

Clothed with Christ: The essential characteristic of Christian Morality

Again and again, Paul reminds his Christian readers that when they joined the Christian community they 'clothed themselves with Christ' (Galatians 3:27). 'You have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator' (Colossians 3:10). He exhorted Gentile Christians: 'Clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God' (Ephesians 4:24). He exhorts the Roman Christians to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 13:14). In all his letters Paul states what this means in the field of Christian virtue.

The aim of this paper is to compare the lists of vices and virtues found in the Paul's letters with the lists found in the writings of moralists from the various schools of moral philosophy of Paul's non-Christian contemporaries. The lists are, for the most part, the same, but whereas for the Greek moralists, virtue is something that we can achieve and ought to achieve by disciplining ourselves to live according to our human nature, Paul looks to Jesus and assures his Christian readers that they can live a life of virtue if they open their mind and heart to grace and let Christ live in them.

Before we compare Paul with the contemporary Greek moral philosophers, we will glance briefly at the contemporary Jewish world, since Paul was a Jew, trained as a Pharisee, and since the first Christians came from the ranks of the Jews.

Expectations of behaviour brought into the Christian community by Jewish converts

Christianity began within Judaism. Within Palestine there were communities of Jewish Christians who lived in villages and whose moral values had been nurtured in Jewish village life. Outside Palestine, Christian communities sprang up for the most part in cities. We think of Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, the other Antioch in the Roman Province of Galatia, as well as the towns of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. Then there is Philippi and Thessalonika in Macedonia, Corinth in Greece, Ephesus and Colossae in the Roman Province of Asia (Western Turkey), Alexandria in Egypt and Rome. Christianity spread wherever there were Jews, and it spread from the Jews to those non-Jews who had associations with the synagogue, and from these to other inhabitants of the cities. In Alexandria and Rome originally Jewish converts predominated. In Macedonia, Greece and Asia Jews were in a minority.

Jewish teachers like ben Sira in Jerusalem at the beginning of the second century BC (his work was translated into Greek by his grandson in Alexandria) and Philo in Alexandria in the first half of the first century AD did their best to convince their students that the wisdom of the Torah far surpassed the wisdom of the Hellenist philosophers. For the Jews what mattered was not the city (the *polis*) but Israel, a people specially chosen by God as his own, a people gathered around the Temple in Jerusalem, but also meeting in the synagogues in the cities of the Diaspora. Jews brought into the Christian communities their own special way of viewing God, the world, and what it means to live a moral life. However, for centuries, though there are many examples of Jews resisting the encroachment of what we have come to know as 'Hellenization' (including many of the ideas espoused by Greek and Roman moralists), they could not avoid being influenced by the thinking of the communities among whom they lived.

Jewish families varied in the degree to which they assimilated the prevailing culture of these cities. This was exacerbated by the Jewish war (66-73AD), and later by the second revolt in the time of Hadrian (132-135AD). These disasters favoured a reorientation of the way Jews viewed the place of Judaism in their lives and in the world. The Temple gave way to the home, the cult to Sabbath observance. This gathering in the home to worship and to share had a profound influence on the life of the early Christian communities.

What Judaism brought to the mix of ideas in the various cities was especially its traditional concern for the poor, for it is to the poor that the God of Israel, YHWH, especially listens.

‘He will not show partiality to the poor; but he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan, or the widow when she pours out her complaint’ (Sirach 35:16-17).

Alongside pragmatic rules for managing life well, ben Sira speaks of God: how a faithful Jews should live by the Torah, and what this means for living a moral life. When Jews joined the Christian community they learned to cease striving to be virtuous by obeying the Torah. Like their non-Jewish fellow Christians, they had to learn to ‘put on Christ’. For Christians virtue is before all else a grace. The Torah was a precious gift, for it kept before their eyes how God had acted in their history, and how they should respond by obeying God’s will. The problem, as Paul kept insisting, was that the Torah did not provide the strength needed to obey it. The good news was that Christ was offering them a share in his faith, his hope, his love, his virtue. Living a virtuous life was possible in the Christian community because of the gift of Jesus’ Spirit.

Expectations brought into the Christian community by non-Jewish converts

While Jewish thinking was a significant factor in the communities which gave rise to the documents that make up what we call the Newer Testament, and while, apart from Luke, the authors of the letters and gospels were all Jews, when we come to look at the exhortations and admonitions concerning behaviour that we find in the letters of Paul, we need to keep in mind that increasingly the people who made up the Christian communities were not Jews. They brought with them what they had learned from the moral training they had received from their family and from the Hellenized society that reared them.

When the Newer Testament was composed the three ethical systems that were most prominent in the Greco-Roman world were the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Academy (Platonists). Our aim is to explore what Christian ethics had in common with the Greek moralists and what it is that was special to Christian understanding when Christians were exhorted to live ‘in Christ’ (an expression Paul uses 85 times), and to ‘behave in a manner worthy of the vocation to which you have been called’ (1Thessalonians 2:12). What would non-Jewish converts have found that was familiar in the moral exhortations they encountered within the Christian communities, and what would they have found that was novel?

The commercial links forged in the wake of the conquests of Alexander the Great meant that the Greek language (influenced, of course, by local dialects) was the main language of communication in the Roman Empire in the first century AD. Hellenization involved more than language: Greek cities were built and Greek educational schools were established. In Egypt the Hellenizing influence was largely restricted to Alexandria, and in Judea the influence was restricted by the tenacious fidelity of the inhabitants to their own religious traditions. In Syria and Asia Minor, however, its influence was quite widespread. In any case it was impossible for anyone interested in being engaged in any way in life beyond the village not to be influenced by Greek ideas, including the moral teaching of the schools.

The Greek philosophical schools considered ethics to be the goal of education, for they were concerned with happiness and the key question occupying their minds, whatever school they belonged to, was ‘How do we live to achieve the highest happiness?’ (for Aristotle see Eudemian Ethics I, i, 1; I, vii, 2; II, i, 9; Nicomachean Ethics I, vii, 15; X, vii, 1; for Epicurus see Diogenes Laertes X, 128; for the Stoics see Diogenes Laertes VII, 89; and for the Academy see Plutarch’s essay on prosperity VI, 464e).

We will be drawing especially on the writings of two men who were contemporaries of Paul. One is

Seneca, who was born in 4BC, close to the time of Jesus' birth. He was in Rome as an adviser to the emperor Nero when Paul was in prison there and close to the time when the earliest Gospel, that of Mark, was composed. While espousing the Stoic philosophy he was, as his 124 letters to Lucilius show, interested in all the schools of thought current at the time. The other person of special interest is Plutarch (c. 46-120AD), who was a priest at the shrine at Delphi and a representative of the Academy.

In a tract entitled '*The Education of Children*', which came to us as a work by Plutarch, but whose author is unknown, we read that from the study of philosophy a pupil should learn:

'what is honourable and what is shameful, what is just and what is unjust, what is to be chosen and what is to be avoided, how a man must bear himself in his relations with the gods, with his parents, with his elders, with the laws, with strangers, with those in authority, with friends, with women, with children, with servants; that one ought to reverence the gods, to honour one's parents, to respect one's elders, to be obedient to the laws, to yield to those in authority, to love one's friends, to be chaste with women, to be affectionate with children, and not to be overbearing with slaves; and, most important of all, not to be over joyful at success or overmuch distressed at misfortune, not to be dissolute in pleasures, nor impulsive and brutish in temper.'

Plutarch in *On the Delays of Divine Vengeance*, wrote:

'Consider first that God, as Plato says, offers himself to all as a pattern of everyday excellence, thus rendering human virtue, which is in some way an assimilation to himself, accessible to all who can follow God.'

He also held that conversion to a philosophical life necessarily involves a struggle against the impulses of one's irrational self. To cultivate appropriate emotions we must learn to discipline them.

The Stoics taught that to live a good life, one must live in accordance with nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*); that is to say, according to right reason. Virtue is necessary for happiness, and virtue is something that is within our control to achieve. The overarching virtue is self-control (*sōphrosynē*).

Society in the first century AD was highly stratified, and there was considerable social pressure to live in a way that was fitting for one's position in society. Village life made certain demands on people. There were different expectations for those living in a city. Embracing the Jesus' movement involved the embracing of a new way of life. Converts to Christianity, however, brought with them into the community their own history, and the virtues that they had picked up from their family and social contacts. Some of these helped them live a good moral life as Christians; others had to be abandoned if they were going to live as a disciple with other disciples of Jesus. Paul was making this last point when he wrote to the Christians of Rome: 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds' (Romans 12:2).

The social class from which converts came affected their sense of identity and the expectations they placed on their own and other people's behaviour. No one in the first century considered people to be equal. People were expected to live in a way that was appropriate to their position in the social structure. Paul assumes this when he writes to the Christian communities in Rome: 'Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due' (Romans 13:7).

Certain values were expected of citizens, that is, of those who were enrolled as members of the citizen body (the *dēmos*), normally limited to property-owning males. They were part of the town council (the *boulē*), and so of the city assembly (the *ekklēsia*). Customary law (*nómos*) governed their lives, and they

were proud of their autonomy and self-sufficiency (*autárkeia*). However, in the first century AD the power traditionally invested in the city (the *pólis*) was greatly reduced because of domination by the Roman state. Furthermore, many of the converts to Christianity from the city dwellers were not citizens, but included women, slaves and resident aliens (*métoikoi*). In his First Letter to the Corinthian community Paul could write: ‘Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God’ (1Corinthians 1:26-29). People came to Christianity from very different social positions with very different expectations of how they should behave.

We should assume that some of the converts came to the Christian church from among the devotees of cults such as that to Dionysus, or to Isis and Serapis. It is more difficult to trace their influence on the life of the early Christian communities, though the charismatic element in Christian communities could come, in part, from their influence.

Letter to the Christian Communities in Galatia (with a special focus on 5:19-26)

In 47AD Paul and Barnabas were sent from Antioch in Syria on a missionary journey, which took in the main cities in the Roman Province of Galatia: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (see Acts 13-14). On his return to Syrian Antioch, Paul wrote back to the Christian communities in these cities. This was probably in 48AD, prior to the Jerusalem Assembly, which took place in 49AD. If these dates are correct, we have here the earliest extant document of what was to become the Newer Testament.

Paul wrote because a group of Jewish Christians was convinced that it was essential for converts to Christianity to faithfully obey everything revealed by God in the Torah. They were shocked to hear that Paul did not share their conviction, and they were determined to correct what they saw as lacking in Paul’s catechesis. When news reached Paul of what these Judean Christians were doing he was livid. They may have been well intentioned, but they had missed the essence of Jesus’ revelation, which was that God loved people as they were. To join the Christian community they did not have to leave their culture and become Jews. They had to commit themselves to being part of the community of Jesus’ disciples. Whatever in their own culture did not fit with this they had to leave behind, but there was no requirement for them to become Jews. Moreover, the hope was that they would enrich the community by bringing into it all that was good in their culture. They were to bring themselves into the community.

Paul begins his letter by giving his credentials as a Christian missionary. He goes on to remind them that what characterized the community that they had been moved to join was not meticulous observance of the Jewish Torah, but their sharing in ‘the faith of Christ’ (Galatians 2:16; see 3:22). Jesus had revealed God as love. He gave them an example of what it means to welcome God’s love and live by it, but he did more than that – and this takes us to the essential foundation of Christian morality. Jesus continues to give his disciples a share in his faith in God and in his love. Paul exhorts the members of the communities in Galatia not to let go the freedom that this gives them. Rather, they are to put their faith in the God revealed by Jesus and they are to love one another and share their faith and love with others. Paul could say: ‘It is no longer I who live; it is Christ who lives in me. The life I live now in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, loving me and giving himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20). It was this experience that drew people to join the Christian community. Paul reminds the Galatians: ‘God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, “Abba (Father)!” (Galatians 4:6).

Again and again, throughout the Letter, Paul returns to the freedom that should characterize the life of a

Christian. In Galatians 5:13 he writes: ‘You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.’ The ‘freedom’ (see 5:1) of which Paul is speaking is the freedom given by Christ, whether it be freedom from slavery to the false values of the pagan world (see 4:3, 8-9), or freedom from subjection to the law (see 2:4; 3:23; 4:1, 24-25). It is freedom from sin (see Paul’s words to the Galatians on the occasion of his first visit, Acts 13:38-39). Already he has spoken paradoxically of his own freedom as expressed in being a ‘slave of Christ’ (1:10). He goes further here to speak of freedom to be slaves of each other. We are to be, as it were, prisoners of love, bound to each other body and soul, heart and mind, giving our lives for each other as Christ gave his for us.

In his letter Paul makes it perfectly clear that in rejecting the law as a necessary condition for enjoying communion with God he is not thereby rejecting morality; nor is he denying a place for the guidance provided by the law (he quotes it in 5:15), so long as it is recognized that life comes from the Spirit of Christ and not as a result of observance of the law. The freedom to which they are called is a freedom to live Christ’s life.

We are not released from subjection to the law in order to be left to ourselves, a prey to our own unspiritual desires, which can only draw us into sin. We are not left to ourselves. We have the Spirit of Christ as our source of life. It is probably here that we uncover the root cause of the problem in Galatia: insecurity concerning the problem of sin and how to cope with it. The missionaries from Jerusalem have been disturbing the Galatians by insisting on strict observance of the law with its clear directions and its institutional ways of finding forgiveness through the cult. Paul is anxious that they avoid the trap of this apparent security, and dare the journey they have already begun. He challenges them to ‘live by the Spirit’ (Galatians 5:16, 25).

Paul follows with a catalogue of conventional vices, which he describes as ways of behaving that come, not from the Spirit, but ‘from the flesh’. These are typical ways in which we behave when we are enslaved by desires that have not been purified by the Spirit of Jesus.

‘The works of the flesh are obvious: fornication (πορνεία), impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), licentiousness (ἀσελγεία), idolatry (ειδωλολατρία), sorcery (φαρμακεία), enmities (ἔχθρος), strife (ἔρις), jealousy (ζήλος), anger (θύμος), selfishness (επιθειά), dissensions (διχοστασία), factions (αἰρέσις), envy (φθόνος), drunkenness (μέθη), carousing (κῶμος), and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Galatians 5:19-21).

Paul begins with porneia (‘fornication’): a word covering a whole range of morally irresponsible behaviour in matters of sexuality, and goes on to list akatharsia (‘impurity’). The pollution of our physical environment bears no comparison with the harm caused when we pollute the mind and heart. He then names the vice of aselgeia (‘licentiousness’): the unrestrained gratifying of sensual desire.

Examples of admonitions against these three vices can be found in the writings of moralists contemporary with Paul. Seneca writes of those who are ‘slaves to lust’ (see *Epistulae Morales* xlvi, 17). Plutarch describes the unrestrained gratification of sensual desire in his portrait of Alcibiades (see *Alcib* 8; also his *Moralia* VI, 501a). The Epicureans held that the goal of life is pleasure. But Epicurus warned: ‘We do not mean the pleasure of profligates and those pleasures that consist in self-indulgence, but the absence of pain in the body and turmoil in the soul’ (quoted by N. de Witt in his *Saint Paul and Epicurus*, Minnesota, Minneapolis 1954, page 171, but without a reference).

