GREEK AND ROMAN STOICISM AND SOME OF ITS DISCIPLES

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EPICTETUS · SENECA AND MARCUS AURELIUS

BY

CHAS. H. STANLEY DAVIS M.D., Ph.D.

AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF EGYPT · EDITOR AND COMMENTATOR OF THE EGYPTIAN BOOK OF THE DEAD · MEMBER
OF THE SOCIÉTÉ D'ANTHROPOLOGIE OF PARIS
THE ROYAL ARCHÆOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
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PREFACE

Stoicism was the noblest system of morals developed within the pale of Greek philosophy. For over two centuries it was the creed, if not the philosophy, of the Roman people, whose type of character from the first was moulded on the Stoic lines.

The multitude of great and memorable truths taught by the Spanish courtier, the Phrygian slave, and the Roman emperor, inculcating as they did the loftiest morality, high standards of action, of absolute self-sacrifice for the sake of virtue, and representing most powerfully the moral and religious convictions of the age, no doubt prepared the way for Christianity, as well as tinctured the thought of modern ages.

Stoicism contributed the noblest men, and the loftiest conceptions of virtue and morality that we meet with in history before the time of Paul. In fact, Stoicism is not only a system of philosophy, but also of religion, and as such it was regarded by its first adherents.

In order that the reader may better comprehend the origin and progress of the Stoic doctrines, a brief account is given of the Greek religion and philosophy, both of which undoubtedly had a considerable influence upon the rise of the Stoic philosophy.

The selections from Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius have been made with great care, and they comprise some of the noblest thoughts of these disciples of Stoicism.

C. H. S. D.

GREEK AND ROMAN STOICISM AND SOME OF ITS DISCIPLES

I

THE GREEK RELIGION

Herbert Spencer has shown that man's imperishable love of life and his aspirations for a higher, a harmonious, and an assured individual existence, constitute the primal fountain of all human motives, and is the great incentive of all human endeavor and progress. Ethics or philosophy does not inspire men with an assured hope in an unending existence, and no system can prevail that has not had its foundations already laid upon the primitive rocks of human nature.

We find in the history of all religions that the underlying belief was an effort to relieve and raise humanity, and however lofty the ideal of the old teachers of religion, it is still nothing more than an ideal. Plato said, "To desire is to love that which as yet we do not possess, that which is not and of which we feel the lack." The intense yearning after the

Divine, a cause, the principle which gave us being, we find showing itself all through the pagan world, and illumined here and there by a few immortal truths. From the beginning man has blindly and in ignorance groped his way slowly onward and upward after what has ever been beyond his power to define.

Paul said of certain people, "that they should seek the Lord if haply they may feel after him and find him." The ethnic religions are the effort of man to feel after God. They partially satisfied a great hunger of the human heart, and, no doubt, in a great degree, they directed the human conscience toward the right. We find in the sacred books of all nations, the Bible, Koran, Vedas, Zendavesta, the laws of Confucius, a vast amount of finished truth, in the most childlike form, without any attempt at formal reasoning, poured forth from the mind by spontaneous inspiration. All Oriental religions are the natural products of the religious instinct in man working itself out in accordance with the principle of natural evolution. And in process of time religious progress as well as advance in philosophy, proves that their growths are an increment of both, and also a cleansing from mythology. A writer has said, that a religion should not be judged by the amount of ancient mythic dross clinging to it, or the puerilities of superadded theological dogmatism and priestly discipline, but from the amount of pure spiritual food it contains, also the practical help it gives towards righteous happy living. We read in the Fravashis, "We worship the souls of the holy men and women, born at any time or in any place, whose consciences struggle, or will struggle, or have struggled for the good."

Over five thousand years ago the sacred books of Egypt taught the unity and spirituality of God, a recognition of the Divine in nature, the feeling that the Deity is in all life, in all form, in all change as well as in what is permanent and stable. The oldest of the religious texts which have come down to us, dating at least 3000 B.C., teaches the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and it appears as a completed system with a long history of development behind it. We find a belief in a future judgment besides a morality of justice and mercy. The Egyptian religion throughout breathes a lofty morality, and a grand conception of law and responsibility. The scribe Pentaur wrote, "Thou alone existant, the creator of being." "In thy rest, thou watched over men, and considered what is best for the beasts.... As high as heaven, as wide stretching as the earth, as deep as the sea, the gods fall down before thy majesty, extolling the spirit of him who has created all things.... Praise to thy spirit because thou hast made us; we are thy creatures, thou hast placed us in the world."

In the Prisse Papyrus, dating from the XIIth Dynasty (2400 B.C.), the Fourth Commandment is found in almost identical terms: "The son who hearkens to the word of his father, he shall grow old thereby." Other texts exhort to the study of wisdom, to regard and respect parents and superiors, to mercifulness, generosity, discretion, integrity, sobriety, chastity, and the like. We read in the *Book of the Dead*, "I did that which was right; I hated evil; I gave bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, succor to him who was in need." "I harmed not a child. I injured not a widow; there was neither beggar nor needy in my time; none were anhungered, widows were cared for as though their husbands were still alive." "I did that which was pleasing to my parents; I was the joy of my brethren, the friend of my companions, honorably minded towards all my fellow citizens. I gave bread to the hungry and shelter to the traveler; my door stood open to him who entered from without, and I refreshed him." Many of the Vedic hymns rise to the purest heights of moral consciousness, and faith in immortality is often expressed. In ancient Brahmanism, its hymns and prayers, its epics, its philosophy, were all intensely spiritual, and the same tendency to spiritual worship exists unchanged in the Hindu mind to-day. The Laws of Manu thus sum up the system of morals of the Brahmins: "Contentment, the act of returning good for evil, temperance, purity, repression of that which is sensual, the knowledge of the holy books, union with the supreme soul, and the avoidance of anger—these are the virtues which constitute our duty."

Buddha, through his personal influence and his ability to speak to the heart, his unsullied purity, and the spirit of his life and work, inculcated a lofty system of morals which exerted a mighty influence upon millions of people, who were thus saved from the depths of barbarism, brutality, and selfishness.[1]

We read in the *Lalita Vistara:* "From east to west the air thrills with the accents of Buddha, a sweet, melodious sound which goes straight to the heart." Said Buddha:

"The real treasure is that laid up by man or woman
Through charity and piety, temperance and self-control.
The treasure thus hid is secure and passes not away,
Though he leaves the fleeting riches of this world: thus man takes with him

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[1] Says Max Müller: "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the great problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India."

A treasure that no wrong of others, and no thief
can steal.
Let the wise man do good deeds — the treasure
that follows of itself."

The religion of Zoroaster had in it sublime anticipations of truth which made it an elevating and salutary influence over the great nation professing it.

The doctrines of Egypt, India, and Persia, and the thoughts and aspirations of generations of people who had been blindly seeking after a higher and better life, are doubtless discovered in the philosophy of Greece, but the spirit of Greek philosophy is essentially Greek, and Oriental doctrines were a subsequent and late admixture and infusion.[1]

The general ideas of our Aryan or Indo-European forefathers are manifestly reproduced in the fundamental features of Greek mythology and religion, but from the earliest history of Greece we find a religion that had outgrown the naturalistic religion of the primitive Aryans, and had become monotheistic, with a divinity essentially human, but which became in time specialized and idealized. In the beginning, religion as well as philosophy had to pass through a mythological period. They were founded at a time when science and methods of inquiry did not as yet exist. But with rare insight the ancient prophets and philosophers taught many moral truths which, even in their imperfect form, proved an invaluable source of solace and help in the tribulations of life.

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[1] Professor Lefèvre has shown us the relationship between the Hellenic and Hindu, Assyrian and Egyptian divinities. Vestiges of Phœnician, Thracian, and Syrian legends can also be traced in Greek mythology. See Lefèvre, La Grèce Antique. Entretiens sur les Origines et les Croyances.

The main idea in the Greek religion was the sight of something divine in human nature. Each god represented some human quality carried to its perfection. To the Greeks everything beautiful was holy; they worshipped the ideal in nature and human life; everything pleasant to man was acceptable to the gods. The love of beauty was their religion, and it was an active religious faith that was the origin of Greek art. Their creed was a deification of the human faculties and the passions and affections of mankind. The Greek ideal was that of development, the artistic culture of all human emotions and energies, the bringing forth of that divineness that lay within the nature of man. Says Schiller:—

> "When o'er the form of naked Truth
> The Muse had spread her magic veil,
> Creation throbbed with life and youth,
> And feeling warmed the insensible.
> Then nature, formed for love's embrace,
> The earth in brighter glory trod;
> All was enchanted ground, each trace
> The footsteps of a god."

The Greeks taught first in poetry and then in plastic art, that man should not bow down to anything beneath him, and that nature can only become fit to be worshipped by being idealized and made human. Greek art originated with the images of the gods, and was the offspring of human emotion and aspiration, and the statues the Greeks wrought and the temples they erected, to commemorate the acts and attributes of some special deity, became living objects of beauty. In fact, both sculpture and architecture emanated from the same grand ideal conception, namely, to embody in imperishable forms the attributes and acts of their hero-gods. The elemental character of the Greek religion was no doubt greatly influenced by the sculptors, and kept always before the eyes of a worshipping people the divine attributes of purity, wisdom, serene benignity, and noble elevation of soul. "What the philosophers did to lead upward the minds of the thoughtful, the sculptors accomplished for the mass of the Greek people." Art, however, with the Greeks was a sentiment. It was the embodiment of physical beauty in its most perfect forms, and artistically rendered human emotion, but it did not touch the heart. It had its root rather in human philosophy than in divine spirituality. But the Greeks opened to themselves and posterity an entirely new world wherein the human mind had free development.

