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Frank B. Meyer A.M. ^a

^a The University of Wooster , Wooster, Ohio

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RELIGION AND MORALITY IN LATIN OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

FRANK B. MEYER, A.M.,
The University of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio.

Teachers of Latin should always bear in mind that it was a Roman world in which Christianity began. And if it is true that "the characteristics of the religious life becoming more clearly recognized as investigations continue, are recognition of and adjustment to a supreme order of life" the study of all things Roman, especially of the period covered by the usual high school authors, cannot be without interest to the intelligent student. In fact, it is difficult to realize that it should be hard to interest any boy or girl in the high school by pointing out that the world seems to have been providentially prepared for the coming of the Saviour. Not a few thinkers of no mean ability have called attention to evidences of design in history. The unique location and the natural peculiarities of the Holy Land, the spread of the Greek language and of Greek thought over the East by the conquest of Alexander and over the West by economic forces, particularly the importation of slaves from the East to Italy, the migration of Jews to nearly all parts of the then civilized world and the establishment everywhere of the *pax Romana*,—considerations suggested by topics such as these should interest any boy or girl who is of the high school age. For the period of life from the age of twelve to the age of eighteen, psychologists tell us, is the time of adjustment. The individual comes into his racial inheritance and becomes conscious that he is a part of a social whole which is necessary to complete his well being. The gang, the club, the fellows, the girls are subjects of major importance. Society rather than self is the center of interest. And during this period the religious and moral instincts natural to the child are often found by the boy or girl to be difficult of adjustment to this new and wider world. The religious and moral life of the church and the Sunday school, and, be it said with regret, of the home, are often too dogmatic to satisfy the rapidly awakening desire for complete explanation. That all this is so is confirmed by the fact that college freshmen, who, be it remembered, are but a few months older than students in the high schools, are interested by no other part of their Latin course so much as they are by the ethical odes of Horace, those most earnest and most finished contributions of the otherwise care-free and most genial poet toward bringing about again an adjustment of man to the moral and religious.

To the objection that the teacher has within the limits of the all too brief recitation period little time for this widening process may be made this answer: Writers on pedagogical psychology in treating the matter of attention in secondary schools emphasize the educating of attention by a fostering of wider interests. The teacher should cherish "the longing of youth to explore the world without and the world within." In beginning the study of Latin the boy or girl should be shown, by the earnest words of his teacher, glimpses of the new world of thought opened up to him by his entering the spirit of that people which has so greatly influenced the world. A few minutes devoted to such a purpose at the beginning of the recitation period, after the pupil has overcome the first difficulties of the new study, have been found by the writer himself to be time well spent. The first year high school pupil has, as a rule, very hazy ideas about the historical setting of Christianity's beginnings. The limit of time of instruction in the Sunday school does not permit of proper orientation of the subject matter. To prove this one has only to ask the first year Latin class questions like the following: When did Abraham live? At what time did Moses live? What is the date of the founding of Rome? Did Cæsar live before or after Christ? What were the leading languages of the world when Paul began his missionary tours?

An immediate interest may be secured by reference to Paul's coming to Italy and landing near Pompeii not many years before that treasure-house of antiquities was sealed up by Vesuvius to be preserved for the modern world of scholarship. Pictures of the city and of its contents can be had cheaply and should be a part of every school's equipment. Before reading the *Mau-Kelsey Pompeii* the teacher should study, in some good guide book like Baedeker's *Southern Italy*, the articles on Naples, Pozzuoli and Pompeii.

But in the first year's efforts most attention should be given to impressing upon the class the character of the early Romans and its correspondence with the language. Attention has been called, by one writer, to the suggestive form of the peninsula of Italy, which is that of a human leg. The Apennines make its strong muscle. It is in the act of mischievously kicking Sicily as though the island were a foot ball. The early legends, which whether true or not affected the Roman as though they were true, can quickly be recited. The character of the first patriots can easily be portrayed. The reading of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* and of the author's own preface would at least give the teacher inspiration, even if he should find there nothing to

present to the class. Of Plutarch's *Life of Cato* a more practical use can be made. A good service would be done if the boys and the girls of the class were only introduced to this writer whose book is one of the world's best books of practical ethics. Next in order reference can be made to the significance of Rome's contact with foreign powers. Especially interesting should be a comparison of the conflict between Rome and Carthage with the struggle between the Israelites and the people whom they were bidden to extirpate. The religious and moral importance of the struggle can hardly be overestimated.