Being a Christian means living in a certain way. It concerns the truth of who we are as persons. It is not

surprising, therefore, that Paul moves immediately to speak of sexuality, for where else do all the dimensions of being human meet more intimately and more mysteriously than in our identity as man or woman? It is traditional Jewish and Christian wisdom that sexual relationships are meant to be sacraments in which we encounter the divine at the heart of another person cherished in love. There are divinely mysterious depths in every person. Sexual experience invites us into this mystery in which two people enjoy, encourage, heal, forgive and create each other in loving trust. There is a restlessness and a mysterious yearning at the heart of sexuality, for we know that we are not sufficient of ourselves. We need the other; we long to be in communion with the other. It is common human wisdom, born of experience, that when we give expression to our sexual desire we should do so in a way that recognizes the sacredness and the dignity of our own person and of the other. Paul exhorts the Galatians to avoid sexual behaviour which ignores all delicacy, by-passes love, and uses, even abuses, another person in a selfish attempt to assert one's own power or gratify one's own misdirected passion.

Paul moves on to name the vice of *eidōlōlatría* ('idolatry'): worshipping false gods. This is a particularly Jewish concept, and is not included in the contemporary catalogues of vices from the Middle Platonists like Plutarch, or the Stoics, like Seneca. Linked with this is the vice of *pharmakeía* ('sorcery'). Rather than accepting human limitations and the mystery of our own being and of the world of which we are part, rather than placing trust in a loving God, we seek false assurances from people who claim to know the future or to be able to control spirits. Plutarch includes sorcery in his catalogue of vices (see *Moralia* VI, 517f).

Échthros ('enmity') and *éris* ('strife') are found where people are defined by race, or by any quality other than their being made in the image of God. The intrusion of the circumcision party from Jerusalem may well have endangered the harmony between Jewish Christians and those who were not Jews. *Zēlos* ('jealousy') is a form of 'zeal' motivated by self-interest. We hold on to what we have so tightly that we treat people as objects and are unwilling to share with others when love requires it.

Paul lists *thúmos* ('anger') among the vices. He is not speaking of appropriate anger when we defend ourselves or others against unjust aggression. Rather, he is speaking of the unreasonable and spiteful passion that can come over us when we fail to get our own way or have our own whims gratified. The many different ways in which selfishness (*eritheía*) finds expression lead to dissensions (*dichostasía*), and creates factions (*haíresis*, from which the English 'heresy'). Paul has in mind especially the 'circumcision faction' (Galatians 2:12).

Paul continues his catalogue of vices with 'envy' (*phthónos*): when we are unhappy with the prosperity of others, or the freedom they have in Christ. Being dissatisfied with who we are or with what we have, we want what others have. Plutarch devotes an essay to envy (see *Moralia* VII, 536E).

Paul concludes with 'drunkenness' (*méthē*) and carousing (*kōmos*). We lack moderation in our behaviour and in the way we seek to satisfy what we see as our needs. Seneca has a fine description of drunkenness and its effects on human behaviour (see *Epistulae Morales* lxxxiii, 20). Plutarch, too, warns of the evil of drunkenness (see *Moralia* VI, 462B and 503E), as does Epicurus (see Diogenes Laertius X, 132).

Apart from 'selfishness' all the vices in Galatians 5:19-21 can be found in contemporary catalogues. Speaking of 'anger', Plutarch recommends following the example of the Pythagoreans who 'if ever they were led by anger into recrimination, never let the sun go down before they joined right hands, embraced each other and were reconciled' (*Moralia* VI, 488C).

The absence of 'selfishness' in contemporary Greek lists of vices is significant. The Greeks were against

anything that might appear to demean the 'self'. Virtue, for them, was a necessary achievement for a life of happiness, but an achievement precisely of the self. Paul uses the word αὐτάρκεια (autárkeia) in 2Corinthians 9:8 and 1Timothy 6:6, where it perhaps best translated 'contentment'. Among the Greek moralists, however, it is considered one of the highest achievements of the virtuous person. Aristotle sees the contemplative as possessing this virtue 'in the highest degree' (*Nic. Eth.* X, vii, 4). He recognizes that we are social beings, such that self-sufficiency is found in community, and not in selfish isolation (see *Nic. Eth.* I, vii, 6). However, he sees it as acquired by a person's own effort and as a triumph of personal endeavour (see *Nic. Eth.* I, ix, 5). Epicurus, too, says of this virtue that its greatest fruit is freedom (*Gnom. Vat.* 77). Plutarch lists it along with 'peace of mind, greatness of spirit, serenity and confidence' (*Moralia* VII, 523D).

Among the Greek moralists, along with the importance of being self-sufficient goes self-love (φίλαυτος, philautos). Aristotle devotes a section of his *Nicomachean Ethics* to it and concludes: 'The good man ought to be a lover of self, since he will then benefit himself by acting nobly and aid his fellows' (IX, viii, 7). Presenting the Stoic view Cicero writes: 'It is love of self that supplies the primary impulse to action' (*De Fin.* III, v, 16). Plutarch does recognize that self-love, if not balanced by other virtue, can be a source of vice (see *Moralia* VII, 523D). A person who is so pleased with himself that he sees no merit in others and has no concern for their welfare is described as αὐθάδης (authádēs, 'self-willed') and is lacking in virtue (see Plutarch VI 454B, 502A). We find such a person described in Titus 1:7 and 2Peter 2:10.

On self-sufficiency let us listen to Seneca: 'The wise person is self-sufficient' (*Epistulae Morales* ix, 3). 'Look towards the true good, and rejoice only in that which comes from your own store; that is, from your own self, from that which is the best part of you' (xxiii, 6). 'Cast about for some good which will abide. But there can be no such good except as the soul discovers it for itself, within itself' (xxvii, 3). Freedom, too, must be acquired 'from yourself' (lxxx, 5).

We are touching here upon one of the key difference between the teaching of the Greek moralists on vices and virtue, and the teaching of Paul. Of course, self-discipline is necessary, but, as Paul will state clearly when he speaks of virtues, these are 'fruits of the Spirit', not achievements of the self. Paul came to see that we should let go our ego and let the Spirit of Christ fill our hearts and direct our lives. For example, what Paul speaks of as 'humility' (ταπεινοφροσύνη; tapeinophrosúnē; see pages 18-19) is not only unknown as a virtue among the Greek moralists, it is listed as a vice: much as our 'putting oneself down' is. It was Jesus who showed that we are to think of ourselves as slaves at the service of others. Our self-worth comes, not from our being independent, but from the fact that we are loved by God.

Paul concludes his catalogue of vices with the words: 'and things like these. I am warning you as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God' (Galatians 5:21). Like Paul, Seneca recognises our need to be set free from a life of vice (see *Epistulae Morales* xcvi.38). What is special to Paul is his conviction that, while we need to work at self-discipline, we will never be free without opening ourselves to the gift of Jesus' Spirit.

Paul has an enlightening phrase in his Second Letter to the Thessalonians where he writes: 'Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right' (2Thessalonians 3:13). The English 'doing what is right' translates a compound verb (*kalopoiéō*) made up of the word 'to do' and the word 'kalos'. This points up an interesting and instructive contrast between Latin and Greek usage. Where Latin speaks of 'virtue' (related to the word for 'man' and 'strength'), and of 'right' (related to the word for 'law'), Greek speaks of 'excellence' (*aretē*), and of 'beauty' (*kalos*). In Greek usage, and in Paul's understanding, to 'do what is right' is to do what is morally beautiful.

Paul follows the list of vices, not with a list of virtues that we might acquire by our own efforts, but with examples of what he calls ‘the fruit of the Spirit’.

‘By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love (ἀγάπη), joy (χαρά), peace (εἰρήνη), long-suffering (μακροθυμία), kindness (χρηστότης), generosity (ἀγαθωσύνη), faithfulness (πίστις), gentleness (πραΰτης), and self-control (εγκράτεια).’ (Galatians 5:22-23)

We are here at the very heart of what is special to Christian morality. In all the various schools of Greek thought, virtue is something that we should commit ourselves to achieve. In Christian morality virtue is always a gift from God. Being the gift of a loving God, it is not forced upon us, so we need to welcome the gift and co-operate with grace, but it is not something that we can achieve. It is always a sharing in the virtue of Jesus. Virtues are ‘fruits of the Spirit’. To cut oneself off from Christ is to cut oneself off from these fruits.

We are not surprised to find that the first fruit of the Spirit is ‘love’ (agápē). Paul has already said: ‘the only thing that counts is faith working through love’ (Galatians 5:6). He is not referring to the spontaneous feeling that one associates with one’s spouse or family; nor is he referring to passionate desire, or the affection experienced between friends. He is speaking of the recognition one has of the value of another person in the light of what God has revealed in Christ. He is speaking of the decision to give one’s life for others the way Christ gave his life for us. ‘Love’, as used here by Paul, speaks of faithful commitment to others whatever feelings circumstances may cause to arise within us. If we love we will achieve all that the law set out to achieve (Galatians 5:13-14). However, love is not something that we can choose to do of ourselves. Love comes from God, and is a gift to us from the heart of Jesus through his Spirit. In his First Letter to the community in Thessalonika he prays: ‘May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you’ (1Thessalonians 3:12).

The second fruit of which he speaks is ‘joy’ (chará): the joy of having Christ living in us (Galatians 2:20); the ‘joy in the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 14:17; see 1Thessalonians 1:6), the joy of experiencing his Spirit in our hearts (Galatians 4:6); the joy of knowing that we are heirs to the promise (Galatians 3:29); ‘joy in the faith’ (Philippians 1:25); the joy of experiencing the love of our brothers and sisters in the faith (see Philemon verse 7).

The third fruit is ‘peace’ (eirēnē). Paul prayed that the Galatians would know this peace in his opening greeting (Galatians 1:3). It is the peace we experience when we are in the right relationship with God and living the life of his Son. It finds expression in the community when differences are no longer sources of injustice or insecurity (see especially the differences mentioned in Galatians 3:28), but variations that enrich the community as various instruments enrich an orchestra. The peace promised here will be complete only when all creation unites in a cosmic hymn of praise. As Paul will write later in his Letter to the Ephesians: ‘Christ is our peace’ (Ephesians 2:14). Seneca criticises those who condemn murder but indulge in war (see *Epistulae Morales* xcv, 3031). He also writes: ‘When we advise a man to regard his friends as highly as himself, we should reflect that an enemy may become a friend. To stimulate love in the friend, and to check hatred in the enemy we add: this is just and honourable’ (*Epistulae Morales* xcv, 63).

The fourth fruit of the Spirit is ‘patience’ (makrothumía; perhaps better translated ‘long-suffering’). Patience is more properly a translation of the Greek hupomonē which speaks of our ability to bear difficulties that are happening to us (see page 21). makrothumía, on the other hand, refers to our sharing in God’s magnanimous love by persevering in doing good and not allowing ourselves to be put off by the opposition or suffering that ensues. It is the ability to remain constant in love and in a big (Greek: *makro*)

way. It is a fruit of the Spirit because it can come only from God; it is a sharing in the passionate and persistent caring that is revealed most persuasively in Jesus 'loving me and giving himself for me' (Galatians 2:20).

The fifth fruit is 'kindness' (*chrēstotēs*). It refers to whatever is pleasing, desirable, useful, lovely, valuable or morally good. Matthew associates it with the yoke of Christ as against the yoke of the law (Matthew 11:30), and for Luke it is characteristic of God who is 'kind to the ungrateful and the wicked' (Luke 6:35).

Closely associated with kindness is the next fruit, 'generosity' (*agathōsunē*), perhaps better translated by the simple and profound word 'goodness'.

Then comes 'faithfulness', or 'faith' (*pīstis*). This has been a central theme of this letter. God is 'faithful': his love and his promises will never be withdrawn. Jesus lived this 'faith' to the full. Faith is one of the fruits of his Spirit; our response to God's love revealed in Jesus.

Paul lists gentleness (*praūtēs*). This is a key virtue for Aristotle (see *Eud. Ethics* III, vii, 10-11). In his *Nicomachean Ethics* he devotes a whole section to it. For Paul, one who lives by the Spirit of Christ shares also in his 'gentleness', a characteristic that is typical of the heart of Jesus (see Matthew 11:28-29).

'Self-control' (*egkráteia*; see also 1Corinthians 7:9, 9:25; Titus 1:8) was considered a most important virtue in the Greek world. Speaking of the self-controlled person, Aristotle writes: 'A man exercises self-control when he acts against his desire in conformity with rational calculation' (*Eud. Ethics* II, vii,8). He sets aside a whole section of his *Nicomachean Ethics* to the subject (see VII). Plutarch, too, treats the topic (*Moralia* VI, 445B-C; 464B; 487A and 505D). Paul is not speaking of control *by* the self. On the contrary, it is the control that we experience when we open ourselves to Jesus and to the gift of his Spirit. It is allowing ourselves to be controlled by him. It is being, like Paul, a 'slave of Christ' (Galatians 1:10).

Looking back over this list we become conscious of an important and fundamental dimension of Christian morality. Paul does not put the Jewish law to the side in order to replace it with a Christian equivalent. The command is not directly to follow certain precepts: it is to 'live by the Spirit' (Galatians 5:16), to be 'led by the Spirit' (Galatians 5:18). If we do this, then the Spirit will cause the above fruits to grow in our lives. Rather than our struggling to obey a law etched on stone, we are to open our hearts and minds to the call of the Spirit, and allow Christ to live in us (see Galatians 2:20). Christian morality is a morality of love, the love revealed by Jesus on the cross. It is not an achievement of the self. It is a fruit of the Spirit. It is not possible without faith, but it is possible with it, and it is here that Paul places his emphasis. If the Galatians are concerned that they are sinning, the answer is not to subject themselves to the Jewish law. That will not give them the life they seek. The answer is to become more and more a 'slave of Christ' (Galatians 1:10), more and more allowing his Spirit to penetrate every aspect of their lives. To 'belong to Christ' (Galatians 3:29) demands, of course, that we die with him on the cross, dying to our selfishness (Galatians 5:24) and giving our lives in love for others. It is to live 'in Christ' (Galatians 2:16-17; 3:26-28; 5:6). It is to be 'clothed with Christ' (Galatians 3:27). It is to have Christ as one's Lord (Galatians 1:3,10) and one's Redeemer (Galatians 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; 4:4-5; 5:1). It is to live by his Spirit (Galatians 4:6).

The First Letter to the Christian Community in Thessalonika (with a special focus on 4:3-8)

In his First Letter to the community in Thessalonika, sent from Corinth c. 50AD, Paul writes:

'Brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus' (1Thessalonians 4:1-2).

The Stoics of Paul's day had worked out a system of ethics based on their understanding of human nature. Christians of a later period were fond of expressing their moral teaching in the terms of the current ethical philosophy, both in order to appeal to their non-Christian contemporaries in language that was understandable, and to support the reasonableness of the Christian position. This procedure has an obvious validity, but it must not be allowed to obscure the truth that Paul invariably argues not from an understanding of human nature and its requirements but from the example of Jesus who shares his Spirit with the believer.

Christian living is modeled on that of Jesus and is possible because of the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in us. A person cannot live Christian morality without faith. It obviously cannot be imposed on non-believers, for it is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Paul's urging is an appeal from the risen Christ, and is made 'in the Lord Jesus' and 'through the Lord Jesus', that is to say, in communion with him and with his authority.

