OT prophecies and applies them to Christ** [xxi/ 21-cvi /106]

Trypho questions Jesus' power since he was dishonoured in his inglorious dying on a cross. This opens discussion about the 2nd coming of Christ, which Justin asserts will be glorious. Quoting from Daniel, Psalm 110 & 72,45.[xxi-xxxiv]

The OT shows types of Christ in Passover, priest's robes, flour offering[xl-xlii].

Other OT Prophecies point to and are fulfilled in Christ – his pre-existence, the coming of the Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, his entry into Jerusalem. In fact, the Law had its end in Christ, who was born of a virgin, of the family of Abraham and David. Only Christ saves. [xliii- liv]

The discussion move to Christ's divinity –is he God? [lv-lxii] Again Justin uses OT examples

to show that Another person, who was not the Father, but was God, appeared to Abraham, Moses, Jacob, David, Joshua and at the creation of man.

Trypho concedes that Justin has given sufficient proof and proceeds to ask Justin to prove that this one God became incarnate, was crucified and rose again. [lxiii-cvii]

Justin asserts that God gives glory to the one who brings light to the Gentiles. He quotes OT prophecies re the virgin birth; authority over demons; death on a cross; receiving of the Holy Spirit and parallels them with events from Jesus' life at his birth, his baptism and particularly his death on a cross and his resurrection. In this discussion, Justin exegetes Psalm 22, applying it to Jesus' death.[xcviii-cvi]

### 5. The failure of the Jews; the calling of the Christians as the true people of God [cviii /108– cxlii/142]

The Jews did not receive the Christ nor repent but they have sent men to accuse Christ. [cviii] and his followers who are Gentiles, who were predicted in OT. He quotes **Micah 6.1ff.** which the Jews misunderstand for they have missed the message that there are 2 advents of Christ -

- the 1st -"the one in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonoured and crucified. A time of the calling of Christians,

- the rest of the prophecy is fulfilled at the 2nd coming, in which Christ shall come from heaven in glory and the man of apostasy shall do unlawful deeds on the earth against the Christians... *"But no-one can terrify or subdue us who have believed in Jesus all over the world... we do not give up our confession" "the more such things (ie persecution) happen the more do others and in larger numbers become faithful and worshippers of God through the same Jesus".* [cx]

He gives three further types in the OT of the two advents.- Moses and Joshua, one saving the people; the other leading the fight and conquest for Israel, showing that Christ was not cursed but saved those who trust.

Christ is the Passover lamb, whose the blood both saves and delivers.

And Rahab Her use of the scarlet thread, which saved her, was a symbol of the blood of Christ by which unrighteous people from all the nations are saved.[cxi-cxiii]

He proceeds to show that the Jews have misinterpreted other OT words and pictures and that Christians have the true understanding.

- Christians have been circumcised in their lives and hearts in a way that is different from the Jews.

- Christians, purified of their sins by Jesus, are the true priests of God and only they offer sacrifices acceptable to God of praise and thanksgiving. He calls Trypho and his friends to repent before the day of judgment comes.

- Christians are the holy people of God. The Jews have not lived exclusively for God so He has chosen a people to become a nation as he called Abraham, who left his land and followed God's word in faith. God made similar promises to Isaac, Jacob and Judah. But not to others so there is a distinction in those who are called. cxix/119

- Men of every "nation" believe in Jesus and are blessed by him and endure sufferings rather than deny him. Christ is the light to the Gentiles. The Jews read this light to the nations as being fulfilled in the coming of proselytes who have attached themselves to the Jewish religion. Justin says it refers to those who follow Jesus. He is the Christ through whom the nations are blessed, the inaugurator of the new covenant. cxxxi/131

- Justin uses several OT prophecies about "the Nations", (i.e. those outside the Jews,) being blessed and receiving salvation and the light of God's knowledge through the one God will send, the Christ, to show that these are the Gentiles, who have believed in Jesus as the Christ. They are the true Israel, the true sons of God.