No doubt the amalgamation of two races of dissimilar mental development, quickened mental impulse, enlivened sensuous emotion, and created new images in the world of imagination. In healthful exuberance and power, body and mind co-operated with each other, and the ideas of beauty were the generic principles which emanated from the perfect rhythm of their physical, moral, and mental organization. "The ancient Greek saw in the floating cloud a moving wing, in the summer wind a goddess's whisper, and in the noise and bubble of the waves, the voice of the old man of the sea; to his simple idea of the things in the world around him he added a new sense, fresh and beautiful, and so created a poetry of vivid and intense loveliness, a religion of winds and waves, a morality of sunlight and spring glories."

The exuberant imagination of the Greeks inhabited a land well suited to foster and nurture the fancy and imagination. It displays a variety of surface and coast-line such as is possessed by scarcely any other country in the world. The climate and the aspects of nature were favorable to develop an active imagination, and to suggest images of beauty. The ever changing color, in which the deep, intense blue constitutes the ground tone, and at sunset the sides of the mountains bathed in a deep, soft, yet quite vivid violet hue; this, with the absolutely intoxicating fragrance exhaled in spring by the spicy pines and blooming shrubs, could not help but appeal to the exuberant imagination of the Greeks.

Every city, every mountain, every fertile plain, every shady grove, or crystal stream, was celebrated in song as the haunt of one or more of the numberless divinities. Air, water, earth, wood, cornfield, and the homes of men, were full of divine life. "They placed Jupiter in Olympus, Apollo in the sun, Neptune in the sea, Bacchus in the vintage, and Ceres among the yellow corn. Their imagination filled the fountains with Naiades, the woods with Dryades, and made the sea teem with the children of Nereus." The Greeks had no doubt of the actual presence of the gods in these places consecrated to them. Says Lehrs (*Gott, Götter und Dämonen*), "When your Greek contemplated nature and the feebleness and dependence of man, there arose before him not one God . . . but there was a spontaneous outbreak of the fullness of life divine. He saw a world of gods."

As all the deities were the creations of a poetic imagination, Herodotus tells us that Homer and Hesiod were the framers of the Greek theogony, as it was their work which greatly assisted in moulding into form the popular ideas regarding the various gods which peopled heaven and earth, and the sea, and the regions under the earth. Says Gladstone, "The Iliad of Homer was a main instrument in establishing the dominant features of the Hellenic religion."

The Greek religion was filled with forms of beauty and nobleness. "It was a heaven so near at hand, that their own heroes had climbed into it, and became demi-gods. It was a heaven peopled with such a variety of noble forms, that they could choose among them the protector whom they liked best, and possibly themselves be selected as favored by some guardian deity. The fortunate hunter, of a moonlight night, might even behold the graceful figure of Diana flashing through the woods in pursuit of game, and the happy inhabitant of Cyprus come suddenly on the fair form of Venus resting in a laurel-grove. The Dryads could be seen glancing among the trees, the Oreads heard shouting on the mountains, and the

Naiads found asleep by the side of their streams."

There is much that is noble and beautiful in Greek legendary faith, and it led in time to a spiritual conception of one sole Supreme Being, the Ruler of human destiny. To the Greek, Zeus was the Supreme Being, Ruler and Preserver of the universe, and Source of Wisdom and Justice. We read of him in the Iliad and Odyssey as the "Cloud-veiled One," "Cloud Compeller" "Thunderer," "Supreme Lord," "Father of Gods and Men." The poorest and most abandoned might rely on his care, and the homeless beggar could claim his powerful protection (*Odyssey*, vi, 208). For several centuries, no rational speculation seems to have been entered upon, nor any inquiry made, with respect to the origin of the world, or the first principle of things, beyond what Homer and Hesiod had intimated in their poems.

But the Greeks finally, as Erdmann says, "when the unquestioning acceptance of life had yielded to reflection," came to believe in the rule of a Divine Providence, according to justice and mercy, and while they were devoted to ritual and outward observances, and as every religion is deeper and purer than its ritual, so we must not judge the piety of the Greeks by their art, literature, or superstitions.

The poets of the fifth and sixth century B.C. reflect the conviction which all the higher minds of Greece were coming to hold, that the world is under the rule of one Divine Being, and to the educated Greeks the old religion had in its essence passed away. The religious sentiment of Greece rose gradually, by following its own moral institutions, to a very elevated conception of deity, and we can trace all through Greek poetry down to the age of Pericles, the development of the Greek conscience side by side with advancing civilization and æsthetic culture. The religion of Greece taught that Nature worked in obedience to the Divine laws, and there was recognized an indwelling of the Divine presence in all natural phenomena and every visible created thing, therefore the philosophic mind of Greece was thus prepared to inquire into and speculate upon the laws themselves. It was the Greeks who first attempted to comprehend the nature of the human mind, and the first to attempt to solve the riddle of the universe. The Greeks were also the first to afford us the picture of personal inner development.

II

GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The Stoic system, as such, owes its rise to a union of ethical and speculative elements, in which both were more definitely determined by one another. In order that we may more thoroughly understand the rise of Stoicism, and the grounds on which it is based, it will be necessary to very briefly consider some of the previous systems of Greek philosophy.

Although Greek philosophy was to a great extent an original conception, yet it was no doubt somewhat influenced by the Greek religion, and also by the metaphysics of the East. We find that the early Greek and Indian philosophers have many points in common. According to Greek tradition, Thales, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and others visited Oriental countries in order to study philosophy. At the advent of the Buddha the Jain sect had already attained a prominent position in the religious world of India. The Jains were advocates of the development theory; hence their ideal was physical, mental, moral, and spiritual perfection. They taught that the universe is a system by itself, governed by laws inherent in its very constitution. The universe is not for man alone, but is a theatre of evolution for all living beings. The Jains taught that the cosmos has no beginning and no end. The search for a cause or origin is the outcome of the inner conviction of the human mind that a state of things must be the effect of sufficient cause. This doctrine had its influence on the Sankhya philosophy, and later on the doctrines taught by some of the Greek philosophers.

The doctrines of the Eleatics, that God and the universe are one, that everything existing in multiplicity has no reality, and that thinking and being are identical; the making a complete abstraction of everything material — all are to be found in the philosophy of the Upanishads and the Vedanta system, which is its outcome. Again, the doctrine of Empedocles, that nothing of all that perish-eth ever is created, nothing ever really findeth an end in death, has its exact parallel in the characteristic doctrine of the Sankhya system about the eternity and indestructibility of matter. But above all, Pythagoras was greatly indebted to Indian philosophy and science. In fact, almost all the doctrines ascribed to him, religious, philosophical, mathematical, were known in India in the sixth century, B.C. The transmigration theory, the assumption of five elements, the Pythagorean theorem in geometry, and the mystical speculations of the Pythagorean school, all have their close parallels in ancient India. And as all subsequent philosophers borrowed from Pythagoreanism, we can see the influence of Indian doctrines in many subsequent schools of philosophy, more particularly, perhaps, with the Neo-Platonists and its disciples, Plotinus and Porphyry.

About five or six centuries before Christ, philosophical speculation was devoted to knowing the order of the world, independent in its application to the common utilities, and to an investigation of the ultimate basis and essential nature of the external world. The Greeks faced the problems of life and science and art in a direct manner and formulated them with great simplicity, and the successive phases of their philosophic speculation constitutes a most curious and interesting chapter in history. The schools grappled with the most difficult problems, and the examples of intellectual acuteness have been rarely equalled, never excelled.

The attempt of the earlier philosophers to generalize the universe, and to resolve all nature into some great unity, or common substance or principle, or, more accurately, to discover which element of nature is the fundamental element, gave rise to a great many theories. But the basis upon which they rested was in its nature unsubstantial, for it included errors due to imperfect and erroneous observations. Aristotle says, that "of those who first philosophized, the majority assumed only material principles or elements." "The Greeks," says Professor Butcher,[1] "before any other people of antiquity, possessed the love of knowledge for its own sake. To see things as they really are, to discern their meanings and adjust their relations, was with them an instinct and a passion. Their methods in science and philosophy might be very faulty, and their conclusions often absurd, but they had that fearlessness of intellect which is the first condition of seeing truly. Poets and philosophers alike looked with unflinching eye on all that met them, on man and the world, on life and death. They interrogated Nature, and sought to wrest her secrets from her, without misgiving and without afterthought. They took no count of the consequences. 'Let us follow the argument whithersoever it leads,' may be taken not only as the motto of the Platonic philosophy, but as expressing one side of the Greek genius."

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[1] Some Aspects of Greek Genius.

But with all the crudities and puerilities of thought, there were intellectual giants in those days. The Ionic philosophers boldly met and solved the most abstruse questions of ontology. The Pythagoreans penetrated into the mysteries of mathematical science. The Eleatics formulated much valuable truth as to the nature and attributes of Deity. The Atomists conducted their investigations in the most approved methods of induction, and reached results which the disciples of Lord Bacon have done little more than verify. The Greek mind saw the world as a cosmos, produced, therefore, and ruled by a reasoning principle, or logos. From Heraclitus to the Stoics, from the Stoics to Philo Judæus, the term passed; changed, modified, expanded in turns, but always there.

Thales considered water the primordial and fundamental principle. Anaximander adopted as the foundation of the universe something called by him the infinite or undeterminate, out of which the various substances, air, fire, water, etc., were generated, and to which they were again resolved. Anaximenes chose air as the element which best represented or symbolized the underlying principle of nature.