Paul is not simply offering suggestions. He is speaking of 'how you *ought* to live'. The obligations are not because they are human but because they are disciples of Jesus. Being human and being a disciple of Jesus are not in opposition. In fact Jesus, being sinless, is perfectly human. The call to live as humanly as Jesus, however, is not made because of the moral strength that the Thessalonians should have as human beings, nor from their meticulous obedience to the 'law of nature' (the Greek philosophers stressed these two elements), but because they share in Jesus' Spirit.

In his list of vices in his Letter to the Galatians, we noticed that Paul began by listing irresponsible sexual behavior. This is consistent with his focus in his First Letter to the Thessalonians:

'For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication (πορνεία); that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honour, not with lustful passion (εν πάθει επιθυμίας), like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) but in holiness (ἀγίασμος). Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you' (1Thessalonians 4:3-8).

Sexuality is to be at the service of love. They are to exercise self-control. Paul is not calling for stronger will power, as though we have in ourselves the capacity to achieve virtue in this matter. Rather, he is calling for them to open themselves to the power of grace. Control over sexual urges that are insensitive to the dignity of others and to their real needs, and that 'wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter' is one of the fruits of submitting one's life to the inspiration and the power of the Spirit of Jesus. It is one of the fruits of love.

Paul's expression 'in lustful passion' (en páthei epithumías) is decidedly Stoic. According to Diogenes Laertes, Zeno defined pathos as 'an irrational and unnatural movement in the soul, an impulse in excess' (see DL VII,117). For the Stoics a virtuous person needs to be apathēs (απαθής, 'unmoved'). Epithumía is considered an 'irrational appetite' from which the virtuous person needs to be liberated (see DL VII, 113).

Paul speaks of 'the will of God'. The Epicureans recognised the existence of the divine. They also recognised the importance of having a correct idea of the gods, because this was an important factor in the attaining of tranquility, and even more because false ideas of the divine were responsible for much of the fear that crippled the ordinary populace. However, having said this, it was one of their central tenets that the gods in no way influence human affairs.

A Stoic, on the contrary, would have been quite at home with Paul's reference to God. Seneca recognised the existence in the world of something over and above matter. One name he gives the 'something' is 'God' (*Epistulae Morales* lxxv, 23). The Stoics held that we humans experience this 'something' in ourselves as 'reason' (lxxv, 12). 'Reason is nothing else than a portion of the divine spirit set in a human body' (lxxvi, 12). However, Seneca seems not to limit our experience of God to our experience of reason: 'God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. A holy spirit dwells within us, one who marks our good and bad deeds and is our guardian. As we treat this spirit so are we treated by it. Indeed no one can be good without the help of God' (xli, 1-2).

He writes: 'Just as the rays of the sun do, indeed, touch the earth but still abide at the source from which they are sent, even so the great and hallowed soul which has come down in order that we may have a closer knowledge of divinity, does indeed associate with us, while still cleaving to its origin' (xli, 3-5). Speaking of the virtuous man, Seneca writes: 'He possesses perfection of soul, developed to its highest capabilities, inferior only to the mind of God, from whom a part flows down even into the heart of this mortal' (cxx, 14). According to Seneca, philosophy encourages us to 'obey God cheerfully' (xvi, 5; also xcvi, 2).

Reason is not found only in humans, it is 'the force which inheres in all the seeds of things' (xc, 29). Seneca recognises the pure divine existing in the gods, and particularly in *the* God, Zeus, the maker and ruler of the universe. He writes: 'Philosophy has taught us to worship that which is divine, and to love that which is human; she has told us that with the gods lies dominion, and among men, communion' (xc, 3). He speaks of an intimate relationship between God and humankind: 'God seeks no servants. Of course not; he himself does service to humankind everywhere and to all he is at hand to help ... God possesses all things, and allots all things, and bestows them freely. And what reason have the gods for doing deeds of kindness? It is their nature. One who thinks that they chose not to do harm is wrong. They cannot do harm' (xcv, 48; see also cx, 10).

A Greek who embraced the good news as lived in the Christian community would have been at home with the idea of God wanting us to be holy, and giving us his Spirit. What is new in Paul is the reliance of Jesus' disciples on the love of the Risen Christ to whom they looked to purify their loving. As Paul reminds the Thessalonians in his Second Letter, becoming holy is what the Spirit does in our lives (see 2Thessalonians 2:13). Holiness is before all else a matter of love, and it is this love that they are to give and receive in the bosom of the Christian community. This is reinforced by Paul's exhortation, drawn directly from the teaching of Jesus: 'See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all' (1Thessalonians 5:15).

The First Letter to the Christian Community in Corinth (with a special focus on 6:9-10)

After the Jerusalem Assembly, Paul, having revisited the communities in Galatia, crossed over to Europe, to Macedonia and then to Greece. He was in Corinth from late 50AD to the spring of 52AD. After visiting Jerusalem and Antioch he settled for three years in Ephesus (52-55AD). From there he wrote to the Christian Community in Corinth in answer to their questions and to reports he had received of their behaviour, reports that disturbed him.

He was particularly concerned with the 'divisions' (σχίσματα, schismata) in the community (1Corinthians 1:10, 11:18, 12:25). Paul speaks of 'your life in Christ Jesus' (1Corinthians 1:30), and reminds them: 'You are God's temple. God's Spirit dwells in you' (1Corinthians 3:16). He appeals to them to 'be imitators of me' (1Corinthians 4:16). He insists:

'I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is

sexually immoral (πόρνος) or greedy (πλεονέκτης), or is an idolater (ειδωλολάτρης), reviler (λοίδορος), drunkard (μέθυσος), or robber (ἄρπαξ)' (1Corinthians 5:11).

'Fornicators (πόρνος), idolaters (ειδωλολάτρης), adulterers (μοιχός), male prostitutes (μαλακός), sodomites (ἀρσενοκοίτης), thieves (κλέπτης), the greedy (πλεονέκτης), drunkards (μέθυσος), revilers (λοίδορος), robbers (ἄρπαξ). None of these will inherit the kingdom of heaven' (1Corinthians 6:9-10).

As is common in Paul's catalogues of vices, it is sexual sins that predominate. This is the first record we have of Paul speaking of homosexual behaviour. How would Paul's contemporaries have understood his condemnation of male prostitutes (malakós) and sodomites (arsenokoίτης)?

The culture in the Greek and Roman worlds was, speaking generally, indulgent towards male sexual behaviour. The male was considered (by male writers and teachers) to be superior, not only intellectually, but also from the point of view of physical beauty. An adult male was encouraged to have a young male to give him pleasure, including the pleasure of sexual gratification. It was expected that the intimacy be intellectually stimulating, and that the older male would look to the education of the younger male, and behave towards him in a sensitive way.

Plato wrote against this practice: 'man with man, or woman with woman, this is against nature' (*Laws*, 636b). Most moralists, however, extolled the virtues of love directed to boys (pederasty). It was not expected that wives would be chosen for either intellectual or romantic motives. It was considered that the appropriate partner for a male was another male. In opposition to Plato's view, pederasty is sometimes described as being more 'according to nature' for a male. Sexual union with a woman is needed for obvious reasons, but it is of a lesser dignity. Laws were enacted to protect young males against sexual harassment and rape, but pederasty of the kind we have described was widely encouraged. It is dangerous to speak in such generalities of the many diverse cultures that made up the Greco-Roman world, but the evidence supports this statement as being largely true.

We might say that the culture, unlike our own, encouraged in all males the prolonging of undifferentiated pubertal sexuality. It was an unashamedly bisexual world. However, while on the whole condoning and even encouraging pederasty, the moralists condemned those who ran brothels, and those males who made a living out of offering their sexual services to older males. In cities like Corinth, the presence of coiffured and perfumed young men in the streets and public squares was a common sight and moralists of divergent philosophical persuasions frequently spoke out against what they decried as decadent behaviour.

A moralist of the day writes :

'To be in love with those who are beautiful and chaste is the experience of a kind-hearted and generous soul; but to hire for money and to indulge in licentiousness is the act of a man who is wanton and ill-bred' (Aeschines, *Timarchus*, 137).

These young men were often described as malakós, one of the words used by Paul in our text. Literally it means 'soft', hence 'effeminate'. Of course, one can readily see the dangers inherent in the acceptable forms of pederasty: dangers in the unequal nature of the relationship, in its impermanency, and in the occasion it provides for abuse and humiliation. However, the point being made here is that the culture saw its advantages as outweighing its disadvantages. There is a good deal of evidence in the ancient texts of a prevailing (though not universal) misogyny, but there is no evidence of the kind of homophobia that we witness today.

There is very little in the Hebrew Bible on the subject of homosexual behaviour. There is the terrible story

of Sodom (Genesis 19), which accounts for our word ‘sodomy’. It is a condemnation of inhospitality and of rape. There is the even worse story of the Levite (Judges 19), which also involves a condemnation of rape. Both stories demonstrate an assumption of male superiority and a disgusting denigration of women. There is the proscription against cult prostitution (Deuteronomy 23:17-18), and the following law: ‘You shall not lie with a male (Greek: *arsēn + koitē*) as with a woman; it is an abomination’ (Leviticus 18:22). ‘If a man lies with a male (Greek: *arsēn + koitē*) as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them’ (Leviticus 20:13).

No context is given for these regulations, and there is no discussion of the issues involved. Were they concerned with the kind of public, flagrant, male prostitution that they observed in the Greek world? Were they concerned at the waste of male semen and so of what they understood to be the vehicle of life (they had no concept of the role of the female gamete)? We do not know what they were saying unless we know what the nature of the behaviour was which they were condemning. What emerges in the discussions of these texts among the Rabbis and in the writings of Jews living in the Greek world is a strong disgust for the male prostitution that is also condemned by Greek and Roman moralists, as well as a condemnation of pederasty. Such behaviour was unknown in the Jewish culture and Jewish writers condemn it as typically Gentile. What is also clear is that there is no discussion at all of homosexuality as a physiological-psychological sexual preference or tendency. The focus is on homosexual behaviour. Furthermore, it is not evident that any of the texts envisage a situation in which two male adults as equals express their affection sexually and with mutual sensitivity. The texts from Leviticus cannot be quoted against behaviour which they may well not have been addressing.

We come now to the two vices listed by Paul. Neither the *malakós* nor the *arsenokoitēs* will inherit the kingdom of heaven. According to the most obvious reading of the text Paul is repeating what is commonly said by Jewish writers and to a lesser extent also by Stoic and other Greek and Roman moralists of his day. He is speaking against the behaviour of those young men, quite obvious in cities like Corinth, who dressed themselves up and offered themselves for money for the sexual gratification of other males. He is also condemning those who take advantage of them. The word *arsenokoitēs* is not found in the Greek moralists. It seems to have its origin in Jewish circles and to derive from the Leviticus texts. Since Paul simply lists these sins here we should assume that he is repeating common Jewish condemnation of male prostitution and pederasty. We would need more evidence to justify extending Paul’s meaning to condemn outright all expressions of homosexual behaviour.

The same must be said about his statement to Timothy. Among those who behave in ways that are ‘against sound teaching’ he includes ‘fornicators (*πόρνος*), sodomites (*ἀρσενοκοίτης*) and slave traders (*ἀνδραποδιστής*)’ (1 Timothy 1:10). The first group is the *pórnoi*, the primary meaning of which is ‘male prostitutes’. This may well be its meaning here. The second group is, once again, the *arsenokotai*, which, as in our present text, could be referring to those who take advantage of the prostitutes. The third group are the *andrapodistai*. In context Paul may well be referring to those who take slave boys into brothels for purposes of prostitution.

In the only other text in which Paul refers to homosexual behaviour he goes beyond a simple listing:

‘Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator ... God gave them up to degrading passions (*πάθη ἀτιμία*). Their women exchanged natural intercourse (*φυσικὴν χρῆσιν*) for unnatural (*παρὰ φύσιν*), and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error’ (Romans 1:25-27).

This text is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it is one of only a handful of texts from the time that mention female homosexual behaviour. Secondly, Paul uses the expression ‘unnatural’ used by Plato against those who allowed their affection for young men to descend into sexual gratification, and used by a number of Greek moralists in their condemnation of male homosexual gratification that was separated from real affection and where the younger man was treated as a commodity for sale. It is possible that Paul is expressing the traditional Jewish opposition to male prostitution, extending his words to include women to demonstrate the universal degradation from which human beings need redemption. In the light of other Jewish writings, it is likely that he intends to include the Gentile practice of pederasty. Beyond that, we are in the area of conjecture. We should note that everything Paul says about love, sensitivity, mutuality, and the sacred nature of sex, is relevant to the discussion of heterosexual behaviour. What we cannot do is take these few texts from Paul and use them to rule out all expressions of homosexual love as some are wont to do. The Bible has a lot to offer us, but we must acknowledge that we are faced with questions which are, in the light of advances in psychology, quite new.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians Paul goes on to discuss matters concerning marriage (chapter 7) and the eating of meat that had been offered to idols (chapters 8-9). Some members were showing no sensitivity to those in the community whose consciences were troubled by the fact that the meat they were eating had probably been part of a pagan cult ceremony. He exhorts the community to follow the example of Jesus, an example shown them also by Paul and his companions: ‘Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his brother or sister’ (1Corinthians 10:24).

Paul speaks of the unity that should characterize the community, a unity based on the presence in the community and in each of its members of the one God, the one Christ, and the one Spirit (see 1Corinthians 12:4-6). Paul is concerned about the insensitivity of the richer members towards the poorer ones, even when they come together to celebrate the Lord’s Supper – something that should bring the members of the community to a profound harmony, based on the presence of the Risen Christ, nourishing them as his Body.

He speaks of the central place of love in the life of the community. He wrote to the Galatians that ‘the only thing that counts is faith working through love’ (Galatians 5:6). Reflecting on the love of God as seen in Jesus, Paul writes:

Love never stops caring (μακροθυμέω);
love acts always in a kind way (χρηστεύομαι);
love does not act out of jealousy or envy (ζηλω);
love does not boast (περπερεύομαι); or behave arrogantly (φυσιοῶ);
Love does not behave indecently (ἀσχημονέω) or insist on (ζητέω) its own way.
Love does not give way to irritation (παροξύνω); or brood over (λογίζομαι) wrongs (κακός);
Love takes no pleasure in wrongdoing (ἀδικία), but rejoices (συγχαίρω) in the truth (ἀληθεια).
Love has space enough to hold and to bear (στέγω) everything and everyone
love believes (πιστεύω) all things, hopes (ελπίζω) all things,
and endures (ὑπομένω) whatever comes.
Love does not come to an end (πίπτω).

Paul uses verbs throughout and in the present tense. He is not listing various qualities that pertain to love. In true Semitic style he is telling us what love does.

‘Love never stops caring’ (makrothuméo). Makrothumía is listed by Paul among the fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). The focus is on our sharing in God’s magnanimous love by persevering in doing

good and not allowing ourselves to be put off by opposition or suffering. It is often translated 'slow to anger'. This, however, is a negative way of rendering something which is very positive. 'Long-suffering' is better. It features as a description of the Lord in the creedal statement found in Exodus 34:6 and repeated in Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:8, Nehemiah 9:17, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2. It is a sharing in the passionate and persistent caring of God that is revealed most persuasively in Jesus 'loving me and giving himself for me' (Galatians 2:20).