In saying this, he challenges the Jews as a people who have rejected God and misinterpreted these scriptures. Despite God's great deeds done for Israel in appearances to the Patriarchs, delivering them from Egypt and caring for them they have been hard-hearted towards Him and unrepentant. They even rejected Christ and killed him so rejecting God who sent him.cxxxvi/136

The Christians pray for them as they have been taught by Christ.

So Justin exhorts Trypho and his friends to be converted and so escape the impending judgment of God. *"For all men everywhere, whether bond or free, who believe in Christ and recognise the truth of his words and those of his prophets know that they shall be with him in that land and inherit everlasting and incorruptible good."* In Christ all are free but the Jewish teachers think that being sons of Abraham will save them but they are mistaken for each man will be judged by his own fault. God has given man free will to choose to live righteously but they sin and *"if they repent all who wish for it can obtain mercy from God and they shall be blessed"*[cxli]

Trypho and his friends part from Justin

Justin's final word *"I can wish no better thing for you than this, that recognising in this way that that intelligence is given to every man, you may be of the same opinion as ourselves and believe that Jesus is the Christ of God"*

### \* The work on the Resurrection

<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-resurrection.html>

This has been attributed to Justin but doubt has been thrown on his authorship.

He is arguing for the resurrection of the body, as distinct from the immortality of the soul and deals with various objections. The answer for him lies in the power of God, who does the impossible.

I - He begins his work by saying that the power of truth is self evidencing because truth comes from God. All things are measured against it. God is truth. The word, God's Son, Jesus Christ reveals the Father giving us resurrection from the dead and eternal life. He is our proof of resurrection.

II - He describes the objections raised about the resurrection of the body, which include;

(i) It is impossible to restore that which has been destroyed/ corrupted

(ii) The body is full of sin and should not be resurrected

(iii) If the body is raised it should be all of it and not just parts and as Jesus said that there is no marriage in heaven the reproductive part of a man will not be raised.

(iv) Jesus himself only reappeared as a spiritual body- not a fleshly one- he only appeared to be in the flesh.

He then sets out to answer these objections:

III - To(iii) Bodies will be raised whole and when they rise they will not necessarily perform the same functions as they do now e.g. sexual reproduction. Even in this life, there are some who don't use their reproductive organs – virgins, barren, Jesus himself. So it is not difficult to see that sexual reproduction may be done away with in future resurrection of the body.

IV- To (iii) Bodies which are deformed will rise as perfect and entire. Jesus healed and restored broken and sick bodies on earth, how much more will He do this in heaven.

V - To (i)The resurrection of the flesh is possible because we believe in God in whom every-

thing is possible, who, by his power, created man and gave man the ability to reproduce.

The philosophers' opinions are consistent with resurrection – Plato, Epicurus, Stoics, all thought that there was a basic element which formed the basis of life and which was indestructible. So it is not impossible for God, who is Himself indestructible to take this indestructible material even after the first form of it has been destroyed and make it anew.

VII - To (ii) Answering those who thought the flesh is not worthy of resurrection – Justin points out that God made fleshy man in His own image so man is valuable and most precious in His sight. There is unity of body and soul so one cannot say the body is sinful and not the soul or vice versa So it is the whole of the man that is raised – body and soul, both have been washed clean by Jesus. Proof of this is seen in the resurrection of Jesus, who was raised in his body and soul. He ate and talked with his disciples and ascended into heaven in the flesh. Resurrection is the power of God. All three, body, soul and spirit will be raised. It is wrong to say that the soul is immortal but the body is mortal and incapable of being revived. Jesus gives hope to man of the promise that God would make corruption, incorruption.

Jesus guards the flesh against sin, making it 'temperate,' because it possesses a hope of salvation.

### Some observations about Justin and his writings

1. Justin set out to show the authorities that Christians were good citizens and, at the same time, to give understanding of their beliefs. He was not arguing for special treatment by the state for Christians but for justice based on what was commonly given to all citizens. Christians were, in Justin's view, were good living people, obeying secular authority, caring for others. If they committed crimes, they needed to be judged according to the offence of the crime.