Philosophy was first brought into connection with practical life by Pythagoras (582–504). Regarding the world as a perfect harmony, dependent on number, he aimed at inducing mankind likewise to lead a harmonious life. Pythagoras gave number as the essence and foundation of all existing things; the different numbers being representative of different natural properties and powers; thus *five* stood for color, *six* for life, etc. "All things," said the Pythagoreans, "as known, have number; and this number has two natures, the odd and the even; the known thing is the odd-even or union of the two." This principle of union was God, ever living, ever one, eternal, immovable, self-identical. The whole tendency of Pythagoreanism was in a practical respect ascetic, and directed to a strict culture of the character.

Xenophanes attacked the popular polytheism, and he insisted that God must be one, eternal, incorporeal, without beginning or ending. At the same time he recognized a world of phenomena, or, as he expressed it, "a world of guesswork or opinion."

Parmenides drew a deep division between the world of reason and the world of sensation, between probative argument and the guesswork of sense-impressions.

Heraclitus maintained a theory of incessant change, the negation of all substance and stability, a power of perpetual destruction and renovation. As in the living body, wherein while there is life there is no stability or fixedness; stability and fixedness are the attributes of the unreal image of life, not of life itself. Heraclitus considered fire as an image, or symbol, of the underlying reality of existence. Fire was a symbol, suggested by the special characteristics of fire in nature, its subtlety, its mobility, its power of penetrating all things and devouring all things, its powers for beneficence in the warmth of living bodies, and the life-giving power of the sun. From fire all things originate, and return to it again by a never-resting process of development. All things, therefore, are in a perpetual flux.

Anaxagoras treated the world as made up of elements, but indefinite in number. By the attraction of each for its own kind, the primitive chaos was separated, but excepting intelligence, no element ever was perfectly pure, the characteristic of each substance being determined by the predominance of the proper element. "All things were as one; then cometh intelligence, and by division brought all things into order." Intelligence he conceived as something apart, giving doubtless the first impulse to the movement of things, but leaving them for the rest to their own inherent tendencies.

Empedocles took his stand upon the four elements, out of which all things were constituted by the action of the opposing principles of love, as enmity or discord — a poetical representation of attraction and repulsion. His speculation about things, like those of Parmenides before him and of Lucretius after him, are set down in verse. Empedocles was the first philosopher who supplanted guesses about the world by inquiry into the world itself.

The celebrated atomic theory originated with Leucippus and with his pupil Democritus. The doctrine of the latter was antithetical to that of Empedocles, who worked out on abstract lines a theory of one indivisible, eternal, immovable Being. Democritus, on the contrary, declared for two co-equal elements, Being and Nonentity. The latter, he maintained, was as real as the former. All the visible structure of the universe had its origin in the movements of the atoms that constituted it, and conditioned its infinite changes.

With Anaxagoras, who combined together the principles of all his predecessors, we may say that the realistic period of the old Grecian philosophy closed. It was the ending of an old and the beginning point of a new course of development. The object of the philosophers had been to demonstrate the absolute unity of the external world, and to establish that all variety was, in truth, only the apparent diversity under which it is given to the perishable senses to contemplate it. Their conceptions of human knowledge, arising out of their theories as to the constitution of things, had been no less various, but their thoughts still exercise a potent, though unnoticed, sway in almost every department of philosophy, literature, oratory, and science, in all civilized countries of the old world and the new.

It now remained for the Sophists, whose teachings struck its roots into the whole moral, political, and religious character of the

Athenian life of that time. They opened up discussions on virtue, on justice, on the laws, and on happiness. Plato remarks in his *Republic* that the doctrines of the Sophists only expressed the very principles which guided the course of the great mass of men of that time in their civil and social relations. Their philosophy came in contact with the universal consciousness of the educated class of that period.

The theoretical principle of the Sophistic philosophy was that the individual Ego can arbitrarily determine what is true, right and good. The Sophists taught, that all thought rests solely on the apprehensions of the senses and on subjective impression, and that therefore we have no other standard of action than utility for the individual. Philosophy which had at first been a protest against the existing state of things, now became the conviction of duty; its dominant idea being submission to that law which every man can discover by a persevering examination of himself. The Greek religion at first announced no moral law, and neither by precept nor example undertook to guide men's consciences. It was not until Grecian wisdom had outgrown the myths of paganism, that philosophy appeared in a pure state, disengaged from religious superstition. All the Grecian schools, however, agreed in one thing, namely, to inculcate outward respect for established forms of religion as an instrument of government. So the Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic, and others consented to practise on public occasions the rites which they not less openly derided in their speaking and writing. The philosophers, as a matter of expediency and prudence, did not attempt to disturb the faith of the multitude, for they considered that a traditional mythology was necessary to maintain order in the state. They feared that a rabble without superstition would be ungovernable. The faith of the multitude in the old gods remained unshaken, for it had long attributed the deliverance from the perils of various wars to their mighty and merciful influence. Philosophy, however, gradually undermined the old religion and substituted for it more noble ideas, a pure monotheism, and profound ethics, and the current of moral philosophy reached the depths of many souls and left there a fruitful deposit, a grand principle of honor and saving power. Many inquiring minds turned to philosophy and to teachers who professed to have explored the mysteries of life, and to have found a safe rule for human action.

In Thales, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Empedocles, and others, we find an apostolic succession of great men, great thinkers, and great poets — men of noble life and lofty thoughts, true prophets and revealers. The progress of philosophy from Thales to Plato was the noblest triumph which the human mind, under pagan influence, ever achieved. It originated and carried out the boldest speculations respecting the nature of the soul and its future existence, and elevated a code of morals which has influenced mankind for two thousand years.

Thales, the first Grecian philosopher (*b.* 494 B.C.) said, "Of all things, the oldest is God; the most beautiful is the world; the simplest is thought; the wisest is time." "Death does not differ at all from life." He also taught that a divine power was in all things. Pythagoras (*b.* 584 B.C.) taught that God was one; yet not outside of the world, but in it, wholly in every part, overseeing the beginnings of all things and their combinations. God is the soul of the world, and the world itself is God in process. Through the interchange and intergrowth of all the contrarieties of lower existence, God realizes himself; the universe in its evolution is the self-picturing of God.

Xenophanes (*b.* 600 B.C.), the head of the Eleatics, declared God to be the one and all, external, almighty, and perfect being, being all sight, feeling, and perception, without beginning or ending. He is both finite and infinite.

Empedocles (460 B.C.) declared God to be the Absolute Being, sufficient for himself, and that we can recognize God by the divine element in ourselves.

Diogenes of Apollonia (500 B.C.) taught that there was a *primum mobile*, or first source of being in action, the Soul of the Universe. He regarded the universe as issuing from an intelligent principle, by which it was at once vivified and ordered, a rational as well as sensitive soul.

Then came the sceptical movement which ended when Socrates first taught the doctrine of Divine Providence, declaring that we can only know God in his works. Socrates instituted a severe logical analysis of the meaning of ethical terms, asking, "What is piety?" "What is impiety?" "What is noble?" "What is base?" "What is just?" "What is temperance?" "What is madness?" "What is a state?" "What constitutes the character of a citizen?" "What is rule over man?" "What makes one able to rule?"

III

GREEK PHILOSOPHY — SOCRATES

The speculations of philosophers for a century or more had arrived at the hopeless conclusion that there was no absolute standard of right and wrong, and that all that men can know is dependent upon sensation and perception through the senses. But it was left for Socrates to teach the real objective existence of truth and morality. Like the Sophists, he rejected entirely the physical speculations in which his predecessors had indulged, and made the subjective thoughts and opinions of men his starting-point. He endeavored to extract from the common intelligence of mankind an objective rule of practical life. Socrates aimed to withdraw the mind from the contemplation of nature, and to turn its regard on its own phenomena. He believed every man has within himself the germs of knowledge, and the only way by which men can conquer truth is to struggle valorously with himself for its possession. Hegel says that "Socrates is celebrated as a teacher of morality, but we should rather call him the *inventor of morality*. The Greeks had a morality of custom; but Socrates undertook to teach them what moral virtues and duties were. The moral man is not merely he who wills and does that which is right — not the merely innocent man — but he who has the consciousness of what he is doing. Socrates, in assigning to insight, to conviction, the determination of men's actions, posited the individual as capable of a final moral decision, in contraposition to country and customary morality, and thus manifested a revolutionary aspect towards the Athenian state. It was for giving utterance to that principle that Socrates was condemned to death."

Socrates was not the founder of any school, although all the subsequent celebrated schools of Greece were developments of his principles. He was the first philosopher who endeavored to provide religion with a stable foundation, working at the same problem which occupied the prophets of Israel, and building up the rule of one God.

Socrates taught that the Supreme Being is the immaterial infinite governor of all, that the world bears the stamp of his intelligence, and attests it by irrefragable evidence, and that he is the author and vindicator of all moral laws. But while Socrates taught the unity of God, the soul's immortality, and the moral responsibility of man, yet his philosophy is of purely an ethical character, and he was the first to teach ethics systematically, and from the immutable principles of moral obligation. Cicero said that Socrates brought philosophy down from heaven to earth, that is to say, wrested it from a purely objective naturism, and established it on the domain of psychological facts, thus placing it on its true basis.

Socrates could not conceive how a man should know the good and yet not do it; it was to him a logical contradiction that the man who sought his own well-being should at the same time knowingly despise it. Therefore, with him the good action followed as necessarily from the knowledge of the good as the logical conclusion from its premise. The practice of virtue he inculcated as indispensable to happiness and true religion, and his philosophy is exclusively an inquiry into the nature of virtue. Self-knowledge appeared to him the only object worthy of man, as the starting-point of all philosophy. Knowledge of every other kind, he pronounced so insignificant and worthless, that he was wont to boast of his ignorance, and to declare that he excelled other men in wisdom only in this, that he was conscious of his own ignorance.