'Love acts always in a kind way' (chrēsteuomai). This is also listed by Paul as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Whatever gifts of grace we may or may not have been given by the Spirit, the more excellent way is the way of love, which can be recognised by the kindness with which we treat others:

'Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you' (Ephesians 4:32).

Through the gift of love we share in the kindness of God (see Romans 2:4). God is frequently spoken of as 'kind' (chrēstos), particularly in the psalms (for example, Psalm 25:8). It is this same picture of God which is given us by Jesus, notably in his description of the way in which the father welcomed home his wayward son: 'While he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him' (Luke 15:20). It is this same compassionate and persistent love that Jesus himself manifested in the way he lived and in the way he died. It is a gift to us from the heart of Jesus pierced on the cross (John 19:34). This is the gift of the Spirit, the fountain of living water which flows from Jesus' breast (John 7:38).

Having described the love of which he is speaking in terms characteristic of the love of God revealed in Jesus, Paul goes on to say what love is not. Again he uses verbs, because he wants to point to what love does not do. His description is relevant to the way the Corinthian community has been behaving.

'Love does not act out of jealousy or envy'. The Greek verb zēloō can be used positively or negatively, depending on which direction one's zeal takes. In fact Paul has just used it in a positive sense when he encouraged the Corinthians to 'strive for the greater gifts' (12:31). Here Paul is directing his criticism against those in Corinth who have what they consider important spiritual gifts and who apply their zeal in preventing others from sharing in them (hence 'jealous'). On the other side, Paul is also critical of those who have their heart set on having these 'spiritual gifts' that give a person a certain prominence in the community, and who apply their zeal to acquiring them (hence 'envious'). Paul has already accused the community of harbouring this vice (see 3:3), which he has listed elsewhere as one of the 'works of the flesh' (Galatians 5:20), and so as contrary to the fruits of the Spirit.

'Love does not boast' (perpereuomai) This verb occurs only here in the New Testament, though Paul has often had occasion in this letter to criticise those who are boasting of their gifts.

'Love does not behave arrogantly' (phusioō). Paul has already criticised the Corinthians a number of times for being arrogant (4:6; 4:18-19; 5:2; 8:1).

'Love does not behave indecently'. As used in this letter, the connotations of 'decent' are sexual (7:36; 12:23). There is a modesty, a tenderness and a delicacy which is proper to love in its sexual expression (see 1Corinthians 6:12-20).

Love does not insist on its own way'. According to Paul, it is because the Jews sought miracles, wanting proofs of divine power that satisfied their expectations, that they found the cross a scandal (1:22-23). It is because people were concentrating their attention on changing their state of life that they were failing to give unhindered devotion to the Lord (7:27). We are reminded of Paul's earlier admonition: 'Do not seek

your own advantage, but that of the other'(10:24).

While neither 'giving way to irritation' nor 'brooding over wrongs occurs elsewhere in this letter, it is not difficult to imagine the behaviour of those in whom these feelings were aroused as they saw their freedom to behave as they wished being criticised by others in the community. We can imagine the feelings of irritation and resentment which some experienced at not being able to take people to court (6:1-8), or behave sexually as they wished (6:12-20), or divorce (7:10-16), or eat meat offered to idols (8:1ff), or wear any kind of hair style they wished (11:2-16), or dine well with their friends at the Lord's supper (11:17ff). Nor is it difficult to imagine similar feelings being aroused in those who were pressured into eating meat against their conscience, or who came to the assembly only to find themselves humiliated.

Love 'takes no pleasure in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.' We think of Paul's statement to the Thessalonians about those who 'have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness' (2Thessalonians 2:12). The truth, as always in Paul, refers to the ultimate reality of God as revealed in Christ on the cross. True love does not indulge in behaviour that is contrary to God's will (5:8), but only such as radiates the reality of God.

'Love has space enough to hold and to bear everything and everyone'. The long paraphrase is based on two facts. The first is that the Greek *panta* is not limited to things. The second is that the Greek verb *stegō* derives from the word for 'roof' (Greek: *stegō*), hence the connotation of space and of containing. Love is about having space in one's heart, space for people, space to hold problems, disappointments and pain, as well as joys, hopes and dreams. Paul is thinking of the heart of God 'from whom are all things, and for whom we exist'(8:6). He is thinking of the heart of Christ 'through whom are all things and through whom we exist'(8:6). Their crucified Lord has space in his heart for all the members of the Corinthian community 'together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours' (1:2). He has space in his heart for the whole human race for which he offered his life (1:13; see also 9:2).

Love 'believes all things'. Paul continues to speak of the close union of love and faith (Galatians 5:6; 5:22; 1Thessalonians 1:3; 3:6; 5:8; 2Thessalonians 1:3). To believe is to be open to God's self-revelation, to accept what we come to know when we listen to God, and to act accordingly. God knows every one and every thing with the knowledge of one who loves. In other words, God continually believes in us and in our possibilities for good. God respects our freedom, but he cares passionately enough for us to be 'angry' with us (see 1Thessalonians 1:10), and to persist in drawing us, through the realities of our life, to him and to each other. To this end he offers us the possibility of repentance when we fail, and believes in our capacity to be converted and to live. For us, too, believing and loving are inseparable.

Love 'hopes all things'. The word 'hope' occurs in 9:10. It is linked closely with faith and love also in Galatians 5:5-6 and 1Thessalonians 1:3 and 5:8. One who loves is attentive to present communion with the one loved. But the present moment is not static or isolated; rather, it points to and opens up a future communion for which we long, and to which we are called. Our present union encourages us to leave the future confidently in the hands of him in whom we have placed our trust.

Love 'endures all things'. This was a central theme in Paul's Thessalonian correspondence where a major concern was persecution (2Thessalonians 1:4; 3:5). Endurance is linked with faith, hope and love in 1Thessalonians 1:3. Paul is speaking, for the only time in this letter to the community in Corinth, of the ability to remain faithful to love in the midst of opposition. The supreme example of this is Jesus on the cross.

'Love never ends'.

Paul goes on to exhort the members of the community: ‘Let all that you do be done in love’ (1Corinthians 16:14), and to reject the opinion of those who oppose women speaking in the assembly (see 1Corinthians 14:33-36).

It is typical of Paul to speak of the holiness of the Christian community, that is, of the communion with the all-holy God as the foundation of their community and personal life (see 3:7; 6:19; 7:14; 7:34; 16:20). Holiness speaks of the separation of the community from the ‘outside world’. The community is not meant to be isolated, but it is special.

Letter to the Colossians (with a special focus on 3:5-17)

It was probably while he was in Ephesus that Paul wrote a letter to the Christian community in Colossae, a town about 180kms east of Ephesus in the upper Lycus valley. The community was founded by Epaphras, one of Paul’s students. Paul had heard that some very strange ideas were circulating in the area and he wrote to support them in their faith by presenting Christ as the one in whom they should place all their faith, hope and love (see Colossians 1:4-5): ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’ (Colossians 1:27). It matters how they live. Paul prays:

‘that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light’ (Colossians 1:10-12).

The strength to live a Christian life comes, not from themselves, but ‘from his glorious power’.

‘As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving’ (Colossians 2:6-7).

In 3:5-9 he catalogues vices that they should ‘put to death’ (3:5). He begins, as is his custom, with sexual sins:

‘Put to death whatever in you is earthly: fornication (πορνεία), impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), passion (πάθος), evil desire (επιθυμία κακή), and greed (πλεονεξία) – which is idolatry (ειδωλολατρία)’(Colossians 3:5).

We have seen the parallel list in Galatians 5:19, and it is typical of the catalogues of the moral philosophers of the day. ‘Greed’ speaks of ruthless aggression, which can be expressed in sexual violence – which may account for its presence here. Paul goes on to say:

‘These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things – wrath (ὀργή), anger (θυμός), malice (κακία), slander (βλασφημία), and filthy language (αισχρολογία). Do not lie (ψεύδομαι) to one another’(Colossians 3:7-9).

Apart from ‘anger’ (see Galatians 5:20), this is the first time we have met any of these vices in Paul’s catalogues. Once again they were a commonplace in contemporary lists of vices. What is special to Paul is found in the words that follow. They provide the motive for their disciplining themselves to reject such behaviour from their lives:

‘seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!’(3:9-11).

Already in his Letter to the Galatians Paul has explained what the new clothing is that they put on when they were baptized into the Christian community: ‘You who were baptized in Christ have clothed yourself with Christ’ (Galatians 3:27). Paul repeats here what he said to the Galatians: ‘There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:18). In joining the Christian community they have become ‘a new self’, and the self is ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’ (Colossians 1:27).

Paul goes on to speak, not of virtues that they should acquire (as one might find in the Stoic manuals of the day) but of the qualities of Christ that they have been clothed in:

‘As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion (σπλάγχνα οίκτιμους; compassionate feelings that find expression in acts of mercy), kindness (χρηστότης), humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη), gentleness (πραΰτης), and long suffering (μακροθυμία)’ (Colossians 3:12).

‘Compassion’ was one of the qualities that characterized Jesus. Jesus was moved with compassion when he met the leper (see Mark 1:41), when he saw the crowd of dejected people (see Mark 6:24; 8:2), and when he met the widow on her way to bury her only child (see Luke 7:13). Jesus stressed the need for compassion in his parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33), and in his parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:20). We recall Jesus’ plea: ‘Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate’ (Luke 6:36). ‘Kindness’, ‘gentleness’ and ‘patience’ were listed by Paul among the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

This is the first time Paul has spoken of ‘humility’. The Greek *tapeinophrosunē* denotes ‘thinking of oneself as being low [*tapeinós*]’. In ordinary Greek usage outside the Bible ‘being in a low state’ is considered undesirable. To be reduced to such a state by people or by the gods is to suffer an evil fate. At the same time, since in relation to the gods one is necessarily ‘low’, to refuse to accept our lowly condition is to fall into the vice of pride. To accept one’s low position in relation to the gods, and even in relation to other people when fate has so willed, is considered sensible and virtuous.

The Greek Old Testament mirrors non-Biblical Greek, with one important qualification, which reflects Israel’s understanding of itself as a religious people born out of the Exodus event. Central to Israel’s self-understanding is that God has redeemed them from their ‘low’ condition in Egypt. Being ‘low’ has no value in itself, but it does attract God’s compassionate love, and it does hold out hope for redemption. The following text from Isaiah is typical: ‘Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his lowly ones [*tapeinos*]’ (Isaiah 49:13). Sirach recommends lowering oneself before God: ‘They who fear the Lord keep their hearts prepared and *bow down their souls in his presence*’ (Sirach 2:17; see also 7:17; 18:21).

Greek moral philosophy, outside the Bible, has no place for ‘*thinking* of oneself as low’. The word translated ‘humility’ in our text (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) does not occur prior to Paul. Shortly after him we find it being used by Plutarch, Epictetus and Josephus, but always as a vice, never as a virtue. For them it means ‘faint-hearted’, ‘small-minded’, or ‘mean-spirited’. It is the equivalent of having a low self-esteem, and it indicates a failure to exercise the greatness of soul (*megalopsuchía*) that is so important for the virtuous person who aspires to everything that is considered noble (on *megalopsuchía* see Diogenes Laertius VII, 128; Aristotle Nic. Eth. IV, iii) and on *megalophrosunē* see Plutarch VII, 523D).

In the Greek Old Testament the related adjective [*tapeinóphrōn*] occurs once: ‘A person’s pride will bring humiliation, but one who is lowly in spirit will obtain honour’ (Proverbs 29:23). The related verb (*tapeinophronéō*) also occurs only once in the Greek Old Testament, in a text which prepares us for its use in the New Testament: ‘O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy

myself with things too great and too marvellous for me. But I have calmed [The Greek reads: 'I think of myself humbly'] and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and for evermore' (Psalm 131).

The New Testament, like Sirach, calls upon people to 'lower themselves' before God. Recall the statement of Jesus: 'All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble [*tapeinóō*] themselves will be exalted' (Matthew 23:12; compare James 4: 10; 1Peter 5:5-6). The following scene from the Gospel recalls Psalm 131: 'At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"' (Matthew 18:1-4). The little child is offered as a symbol of humility for it beautifully captures Jesus' own childlike trust in the God whom he calls 'Abba! (Father)' He wants his disciples to have a heart that is humble like his (Matthew 11:29). Because Jesus looked up to God in loving trust, he was able to look up to everyone, delighting in people with the delight that belongs to the innocence of childhood and experiencing it as a privilege to serve them.

All this provides the background to the virtue that appears for the first time in Greek in Paul. 'Thinking of oneself as low' (or 'humility') is an attitude of mind and heart that recognises oneself as God's child, sharing the life of his Son, and therefore as living in total dependence on God. The humble person delights in this dependence, knowing that God is a Father and can be absolutely counted on as a source of life, love and hope.

In the Greek and Roman world it was considered a virtue to recognise one's low position in regard to the gods; it was right not to exaggerate one's own importance or to strive beyond one's fate. But the self held a central place in their ethics, for they thought of their individual nature as sharing in the divinity. The divine in each person was thought of as identified with the self. It was important, therefore, to recognise and respect one's self, and not to think of oneself in a servile way.

For the Christian the divine Spirit which sanctifies the self is not identical with it but is the Spirit of Christ: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Galatians 2:20). To know how to obey the divine will, Christians do not look to their own nature and strive to act accordingly. Rather, they listen attentively to the call of the Lord, and strive to be obedient to one in whose wisdom and love they trust.

The highest freedom experienced by disciples of Christ is to be his slave, to allow him to live in them and to find in the freedom given by Christ an opportunity to be 'through love, slaves of one another' (Galatians 5:13). Christians experience a radical and liberating change of perspective: 'If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation' (2Corinthians 5:17).

In this new creature, humility is a basic virtue. Everything now is possible, not to the one who is most self-sufficient, but 'for one who believes' (Mark 9:24). The self is no less important, but perfection for the self is a flowering of the gifts of the Spirit, and the way to this perfection is in self-giving, after the example of Jesus, and by the power of his Spirit. 'Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it' (Luke 17:33). Humility as a Christian virtue is a sharing in the humility of Jesus, the child of God, and in the intimacy of his trust in his Father.

Paul makes no attempt to define humility. He points to Jesus. This is no natural law ethic. The virtue Paul recommends is realisable because Christ is living in him and in the Christians of Colossae. It cannot be argued to from reason. Jesus was humble and he offers us a share in his virtue, and, if we are in communion with Jesus we can share in his humility. As he wrote earlier in the letter: 'You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received – Jesus the Lord. You must be rooted in him, built on

him' (Colossians 2:6-7).

He wants them to let this special trusting dependence of Christ on his Father find expression in their lives too. Then they would have no difficulty in looking up to others, delighting in their gifts, looking after their interests. Humility for a disciple of Christ has nothing to do with belittling self. It is the recognition of oneself as a child of God and a trust that one's self will be created by God's love.

Paul continues his teaching of the 'clothing' that they were given when they were baptised into the Christian community: clothing for the new self that they became when they 'put on Christ':

'Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive (χαρίζομαι) each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him' (Colossians 3:13-17).