His personal search and faith in Jesus as the only one sent from God for salvation shines through his defences of the faith to the secular world.

2. In the Apologies, Justin mentions non-Christian groups.

(i) The Jews looked for the coming of the One sent from God but they were ignorant and missed him.

(ii) The heathens have been influenced by demons, who put forward tales about gods which imitated some of the things said about Christ in the prophecies.

(iii) The philosophers, Socrates, the Stoics and Plato reflect some of the truths of Christ but they are deficient in heavenly wisdom and the true knowledge, which only Christians have by knowing God and His Word.

3. One feature of Justin's defence was his extensive **use of the Old Testament and other Christian writings** to show that Christ was prophesied many years before.

a) His defence showed how thoroughly he, coming from a pagan background, had studied the Jewish Old Testament as the 'old man' had prompted him to do.

He also used other writings about Christ, particularly Matthew's Gospel from which the Sermon on the Mount [apology 1. xiv-xvii /14-17] and narratives about the events surrounding Jesus' birth. [Dialogue to Trypho lxxvii-lxxviii /77-78] which showed the availability and authority of Christian gospels at that time, even though there may not have been a canon as such.

b) Some of Justin's interpretations of the OT may to us seem a bit obscure, nevertheless, he was faithful in his use of them and did not try to see secret meanings in them as happened among some early Christians, especially those from Alexandria who allegorised much of the scripture.

c) Justin's use of the Old Testament and Christian records

(i) **contrasts with Marcion**

Justin's use of the OT, with its Jewish books of prophecy and Moses' histories, contrasts with **Marcion**, who believed that the Old Testament was not valid for Christians, because it was Jewish.

For Marcion, the only valid writings were those of Paul and some parts of his disciple, Luke's works - his gospel, but not Acts. Even then, he cut out of them any reference to the Old Testament. Justin refers to him in Apology 1. xxvi/26

Marcion was born around AD 85 at Sinope on the Black Sea into a Christian family and made a fortune as a shipmaster. He joined the church in Rome but was excommunicated from it because of his teaching about AD 144. The church in Rome returned the considerable amount of money he had given it.

He formed his own church that spread throughout the Mediterranean area and lasted for several centuries. His teaching bore many similarities to Gnosticism. He thought the world was evil and came to the conclusion that its creator must be either evil or ignorant and so he developed a view that there must be two gods. One was a unjust God of OT, the one which the Jews worshipped, who created the world, demanded bloody sacrifices and slaughtered enemies. The other was a loving and peaceful God, the Father of Jesus. His view of Jesus was docetic - he had the appearance of being human but he wasn't really a man. Jesus was sent by God to liberate us from the old way of life and from the grasp of the God of the OT. He not only rejected Jewish writings, he also had a negative view of the body and sex for the Marcionites were rigid ascetics, who abstained from flesh, marriage and wine. They used water in the Eucharist instead of wine.

Tertullian called Marcion "the first born of Satan".

"The importance of Marcion may be judged by the fact that he was attacked by most of the church fathers ... His difficulties were peculiarly modern. His antithesis between love and justice is still found in popular sentiment that proclaims the inability of God and of the good man to punish".  
*Wand A history of the Early Church, Methuen*

**(ii) The Church's collection of acceptable books for the Canon of the NT and OT**

Partly, as a reaction to Marcion and his movement, the church gathered together the writings which they thought were profitable for believers to read. They included the four gospels, Acts and Paul's letters and 1 Peter. These writings had been circulating since the 60's and were recognised among the believers in the early churches. Reference to them is given in many early Christian authors. Irenaeus, AD185, proposed 20 books as a canon; Athanasius in AD367 included 27 books in the "new" Testament, as well as recognising the Old Testament.

The Synod in Carthage in 397 & 418 finally confirmed our current 27 books of the NT, although there was continuing debate over particular books.

The criteria used were witness of the Holy Spirit, Apostolic origin or sanction, usage by the church through the previous centuries, their content, and their spiritual and moral effects.

If you want to read more about the history of the church canon the article by R.W. Hoover is helpful.