Socrates taught that the human soul is allied to the divine essence, not by a participation of essence, but by a similarity of nature; that if the soul of man is a portion of the Deity, virtue, and therefore happiness, must be sought by endeavoring to mould ourselves after the divine image. The *Phaedo* of Socrates stands among the masterpieces of literature. But the soul which Socrates in the *Phaedo* called immortal is not the soul or spirit of the Christian doctrine. It is more the vital principle, the seat of desire, affection, and reason, than the spiritual principle in man.

According to the philosophy of Socrates, man excels all other animals in the faculty of reason, and that the existence of good men will be continued after death, in a state in which they will receive the reward of their virtue. The first principles of virtuous conduct are, according to Socrates, the laws of God, because no man can depart from them with impunity. He taught that true felicity is not to be derived from external possessions, but from wisdom, which consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue; that the cultivation of virtuous manners is necessarily attended with pleasure, as well as profit; that the honest man alone is happy; and that it is absurd to attempt to separate things which are in nature so closely united as virtue and interest.

Socrates was the first to maintain that reason is above nature, and that the natural is merely subservient to intellectual ends. He believed in the existence of one supreme Divinity, the Creator and Disposer of the universe, the

Maker and Father of mankind, the Ruler and Governor among the nations, invisible, all-powerful, omniscient, and omnipotent, perfectly wise and just and good. His one only and constant prayer was, that God would guide him, and give him, not riches, pleasure, honor, power, which were as likely to prove a bane as a blessing, but what was best for him; since God only knew what was for his true and highest good.

In his dialogues with Aristodemus and with Enthydemus, he says: "Such is the nature of the Divinity: that he sees all things, hears all things, is everywhere present, and constantly superintends all events. He who disposes and directs the universe, who is the source of all that is fair and good, who, amid the successive changes, preserves the course of nature unimpaired, and to whose laws all beings are subject, this supreme Deity, though himself invisible, is manifestly seen in his magnificent operations. Learn, then, from the things which are produced, to infer the existence of an invisible power, and to reverence the Divinity."

Socrates did not deny the inferior deities, but regarded them only as we regard angels and archangels, saints and prophets, as finite beings, above man, but infinitely below the Supreme Being.

Socrates taught men to think aright, to give right views of duty, and to expand into life and vigor man's moral, as well as his intellectual nature. He constantly enforced the virtues of temperance, sobriety and justice. He taught the love of knowledge, the love of goodness, the worth of friendship, courage, and wisdom. To him goodness is something sacred in itself, and he had no respect for theories that had not for their object and end the attainment of some practical good. It was the beauty and glory of Socrates' character, that his doctrine of providence and prayer and a future state was the controlling principle of his life. He was an acute inquirer into the existing philosophies of the day, a profound and original thinker, but at the same time endowed with a heart of childlike piety, and a lofty moral character, which wrought his faith, his doctrine, and his life into complete accord, and he was the first who caused the truths of philosophy to exercise a practical influence upon the masses of mankind.

The fathers of the Christian church vie with heathen moralists, in deservedly extolling the wisdom and self-denying virtue of Socrates. Says a writer, " He was raised up to be a prophet to the whole civilized world, and by his lofty wisdom he was a Greek John the Baptist, preparing the way for a higher teacher than himself." Says Rosseau,[1] "Socrates himself would have aspired to no higher honor than that of being a forerunner of Christ among the Greeks. That honor justly belongs to him ; and his propædeutic influence can easily be traced, like that of Plato, and largely through him and his followers, in the history and philosophy of the Greeks and Romans before and after Christ, while the power of his teaching and his life is still felt in all the literature, the philosophy, and the religion of all Christian nations."

Says Grote,[2] " There can be no doubt that

[1] Émile, bk. IV.

[2] History of Greece.

the individual influence of Socrates permanently enlarged the horizon, improved the method, and multiplied the ascendant minds of the Grecian speculative world, to a manner never since paralleled. Subsequent philosophers may have had a more elaborate doctrine, and a larger number of disciples who imbibed their ideas; but none of them applied the same stimulating method with the same efficacy; none of them struck out of other minds that fire which sets light to original thought; none of them either produced in others the pains of intellectual pregnancy, or extracted from others the fresh and unborrowed offspring of a really parturient mind."

After the death of Socrates a number of schools of philosophy came into being, which incorporated some of the fundamental doctrines of Socrates or contained some systems which existed anterior to the age of Socrates, but which were modified by the influence of the Socratic philosophy, and which often changed, exaggerated, or perverted the tenets of their common master. Of such were the Cynic school of Antisthenes and Diogenes, the Cyrenaic school of Aristippus, the Pyrrhonic school of Pyrrho, the Megaric or Eristic school of Euclid, and Diodorus Chronos, the Academic school of Plato, the Epicurean school of Epicurus, and the Peripatetic school of Aristotle.

The fundamental thought of the followers of Socrates was that man should have one universal and essentially true aim, but the nature of this aim varied with the teaching of the various disciples. The majority, however, of philosophical schools deviated from the spirit of Socrates, who had taught men to have a high regard for their duties and to act after mature consideration. The schools of philosophy learned either the idealism of Plato or the analytic method of Aristotle, while the later system of ethics partakes largely of the Stoic self-sacrifice, and the Epicurean doctrine of the highest pleasure as the chiefest good. But when Zeno had elaborated his ethical system, something was offered to the people that their religion was no longer able to bestow. We shall see how much Zeno and the later teachers of Stoicism were indebted to Socrates for many of their best and noblest thoughts.

It is not our purpose to follow the course of Greek philosophy from Socrates to Zeno. We have only briefly referred to the philosophers before Socrates, and to Socrates, in order that the reader may see to what extent Zeno may have been influenced by his predecessors. As we have seen, the influence of Socrates was undoubtedly very great. He gave the impulse to Plato, the great master, the Shakespeare of Greek philosophy, as he has been called. The moral philosophy of Plato was adopted from the teachings of Socrates without notable modification or alteration. Plato, in his turn, acted upon Aristotle, and the systems of philosophy developed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, have persistently dominated human belief to the present day. Outside the sacred literature of the world, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were the main factors of civilization. They fulfilled a truly sublime mission in their day and nation, for in the fourth century, B.C., these philosophers and their disciples made an end to the more ancient materialism, and built up those systems of philosophy, including the natural sciences, which have exercised so vast an influence upon the progress of man, and still do in very many instances. They were the great prophets of the human conscience in the pagan world. Says Pressensé, "The philosophy of a people is the highest and truest expression of its genius. Its thinkers evolve from their inner consciousness, the fundamental principles of the nation's life, apart from all that is merely accessory."

We shall see that the philosophy of Greece did inestimable service in preparing the way for Christianity, by purifying the idea of the Deity, and we shall find in their religious ideas and their psychology many points of union with Christianity. Zeller has shown[1] that the decadence of the national Greek life had a marked influence upon philosophic thought. At the time that the philosophy of Greece reached its highest point in Plato and Aristotle, Greece was in all other respects in a hopeless state of decline. The old morality

[1] Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics.

and propriety of conduct had disappeared, and the philosophy of the day offered no substitute for the loss of the old belief in the gods. The age required moral bracing and strengthening. As this was not to be found in the national religion, philosophy was looked to to supply the deficiency, and Epicureanism and Stoicism, by the essentially practical character of their teaching, and by their concentration of thought on ethical problems and on the moral life of the individual, supplied the needs of the educated people by inculcating peace of mind by avoiding all those disturbances which sometimes arise from external influence, at other times from internal emotions. As a writer has said, the Stoics had replaced the incomprehensible God of Plato, and the solitary God of Aristotle, by a living God who penetrates and fills the universe with his own life — the God which underlies the Vedas as it underlies Hellenism, and the Semitic peoples. Although under conditions which they did not understand, Stoic and even Epicurean were preparing the way for the Christian religion, and Greek civilization was an essential condition of the progress of the Gospel.

Professor Cocker[1] sums up the work of preparation done by Greek philosophy, as seen : —

"1. In the release of the popular mind from polytheistic notions, and the purifying and spiritualizing of the theistic idea.

"2. In the development of the theistic argument in a logical form.

"3. In the awakening and enthronement of conscience as a law of duty, and in the elevation and purification of the moral idea.

"4. In the fact that, by an experiment conducted on the largest scale, it demonstrated the insufficiency of reason to elaborate a perfect ideal of moral excellence, and develop the moral forces necessary to secure its realization.

"5. It awakened and deepened the consciousness of guilt and the desire for redemption."

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[1] Christianity and Greek Philosophy.

IV

THE FOUNDERS OF STOICISM

The aim of Stoicism was to popularize the doctrines and the teachings of philosophers, which had been for some time the property of the learned class, also to provide the individual in a period of great moral depravity, with a fixed moral basis for practical life. This school was founded at Athens about 310 B.C., by Zeno of Citium, and brought to fuller systematic form by his successors as heads of the school, Cleanthes of Assos, and especially Chrysippus of Soli, who died about 206 B.C.

Zeno was born at Citium, in the island of Cyprus, a Greek city having a large Phœnician admixture.[1] Proving a studious boy, his father, who was a merchant, early devoted him to the study of philosophy. While on a visit to Athens, the elder Zeno purchased several of the writings of the most eminent philosophers, and these the young Zeno read with great avidity. So interested did he become in his philosophical studies, he determined to visit Athens where he could study the philosophical systems at their fountain head, which he did in his thirtieth year. Happening accidentally to meet in a bookstore, Crates, the Cynic philosopher, he formed his acquaintance and, attending some of his lectures, he was so well pleased that he became one of his disciples. But while he admired the general principles and spirit of the Cynic school, he could not reconcile himself to their peculiar manners, and it was not long before he became dissatisfied with the coarse, ostentatious disregard for established usages, and the indifference to speculative inquiry which characterized the Cynic sect.