Such an outline presentation made during the first year may fittingly be closed by calling attention to the general effects of Rome's contact with other peoples. The change in Italian economic conditions, which followed upon Hannibal's long occupation of the peninsula, should not be overlooked. A few suggestions of the effects exerted upon Rome's religion and morals by the expansion of her political power and of her trade will eagerly be seized by the pupil. And then the teacher is ready to show from what standpoint are to be estimated the three or four or five authors whose writings are to compose the remainder of the high school course.

In judging these men one should note at the outset that practically all moral influences were against them and that they received no help from religion. According to Ihne the Roman religion was designed for practical purposes and according to Mommsen the gods were instruments for practical ends. Ritual and magic were used to compel the gods to do the will of the worshiper. Accordingly the exact observance of the ritual became the important feature of the religion. Naturally, therefore, as time went on there was a turning toward other forms of worship that might better satisfy the religious emotions. The beginning was made in the year 217, when the Great Mother Cybele and her orgiastic rights were brought from Asia Minor. Religion is a most conservative force. But the Roman religion was so mightily assailed by outside forces that its intense formalism, though ingrained in a formal and sternly practical people, was not able to resist. As the historian Froude says in his sketch of Cæsar, "while morality was assailed on the one side by extraordinary temptations the religious sanction of it was undermined on the other. The Romans ceased to believe and in losing their faith they became as steel that is demagnetized; the spiritual quality was gone out of them and the high society of Rome itself became a society of powerful animals with an enormous appetite for pleasure."

The weakness of the Roman religion can be inferred from what

has already been said. It is shown most plainly by the second Punic war when the authorities felt themselves to be so helpless that they had recourse to importing the great Rhea, already referred to. Largely because of there being no appeal to the emotions, respect for the old religion was rapidly disappearing. In point is the instance of Flaminius' despising the gods as is vividly recorded in Livy xxi:63. This chapter and the preceding one, by the way, throw a great deal of light upon the subject of Roman religion and morality in general. The teacher would do well to read them often as also the additional information given by their annotations in the various school editions.

From literature, art and philosophy also came undermining influences. Ennius translated the work of Euhemerus on the origin of the gods and showed his fellow countrymen how it was possible that their divinities were but the deifications of great men. The comedies of Plautus diffused pictures of the lowest practical morals throughout Roman society. In 180 B. C. occurred the Bacchanalian scandal; several thousand men had bound themselves by oath to be loyal to the cult even if this should sacrifice loyalty to the state. The driving out of oriental astrologers shows further what the conditions were coming to be. Etruscan soothsayers were gaining favor. In the same year as the one in which the devotees of Bacchus created such a furor the so-called books of Numa were found. These were full of subverting Pythagorean doctrines. The senate ordered them burnt. Cato, who was the embodiment of the old Roman character exaggerated, was instrumental in driving out Greek sophists. They had so much lack of moral sense that they one day proved certain weighty points of morality and on the next day overthrew all their former arguments. They did serious harm by entertaining the Roman youths with their blatant sceptical discourses, especially through a refutation of the current arguments for political justice and the implied vindication of all of Rome's conquests.* Epicureanism early became known. Its chief Roman apostle, Lucretius, used all his great genius to ease his fellow countrymen's consciences by endeavoring to abolish their belief in their own gods. Stoical philosophy appealed to the practical Romans; but philosophy is hostile to polytheism. Varro attempted to bolster religion by explaining the gods upon a physical basis.