Paul is not suggesting that the Christians in Colossae model themselves on Christ 'from the outside'. It is not a matter of their becoming *like* Christ – certainly not by virtue of their own striving. Rather, they are to allow the life of Christ to bear fruit in their lives. Verse fourteen speaks of 'love' and verse fifteen of 'peace'. Both of these are listed as fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. It is in love that 'we have come to fullness in him' (Colossians 2:10). It is love that informs all the other virtues, giving them that special quality that identifies them as Christian. It is in experiencing our love (the outer garment that people first see) that others come to experience, through us, the love of Christ. Through the gift of peace, we experience the 'fullness' of the risen Christ and the harmony of all the various energies of our mind, heart and body. Furthermore, this personal 'peace' is not something individual. It comes through belonging to his body, the church (see Colossians 1:18). It is a gift mediated through the community and which, in turn, builds the community.

Paul's list comes to a climax with the virtue of 'thanksgiving', which permeates verses fifteen to seventeen. He knows that our mutual love must flow from our prayer and be an expression of our communion with God. In verse sixteen, the words 'teach', 'admonish' and 'sing' indicate different ways in which Christ speaks to us through each other. Our teaching and admonishing will be 'wise' only if it is the teaching and admonishing of Christ that we mediate to each other (see Colossians 1:9).

Notice how Paul concludes this portrait of the Christian life by referring to communal prayer (see Colossians 1:12), to doing 'everything in the name of the Lord Jesus', and, once again, to gratitude. There is nothing individualistic about this portrait, nor is Paul exhorting the Colossian Christians to Stoic virtue acquired by self-motivated discipline. He is exhorting them to welcome and be faithful to the life given them in the community of the church by the risen Christ.

The followers of Epicurus who joined the Christian community would have found such passages highly attractive. However, in being attracted to the Christian community, and through their experience within the community, they would have found themselves challenged both to humility and to a new conception of God, free from the kinds of fears that caused Epicurus himself to see popular religion as the main source of fear and so of unhappiness. The God revealed in Jesus is a God who manifested in Jesus the beautiful qualities that Paul expresses in this passage. Trust in the God of Jesus and humility, are inseparable. We are lowly. It is only because, being lowly we know we are loved, that we can afford not to strive to rise above our condition by the attaining of a self-sufficient virtuous life. People needed Jesus to show them

another way, a way rooted in love and built on love, that enables people to be true to who they are while experiencing the love of God, while growing into the virtues of Jesus.

Likewise, the Stoics who joined the Christian community would have been attracted by the peace, the love, and the joy that were apparent in the community. Here was a community that crossed tribal and social boundaries, and preached the one God for all, a God of love. For them, too, it is humility that highlights the conversion that was necessary for them, for it required a shift in the basis of their ethical system, from self to God, from logic to grace.

The idea of 'grace' was not new to the Stoics. Aristotle had defined it as the giving of a gift without expectation of a return, simply out of the generosity of heart of the giver (see *Rhet.* I, i, 7). What was new about Christianity was Jesus, and the fact that the God he revealed was identified as the giver of 'grace'. It is not surprising that Christianity had such an appeal to the Greeks, searching as they were for meaning, attempting to find a way of life that transcended geographical boundaries, and that respected the powerful religious experiences that were the common lot of mankind, while offering the love that could purify them.

Second Letter to the Corinthians (with a special focus on 6:4-7 and 12:20-21)

In appealing to the community in Corinth Paul reminds them of the way he behaved when among them:

'As servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance (ὑπομονή) ... by purity (ἀγνότης), knowledge (γνώσις), long suffering (μακροθυμία), kindness (χρηστότης), in the Holy Spirit (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ), in genuine love (ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ), in truthful speech (ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας), in the power of God (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ); with the weapons of righteousness (δικαιοσύνη)' (2Corinthians 6:4-7).

Paul is exhorting them to follow his example. He speaks of his 'endurance'. This is a virtue spoken of by Aristotle (*Eud. Eth.* III,I, 5). Cicero uses *patientia* and *perseverantia* to capture its meaning in Latin (*De Inven.* I, i, 54). Paul then lists 'purity'. This follows from the presence of the Holy Spirit, and speaks of reverence and awe as well as moral purity.

Paul goes on to speak of 'knowledge', something that was central to all the schools of philosophy at the time (see Aristotle, *Eud. Eth.* VII, xii, 6). The Epicureans considered the unenlightened as morally diseased (see Lucretius *De Rer. Nat.* VI, 1ff; Cicero *De Fin* I, xviii, 59ff). Paul is referring especially to his knowledge of God in Christ (see 2Corinthians 2:14).

'Patience' and 'kindness' are the two primary qualities of divine love as listed by Paul in his earlier letter to the community (1Corinthians 13:4). They are also fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22) who empowers Paul's ministry (see 2Corinthians 3:8). Paul speaks of being 'in the Holy Spirit' and of living 'in genuine love'. He reminds them that what he said to them was always 'in truth', what he will call later 'the truth of Christ' (2Corinthians 11:10). This is 'the truth of the gospel' (Galatians 2:5; 2:14).

The Corinthians have experienced 'the power of God' in Paul's ministry because of the action of the Spirit. Paul has carried out his commission, as they well know, because of the communion that he experiences with God. This is his 'righteousness'. Righteousness is one of the four cardinal virtues for the Greeks (see Aristotle *Nic. Eth.* V). For the Epicureans 'righteousness' had nothing to do with the gods. The righteous person was one who ordered his behaviour rationally so as to achieve the greatest tranquillity. For the Stoics 'righteousness' was the virtue by which a person acted according to his nature, which in turn linked him with the divine cosmos. For Paul 'righteousness' is essentially related to God; and not a God argued to from first principles, or discovered by careful observation and rational logical deduction. For Paul, God

is the one who acts in history, significantly in the Exodus, and now in Jesus. God is as God has revealed himself to be. God is 'righteous' in that God always acts as he really is. In Jesus God revealed himself to be a God who forgives, a God who wants people 'to live and live to the full' (John 10:10). It is this that gives meaning and direction to our lives. If we open ourselves to grace we can live in communion with God, and so in accordance with God's will. Being 'righteous' for us is possible only by 'the power of God, and this power is there for us 'in the Holy Spirit'. It is not something we can achieve from our own inner resources. As he wrote in an earlier letter: Christ Jesus is our righteousness' (1Corinthians 1:30). 'Endurance', too, is a sharing in the 'endurance of Christ' (2Thessalonians 3:5).

Paul makes no attempt to create a systematic ethic. His desire is to bring people to know Christ through the communion of love that is the Christian community. It is in the community (which he refers to as the Body of Christ) that we experience virtue, and so know it as a gift from God and our sharing in the life of Jesus.

Judgment of value for the Greeks rested on reason. Paul is clearly appealing to something that transcends reason. His key criterion is not conformity to human nature. He appeals to the Corinthians to 'examine yourselves to make sure you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you acknowledge that Jesus Christ is in you' (2Corinthians 13:5). Salvation, for Paul, comes through an act of God's gracious love. It is seen in Jesus and the invitation God gives through Jesus for us to live by the same divine Spirit that inspired and gave life to Jesus. Morality for Paul is the fruit of this saving love. It is impossible without this love. Paul does not argue for the logic of his positions, or attempt to demonstrate that they are inherently consistent. He does not present Christian moral conduct as something to be lived by anyone who might choose to do so, no matter how rational and good willed they might be. Paul invites people to faith, he invites them into the Christian community, he shows what is possible for a Christian. He points to behaviour that is inconsistent with living as a disciple of Jesus. For himself he prays, not for greater rationality, but that 'the power of Christ may stay over me' (2Corinthians 12:9).

In what appears to be a later letter, which was joined to 2Corinthians 1-9 as 2Corinthians 10-13, Paul writes:

'I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarrelling (ἔρις), jealousy (ζήλος), angry outbursts (θυμοί), selfishness (επιθεία), slander (καταλαλιά), gossip (ψιθυρισμός), conceit (φυσιώσις), and disorder (ἀκαταστασία). I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity (ἀκαθαρσία), sexual immorality (πορνεία), and licentiousness (ἀσελγεία) that they have practised' (2Corinthians 12:20-21).

All these vices can be found listed in the catalogues of moralists of the day. Paul lists quarrelling, jealousy, angry outbursts, and selfishness, and in the same order, in Galatians 5:20. Slander, gossip, and conceit, occur only here. He spoke of disorder in 1Corinthians 14:33 and 2Corinthians 6:5, and listed impurity, sexual immorality and licentiousness in Galatians 5:19 (see also Colossians 3:5). He has already spoken about 'disorder' (see 1Corinthians 14:33

Letter to the Romans (with special reference to 1:18-32 and chapters 12-15)

Paul spent the winter of 56-57AD in Corinth in the house of Gaius (see Romans 16:23). He felt called to leave the Christian communities in the East and, after visiting Jerusalem, to head for Rome and from Rome to Spain (see Romans 15:24). While waiting for the sailing season to open he composed a letter to

the communities in Rome in which he set out the essential dimensions of the gospel he was proclaiming. He speaks of his ‘eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome’ (Romans 1:15). In other letters he was addressing situations with which he was familiar, and his teaching on behaviour was, to some extent, shaped by the needs of the community to which he was writing. His teaching in this letter is more theoretical.

1. Romans 1:18-32

Paul’s aim is to highlight the amazing grace of God that has come into the world in Jesus. He begins by describing the moral depravity of the world, the depravity from which everyone needs to be freed. In describing the condition of those who fail to ‘honour God or give thanks to him’ (Romans 1:21), Paul’s focus is not so much on sin as on the way sin affects our relationship with God. He speaks first of impurity, driven as people are by ‘the lusts of their heart’ and to ‘degrading their bodies among themselves’. When he comes to give details of their ‘degrading passions’ (πάθη ἀτιμίας; Romans 1:36) he writes:

‘Their women exchanged natural intercourse (φυσικός χρῆσις) for unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν), and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion (ὀρέξις) for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind (ἄδόκιμος νοῦς) and to things that should not be done (καθήκοντα)’ (Romans 1:26-28).

For a reflection on Paul’s teaching on homosexual behaviour see the commentary earlier on 1 Corinthians 6:9. As explained there we have to read Paul’s statement here with great care. Here he focuses on ‘unnatural’ homosexual behavior because it underlines the disorder created in the human condition by the suppression of truth and failure to acknowledge God. The expression ‘natural intercourse’ does not occur again in the New Testament, and is not used in the Septuagint. The same is true of the expression ‘unnatural’ (para phusin). The distinction between natural and unnatural behaviour comes from Stoic moral philosophy, as do the expressions ‘debased mind’ and the technical Stoic expression ‘things that should not be done’. Paul is borrowing these expressions from contemporary moralists (see Seneca lxxxii, 9).

For Seneca, reason demands of man that he ‘live in accordance with his own nature’ (xli.9). In his *kuriiai doxai*, Epicurus tells his disciples to ‘refer each of your actions to the end prescribed by nature’ (see Diogenes Laertius X, 148). Diogenes Laertius tells us that Zeno was the first to ‘designate as the end, life in agreement with nature ... which is the same as a virtuous life’ (D.L. VII, 87). Cicero says that we should be ‘content with the bounds nature has set’ (*De Fin.* xiii, 44; see also III, vii, 26 and III, ix, 31; see also Lucretius II, 61).

In light of human intelligence, creativity, and decision-making, how does one attempt to describe the limits of ‘human nature’? Furthermore, it is one thing to ask ‘What is man?’ It is another to ask ‘Who is this man?’ There is a tension between ‘nature’ and ‘freedom’. Once you have identified the ‘nature’ of a metal, there is little else to say. We can replace one piece of metal with another. We cannot do this with people. Identifying someone as human tells us little about a particular person. We are what we have become as a result of our decisions, including how we have responded to the decisions others have made in regard to us. Furthermore, in the light of the humanity of Jesus, Paul is not interested in natural law ethics, but in how we should let Jesus live in us, how we should ‘put on Christ’.

For Seneca we are not evil by nature: ‘You are mistaken if you suppose that our faults are inborn in us; they have come from without, having been heaped upon us. Hence, by receiving frequent admonitions, we

can reject the opinions that din about our ears. Nature does not ally us with any vice; she produced us in health and freedom' (xciv, 55-56). At the same time 'evil is within us, situated in our very vitals. For that reason we attain soundness with difficulty, because we do not know that we are diseased' (1, 5; also civ, 21). 'There is no one to whom a good mind comes before an evil one. It is the evil mind that gets first hold of all of us. Learning virtue means unlearning vice' (1, 7). 'There are two reasons why we go astray: either there is in the soul an evil quality which has been brought about by wrong opinions, or, even if not possessed by false ideas, the soul is prone to falsehood and rapidly corrupted by some outward appearance which attracts it in the wrong direction. For this reason it is our duty either to treat carefully the diseased mind and free it from faults, or to take possession of the mind when it is still unoccupied and yet inclined to what is evil. Both these results can be attained by the main teachings of philosophy' (xciv, 13; see also lxxv, 28). 'There is an idea of good conduct present subconsciously in souls which have been led even into the most depraved ways. We are not ignorant of what evil is, but indifferent' (xcvii, 12; compare Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, III, xxxv, 85; and Plutarch VI, 476E).

According to Seneca, the main reason for us not being free from folly is 'because we do not combat it strongly enough, because we do not struggle towards salvation with all our might; and secondly, because we do not put sufficient trust in the discoveries of the wise, and do not drink in their words with open hearts' (lix, 9). Seneca quotes Epicurus as stating that 'the beginning of salvation is knowledge of sin' (xxviii, 9; see also xxxi, 6). Paul also wants us to know sin, but he saw that this knowledge cannot help without knowing the God of Jesus.

Let us turn now from general considerations of 'natural law ethics' in Greek moral writing, to the specific vices mentioned by Paul, for Seneca, too, was concerned with the unnatural sexual vices as he found them in Rome. Speaking of women he writes: 'In rivaling male indulgences, they have also rivaled the ills to which men are heirs ... They devise the most impossible varieties of unchastity, and in the company of men they play the part of men ... Because of their vices, women have ceased to deserve the privileges of their sex; they have put off their womanly nature and are therefore condemned to suffer the diseases of men' (xcv, 21). In the same letter he goes on to describe the 'troops of luckless boys' and the 'shameful treatment' they receive, and the 'catamites'.

Paul follows with a list of vices that is typical of the lists found in Greek or Jewish moral manuals of the day. He begins with a list of very general ethical terms:

'They were filled with every kind of unrighteousness (ἀδικία), wickedness (πονηρία), covetousness (πλεονεξία), malice (κακία)' (Romans 1:29).

'Covetousness' is one of the expressions of the corrupted human heart that we find listed in Mark 7:22. Paul included it in the list of vices in Colossians 3:5. It speaks of a ruthless, aggressive, grasping at what we do not have, just so as to have more. It includes using other people to satisfy our lust for possession and power. It is well described in the Letter to the Ephesians: 'They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, *greedy* to practise every kind of impurity' (Ephesians 4:19). Jesus warns against it: 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of *greed*; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions' (Luke 12:15). Paul continues his description of the depraved person:

'full of envy (φθόνος), murder (φόνος), strife (ἔρις), deceit (δόλος), craftiness (κακοηθεία), they are gossips (ψιθυριστής), slanderers (κατάλαλος), God-haters (θεοστυγής), insolent (ὕβριστής), haughty (ὕπερηφάνος), boastful (ἀλαζων), inventors of evil (εφευρετής κακῶν), rebellious (ἀπειθής) toward parents, foolish (ἄσυνέτος), faithless (ἄσυνθέτος), heartless (ἄστόργος), lacking in mercy (ἀνελεήμων)' (Romans 1:29-31).