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[1] It is noticeable that not only Zeno, but a large proportion of the successive leaders of the Stoic school, came from this and other places having Semitic elements in them.

The school of Cynics was founded by Antisthenes, an Athenian by birth, about 380 B.C. He was a pupil of Socrates, and, like him, he taught that a speculative philosophy was unprofitable, and should be supplanted by the practical ethical training whose end is a moral and tranquil life. In this respect the Cynic school was like the Stoic, but differed in defining virtue to be extreme simplicity in living. In fact, the sole end of the Cynic philosophy seemed to be to subdue the passions, and produce simplicity of manners. But the rigorous discipline finally degenerated into the most absurd severity. The followers of Antisthenes wore the most filthy clothing, ate raw meat, and treated all who approached them with great rudeness. Diogenes, of Sinope, became one of the most famous of the Cynics, and his striking figure and bold epigrams attracted great attention.

The doctrine of Antisthenes was mainly confined to morals; but even in this portion of philosophy it is exceedingly meager and deficient, scarcely furnishing anything beyond a general defence of the olden simplicity and moral energy, against the luxurious indulgence and effeminacy of later times. Indeed, all speculation seemed to him quite idle or fantastic which did not bear directly upon moral questions. Like Socrates he regarded virtue as necessary, indeed, alone sufficient for happiness, and could be a branch of knowledge that could be taught, and that once acquired could not be lost, its essence consisting in freedom from wants by the avoidance of evil, *i.e.*, of pleasure and desire. Its acquisition needs no dialectic argumentation, only Socratic strength.

It was while he was with the Cynics that Zeno composed his *Republic*, a work which afterwards caused some trouble to the school. Zeno's inquisitive turn of mind led him to follow the teachings of other philosophers, notably that of Stilpo, a philosopher, who was a native of Megara, and taught philosophy in his native town. Such was Stilpo's inventive power and dialectic art, that he inspired almost all Greece with a devotion to the ethical Megarian philosophy, dwelling especially upon the conception of virtue and its considerations. On moral topics Stilpo taught that the highest felicity consists in a mind free from the dominion of passion, a doctrine afterwards incorporated into the Stoic belief.

Plato, in his dialogues, brings his philosophic conceptions into striking relation with the theories of the Megarian as well as the Cynic schools of thought.

Zeno afterwards attended the lectures of Xenocrates and Diodorus Chronos, a native of Caria, and disciple of the Megaric school. By the latter Zeno was instructed in dialectics. He also became acquainted with the doctrines of Socrates and with Platonism. At last Zeno became a disciple of Polemon, a disciple of Xenocrates, whom he succeeded as director of the Academy. He strictly adhered in his teaching to the doctrines of Plato. Polemon was aware that Zeno's intention in thus passing from one school to another was to collect materials for a new system of his own. Said Polemon, " I am no stranger to your Phœnician arts, Zeno; I perceive that your design is to creep slyly into my garden and steal away my fruit."

At last, after twenty years of preparation, having made himself master of the tenets of the prevailing philosophies, Zeno determined to become the founder of a new sect, which should have for its object the liberating of himself and his followers from the degeneracy of the times, by means of a philosophy which, by purity and strength of moral will, would procure independence from all external things, and procure inward peace. The place he made choice of for his school was called the *Poecile*, or "Painted Porch," a public portico, so called from the pictures of Polygnotus and other eminent masters with which it was adorned. This portico, being the most famous in Athens, was called by way of distinction, *Stoa*, "the Porch." It was from this circumstance that the followers of Zeno were called Stoics, *i. e.*, "men of the Porch." Zeno used to walk up and down in the beautiful colonnade, and there he delivered his discourses, wishing, as Diogenes Laertius observed, to make that spot tranquil; for in the time of the Thirty Tyrants, nearly fourteen hundred of the citizens had died by the executioner's hand.

Zeno began his teaching as a Cynic, to which he gradually added the tenets of other systems, noticeably those of Heraclitus, Aristotle, Diogenes of Apollonia, and the Pythagoreans. In their theory of knowledge, the Cynics made use of "reason," which was also one of their leading ethical conceptions. In this particular Zeno followed them. But he enlarged upon the belief of the Cynics, and made reason, or the *logos*, which had been an ethical or psychological principle of the Cynics, an extension throughout the natural world, in which Heraclitean influence is unmistakable, but he came to formulate his distinctive theory of the universe far in advance of the teaching of the Cynics. As to the moral doctrine of the Cynics, there can be no doubt that he transferred it with but very little change into his own school. In fact it differed more in words than in reality. He retained the spirit of their moral teaching, but from his studies of other philosophies, he formed a new system of speculative philosophy. Juvenal remarked that the distinction between the Cynics and the Stoics lay only in the coat they wore.

The principal difference, however, between the Cynics and the Stoics was, that the former disdained the cultivation of nature, the latter affected to rise above it. On the subject of physics, Zeno received his doctrine from Pythagoras and Heraclitus through the Platonic school. Zeno combated Plato's doctrine that virtue consists in contemplation, and of Epicurus, that it consisted in pleasure. He sought to oppose scepticism, which was casting its funeral veil of doubt and uncertainty over everything pertaining to the soul, God, and the future life. According to Zeno, to practise virtue was the highest duty of man, but knowledge was needed in order to practise virtue. How, then, shall we obtain sure and certain knowledge? The only knowledge which is sure, certain, immediate, and real, is the knowledge we have through the senses. The philosophy of Zeno did not absolutely deny to man the right to speculative endeavor, but inculcated, above everything else, a virtuous activity. Man must live to be virtuous, to do brave deeds, to be a man in the true Latin sense of the word *vir*-tus — manliness, mankind, *i.e.*, strength, vigor, bravery, courage, aptness, capacity, worth, excellence, virtue, etc.

Zeno was persuaded that if we only knew what is good we should be certain to practise it. With him *sense* furnishes the data of knowledge, and *reason* combines them; the soul being mortified by external things, and modifying them in return, he believed that the mind is at first, as it were, a blank tablet, on which sensation writes marks, and that the distinctness of sensuous impressions is the criterion of their truth. Zeno, in his teaching, avoided interfering with the national religion, all of whose divinities were to him manifestations of the One Being; and in virtue of this principle he was able to respect popular beliefs. He taught a devout recognition of an all-powerful and perfectly good God, who directly controls the universe. Regarding everything in the world as of divine origin, he denied the existence of evil, which would imply that the Deity was defective in either goodness or power. To show how God and the universe were distinct and yet one, was the problem of Zeno and his disciples. They taught that God was the soul of the great animal world. That he is the universal reason which rules over all, and permeates all. That he is that gracious Providence which cares for the individual as well as for all. He is infinitely wise. His nature is the basis of law, forbidding evil and commanding good.

While the teaching of Zeno was mainly ethical, it differed little from the moral doctrines of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus; but it was accompanied by theological ideas which gave it a peculiar character. The Athenians had so much respect for Zeno that they honored him with a golden crown, and a brazen statue. King Antigonus held Zeno in great respect, and he attended his lectures whenever he came to Athens. Apollonius quotes the following letter of Antigonus to Zeno: —

"I think that in good fortune and glory I have the advantage of you; but in reason and education I am inferior to you, and also in that perfect happiness which you have attained to. On which account I have thought it good to address you, and invite you to come to me, being convinced that you will not refuse what is asked of you. Endeavor, therefore, by all means to come to me, considering this fact, that you will not be the instructor of me alone, but of all the Macedonians, and who leads him in the path of virtue, evidently marshals all his subjects on the road to happiness. For as the ruler is, so it is natural that his subjects for the most part shall be also."

Zeno is described by Diogenes Laertius, as a person of great powers of endurance; and of very simple habits, living on food which required no fire to dress it, and wearing a thin cloak, so that it was said of him: —

"The cold of winter, and the ceaseless rain,
Come powerless against him; weak is the dart
Of the fierce summer sun, or fell disease,
To bend that iron frame. He stands apart,
In naught resembling the vast common crowd;
But, patient and unwearied, night and day,
Clings to his studies and philosophy."

Philemon speaks thus of Zeno, in his play entitled *The Philosophers:* —

"This man adopts a new philosophy,
He teaches to be hungry; nevertheless,
He gets disciples. Bread his only food,
His best dessert dried figs; water his drink."

The disciples of Zeno were very numerous. Among the most eminent were, Persæus, of Citium; Ariston, of Chios, the son of Miltiades; Sphærus, of the Bosphorus; Philonides, of Theles; Callippus, of Corinth; Posidonius, of Alexandria; Athenodorus, of Soli; and Zeno, a Sidonian. But one of the most noted was Cleanthes, of Assos, the son of Phanias, and we owe to him the carrying out and elaboration of the Stoic philosophy. He succeeded Zeno, and while he was not his equal in point of knowledge, by his genius he raised himself from a humble rank in life to a position of great eminence. His natural faculties were slow, but resolution and perseverance enabled him to overcome every difficulty. He wrote much, but none of his writings remain except the following beautiful hymn to Zeus, pronounced by Sir Alexander Grant "the most devotional fragment of Grecian antiquity."[1]

Most glorious God, invoked by many names,
O Zeus, eternally omnipotent,
The Lord of nature, ruling all by law,
Hail! For all men may speak to thee unblamed;

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[1] The Ethics of Aristotle, p. 328.