[http://www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R\\_Articles/canon.html](http://www.westarinstitute.org/Periodicals/4R_Articles/canon.html)

and also one by Don Closson

<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/xn-canon.html>



In our day, T.F. Torrance is one writer, among many, who stresses the significance of the OT for the believer. He points out that Jesus was born into a people, Israel, which had a deep experience of God, often expressed in resisting Him. They were a people with whom God had covenanted to be their God and they, His people. Israel's history demonstrates the working out their relationship with this holy God, which involved God's revelation of how they should approach him as the only God. He gave them patterns of worship based on a priests and sacrifice and laws which governed their relationship with other people. This relationship was marked by suffering and faith for Israel. Israel's symbols, language about God, His revelation, His planned redemption, its cultus of sacrifice and morality underlie our understanding Jesus' life. Torrance's main idea is that we cannot disconnect our understanding of Jesus from this matrix in which he is set.

*[after Thomas F. Torrance, The Mediation of Christ, Paternoster]*

4. Even though Justin argued strongly with the Jews and disliked the fact that they opposed Christians and accused them to authorities, he was personally polite to them. After his dialogue with Trypho, he parts with him on friendly terms. His desire was that Trypho and his friends would come to believe in Jesus, the Christ, and be members of the new covenant for he thought that they did not know God fully. Consider how he thought about the place of Jews in God's kingdom.

6. Justin had studied certain of the Greek philosophers, so he commended where they made true observations but their knowledge was deficient for they did not know truth, which is found solely in Christianity. This attitude of Justin's is in sharp contrast to Tertullian who held that pagan thinking had no business in coming into the church.

7. Justin was killed under Marcus Aurelius, who regarded Christianity as a superstition. Earlier, the Emperor Trajan had laid down guidelines for the treatment of Christians. He did this in his reply to the Governor Pliny about AD112 (which is quoted in the third study). He had directed him not to seek out Christians, but if they were accused by someone to give the Christian opportunity to recant, to deny Jesus; if they did not recant and make offerings to the pagan gods, Pliny was to execute them. In line with this precedent, Marcus Aurelius advised his governors to behead those who did not recant.

[The following is an account of the martyrdom of Justin and his six companions](#)

## THE MARTYRDOM OF THE HOLY MARTYRS,

JUSTIN, CHARITON, CHARITES, PÆON, AND LIBERIANUS, WHO SUFFERED  
AT ROME.

[TRANSLATED BY THE REV. M. DODS, M.A.]

### CHAP. I. — EXAMINATION OF JUSTIN BY THE PREFECT.

In the time of the lawless partisans of idolatry, wicked decrees were passed against the godly Christians in town and country, to force them to offer libations to vain idols; and accordingly the holy men, having been apprehended, were brought before the prefect of Rome, Rusticus by name. And when they had been brought before his judgment-seat, Rusticus the prefect said to Justin, "Obey the gods at once, and submit to the kings."<sup>1</sup> Justin said, "To obey the commandments of our Saviour Jesus Christ is worthy neither of blame nor of condemnation." Rusticus the prefect said, "What kind of doctrines do you profess?" Justin said, "I have endeavoured to learn all doctrines; but I have acquiesced at last in the true doctrines, those namely of the Christians, even though they do not please those who hold false opinions." Rusticus the prefect said, "Are those the doctrines that please you, you utterly wretched man?" Justin said, "Yes, since I adhere to them with right dogma."<sup>2</sup> Rusticus the prefect said, "What is the dogma?" Justin said, "That according to which we worship the God of the Christians, whom we reckon to be one from the beginning, the maker and fashioner of the whole creation, visible and invisible; and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who had also been preached beforehand by the prophets as about to be present with the race of men, the herald of salvation and teacher of good disciples. And I, being a man, think that what I can say is insignificant in comparison with His boundless divinity, acknowledging a certain prophetic power,<sup>3</sup> since it was prophesied concern-

ing Him of whom now I say that He is the Son of God. For I know that of old the prophets foretold His appearance among men."