Paul listed ‘envy’ and ‘strife’ in the catalogue of vices in Galatians 5:20-21. This is the first time we have met the rest of the vices listed here. ‘Murder’ and ‘deceit’ are listed in Mark’s catalogue of vices (see Mark 7:21-22). A related vice is ‘craftiness’ - a word that occurs only here in the New Testament. The word ‘gossips’ too, occurs only here in the New Testament, as do, ‘slanderers’ and ‘God-haters’: those who choose behaviour which rejects God’s will.

The ‘insolent’ are those who act in ways that have no regard for proper order. Insolence shows itself in wanton acts of contempt for others. The ‘haughty’ are those who think of themselves as superior to others, such that they do not need to have any regard for other people’s opinion or welfare. To be haughty (‘proud’, ‘arrogant’) is to be the opposite of humble. A stern warning is contained in the prayer of Mary: ‘He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the *proud* in the thoughts of their hearts’ (Luke 1:51). The pretentious, arrogant and ‘boastful’ person is a type often condemned in moral writings of the day. We might listen as the unrighteous, upon realising their folly, cry:

‘It was we who strayed from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not shine on us, and the sun did not rise upon us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us?’ (Wisdom 5:6-8).

‘Faithless’ is the exact opposite of the kind of tranquillity aspired to by both the Epicureans and the Stoics. It describes a person who lacks not only a kind of personal integration, but who disturbs peace wherever he finds it. The final vice in Paul’s list, ‘lacking in mercy’ (ἀνελεήμων) is the only one that would have surprised a Greek moralist. For many Greeks ‘mercy’ (έλεος) was considered a vice of the ‘small-minded’ (see Seneca *De Clem* ii, 6 and *Tusc.* iv, 8, 18). They favoured ‘clemency’ (επιεικεία) – a word used by Paul to speak of Christ (see 2Corinthians 10:1). Without knowing Jesus how could they know of the transforming power of divine grace that purifies and refreshes the repentant sinner, giving new life where death once reigned. Paul sees ‘mercy’ as the power of love to renew and give life.

2. Romans 12-15

Paul’s gospel is about the God revealed by Jesus: a righteous God who wants to save. We cannot achieve salvation by our own efforts. What is required of us is that we open our hearts to welcome God’s offer and let grace purify our lives. Faith for Paul, as for the whole of the Jewish tradition, is about the way we think. It is about what we know concerning God and ourselves in relation to God from God’s self-revelation in creation and in human history, and, in a special way, in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. Faith is about our attitudes, and the choices that we make in our relationships with each other because of what God has revealed. Paul looks at this matter in every one of his Letters.

The whole of the last section of his Letter to the Romans (chapter 12 to 15) is devoted to Christian morality, and there is a sense in which we can say that everything in Romans 1-11 has been in view of what he writes in these final chapters. The reason for his writing in the first place will be discovered here, where it emerges that there are problems in the Christian community in Rome that endanger the very essence of the gospel. There are problems in the way that different groups are failing to ‘welcome one another just as Christ welcomed you’ (15:7). The problem is made even more serious in that it is affecting the relationship between Gentiles and Jews, both Christian and non-Christian. There is no issue that concerned Paul more than the issue of Jewish-Gentile communion in the one community of faith. He knew that the building and the maintenance of this communion was a matter of love, and it is to love that he now turns his attention.

In the first eleven chapters of his Letter to the Romans, Paul’s focus is on God’s righteousness, especially

on the way in which God has revealed his righteousness in Jesus. In chapters 12-15 he focuses on the righteousness that God has offered to us through our communion with his Son. Paul has insisted from the beginning that God's gift of salvation requires from us the free acceptance that he calls 'faith'. Now he wants to look at what faith looks like when it is real, and the kind of fruit which we should expect in the life of one who has what Paul calls 'the one thing that counts', namely, 'faith working through love' (Galatians 5:6). Everything Paul has written to this point has highlighted the central importance of faith. It is clear that faith involves an acceptance of grace from God; but, as he said in the introduction, and as he will repeat in the conclusion, it is an acceptance of grace with a view to obedience (Romans 1:5 and 16:26). Having attracted all to Jesus, and having shown what God is offering through Jesus, Paul now concentrates on the way of life that should characterize a disciple of Jesus.

In introducing the theme of his letter to the Roman communities, Paul included a quotation from the prophet Habakkuk: 'The one who is righteous will live by faith' (1:17). He wants now to examine what such a life involves. He has also said that what God has done for us in Jesus is so that 'we too might walk in newness of life' (6:4). He wants now to examine some key characteristics of this new way of life. If we truly have become 'slaves of righteousness' (6:18), how should we be living? Paul has demonstrated that righteousness is a divine gift, and that salvation comes through God's gracious love. He has kept Jesus before our eyes – his faith, his obedience, his life-giving and his love-giving. He has insisted that it is the Spirit of the risen Christ that is offered to all as his redeeming and saving gift, and he has invited all to be led by the same Spirit that inspired Jesus (8:14), the Spirit who makes such living possible. As he wrote to the Galatians: 'If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit' (Galatians 5:25).

Paul has spoken of his mission as one of bringing about the 'obedience of faith' (1:5). He has spoken of God's kindness as in view of 'leading you to repentance' (2:4). He has asked: 'How can we who died to sin go on living in it?' (6:2). He has told us that we were baptised so that 'we might walk in newness of life' (6:4). 'You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' (6:11). He has urged us: 'present your members to God as instruments of righteousness ... for you have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted' (6:13,17). We are to 'bear fruit for God' (7:4), 'serve in the new life of the Spirit' (7:6) and 'walk according to the Spirit' (8:4). He has assured us: 'If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live' (8:13). He is now ready to examine what this means. He exhorts the Christians in Rome:

'Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. It is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. If it is possible, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' (Romans 12:9-21).

After exhorting them to be good citizens (Romans 13:1-7), he reminds them that 'love is the fulfilling of the law' (Romans 13:10). He then lists the following vices:

'revelling (κώμος) and drunkenness (μέθη), debauchery (κοίτη) and licentiousness (ἀσελγεία), strife (ἔρις) and jealousy (ζήλος). Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the

flesh, to gratify its desires (ἐπιθυμία) (Romans 13:13-14).

Importantly, Paul exhorts the Christians, not to be more self-disciplined, but to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’. Morality is the fruit of God’s liberating love: it is Christ living in us. It is impossible to live a moral life free from sin without this gift, even with the law. The gift of ‘living for God in Christ Jesus’ is, however, offered to all, without distinction, Jew and Gentile alike. Paul does not argue like the Stoics for the logic of his positions, or attempt to show that they are inherently consistent. Nor does he present Christian morality as something that we can live by our own efforts so long as we are good-willed and rational. He invites people to faith. He invites people into the Christian community. He invites us to belong to Christ and to experience his indwelling Spirit. He shows what fruit can come from such a union, fruit that without such a union is quite impossible. He also points to behaviour that is inconsistent with living in the Spirit. His prayer is not for greater rationality and more responsible self-sufficiency, but that ‘the power of Christ’ (2Corinthians 12:9) may dwell in us so that our lives will be lives of ‘righteousness’.

Letter to the Ephesians (with special reference to 4:1-24)

This appears to be the Ephesian copy of a general letter written by Paul to the Christian communities in the East before he heads for Rome and a new mission in the West. In many ways it is Paul’s finest letter. Free of the need to respond to questions or to defend his gospel, Paul pours out his heart to those among whom he has lived and whom he loves.

After a hymn of praise to God for God’s providential design for the world to gather everyone into the Christian community, the body of Christ, Paul offers a prayer of gratitude and a plea that the non-Jewish world will embrace God’s gracious offer (Ephesians 1). In chapters 2 and 3 Paul outlines God’s plan, which is to unite Jews and Gentiles in living the life of Christ in the one church. He speaks of his commission to make this known, and he prays for all the members of the Christian community. Once again he offers praise to God. The knowledge that he wants the Christians to know is not a more accurate knowledge of the possibilities of human nature. Rather, it is ‘to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God’ (Ephesians 3:19).

In chapter four he stresses the importance of unity in the church. He speaks of the gifts that the Spirit has given to establish and support this unity, and the kind of life it requires of Christian disciples (4:1-16). They are to embrace ‘humility’ (ταπεινοφροσύνη), ‘gentleness’ (πραΰτης) and ‘long-suffering’ (μακροθυμία), ‘bearing with one another in love (ἀγάπη)’ (Ephesians 4:2). They are to ‘do the truth in love’, and so ‘grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ’ (Ephesians 4:15). He goes on:

‘You must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to uncontrolled self-gratification (ἀσελγεία), to the point of indulging in all kinds of impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) and greed (πλεονεξία)’ (Ephesians 4:17-19; see also Ephesians 5:3).

We have met Paul listing ‘uncontrolled self-gratification’ (‘licentiousness’), ‘impurity’ and ‘greed’ in other catalogues of vices. That morality concerns the ‘heart’ and not just external behavior is central to the teaching of the prophets. It is also central to the teaching of Jesus.

‘It is from within, from the human heart (καρδία), that evil intentions come: fornication (πορνεία), theft (κλοπή), murder (φόνος), adultery (μοιχεία), covetousness (πλεονεξία), wickedness (πονηρία), deceit (δόλος), licentiousness (ἀσέλγεια), envy (ὄφθαλμὸς πονηρός), slander (βλασφημία), haughtiness (ὑπερηφανία), folly (ἀφροσύνη). All these evil things come from

within, and they defile a person' (Mark 7:21-23).

For Paul, morality from the heart is possible because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (Romans 5:5; see 2Corinthians 1:22).

It is interesting to note that the equivalent list in Matthew 15:19 is considerably shorter. Matthew's list is limited to theft, murder and adultery (from the Decalogue, see Exodus 20:13-15), as well as fornication and slander. Fornication and licentiousness occur in the catalogue of vices in Galatians 5:19, and covetousness, wickedness, deceit, and haughtiness occur in the catalogue of vices in Romans 1:29-30. Envy (the evil eye) and folly are not listed in any other catalogue.

The importance of the heart was recognized within the Greek schools. Lucretius writes: 'A good life was impossible without a pure heart (*pectus*)' (*De Rer. Nat.* V, 18). Cicero also: 'Unrighteousness is to be avoided not simply on account of the disadvantages that result from being unrighteous, but even far more because when it dwells in man's heart (*anima*) it never suffers him to breathe freely or know a moment's rest' (*De Fin.* I, xvi, 53). And Seneca: 'If any vice rends your heart, cast it away from you; and if you cannot be rid of it in any other way, pluck out your heart also' (I, 13; compare Mark 9:43-48).

Paul goes on to speak of the kind of life that disciples of Jesus are committed to.

'That is not the way you learned Christ. Surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth (*ἀληθεία*) is in Jesus, to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts (*επιθυμία*), and to be renewed by the spiritual transformation of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in the righteousness (*δικαιοσύνη*) and respect for the sacred (*ὁσιότης*) which come from the truth (*ἀληθεία*)' (Ephesians 4:20-24).

Paul states the general principles that demand of his readers a different way of life to that just described. He reminds them of the gospel which they have heard (see 1:13). They have 'learned Christ'; that is to say, they have been taught to follow Jesus as his disciples. We 'learn Christ' by contemplating the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We should note that the Greek *mathētēs* ('disciple') comes from the verb *manthánō* ('learn'). Knowledge of Christ, in the sense already clarified – knowing him through communion in love (see 3:19) – is an essential condition for living a moral life as a disciple, just as knowing Christ is an essential condition for the harmonious growth of the church (see 4:13).

We should note that Paul has already put what he is saying here into a quite specific context. Christian morality can be understood only to the extent that we grasp the 'mystery' of the Gospel that we have been taught. A Christian moral life can be lived only 'in Christ', only as part of the Body of Christ in which we live, from which we receive, and to which we contribute. The section beginning with 4:17 was preceded by 4:1-16, and the context provided there is essential for a proper grasp of what Paul is now saying. The primary moral imperative, as Paul presents it, is to work for the building up of the church in love, for it is in this communion only, as part of the 'one new humanity' that Christ 'created in himself' (2:15), that we can truly learn to be disciples of Jesus.

Paul's words here remind us of what he wrote to the Romans: 'be transformed by the renewing of your minds' (Romans 12:2). There are close parallels with Colossians: 'You must get rid of all such things ... seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator' (Colossians 3:8-10). We must continue to contemplate Jesus: 'All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit' (2Corinthians 3:18).

Paul's moral exhortations continue to focus, not on disciplining ourselves to act according to our nature, but on the Spirit of Christ that we have received, and on being 'imitators of God' (or, as we read in the Second Letter of Peter 'sharing in the divine nature (2Peter 1:4).

'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness (πικρία) and wrath (θυμός) and anger (ὀργή) and wrangling (κραυγή) and slander (βλασφημία), together with all malice (κακία), and be kind (χρηστός) to one another, tenderhearted (εὐσπλαγχνος), forgiving (χαρίζομαι) one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love (ἀγάπη), as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But fornication (πορνεία) and impurity (ἀκαθαρσία) of any kind, or greed (πλεονεξία), must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene (αισχρότης), silly (μωρολογία), and vulgar (εὐτραπελία) talk; but instead, let there be thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία). Be sure of this, that no fornicator (πόρνος) or impure (ἀκάθαρτος) person, or one who is greedy (πλεονέκτης) (that is, an idolater (ειδωλολάτρης), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Ephesians 4:30 – 5:5).

Letter to the Philippians (with special reference to 2:1-5 and 4:8-9)

Writing from prison, probably in Rome 60-62AD, Paul addressed this letter to the Christian community in Philippi, the first community he visited in Macedonia some twelve or so years earlier. It is an especially affectionate letter in which he assures them: 'God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 1:8). He exhorts them to 'live as citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ' (Philippians 1:27), and goes on to write:

'If there is any appeal (παράκλησις) in Christ, any consolation (παραμύθιον) from love (ἀγάπη), any communion (κοινωνία) in the Spirit, any movements of compassion (σπλάγγχνα) and feelings of love (οικτιρμοί), make my joy (χαρά) complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one soul (σύμψυχοι) and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition (επιθεία). Do not strive after or seek to find your value in things that are worthless (κενοδοξία), but in humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) regard others above yourselves, so that everyone is not focused on themselves, but each is looking to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 2:1-5).