From thee we spring, with reasoned speech endowed
Alone of tribes that live and creep on earth.
Thee will I hymn, and ever sing the power.
Thee all this cosmos, circling round the earth,
Obeys, and willingly is ruled by thee.
Thou holdest in unconquerable hands
So grand a minister, the double-edged,
The burning, ever living thunderbolt;
For 'neath its strokes, all things in nature awed,
Shudder; and thou therewith directest wise
The universal reason, which through all
Roams, mingling with the lights both great and small . . .
The great supreme, all-penetrating king.
Nor without thee, O God, is any work
Performed on earth or sea, or in the vault
Ethereal and divine, save whatso'er
The wicked do through folly of their own.
But thou canst perfect make e'en monstrous things,
And order the disordered; things not dear
Are dear to thee: for into one thou so
Hast harmonized the whole, the good and ill,
That one eternal reason dwells in all;
From which the wicked flee, ill-fated men,
Who, longing ever to obtain the good,
Nor see nor hear God's universal law,
Obeying which they might achieve a life
Worthy, enriched with mind; but they in haste
Forsaking good, seek each some different ill.
For glory some arouse the eager strife;
And some, disordered, turn to gain; and some
Pursue, ungoverned, bodily delights.

But Zeus, all bounteous, wrapt in sable cloud,
Thou ruler of the thunder, oh! redeem
Mankind from mournful ignorance. Do thou
Dispel, O Father, from our souls this fault,
And grant that we attain that wisdom high
On which relying thou dost rule the world
With Justice; so that, honored thus by thee,
Thee we in turn may honor, and may hymn
Unceasingly thy works, as doth beseem
A mortal, since nor men nor gods can know
A grander honor than to greatly hymn
The universal and eternal law.

The dynamical theory of physics, as founded by Thales, developed by Anaximenes and Diogenes, and finally consummated by Heraclitus, had taught that the universe was an eternal living being, possessing in itself a principle of vitality, which, by spontaneous development, produced all phenomena, whether physical or moral. The physical doctrines of Heraclitus were embodied by Zeno in his eclectic system of philosophy. According to Heraclitus, the end of wisdom is to discover the ground and principle of all things, which is an eternal and ever-living unity, and pervades and is in all phenomena. This principle is not distinct from the soul or vital energy, but which, as guiding and directing the mundane development, is endowed with wisdom and intelligence. This supreme and perfect force of life is obviously without limit to its activity; consequently, nothing that it forms can remain fixed; all is constantly in a process of formation. In the eternal flux and flow of being constitutes its reality; even as in a river the water is ever changing, and the river exists as a river only in virtue of this continual change. This eternal movement Heraclitus pictured as an eternal strife of opposites, whose differences consummate themselves in finest harmony.

While Zeno adopted this theory and endeavored to identify the Cynic "reason" which is a law for man, with the "reason" which is the law of the universe, it remained for Cleanthes to take this idea out of the region of ethics, as it had been considered by Zeno, and to discover the motive cause. The vital principle pervading all phenomena is a purely physical fact, and accounts for the diverse destinies of all innumerable particular things; it is the true cause of the movement and process of the universe. Herein lies the key to the entire system of the Stoics.

Doubtless the origin and success of the Stoic philosophy may be traced to the inadequacy of the Platonic and the Aristotelian philosophy to discover the principle of connection between God and the sensible world. The doctrines, however, as taught by Zeno and his followers, contained little that was new, seeking rather to give a practical appreciation to the dogmas which they took ready-made from the previous systems. With them philosophy is the science of the principles on which the moral life ought to be founded.

Cleanthes was succeeded by Chrysippus, a native of Soli or of Tarsus, in Cilicia, who died about 208 B.C. He was a man of much greater attainments than Zeno or Cleanthes, and he has been regarded as the chief prop of the Stoic school, in which respect it was said of him, that without Chrysippus there would have been no Stoic school at all. Says Diogenes Laertius, "He was a man of great natural ability, and of great acuteness in every way, so that in many points he dissented from Zeno, and also from Cleanthes, to whom he often used to say that he only wanted to be instructed in the dogmas of the school, and that he would discover the demonstrations for himself. But whenever he opposed him with any vehemence, he always repented, so that he used frequently to say:—

In most respects I am a happy man,
Excepting where Cleanthes is concerned;
For in that matter I am far from fortunate.

And he had such a high reputation as a dialectician that most people thought that if there were such a science as dialectics among the gods, it would be in no respect different from that of Chrysippus. But though he was eminently able in matter, he was not perfect in style."

Chrysippus wrote, according to Diogenes Laertius, over seven hundred books, and he often wrote several books on the same subject, wishing to put down everything that occurred to him; and constantly correcting his previous assertions, and using a great abundance of testimonies. Chrysippus assimilated, developed, and systematized the doctrines of his predecessors, securing them in their stereotyped and final form. He maintained with the Stoics in general, that the world was God, or a universal effusion of his spirit, and that the superior part of this spirit, which consisted in mind and reason, was the common nature of things, containing the whole and every part. Chrysippus labored after thoroughness, erudition, and scientific completeness. In disputation he discoursed with a degree of promptitude and confidence, as well as a vehemence and arrogance which created him many adversaries, particularly in the Academic and Epicurean sects. He supported his teachings by an immense erudition, and culled liberally from the poets to illustrate and enforce his views. Of his writings nothing remains, except a few extracts which are preserved in the works of Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, and Aulus Gellius.

To Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, we owe the building up of the character and spirit of Stoicism. At first, owing to the many rivals, the progress of Stoicism was very slow, but to the foundations then laid, hardly anything of importance was afterwards added.

V

DOCTRINES OF STOICISM

As we have seen, the Stoic system, like the rest of the great Socratic schools, derived its main principles first at Athens, and was gradually developed by Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus, in the course of the third century before our era. The Stoics, like the Epicureans, avoided the labor of original invention. In logic and dialectics they were followers of Aristotle and the Cynics. In physics they were followers of Heraclitus, Socrates, and Aristotle. With the exception of the threefold division of the elements, there is hardly a single point of the Heraclitian theory of nature which the Stoics did not appropriate. Their formal logic followed that of Aristotle. The Stoics, however, conceived the individual as no longer the political being conceived by Aristotle. They rose above the city to the notion of a more comprehensive fellowship of mankind. Says Aristotle, "the chief good of man consists in the full realization and perfection of the life of man as man, in accordance with the specific excellence belonging to that life, and if there be more specific excellence than one, then in accordance with that excellence which is the best and the most rounded and complete." This is in fact the teaching of Socrates and Plato.

In ethics the Stoics followed Socrates, the Cynics, and the philosophers of the Old Academy, but they gradually diverged further and further from the Cynics, although the self-sufficiency of virtue, the distinction of things good, evil, and indifferent, the ideal pictures of the wise man, the whole withdrawal from the outer world within the precincts of the mind, and the strength of the moral will, are ideas taken from the Cynics. The Stoics themselves, however, deduced their philosophical pedigree direct from Antisthenes, or the Cynics, and indirectly from Socrates.

The Stoic doctrine showed itself to be an essentially practical one by laying the most stress on a proper mode of life, but this proper mode of life must proceed, as Socrates required, from a proper conviction, and by the appreciation of a certain standard, or criterion.

The Stoics have connected philosophy most intimately with the duties of practical life. Philosophy is with them the practice of wisdom, the exercise of virtue. Virtue is the perfect adjustment of all the desires and acts of the soul—in Christian phraseology, the submission of the will to the universal and persistent *logos*, the divine reason and providence. Virtue is thus, necessarily, one and indivisible. This ethical view is essentially the same with that of the most rigid Christian sects. Virtue consists in bringing man's actions into harmony with the laws of the universe, and with the general order of the world. This is only possible when man knows that order and those laws. With the Stoics, virtue and science are one, in so far, at least, that they divide virtue in reference to philosophy into physical, ethical, and logical. The Stoics not only define philosophy as the art of virtue, or the effort to attain it, but give as the reason of its division into logic, physics, and ethics, the fact that there are logical, physical, and ethical virtues. They use the name of *logic*, because it treats of the *logos*, *i.e.*, thought or the word,[1] together with the production of both. This they divided into *rhetoric* and *dialectic*, the arts of monologue and dialogue respectively, because it is possible to speak either for one's self, for others, and with others. The elaborate divisions and subdivisions into which they divided both rhetoric and dialectic, it is not necessary for us to speak of, as many of them now seem trivial, useless, and irrelevant to what is known as formal logic. They laid particular stress upon hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms, which they did not introduce, but adopted from Aristotle. From Heraclitus to the Stoics, and from the Stoics to Philo Judæus, the term *logos* passed, but constantly changed and modified. Heraclitus found the *logos* inseparable from the world. In man it is the soul. It was in no sense speech or word, but it was the relation or reason of things objectively. This operative principle, with the Stoics, is the active principle which lives in and determines the world, and is even called God, though conceived as material.

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[1] The Greek term *logos* has a peculiar significance in Philo, St. John, and the early Greek Fathers, and is an important item in the history of Christology.

In logic, the Stoics found the criterion of knowledge in sensuous impressions, which furnish the materials fashioned by reason, and combated scepticism by affirming that every representation of an object implied the existence of the object itself; it, they said, is nothing else than a representation which is produced by a present object in a manner like itself. The soul is conceived as a blank tablet upon which the object produces a conception either by actual impressions or by altering the psychical condition, from which there is subsequently generated by repetitions, first expectation and finally experience. Plutarch refers to this as follows:

"When we perceive, for example, a white object, the recollection remains when the object is gone. And when many similar recollections have accumulated, we have what is called *experience*. Besides the ideas which we get in this natural and quiet undesigned way, there are other ideas which we get through teaching and information. In the strict way only these latter ought to be called ideas, the former rather should be called perceptions. Now the rational faculty, in virtue of which we are called reasoning beings, is developed out of, or over and beyond, the mass of perceptions, in the second seven years' period of life. In fact a thought may be defined as a kind of mental image, such as a rational animal alone is capable of having."