### CHAP. II. — EXAMINATION OF JUSTIN CONTINUED.

Rusticus the prefect said, "Where do you assemble?" Justin said, "Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful." Rusticus the prefect said, "Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?" Justin said, "I live above one Martinus, at the Timiotinian Bath; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth." Rusticus said, "Are you not, then, a Christian?" Justin said, "Yes, I am a Christian."

### CHAP. III. — EXAMINATION OF CHARITON AND OTHERS.

Then said the prefect Rusticus to Chariton, "Tell me further, Chariton, are you also a Christian?" Chariton said, "I am a Christian by the command of God." Rusticus the prefect asked the woman Charito, "What say you, Charito?" Charito said, "I am a Christian by the grace of God." Rusticus said to Euelpistus, "And what are you?" Euelpistus, a servant of Cæsar, answered, "I too am a Christian, having been freed by Christ; and by the grace of Christ I partake of the same hope." Rusticus the prefect said to Hierax, "And you, are you a Christian?" Hierax said, "Yes, I am a Christian, for I revere and worship the same God." Rusticus the pre-

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the emperors.

<sup>2</sup> Μετὰ δόγματος ὀρθοῦ, orthodoxy.

<sup>3</sup> That is, that a prophetic inspiration is required to speak worthily of Christ.

fect said, "Did Justin make you Christians?" Hierax said, "I was a Christian, and will be a Christian." And Pæon stood up and said, "I too am a Christian." Rusticus the prefect said, "Who taught you?" Pæon said, "From our parents we received this good confession." Euelpistus said, "I willingly heard the words of Justin. But from my parents also I learned to be a Christian." Rusticus the prefect said, "Where are your parents?" Euelpistus said, "In Cappadocia." Rusticus says to Hierax, "Where are your parents?" And he answered, and said, "Christ is our true father, and faith in Him is our mother; and my earthly parents died; and I, when I was driven from Iconium in Phrygia, came here." Rusticus the prefect said to Libe-rianus, "And what say you? Are you a Christian, and unwilling to worship [the gods]?" Libe-rianus said, "I too am a Christian, for I worship and reverence the only true God."

CHAP. IV. — RUSTICUS THREATENS THE CHRISTIANS WITH DEATH.

The prefect says to Justin, "Hearken, you who are called learned, and think that you know true doctrines; if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe you will ascend into heaven?" Justin said, "I hope that, if I endure these things, I shall have His gifts.<sup>1</sup> For I know that, to all who have thus lived, there abides the divine favour until the completion of the whole world." Rusticus the prefect said, "Do you suppose, then, that you will ascend into heaven to receive some recompense?" Justin said, "I do not suppose it, but I know and am fully per-

<sup>1</sup> Another reading is *δόγματα*, which may be translated, "I shall have what He teaches [us to expect]."

sued of it." Rusticus the prefect said, "Let us, then, now come to the matter in hand, and which presses. Having come together, offer sacrifice with one accord to the gods." Justin said, "No right-thinking person falls away from piety to impiety." Rusticus the prefect said, "Unless ye obey, ye shall be mercilessly punished." Justin said, "Through prayer we can be saved on account of our Lord Jesus Christ, even when we have been punished,<sup>2</sup> because this shall become to us salvation and confidence at the more fearful and universal judgment-seat of our Lord and Saviour." Thus also said the other martyrs: "Do what you will, for we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols."

CHAP. V. — SENTENCE PRONOUNCED AND EXECUTED.

Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the emperor be scourged,<sup>3</sup> and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws." The holy martyrs having glorified God, and having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Saviour. And some of the faithful having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a suitable place, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having wrought along with them, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>2</sup> This passage admits of another rendering. Lord Hailes, following the common Latin version, thus translates: "It was our chief wish to endure tortures for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so to be saved."

<sup>3</sup> [This wholesale sentence implies a great indifference to the probable Roman citizenship of some of them, if not of our heroic martyr himself; but Acts xxii. 25-29 seems to allow that the *condemned* were not protected by the law.]

from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.xi.html>

## \*\* Athenagoras

An Athenian philosopher who wrote about AD 177.