This goes beyond the training Paul received as a Jew, or the Stoic philosophy that he learned in Tarsus. It is a new basis for moral living, possible because of the gift of Jesus' mind, heart and Spirit. The 'compassion' he is speaking of is 'the compassion of Christ Jesus' (Philippians 1:8). No wonder he pleads with the Christians of Colossae: 'Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom by some secondhand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world instead of Christ' (Colossians 2:8). The righteousness that Paul lives is 'not a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through the faith of Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith' (Philippians 3:9). Sharing in Jesus' communion with God, the Christian shares in Jesus' faith, and it is this communion that is the basis of living a Christian life. Paul continues:

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true (ἀληθής), whatever inspires reverence (σεμνός), whatever is just (δίκαιος), whatever is pure (ἀγνός), whatever attracts to love (προσφιλής), whatever is commendable (εὐφημος), if there is any excellence (ἀρετή) and if there is anything worthy of praise, give consideration to these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and

received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you' (Philippians 4:8-9).

The best of Greek moral philosophers would have been delighted with Paul's exhortation here. 'True' speaks of what is real, what is not forgotten, not obscured by lies and pretence. Paul, of course, cannot speak of 'truth' without thinking of the God revealed by Jesus. He exhorts the Philippians to keep their attention fixed on whatever inspires a sense of God. Something is 'just' when it is in accordance with the will of God. As he wrote to the Romans: 'the one who is just will live by faith' (Romans 1:17; see Galatians 3:11). It is the faithfulness of God and God's gift to us of the 'faith of Christ' that makes possible living a life that is just. Something is 'pure' when it evokes a sense of the holy. Paul speaks of what brings love out in us. Something is 'commendable' when it does not give offence, but rather wins people over and evokes praise. 'Excellence' is the classical Greek word for 'virtue'.

Letter to Titus (with special reference to 3:1-3)

Paul's letter to Titus seems to have been written after his release from prison in Rome in 62AD. He is really writing to the communities in Crete in support of Titus's authority. Paul writes of the qualities required of the presbyters whom Titus is to appoint to lead the local communities. As God's steward appointed to supervise the community, the presbyter must be

'blameless (ἀνέγκλητος); he must not be arrogant (αὐθάδης) or quick-tempered (ὀργίλος) or addicted to wine (πάροινος) or violent (πλήκτης) or greedy for gain (αισχροκερδής); but he must be hospitable (φιλόξενος), a lover of goodness (φιλόγαθος), prudent (σώφρων), upright (δίκαιος), devout (ῥοῖος), and self-controlled (εγκρατής)' (Titus 1:7-8).

Paul goes on to instruct Titus on how to deal with those who were teaching error (Titus 1:10-16), he writes of the qualities that should characterise the older men (Titus 2:2), the older women (Titus 2:3-5), the younger men (Titus 2:6), and slaves (2:9-10).

Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as 'Saviour who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds' (Titus 2:14), and urges Titus to remind the Christians:

'to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient (πειθαρχέω), to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarrelling (ἀμάχος), to be gentle (επιεικής) and to show every courtesy (πραΰτης) to everyone' (Titus 3:1-2).

Paul's concern for good order mirrors his remarks to the communities in Rome (see Romans 13:1-7). In his Second Letter to the Corinthians he spoke of the 'courtesy and gentleness of Christ' (2Corinthians 10:1). Titus is to exhort the Christian communities to imitate Christ in these virtues, or rather, to let the courteous and gentle Christ live in them. He reminds them of the kinds of vices they were caught up in prior to their joining the Christian community:

'For we ourselves were once foolish (ἀνόητος), disobedient (ἄπειθής), led astray, slaves to various passions (επιθυμία) and pleasures (ἡδονή), passing our days in malice (κακία) and envy (φθόνος), despicable (στυγητός), hating one another' (Titus 3:3).

In view of Paul's accent in this letter on 'knowledge of the truth' (Titus 1:1), we are not surprised that he would begin his list with 'foolish'. When he used this word to reprimand the Galatians it was that they were giving in to the temptation to live under the security of the Torah rather than living by the Spirit of Jesus the crucified Christ (see Galatians 3:1-3). The Cretans, too, are in danger of being 'led astray' (see the warning given by Jesus, Matthew 24:10-12).

Instead of being, like Jesus, ‘slaves of God’ (Titus 1:1), they had been enslaved by the own impulses, ‘sold into slavery under sin’ (Romans 7:15). They had failed to experience true life because the seed of life was choked by their giving themselves up to ‘pleasures’ (see Luke 8:14). ‘Envy’ has a corrosive power to destroy trust and communion. The final vice ‘hating one another’ is the opposite of Christian love (ἀγάπη). We recall Jesus’ solemn words: ‘Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you’ (Luke 6:27).

First Letter to Timothy (with special reference to 1Timothy 1:9-11; 6:3-5 and 6:11)

Like his letter to Titus, this letter is not so much to Timothy as to the Christian communities in Asia. Paul is writing to support Timothy’s authority. Again, like his Letter to Titus, it appears to have written after Paul’s release from imprisonment in Rome, some time after 62AD.

Timothy has a special responsibility to correct anyone whose teaching is not in accordance with the gospel. As Paul states:

‘the aim of instruction is love (ἀγάπη) that comes from a pure heart (καρδία), a good conscience (συνειδήσις), and sincere faith (πίστις)’ (1Timothy 1:5).

Paul goes on to outline the purpose of the Torah:

‘The law is laid down not for the righteous (δίκαιος) but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the godless (ἀσεβής) and sinful, for the unholy (ἀνόσιος) and profane (βέβηλος), for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers (ἀνδροφόνος), fornicators (πόρνος), sodomites (ἀρσενοκοίτης), slave traders (ἀνδραποδιστής), liars (ψεύστης), perjurers (επίορκος), and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me’ (1Timothy 1:9-11).

In the above list Paul follows the pattern of the Decalogue, which begins by speaking of our relationship with God. Paul begins by speaking of the ‘godless’, the ‘unholy’, and the ‘profane’. The Decalogue goes on to speak of our relationships with each other. The fourth commandment requires that we ‘honour father and mother’ (Deuteronomy 5:16). Paul mentions the extreme opposite. Paul follows the Decalogue by listing murder and irresponsible heterosexual and homosexual behaviour. On ‘sodomites’ see out treatment of 1Corinthians 6:9. ‘Slave traders’ is an extreme form of disobeying the seventh commandment on stealing. The eighth commandment is against bearing false witness. Paul lists lying and perjury.

As a faithful Jew, Paul has a profound respect for the Torah: ‘the law is good’ (Romans 7:12, 16). It shows how God relates to us, and how we are to relate back to God. However, unlike ‘the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 8:2), it does not, of itself, liberate us from sin’s dominion; it does not give us the power to live in accordance with God’s will. However, it does point us towards Jesus who can liberate us, and it does have a role to play in alerting us to our sinful behaviour from which we need to be freed.

In the largely Jewish-Christian communities of Crete, Paul spoke of the qualities required of a presbyter. In the largely Gentile-Christian communities of Asia, he speaks of the qualities required of a ‘bishop’ (‘supervisor’ or ‘overseer’, 1Timothy 3:1-7), and his assistant male and female deacons (1Timothy 3:8-13).

‘A bishop must be above reproach (ἀνεπίλημπος), married only once, temperate (νηφάλιος), sensible (σώφρων), respectable (κόσμιος), hospitable (φιλόξενος), an apt teacher (διδασκτικός), not a drunkard (πάραινος), not violent (πλήκτης) but gentle (επιεικής), not quarrelsome (ἄμαχος), and not a lover of money (ἀφιλάργυρος)’ (1Timothy 3:2-3).

‘Deacons likewise must be serious (σεμνός), not double-tongued (δίλογος), not indulging in much

wine, not greedy for money (αισχροκερδής); they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (συνειδήσις)’ (1Timothy 3:8-9).

He also speaks of the presbyters (1Timothy 5:17-21). Paul is concerned with heterodox teaching (see 1Timothy 1:3):

‘Whoever does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness (εὐσέβεια), is conceited (τύφω), understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy (φθόνος), dissension (ἔρις), slander (βλασφημία), base suspicions (ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί), and wrangling (διαπαρατριβή) among those who are depraved (διαφθείρω) in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain’ (1Timothy 6:3-5).

Teaching must be based on ‘the words of our Lord Jesus Christ’: the words spoken by Jesus in his life, and later through his Spirit, as well as the words about Jesus that are proclaimed in the gospel. ‘Envy’ features in the lists of vices in Galatians 5:21 and Romans 1:29. Envy leads to ‘dissension’ (also listed in Galatians 5:20 and Romans 1:29). They are to ‘shun all this’ and

‘pursue righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), godliness (εὐσέβεια), faith (πίστις), love (ἀγάπη), endurance (ὑπομονή) and gentleness (πραῦπάθεια)’ (1Timothy 6:11).

Except for the last virtue (praüpátheia), which occurs only here in the Greek Bible, all these terms are familiar from Paul’s earlier letters (see the Index).

Second Letter to Timothy (with special reference to 2Timothy 2:22-25 and 3:2-5)

The historian Eusebius, writing in the opening years of the fourth century, has this to say about Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy: ‘After defending himself, the apostle was again sent on the ministry of preaching, and coming a second time to the same city suffered martyrdom under Nero. During this imprisonment he wrote the Second Letter to Timothy, indicating at the same time that his first defence had taken place and that his martyrdom was at hand’ (*History of the Church* 2.22). We have the privilege of reading Paul’s final communication with a man who had been a close companion for more than twenty-five years, and for whom he has the deepest affection.

Paul thanks God for Timothy’s faith and exhorts him to remain faithful, even when this involves suffering. As in the other Pastoral Letters Paul is concerned with heterodox teaching. He exhorts Timothy:

‘Shun youthful passion (επιθυμία) and pursue righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), faith (πίστις), love (ἀγάπη), and peace (ειρήνη), along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (καρδία). Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels (μάχη). And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly (ἡπιος) to everyone, an apt teacher (διδασκτικός), patient (ἀνεξίκακος), correcting opponents with gentleness (πραῦτης)’ (2Timothy 2:22-25)

Paul warns Timothy to expect people to ‘oppose the truth’ (2Timothy 3:8).

‘People will be lovers of themselves (φίλαυτος), lovers of money (φιλάργυρος), boasters (ἀλαζών), arrogant (ὑπερήφανος), abusive (βλάσφημος), disobedient (ἄπειθής) to their parents, ungrateful (ἀχάριστος), unholy (ἀνόσιος), heartless (ἄστοργος), implacable (ἄσπονδος), slanderers (διάβολος), profligates (ἀκρατής), brutes (ἀνήμερος), haters of good (ἀφιλάγαθος), treacherous (προδοτής), reckless (προπετής), swollen with conceit (τύφω), lovers of pleasure (φιλήδονος) rather than lovers of God (φιλόθεος), holding to the outward form of religion (εὐσεβεία) but denying

its power'(2Timothy 3:2-5).

Paul has already told Timothy that 'all who are in Asia have turned away from me' (2Timothy 1:15), and he has been urging Timothy to protect himself against the influence of those who are expounding erroneous teaching (2Timothy 2:16-18, 23-26). Here he focuses directly on these teachers, seeing them as part of the 'distressing times'. Timothy is to expect this, but he is also to know that they will ultimately fail. We should not miss the pain that lies behind these verses. Paul is not describing the world. He is lamenting the sinfulness that Timothy will find in the church, among those who break faith, or, as he says in the final verse, who 'hold to the outward form of religion but deny its power'. They have been baptised into the church, but have resisted the power of Christ's Spirit to transform their lives into lives of holiness. Paul's picture is purposely black. The tragedy is that he and Timothy can already see within the Christian community elements of what is described here. Such people, if they refuse to repent, are to be kept out of the congregation lest their corruption 'spread like gangrene' (2Timothy 2:17).

The beginning, middle and end of the list set the tone. People will be self-centred, rather than centring their lives on God and on others. They will be 'unholy', having no respect for the sacred, and so they will be closed to God and to others, their lives wholly occupied with their own desires. Some of the categories listed here can be found also in the only longer list in Paul's writings in his letter to the Romans. 'Boasters', 'arrogant', and 'disobedient to parents' are listed together also in Romans 1:30, where they are also followed by 'inhuman' (Romans 1:31).

In the opening address of his letter to Titus, Paul spoke of himself as 'a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of those chosen by God and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness' (Titus 1:1). The 'outward form of godliness' is clearly not enough. It can even act as an instrument of self-deception, for it can coexist with the kind of vices just described. True godliness is the fruit of divine power. Timothy is to do all he can to encourage those in his care to open themselves to the purifying power of God's Spirit who alone can transform us into Christ.

Concluding remarks

Our investigation shows that the moral teaching of Paul is, for the most part, in language with which the Greek moralists were familiar. This is especially clear in Paul's use of terms such as 'self-control' (εγκρατεία) in Galatians 5:23 (see also Acts 24:25 and 2Peter 1:6), contentment (αὐτάρκεια) in 2Corinthians 9:8 and 1Timothy 6:6, clemency (επιεικεία) in 2Corinthians 10:1 (see also Acts 24:4), and in his use of the expression 'what is not to be done' (μὴ καθήκοντα) in Romans 1:28.

It is also apparent that the basis of Christian moral living is very different from any of the Greek ethical systems. They are all based on human nature as understood by human reason, and on the self-achievement of disciplined behavior that is in accord with this knowledge. Saint Paul comes at behaviour from an entirely different perspective. Paul's focus is on God as revealed by Jesus, and on grace. Our response is to believing in God's love for us and in opening ourselves to the gift of Jesus' Spirit that is being poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5). Love (ἀγάπη) is central. In the light of Jesus' example humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη) is a virtue that is to characterize the Christian. There is a close link between humility, faith and prayer.

There is a place in Christian ethics for clemency (επιεικεία), a refined virtue of the Greek world, but also for mercy (ελεημοσύνη) and forgiveness (χαρίζομαι). People exercise clemency when they carry out justice with a large soul and are able to rise above self-interest in order to make decisions that achieve the greatest degree of order. Christians are to recognize this virtue, but they are to recognize a truth that goes beyond reason and logic: the truth that people cannot be virtuous just by their own efforts. To live the truth

we need love from Another, from God. Christians believe that God is love and has revealed this love in Jesus. God continues to pour out this liberating love. Ours is to accept this gift, the love in the heart of Jesus, with humility and gratitude, and allow it to bring forgiveness, healing and the possibility of virtue that we could not of ourselves achieve.

Furthermore, this love can fill our hearts and be given to others. This was not a conviction that grew out of an examination of human nature. It actually happened in Jesus: people were forgiven, were healed. They found peace, and the fruit of virtue was obvious in their lives.

What the study has highlighted is the danger of a moral system based on an understanding of the ‘natural law’. It is good to learn from the wisdom of Aristotle and the other great Greek moralists, but it appears to be a serious mistake to make a rational understanding of human nature the basis of a systematizing of Christian morality. This is not the approach of the Newer Testament. Moreover, it runs the danger of developing an ethic that does not depend on conversion to Jesus and faith in God’s love. For the writers of the Newer Testament, conversion is necessary to live a truly moral life that can lead to true happiness. Christian morality cannot be separated from Christian experience, and so cannot be imposed on those who do not have this experience.

To live a Christian life we need to open ourselves to receive the power of God into our lives. Only this love, as lived by Jesus, can bring healing and meaning to the human condition. There is a place for indicating the reasonableness of Christian morality, but in the final analysis the appeal is to Jesus’ promise to share his Spirit with us. There will always be a sense of sacred mystery about human life and human behaviour. One aim of education will be knowledge, as the Greek moralists said. But more important than knowledge of ‘human nature’ will be knowledge of Jesus and what he reveals to us about who God is and who we are called and graced to be.