The Stoics regarded sensations as the only source of all perceptions. Perceptions give rise to memory, repeated acts of memory to experience, and conclusions based on experience suggest conceptions which go beyond the sphere of direct sensation. The formation of conceptions by comparison, or upon the combination of perceptions, or upon analogy, sometimes takes place methodically and artificially, at other times naturally and spontaneously. Thus the Stoics conceived that they had answered the whole problem, in affirming that the true or conceivable representation reveals not only itself, but also its object.

This theory of Zeno, undoubtedly adopted from Plato, was persistently attacked by the Epicureans and Academics, who made clear that reason is dependent upon, if not derived from, sense, and that the utterances of reason lack consistency. Chrysippus, as a concession to his opponents, substituted for the *logos* the new standards of sensation and general conception — anticipation, that is the generic type formed in the mind unconsciously and spontaneously. It was under Chrysippus that the formal logic of the Stoics reached scientific completeness. Zeller says, however, "making every allowance for the extension of the field of logic, in scientific precision it lost more than it gained by the labors of Chrysippus." He considers that no very high estimate can be formed of the formal logic of the Stoics. "We see, indeed, that the greatest care was expended by the Stoics since the time of Chrysippus in tracing the forms of intellectual procedure into their minutest ramifications, and referring them to fixed types. At the same time, we see that the real business of logic was lost sight of in the process, the business of portraying the operations of thought, and giving its laws, whilst the most useless trifling with forms was recklessly indulged in. The Stoics can have made no discoveries of importance even as to logical forms, or they would not have been passed over by writers ever on the alert to note the slightest deviation from the Aristotelian logic. Hence the whole contribution of the Stoics to the field of logic consists in their having clothed the logic of the Peripatetics with a new terminology, and having developed certain parts of it with painful minuteness, whilst they wholly neglected other parts, as was the fate of the part treating of inference."[1]

Physics, or the Theory of Nature. In their physics, where they follow for the most part Heraclitus, the Stoics are distinguished from their predecessors, especially from Plato and Aristotle, by their thoroughly carried out proposition that nothing incorporeal exists, that everything essential is corporeal. Within the corporeal they recognized two principles, matter and force, *i.e.*, the material, and the Deity permeating and influencing it. Ultimately, however, the two are identical. There is nothing in the world with any independent existence: all is bound together by an unalterable chain of causation. They, therefore, considered God and matter as one identical substance, which, on the side of its passive and changeable capacity they call matter, and on the side of its active and changeless energy, God. There is in reality but one being existing. We may call him God, or we may call him the universe. The one is God active, the other is God passive. The one is the life, the other is the body which is animated by the life. But since the Stoics considered the world ensouled by God in the light of a living and rational being, they were obliged to treat the conception of God not only in a physical but also in its ethical aspect. God is the source of all character and individuality, who is indestructible and eternal, the fashioner of all things, who in certain cycles of ages gathers up all things unto himself, and then out of himself brings them again to birth; there is the matter of the universe wherein God works, and there is also the union of the two. This is the totality of all existence; out of it the whole universe proceeds, hereafter to be again resolved into it. The world is governed by reason and forethought, and this reason extends through every part. The universe, therefore, is a living thing, having a soul or reason in it. That every existence must have a body was the doctrine which moulded the whole of the theology of the Stoics. The very indefiniteness in which they left the idea of the corporeal, showed that they were far removed from the school of the Epicureans. Emotions, impulses, notions and judgments, in so far as they are due to material causes, were regarded as material objects, and for the same reason not only artistic skill but individual actions were said to be corporeal.

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[1] Zeller, The Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, p. 123.

Treated in its ethical aspect, God is not only in the world as the ruling and living energy, but is also the universal reason which rules the whole world and penetrates all matter: he is the gracious Providence which cares for the individual and the whole; he is wise, and is the ground of that natural law which commands the good and forbids the evil; he punishes and rewards; he possesses a perfect and blessed life. To the question, what is God? Stoicism rejoins, what is God not? Everything in the world seemed to them to be permeated by the divine life, and was regarded as but flowing out of the most perfect life through certain channels, until it returned in a necessary cycle back again to itself. Everywhere was one universal law pervading and ruling all things and all beings, and that law, if stern, was righteous, and enjoined virtue in man. Man can only lead a rational life by conforming to a general law, and he rises or falls in the scale of dignity and happiness as he succeeds or fails in doing thus with persistent purpose. Tiedemann says of the Stoics, "Among all philosophers of antiquity, none defended the existence of God with so warm a zeal or so many powerful arguments."

It is thus seen that the system of the Stoics was strictly pantheistic,[1] as they admitted no essential difference between God and the world. In discussing the question as to what led the Stoics to this materialism, Zeller considers that the real causes will be found in the central idea of the whole system of the Stoics — the practical character of their philosophy. "Devoting themselves from the outset with all their energies to practical inquiries, the Stoics in their theory of nature occupied the ground of common views, which know of no real object excepting what is grossly sensible and corporeal. Their aim in speculation was to discover a firm basis for human actions. In action, however, men are brought into direct and experimental contact with objects. The objects thus presented to the senses we are brought face to face with in naked reality, nor is an opportunity afforded for doubting their real being. Their reality is proved practically, inasmuch as it affects us and offers itself for the exercise of our powers. In every such exercise of power, both subject and object are always material. Even when an impression is conveyed to the soul of man, the direct instrument is something material—the voice or the gesture. In the region of experience there are no such things as non-material impressions. This was the ground occupied by the Stoics: a real thing is what either acts on us, or is acted upon by us. Such a thing is naturally material, and the Stoics, with their practical ideas, not being able to soar above that which is most obvious, declared that reality belongs only to the world of bodies."[1]

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[1] The speculations which have been called pantheistic are legitimate exercises of the human intellect. They are efforts to think and speak of God under the aspects in which God has appeared to different minds, or has been viewed under different relations. To call God Being, Non-being, Substance, Becoming, Nature, the Absolute, the infinite I, the Thought of the Universe, or the "not ourselves" which works for righteousness, is to speak of God with the imperfections of human thought and language, and yet such names are as legitimate as Creator, vast Designer, eternal Geometrician, or to those who receive it, even as Lord, Supreme Ruler, or Father of men. — Pantheism and Christianity, John Hunt, D.D., p. 397.

Ethics. The philosophy of the Stoics culminated in their ethics. In its speculation on the origin of things, still more in its ethical ideal, Stoicism is very near to some of the noblest phases of Christian theology and morals. Their ethics were a protest against moral indifference; their followers were taught to live in harmony with nature, conformably with reason and the demands of universal good. They taught that it is wisdom alone that renders men happy, that the ills of life are but fancied evils, and that a wise man ought not to be moved with either joy or grief, but to show the utmost indifference to pleasure, pain, and all external good or evil.

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[1] Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, p. 134.

The chief end of life is "A life consistent with itself," or, as it was otherwise expressed, "A life consistent with nature." The first object of man is the preservation of his own existence and his consciousness of his own existence. This is its life according to nature; this is virtue and the chief good,—for virtue and the chief good can be only life according to nature. Therefore live in harmony with thy rational nature so far as this has not been distorted nor refined by art, but is held in its natural simplicity. In the "life consistent with nature" is included also, life in and according to a social order, for nature is but a synonym for reason, and society is but a natural offspring of reason, the common nature of mankind. Herein we discover an internal source of the external harmony and regularity of a consistent life. The Stoics taught that nature counts for everything and external performances for very little. Once let the reason become *right*, and it imparts this character to all that it affects. First the soul is made strong, healthy, and beautiful; when, therefore, it thus fulfils all the conditions of its being, it is absolutely perfect. Nothing can be conformable to nature for any individual thing, unless it be in harmony with the law of the universe, or with the universal reason of the world.

From this moral principle we deduce the Stoic conception of virtue, which is a rational life, an agreement with the general course of the world. Only virtue is good, and happiness consists exclusively in virtue. The virtue of man is the perfection of his soul, *i.e.*, of the ruling part or rational soul; make the soul perfect and you make the life perfect. Then life will flow on smoothly and uniformly, like a gentle river. No longer will there be anything to hope or fear; this harmonious accord between impulses and acts is itself man's well-being or welfare. Happiness consists in independence and peace of mind rather than in the enjoyment which moral conduct brings with it. To be free from disquietude, says Seneca, is the peculiar privilege of the wise; the advantage which is gained by philosophy is, that of living without fear, and rising superior to the troubles of life.

The Stoics held that pains are an evil, but, by a proper discipline, may be triumphed over. They disallowed the direct and ostensible pursuit of pleasure as an end (the point of view of Epicurus), but allowed it to their followers partly by promising them the victory over pain, and partly by certain enjoyments of an elevated cast that grew out of their plan of life. Pain of every kind, whether from the casualties of existence, or from the severity of the Stoical virtues, was to be met with by a discipline of evidence, a hardening process which, if persisted in, would succeed in reducing the mind to a state of apathy or indifference. Even pleasure and pain, however, so far as concerns the absolute end or happiness of our being, are things indifferent; we cannot call them either good or evil. Yet they have a relation to the higher law, for the consciousness of them was so implanted in us at the first that our souls by natural impulse are drawn to pleasure, while they shrink from pain as from a deadly enemy. Things indifferent are things that are neither beneficial nor injurious, such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, riches, good reputation, nobility of birth, and their contraries, death, disease, labor, disgrace, weakness, poverty, and bad reputation, baseness of birth, and the like.[1]

Great stress was laid on the instability of pleasure, and the constant liability to accidents: whence we should always be anticipating and adapting ourselves to the worst that could happen, so as never to be in a state where anything could ruffle the mind. It was pointed out how much might still be made of the worst circumstances—poverty, banishment, public odium, sickness, old age—and every consideration was advanced that could "arm the obdurate breast with stubborn patience, as with triple steel."