With regard to the immorality that prevailed in the last century before the Christian era the barest references would suffice. Such references should give the student renewed interest in the book of Romans.

* Mahaffy, *The Silver Age of the Greek World*.

Considered in the light of all this the wonder is that Caesar, Cicero and Ovid were what they were. But of course the teacher of any of these authors is not obliged to defend him against all charges of imperfection. Every boy and girl will realize this. It makes a pathological study, to be sure; but one learns best by contrasts and it is not to be feared that in the case of any of these authors vice will be made so attractive that the young student will "first endure, then pity, then embrace." Above all should it be remembered that vice is more often recorded than virtue. A profitable comparison can be made of Pliny's letters with Juvenal's satires.

It is for our purpose a happy arrangement which puts Caesar first in the course, Cicero next and then Vergil and Ovid. The energetic action of the great general appeals more strongly to the younger student. In the following year he is better able to comprehend the economic and political conditions revealed by the orations of the more philosophic Cicero. Finally he comes to a consideration of the character portrayal of the emotional and religious Vergil and of the graceful and artistic Ovid.

To enumerate here the different moral and religious questions found in these writers and to attempt to discuss any of them would be useless as well as tiresome. They must be left to the disposition of the individual teacher. He would do well to read widely with the religious and moral object in view. The recently published *Ethics* by Dewey and Tufts is an excellent handbook. For the different authors there are works like Froude's *Caesar* and Forsythe's *Cicero*. The larger histories of Rome give no little help which may be found by aid of the indices. All the modern school editions contain in their introductions and commentaries much valuable material which the teacher as well as the pupil is too apt to overlook. So too do the various books on Roman private life like Johnston's and Friedlaender's, now at last translated into English. The classical dictionaries give information about particular matters and usually direct one to the original or broader sources. In German there are Wissowa's work on Roman religion in the *Ivan Mueller Handbuch* series and Roscher's lexicon of religion and mythology. But questions of morality never change in essentials and the wide-awake reader finds continuous discussion of them in books and periodicals of all sorts.

For Caesar the opening and closing chapters of Froude can not be recommended too highly. Especially to be noticed is his elaboration of the theme of the great man's coming into the world at a special time for a special object. With Caesar religion was a state affair.

This explains many apparent inconsistencies in his character. In considering his morality emphasis should be placed upon his selfcontrol and his ability to subordinate all means to his ends. Note his dealings with men of all classes, dealings always so generous that he attached men to his cause and so assisted his own advancement, his temperateness, his acquired powers of wonderful endurance and of speed. His wars show that he knew that in military operations the so-called fortunes of war count for little and that moral preparation is almost everything. In ethical matters among other peoples he is genuinely interested, as is shown time after time by the pages of his Gallic War. What he says about the Druids, for example, stimulates one to make additions to one's knowledge of this strange order by recourse to the encyclopedias, if no better authorities are available. He is interested most in customs that serve practical ends. But he always commends self-sacrifice for the good of others and he seems to realize that man is man most truly and serves himself best when he serves others. As to his weaknesses we may believe that what Plutarch says about his superstitiousness is not altogether without foundation.

Against Cicero's character not much can be said; nor yet can much be said for it. Some of his letters, however, especially those that relate to his daughter, reveal a tenderness of affection that in a man of his times is quite gratifying. But he has little of genuine and personal religion. He believed in a personal god and in his Tusculan Discussions and elsewhere in his philosophical writing he strenuously maintains that the soul is immaterial and immortal. And yet that same work, the Tusculan Discussions, composed as it was after the death of his beloved daughter, shows that his opinions had almost no practical force and value. His correspondence with Servius Sulpicius at this time shows that neither he nor his intimate friends, when they try to console him, think of the truths upon which he has so eloquently descanted. His *De Deorum Natura* exhibits religion as merely a pleasant subject for investigation. The only satisfaction that one can receive from such an investigation comes from learning how empty of hope was the mind of the world during the period with which we are dealing. In connection much might be said about the mental and spiritual preparation of the minds of men for the coming of the One who brought life and immortality to light.