He is commended for his as clear and straight forward style of argument. He stays to his point and doesn't digress as Justin is apt to do. His plea is similar to Justin's as he pleads the for tolerance and understanding for Christians.

As with many of the Apologists, his concern lies in the persecution of Christians based simply on their name. He answers particular accusations brought against Christians of atheism, immorality and Thyestean feasts ie feasts where human flesh was eaten. His major thrust against the charge of atheism was to compare the Christian way with the pagan gods so he gives a rebuttal based on an analysis of them. Justin approached the accusation of atheism from a different angle. He noted that Christians did not worship idols but his major defence rested on proof that the God Christians worshipped was the one predicted by the prophets of the Jews.

Read his plea at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/athenagoras-plea.html>

## **Athenagoras' Plea for the Christians His Argument**

I - He appeals to Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus

He points out that the emperors allow different nations to have different customs and that they say that to have no belief in a god is wicked and that it is necessary for each man to worship a god he prefers so that he may be kept from wrong doing.

Their rule grants equal rights to individuals so he asks why do they attack Christians just because of their name and allow them to be harassed and persecuted by others.

II - He appeals for justice that is equal to others and not based on just a name, rather that they may be judged by their actions.

III - He names the charges against them- atheism, Thyestean feasts (ones at which human flesh is eaten) and incest

### **IV - X A reply to The charge of Atheism**

He says not so - Christian doctrine acknowledges 'one God, the Maker of the Universe, who made all things by the Logos which is from Him'. He observes that other philosophers have also expressed belief in one God without impunity. The Christian doctrine however is superior for it is witnessed by the prophets who know God as One father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God - not many gods, not polytheism.

XI-XII - the behaviour of Christians also indicates they believe in God for they believe they are accountable to Him for their actions in this present life since He will judge them in the Future.

XIII - XXX - Athenagoras compares the Christian God with other false gods which are made by men and demons.

- Christians do not offer sacrifices to God because he needs nothing, having made it all. There is an inconsistency among their accusers for they all worship different gods among themselves and these are made of matter, whereas the Christian God is not created. He is the Maker and Framer of matter.

- Nor do Christians worship the elements of the universe. Athenagoras can 'admire the heavens and elements but not worship them as gods'.

- The pagan gods are of recent origin, named and made up by poets and men. 'They are nothing but earth, stones and matter and curious art'. He dismisses the emotions that are attributed to the gods of the Greeks and Romans.

- The demons use these earthly images that men make for the exploitation of men and to claim glory for themselves.

- Some gods they worship had in fact been men whose stories have been told by poets to venerate them.

### **XXXI - XXXVI Replying to other Charges of Cannibalistic feasts and forbidden intercourse**

The people who attack the Christians are trying to make them leave their Christian faith or influence the rulers to treat them harshly. But those whose life is centered on God will not entertain even the thought of sin for Christians know that God witnesses their lives and they shall live with Him in the future. Christians practise a very high morality which regards a neighbour with honour and care not to corrupt or defile another. In marriage they have one wife, don't remarry or some remain unmarried. He contrasts Christian morality with that of their accusers. They could not kill anyone, and certainly not a child - that would be a detestable thing.

He finishes with an appeal to the benevolent rulers to judge the Christians fairly and approve them so they may lead a quiet and peaceable life.

Athenagoras wrote another work on the resurrection of the body

#### **Some considerations for us today.**

The Christians of the 2nd century faced a hostile world, which killed them for following Christ, just for the name Christian. The apologists tried to give an understanding to the world of the Christian belief. As we have seen their arguments took two forms.

They argued the superiority of monotheism and belief in Christ, the one sent from God. In doing this, they showed the shortcomings of the surrounding religions and philosophies, whether pagan or Jewish.

Secondly, they showed the high standard of morality that Christians lived by which was arose from their Christian convictions.

What pressures do we Christians of the 21st century face?  
from outside the church?  
and from within the church itself?

What defence and arguments do we make to these pressures?