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 ἁγιασμός hagiasmós holiness (1Thessalonians 4:7 page 10)
 ἁγνός hagnós pure (Philippians 4:8 page 29)
 ἁγνότης hagnotes purity (2Corinthians 6:6 page 21)
 ἀδικία adikía unrighteousness (1Corinthians 13:6 page 14; Romans 1:29 page 24)
 ἀδόκιμος adókimos debased (judged to be unfit) (Romans 1:28 page 24; Titus 1:16)
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 αἰσχροκερδής aischrokerdēs greedy for gain (Titus 1:7 page 30; 1Timothy 3:8 page 31)
 αἰσχρολογία aischología filthy language (Colossians 3:8 page 17)
 αἰσχρότης aischrótes obscene (Ephesians 5:4 page 29)
 ἀκαθαρσία akatharsía impurity (Galatians 5:19 page 5; Colossians 3:5 page 17; 2Corinthians 12:21 page 22; Ephesians 4:19 page 27; Ephesians 5:3 page 29)
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 ἀκαταστασία akatastasia disorder (2Corinthians 12:20 page 22)
 ἀκρατής akrates profligate (2Timothy 3:3 page 32)
 ἀλαζων alazōn boastful (Romans 1:30 page 24; 2Timothy 3:2 page 32)
 ἀλήθεια alētheia truth (2Corinthians 6:7 page 21; Ephesians 4:21,24 page 28)
 ἀληθής alēthēs true (Philippians 4:8, page 29)
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 ἄρσενοκοίτης arsenokoítēs sodomite (1Corinthians 6:9 page 11-13; 1Timothy 1:10 page 31)
 ἄσεβής asebēs godless (1Timothy 1:9 page 31)
 ἀσέλγεια asélgeia licentiousness (Galatians 5:19 page 5; 2Corinthians 12:21 page 22; Romans 13:13
 page 26; Ephesians 4:19 page 27; Mark 7:22 page 27)
 ἄσπονδος áspōndos implacable (2Timothy 3:3 page 32)
 ἀστόργος astórgos heartless (Romans 1:31 page 24; 2Timothy 3:3 page 32)
 ἀσυνέτος asunétos foolish (Romans 1:31 page 24)
 ἀσυνθέτος asunthétos faithless (Romans 1:31 page 24)
 αὐτάρκεια autárkeia self-sufficiency (page 4 and 7 and 33)
 αὐθάδης authádēs arrogant, self-willed (page 7; Titus 1:7 page 30)
 ἀφιλάγαθος aphilágathos hater of good (2Timothy 3:3 page 32)
 ἀφιλάργυρος aphilárguros not a lover of money (1Timothy 3:3 page 31)
 ἀφροσύνη aphrosúnē folly (Mark 7:22 page 27)
 ἀχάριστος acháristos ungrateful (2Timothy 3:2 page 32)
 βέβηλος bébēlos profane (1Timothy 1:9 page 30)
 βλασφημία blasphēmía slander (Colossians 3:8 page 17; Ephesians 4:31 page 29; 1Timothy 6:4 page 32;
 Mark 7:22 page 27)
 βλάσφημος blásphēmos abusive (2Timothy 3:2 page 32)
 γνώσις gnōsis knowledge (2Corinthians 6:6 page 21; Ephesians 3:19 page 27)
 διάβολος diábolos slanderer (2Timothy 3:3 page 32)
 διαπαρατριβή diaparatribē wrangling (1Timothy 6:5 page 32)
 διαφθείρω diaphtheírō depraved (1Timothy 6:5 page 31)
 διδακτικός didaktikós teacher (1Timothy 3:2 page 31; 2Timothy 2:24 page 32)
 δίκαιος díkaios just (Romans 1:17 page 30; Philippians 4:8 page 29; Titus 1:8 page 30; 1Timothy 1:9
 page 31)
 δικαιοσύνη dikaiosúnē righteousness (2Corinthians 6:7 page 21; Ephesians 4:24 page 28; 1Timothy
 6:11 page 32; 2Timothy 2:22 page 32)

δίλογος dílogos double tongued (1Timothy 3:8 page 31)

διχοστασία dichostasía dissension (Galatians 5:20 page 6)

δόλος dólos deceit (Romans 1:29 page 24; Mark 7:22 page 27)

εγκράτεια egkrátēia self-control (Galatians 5:23 page 8-9; page 33)

εγκρατής egkratēs self-controlled (Titus 1:8 page 30)

ειδωλολάτρης eidōlōlatrēs idolator (1Corinthians 5:11, 6:9 page 12; Ephesians 5:5 page 29)

ειδωλολατρία eidōlōlatría idolatry (Galatians 5:20 page 6; Colossians 3:5 page 17)

ειρήνη eirēnē peace (Galatians 5:22 page 8; Ephesians 2:14 page 8; 2Timothy 2:22 page 32)

ελεημοσύνη eleēmosunē mercy (page 33)

επιεικεία epieikeía clemency (2Corinthians 10:1; page 25 and 33)

επιεικής epieikēs gentle (Titus 3:2 page 30; 1Timothy 3:3 page 31; Philippians 4:5)

επιθυμία epithumía passion, lust (1Thessalonians 4:5 page 10; Colossians 3:5 page 17; Romans 13:14 page 27; Ephesians 4:22 page 28; Titus 3:3 page 30; 2Timothy 2:22 page 32; Galatians 5:16,24)

επίορκος epíorkos perjurer (1Timothy 1:10 page 31)

επιθειά eritheía selfishness (Galatians 5:20 page 6; 2Corinthians 12:20 page 22; Philippians 2:3 page 29)

ἔρις éris strife (Galatians 5:20 page 6; 2Corinthians 12:20 page 22; Romans 1:29 page 24; Romans 13:13 page 26; 1Timothy 6:4 page 32)

εὐσέβεια eusébeia godliness, religion (1Timothy 6:3 page 32; 1Timothy 6:11 page 32; 2Timothy 3:5 page 32)

εὐσπλαγχνος eúsplagchnos tenderhearted (Ephesians 4:32 page 29)

εὐτραπελία eutrapalía vulgar (Ephesians 5:4 page 29)

εὐφημος euphēmos commendable (Philippians 4:8 page 29)

εὐχαριστία eucharistía thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:4 page 29; 1Timothy 4:4)

ἔχθρος échthros enmity (Galatians 5:20 page 6)

ζήλος zēlos jealousy (Galatians 5:20 page 6; 2Corinthians 12:20 page 22; Romans 13:13 page 26)

ἡδονή hēdonē pleasure (Titus 3:3 page 30)

ἤπιος ēpios kindly (2Timothy 2:24 page 32)

θεοστυγής theostugēs God hater (Romans 1:30 page 24)

θυμός thumós anger (Galatians 5:20 page 6; Colossians 3:8 page 17; 2Corinthians 12:20 page 22; Ephesians 4:31 page 29)

καθήκοντα hathēkonta what should be done (Romans 1:28 page 23; page 33)

κακία kakía malice (Colossians 3:8 page 17; Romans 1:29 page 24; Ephesians 4:31 page 29; Titus 3:3 page 30)

κακοηθεία kakoētheía craftiness (Romans 1:29 page 24)

καλοποιέω kalopoieō doing what is right (page 7; 2Thessalonians 3:13)

καρδία kardía heart (Romans 5:5 page 28; 1Timothy 1:5 page 30; 2Timothy 2:22 page 32; Mark 7:21 page 27)

καταλαλιά katalalía slander (2Corinthians 12:20 page 22)

κατάλαλος katálalos slanderer (Romans 1:30 page 24)

κενοδοξία kenodoxía worthless (Philippians 2:3 page 29)

κλέπτης kléptēs thief (1Corinthians 6:10 page 11)

κλοπή klorē theft (Mark 7:21 page 27)

κοινωνία koinōnía communion (Philippians 2:1 page 29)

κοίτη koitē debauchery (Romans 13:13 page 26)

κραυγή kraugē wrangling (Ephesians 4:31 page 29)

κόσμιος kósmios respectable (1Timothy 3:2 page 31)

κῶμος kōmos carousing (Galatians 5:21 page 6; Romans 13:13 page 26)

λοίδορος loídoros reviler (1Corinthians 5:11 page 12; 1Corinthians 6:10 page 12)

μαθητής mathētēs disciple (page 28)

μάχη máchē quarrelling (2Timothy 2:23 page 32)

μακροθυμία makrothumía long-suffering (Galatians 5:22 page 8; Colossians 3:12 page 18; 2Corinthians 6:6 page 21; Ephesians 4:2 page 27)

μαλακός malakós male prostitute (1Corinthians 6:9 page 11-13)

μέθη méthē drunkenness' (Galatians 5:21 page 6; Romans 13:13 page 26)

μέθυσος méthusos drunkard (1Corinthians 5:11 page 12; 1Corinthians 6:10 page 12)

μοιχεία moicheía adultery (Mark 7:22 page 27)

μοιχός moichós adulterer (1Corinthians 6:9 page 12)

μωρολογία mōrología silly (Ephesians 5:4 page 29)

νηφάλιος nēphalios temperate (1Timothy 3:2 page 31)

οικτιρμός oiktirmós feelings of love (Colossians 3:12 page 18; Philippians 2:1 page 29)

ὀργή orgē wrath (Colossians 3:8 page 17; Ephesians 4:31 page 29)

ὀργίλος orgílos quick tempered (Titus 1:7 page 30)

ὅσιος hósios devout (Titus 1:8 page 30)

ὀσιότης hosiotēs sacred (Ephesians 4:24 page 28)

ὀφθαλμός πονηρός ophthalmós ponēros envy ('evil eye') (Mark 7:22 page 27)

πάθος páthos passion (Colossians 3:5 page 17; Romans 1:36 page 23)

παρὰ φύσιν para phúsin unnatural (page 13; Romans 1:26 page 23)

παραμύθιον parathúmion consolation (Philippians 2:1 page 29)

παράκλησις paráklēsis appeal (Philippians 2:1 page 29)

πάροιδος pároinos addicted to wine (Titus 1:7 page 30; 1Timothy 3:3 page 31)

πειθαρχέω peitharchéō to be obedient (Titus 3:1 page 30)

πικρία pikría bitterness (Ephesians 4:31 page 29)

πίστις pístis faithfulness (Galatians 5:22 page 8-9; 1Timothy 1:5 page 31; 1Timothy 6:11 page 32; 2Timothy 2:22 page 32)

πλήκτης plēktēs violent (Titus 1:7 page 30; 1Timothy 3:3 page 31)

πλεονεξία pleonexía greed (Colossians 3:5 page 17; Romans 1:29 page 24; Ephesians 4:19 page 27; Ephesians 5:3 page 29; Mark 7:22 page 27)

πλεονέκτης pleonéktēs greedy (1Corinthians 5:11 page 12; 6:10 page 12; Ephesians 5:5 page 29)

πονηρία ponēría wickedness (Romans 1:29 page 24; Mark 7:22 page 27)

πορνεία porneia irresponsible sexual behavior (Galatians 5:19 page 5; 1Thessalonians 4:3 page 10; Colossians 3:5 page 17; 2Corinthians 12:21 page 22; Ephesians 5:3 page 29; Mark 7:21 page 27)

πόρνος pórnos sexually irresponsible male (1Corinthians 5:11 page 11; 6:9 page 12; 1Timothy 1:10 page 31)

πραϋπάθεια praüpátheia gentleness (1Timothy 6:11 page 32)

πραϋτής praútēs gentle (Galatians 5:23 page 8-9; Colossians 3:12 page 18; Ephesians 4:2 page 27; Titus 3:2 page 30; 2Timothy 2:25 page 32)

προδότης prodótēs treacherous (2Timothy 3:4 page 32)

προπετής propetēs reckless (2Timothy 3:4 page 32)

προσφιλής prosphilēs attracting to love (Philippians 4:8 page 29)

σεμνός semnós inspiring reverence (Philippians 4:8 page 29; 1Timothy 3:8 page 31)

σπλάγχνα οικτιρμου splágchna oiktirmou compassionate feelings (Colossians 3:12 page 18; Philippians 2:1 page 29)

σύμψυχος súmpsuchos of one soul (Philippians 2:2 page 29)

στυγητός stugētós despicable (Titus 3:3 page 30)

συνειδήσις suneidēsis conscience (1Timothy 1:5 page 31; 1Timothy 3:9 page 31)

σχίσμα schisma division (1Corinthians 1:10, 11:18, 12:25 page 11)

σωφροσύνη sōphrosúnē self-control (page 3; 1Timothy 2:9, 15)

σώφρων sōphrōn prudent (Titus 1:8 page 29; 1Timothy 3:2 page 31)

ταπεινοφροσύνη tapeinophrosúnē humility (page 7; Colossians 3:12 page 18-19; Ephesians 4:2 page 27; Philippians 2:3 page 29; page 33)

τυφώ tuphoō conceited (1Timothy 6:4 page 32; 2Timothy 3:4 page 32)

ὕβριστής hubristēs insolent (Romans 1:30 page 24)

ὕπερηφανία huperephanía haughtiness (Mark 7:22 page 27)

ὕπερηφάνος huperēphános haughty (Romans 1:30 page 24; 2Timothy 3:2 page 32)

ὕπομονή hupomonē patient endurance (2Corinthians 6:4 page 21; 2Thessalonians 3:5 page 22; 1Timothy 6:11 page 32)

ὕπόνοια hupónoia suspicion (1Timothy 6:4 page 32)

φαρμακεία pharmakeía sorcery (Galatians 5:20 page 6)

φθόνος phthónos envy (Galatians 5:21 page 6; Romans 1:29 page 24; Titus 3:3 page 30; 1Timothy 6:4 page 32)

φιλάγαθος philágathos lover of goodness (Titus 1:8 page 30)

φιλάργυρος philárguros lover of money (2Timothy 3:2 page 32)

φίλαυτος philautos self-love (page 7; 2Timothy 3:2 page 32)

φιλήδονος philēdonos lover of pleasure (2Timothy 3:4 page 32)
φιλόθεος philótheos lover of God (2Timothy 3:4 page 32)
φιλόξενος philó Xenos hospitable (Titus 1:8 page 30; 1Timothy 3:2 page 31)
φόνος phónos murder (Romans 1:29 page 24; Mark 7:21 page 27)
φυσιώσις phusiōsis conceit (2Corinthians 12:20 page 22)
χαρὰ chara joy (Galatians 5:22 page 8; Philippians 2:2 page 29)
χαρίζομαι charízomai to forgive (Colossians 3:13 page 20; Ephesians 4:32 page 29; page 33)
χρηστός chrēstós kind (Ephesians 4:32 page 29)
χρηστότης chrēstotēs kindness (Galatians 5:22 page 8; Colossians 3:12 page 18; 2Corinthians 6:6 page 21)
ψεύδομαι pseúdomai lying (Colossians 3:9 page 17)
ψεύστης pseustēs liar (1Timothy 1:10 page 31)
ψιθυρισμός psithurismós gossip (2Corinthians 12:20 page 22; Romans 1:29 page 24)