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Présentation de la fiche

Coteb022_f0054

SourceBoite_022-2-chem | Lactance. M.Felix. Justin. Athenagoras

LangueFrançais

TypePhotocopie

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 21/10/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

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Augustus to Constantine

(N.Y.
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270-AUGUSTUS TO CONSTANTINE

empire generally. The prophet Hermas and the bishop Callistus had once been slaves; Hippolytus looked down on the bishop.⁸¹ According to Athenagoras, Christians owned slaves, "some more, some fewer," and none brought accusations against their masters.⁸² On the other hand, at Lyons about 177 some slaves did make such accusations,⁸³ and Tertullian called the slaves of Christians their enemies "from their very nature."⁸⁴

The emancipation of slaves is recommended in later church orders,⁸⁵ but only in regard to those enslaved in times of persecution. The idea that slavery is immoral because all men are equal before God is expressed only in the Gnostic *Acts of Thomas*.⁸⁶

X-ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUAL MATTERS

As regards marriage and the family, it is obvious that the guidelines set forth in the New Testament are primarily expressed from the husband's standpoint. The Matthaean statements about divorce are concerned with the husband first and with the wife and her adultery only second (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9), even though in Mark 10:11-12 divorce and remarriage are forbidden for both husband and wife. In 1 Corinthians 7:2-16 (cf. 32-34) Paul expresses an ethic of mutual obligation, but from a later passage (1 Cor. 11:3-12) it is clear that he envisages the husband as set in charge of the wife (cf. 14:34-35). Other New Testament passages make it plain that the wife is to obey her husband; it is he who loves her.⁸⁷

The same attitude is expressed by Ignatius. Christian women are to "love the Lord and be content with their husbands in flesh and spirit," while their husbands are "to love their wives as the Lord loved the church." Ignatius is the first Christian writer to require that marriages take place "with the consent of the bishop" so that they may be related to the Lord and not to lust.⁸⁸

Following Jewish precedent, several New Testament writers militantly condemn both adultery (with a married person) and fornication (with an unmarried person), as well as homosexual acts of any sort.⁸⁹ Sexual intercourse as such is not condemned, however, and indeed the apostle Paul can speak

⁸¹ Ref. 9, 12, 1.

⁸² Leg. 35, 1.

⁸³ Eusebius, *H. E.* 5, 1, 14.

⁸⁴ *Apol.* 7, 3.

⁸⁵ *Const. Apost.* 4, 9, 2.

⁸⁶ *Acta Thomae* 82-83 (pp. 198-99 Bonnet). Cf. the canon of Elvira noted below, p. 277.

⁸⁷ Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1.

⁸⁸ *Polyc.* 5, 1-2.

⁸⁹ E.g., 1 Cor. 5:1-13, 6:9-20; Matt. 15:19=Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:26-27.