The mention of portents in the speeches naturally reminds the teacher of what he has read about the same subject in Livy. The class would profitably enjoy translations of such passages as XXI 62, XXII 1 and 9 (second half), 57 (first half), XXIV 10, XXV 12 and

XXIX 10 (second half). The prevalence of superstition, of which there are traces in the orations, is an entrancing topic for investigation. The article *Superstitio* in the classical dictionary, with the cross references, should first be read. To make a deeper study one would consult the books on private life already referred to and such books as Prof. Dill's on Roman society. Most fruitful of original sources are the two works on agriculture by Cato and Varro, Ovid's *Fasti*, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* and the *Noctes Atticae* of Gellius. Practices that survive in modern Italy, such as belief in the efficacy of the "evil eye," are illuminative.

But in Cicero there are moral topics that are closely related to economics and to politics also. Especially interesting in these days, when so much is heard about graft, are some orations that are not often studied in the secondary school, notably those against Verres. The contents of these speeches are presented in a very entertaining way by Prof. Church in his story called *Roman Life in the Days of Cicero*.

Vergil is a rich mine of religious and moral lore. He tempts the teacher, who is so disposed, to devote too much time in the classroom to the subject. But certainly the *Aeneid* should receive its proper setting in order to be appreciated. The introductions in most of the modern school editions are satisfactory in this regard, especially when several are used to supplement one another. Yet additions may well be made in the form of spirited translations of some of the odes of Horace and of the fourth eclogue of Vergil himself. The *Carmen Saeculare* and its story, with illustrations of the *Ara Pacis*, may be made to contribute to the end in view. In other words the student should be helped to grasp the great purpose of the poem. At the outset he should make an effort to comprehend Vergil's conception of Fate and of the god's control over human affairs. Brief debates on the moral effects of such beliefs the class would participate in with eagerness. The study would help the class to reconcile the hero's epithet *pius* with his desertion of most excellent Dido. It would result also in a better understanding of the position that patriotism occupied in ancient codes of ethics. The athletic contents described in the fifth book invite comparison with those of today. But of course the teacher will not allow the acute boys of the class to argue that things athletic are today beyond reproach because they are better than they were yesterday!* The Sibyl and many other matters in the sixth book form attractive subjects. The articles on the Sibyl in the

* See *The Forum*, November, 1901.

classical dictionary and in the encyclopedias might well be worked over by the members of the class themselves.

During this period of the course the teacher might often himself translate the lesson text in the class and devote the remainder of the recitation period to a presentation of what he regards as the best portions apropos of works like Glover's *Studies in Vergil*, Tunison's *Master Vergil* and Comparetti's *Vergil in the Middle Ages*. The telling of such a legend as the one which purports to give St. Paul's opinion of the great poet would be profitable in more ways than one.

This paper, which was by no means intended to be at all exhaustive, is brought to a close with a hope that it may stimulate some teachers in the secondary schools to enter upon, or more earnestly to pursue, a line of thought that shall help them more completely to co-ordinate their work with those other portions of the curriculum that belong to history, in the broad sense of that term, and to do their part in the great work of not only instructing the intellectual faculties but also of developing right characters in their boys and girls.

THE JEWISH CHILD AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

ABRAM SIMON, PH.D.,

Rabbi Washington Hebrew Congregation, Washington, D. C.

What are the rights of the Jewish child in the American public school? There is only one answer to this question. He has no more rights and should have none less than any other child there. He would be guilty of an unpatriotic act were he, in the excess of zeal, to request any preferential treatment. There is no greater friend of the American public school system than the Jew. There is none more eager to grasp its opportunities and none more grateful for its privileges. Public education as it is now understood has been enjoyed by the Jew for one hundred years. The enthusiasm of the American Jew for public education is woven of three threads. First, is the fact that it is education, of which he has been a loyal devotee for thirty odd centuries; second, in the fact that it is free and public, preparing for training in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and third, in the fact that it is not sectarian in principle, method and