

*Jesus:*

No. God intended for man to have two hands.

*Socrates:*

Who intended for man to have weaknesses and an evil nature, the devil ? No. God intended for man to have weaknesses and evil nature. If mankind is flawed or evil or weak, it is because God put the flaw or weakness there and intended it to be there. Let me tell you another parable. Have you ever seen the birds killing fish in the sea. Who put it into that bird to fang and kill that flying fish? Who's to doom, man, when the judge himself is dragged before the bar?

*Jesus:*

Man has free will. God did not force him to sin. He merely gave him the opportunity to be virtuous or sinful. Man would have been of no value to God if he had made him a mere puppet who could do nothing but good. He wanted to give man the opportunity to be good or evil according to his own merit and choice.

*Socrates:*

It is absurd for God to punish man after creating him. It is as though a Homer wrote an ode about a pig and then whipped and lashed the pages or cast them on an eternal unconsuming fire, because he disliked the qualities of the animal. Or that a master sculptor made a perfect statue of a pig and then lashed it for all eternity because he disliked the traits of the animal.

*Jesus:*

God did not create man with an evil nature that predetermined that he must sin.

*Socrates:*

Then who did?

*Jesus:*

God created man to be innocent and naturally good. God put man in a paradise, the Garden of Eden. He gave man free will and allowed Satan to come into the Garden of Eden to test mankind. God did not predetermine that man would sin.

*Socrates:*

But God created everything that went into this combination, situation

or environment. When he created each of the elements or ingredients in the situation, he knew exactly how each would react with the others in any circumstance; because he was all-knowing. He intended for each element to be exactly as it was because he was all-powerful and could not make a mistake. It is as though a scientist or a physician combined several ingredients into a medicine, which although harmless in themselves, when combined, become a deadly poison; and then after administering it to a patient, disavowed any responsibility for his death. In just this way, God combined many things: an innocent man, a tree of knowledge, a beautiful garden and an angel.

*Jesus:*

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

*Socrates:*

It seems to me that your Lord God has merely created man to watch him suffer. This business of Satan, the Garden of Eden and free will is merely a facade. God merely wanted an excuse to harass, persecute, torment and oppress mankind. If an all-powerful and all-knowing being creates everything, and allows his creations to react in a certain way, he actually intended them to act in that way and is solely responsible for the results.

*Jesus:*

I warn you, God is not mocked. Do not talk in this way or you will be thrown into the fiery furnace where you will gnash your teeth, forever in torture and torment.

*Socrates:*

I thought our Olympic gods were vicious and unreasonable, but they seem veritable lambs of mercy and forbearance compared to this God of yours: who torments and tortures you for all eternity for doing what he forces you to do in the very making of you and your environment.

*Jesus:*

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good; For his mercy endureth forever.

*Socrates:*

Why, if he is a god of peace and mercy does he torment mankind and permit, even encourage and demand,