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[1] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Zeno, p. 292.

The Wise Man. How must we act in every individual instance, in every moral relation, so as to act according to nature? To answer this question, the Stoics describe in general terms the action according to nature, and portraying their ideal of the wise man. The wise man is he who, being perfect in his knowledge of the laws of the universe, above all passion, and completely governed by reason, is perfectly contained and self-satisfied, — a fit companion for the gods, yes, even for Zeus himself. He who possesses virtue possesses it whole and entire; he who lacks it lacks it altogether. The wise man is drawn as perfect. All he does is right, all his opinions are true; he alone is free, rich, beautiful, skilled to govern, capable of giving or receiving a benefit. Only the wise man is capable of feeling gratitude, love, and friendship. The wise man, therefore, is the perfect human being; that is, perfectly adjusted to the rest of the universe, of which he forms a part. The one problem of life is to make the divine reason paramount and supreme in the sphere of one's own conduct. The wise man is directed to remember that Nature, in her operations, aims at the universal, and never spares individuals, but uses them as means for accomplishing her ends. It is for him, therefore, to submit to his destiny, endeavoring continually to establish the supremacy of reason, and cultivating, as the things necessary to virtue, knowledge, temperance, fortitude, justice. It was a great point with the Stoic to be conscious of "advance," or improvement. By self-examination, he kept himself constantly acquainted with his moral state, and it was both his duty and his satisfaction to be approaching to the ideal of the perfect man. In this picture of the wise man, the moral idealism of the Stoic system attained its zenith.

VI

ROMAN STOICISM

After the time of Chrysippus, details showing the practical application of the principles of the Stoics to the special relations of life, engrossed much of the attention of the Stoic philosophers. The Stoic doctrine was but rarely kept pure by its adherents; some diluted it, as did Epictetus and Seneca, so that it became a mere system of practical wisdom, and others exaggerated it by ascetic additions derived from the doctrines and rules of the Pythagoreans and Cynics. Posidonius enumerates, as belonging to the province of moral philosophy, precept, exhortation, and advice. He held that reason cannot, as the earlier Stoics declared, be the cause of the passions, which, he thought, are by nature *ir*rational, but that reason and the passions exist side by side in the soul as distinct faculties. Mere thought or will is not sufficient to arouse and control passion, except in highly cultivated natures. By this view Posidonius relaxed the evident strain in the system of the earlier Stoics upon the faith of ordinary consciousness in its own immediate presentiments.

Although Stocism, as we have seen, arose on Hellenic soil, the school can hardly be considered a product of Greek intellect, although the Romans never added a single principle to the philosophy which the Greeks elaborated. Stoicism did not, however, achieve its crowning triumph until it was brought to Rome, where for over two hundred years it was the creed, if not the philosophy of all the best of the Romans, and notably in ethics and jurisprudence. Stoicism has demonstrated the thought of after ages to a surprising degree. We find the most famous names in connection with the Stoic doctrine, belonging to the Roman world. The Roman type of character from the first was moulded on the Stoic lines. "The sternness, the strength, the indomitable endurance of the Roman: his indifference to intellectual speculation or intellectual activity of any sort, his moral dignity, his devotion to duty, and the simplicity of his tastes and habits — which lent a strong tinge to the character of even the degenerate Romans of the Empire — seem to mark out the Roman as the typical Stoic."[1]

Panætius was the chief founder of Roman Stoicism, which played so important a part in the history of the Roman Empire. He, however, departed more widely than any of the later Stoics from the dogmatic spirit and the tenets of the earlier. Panætius was a man of means and culture, belonging to one of the oldest and most distinguished families of Rhodes. He studied under Diogenes, at Athens, and was a member of the historic embassy which proceeded from Athens to Rome in 155 B.C., to plead for toleration for philosophers. The Stoic school was represented by Diogenes, but its most active apostle was Panætius. At Rome he was received into the circle of the younger Scipio and his friend Laertius, also of the historian Polybius and the poets Terence and Lucretius, and he was able to gain numerous adherents among the Roman nobles by his skill in softening the harshness and subtlety of the Stoic teaching, and in representing it in a refined and polished form. Cicero himself said that he chiefly followed Panætius, not as a mere translator, but *correctione quadam adhibita*. His treatise upon *Propriety of Conduct* (*De Officia*) is based confessedly upon a treatise of Panætius, while containing references to other teachers of the Stoicism, such as Antipater and Posidonius.

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[1] Brown, Stoics and Saints, p. 35.

Panætius was not apparently a strict Stoic, but rather an eclectic philosopher, who tempered the austerity of his sect by adopting something of the more refined style and milder principles of Plato and other earlier Academicians. He modified the rigid tenets of his sect to make it the practical rule of life of statesmen, politicians and others, and dwelt upon the practical aspects of the creed, to the exclusion of all that might appear as too dialectic. Aulus Gellius says that Panætius rejected the principle of apathy adopted by the earlier Stoics, and returned to Zeno's original meaning, namely, that the wise man ought to know how to master the impressions which he receives through the senses. He accommodated the Stoic theology to the popular religion, and the Stoic ethical system to popular sentiment.

At Rome Stoicism fell upon congenial soil; the time was ripe for its acceptance; it was, in fact, the one philosophy congenial to the Roman type. Says Rendall[1]: —

"The emphasis it laid on morals, the firmness and austerity of its code, the harshness of its judgment on defaulters, the stern repudiation of emotional considerations and impulses, even the narrowness and inflexibility of its moral logic, all commended it to Roman sympathies. The strength of Rome, the secret of her empire, lay in *character*, in an operative code of honor, domestic, civic, and (more at least than in other states) international. And the Stoic conception of virtue corresponded closely to the range of qualities denoted by Roman *virtus* — manliness. The traditional type of Roman patriot, the patrician steadfastness of a Camillus or Dentatus, the devotion of a Decius, the dogged self-sacrifice of a Regulus, the sternness of a Brutus ordering his disobedient son to execution, the immovable and often ruthless allegiance to the constituted order of the commonwealth, were treasured historical exemplifications of unformulated Stoicism. Its very narrowness and obstinacy of view was in its favor. Cato (of Utica) was typically Roman, and by his faults and limitations as much as his backbone of virtue became for a time the ideal of Roman Stoicism."

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[1] Marcus Aurelius Antoninus to Himself, p. xciii.

At a time when there was no belief or doctrine which offered support to men in their hour of trial, the doctrines taught by the Stoics were a source of consolation and a guide in the vicissitudes of life, to many of the great philosophers, statesmen, and even emperors of Rome. In Rome there was a universal corruption and depravity of manners. The religion of the time had not the least influence towards exciting or nourishing solid and true virtue in the minds of men. It had but little if any influence on man's moral nature, and so long as there was a ceremonial obedience, there was no occasion to look for any spiritual influence beyond. The devout man was he who punctually performed his religious obligations, who was pious according to law. It was only the philosophers who could comprehend the one God; the imaginations of the uneducated were only engaged with the numerous powers and energies flowing forth from that one Highest Being. Plato said, that it was hard to find out the Father of all, and that it was impossible, when you had found him, to make him known to all.

The vivid imagination of the Greek turned every deity of his religion into a stronger, wiser, and more beautiful man. All that the Roman knew of his gods was that the custom of his fathers required him to offer them prayers and sacrifices at particular times and seasons. Seneca in his *Contra Superstitiones* says: "We must pray to that great multitude of common gods, which in a long course of time a multifarious superstition has collected, with this feeling, that we are well aware that the reverence shown to them is a compliance rather with custom, than a thing due to the actual truth. All these things the philosopher will observe, as something commanded by the law, not as a thing pleasing to the gods." So Plutarch says: "He feigns prayer and adoration from fear of multitude! and he utters words which are against his own conviction; and while he is sacrificing, the priest who slays the victim is to him only a butcher."[1]

The more intelligent of the Romans looked upon the whole religious system as a just object of ridicule and contempt. Ovid said that "the existence of the gods is a matter of public policy, and we must believe it accordingly." In Rome there was a crop of superstitions native to the soil, divination of all kinds, scepticism and superstition, Chaldean astrology, the sensual rites of Cybele, and the fouler orgies of the Bacchanalia. The gods, above all things else, were instruments for helping man to the attainment of very substantial earthly objects. Lecky in his *European Morals* describes religion as follows: "The Roman religion was purely selfish. It was simply a method of obtaining prosperity, averting calamity, and reading the future. Ancient Rome produced many heroes, but no saints. Its self-sacrifice was patriotic, not religious." What religion had come to in the minds of the more intelligent people, may be seen in this extract from the elder Pliny: —

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[1] Epicurum, ch. 22.

"All religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness, and fear. *What* God is, if in truth he be anything distinct from the world, it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion, which has sprung from human weakness and human pride, to imagine that such an infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men. It is difficult to say, whether it might not be better for men to be wholly without religion, than to have one of this kind, which is a reproach to its object. The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing after existence, have led him also to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures; since the other creatures have no wants transcending the bounds of their nature. Man is full of desires and wants that reach to infinity, and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie, uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among these so great evils, the best thing God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life."

In Rome, devotion to the state, to the public good, was the atmosphere which men breathed. Mommsen remarks, that the Roman religion in all its details was a reflection of the Roman state. When the constitution and institutions of Rome changed, their religion changed with them. In time the state religion became undermined by philosophy, and it fell more and more into a decline. Much greater weight was paid to the punctilious performance of religious obligations, than to any belief in the doctrines of religion. The priests had never been the social moralists of Rome; preaching and catechizing were unheard of; and the highest functionaries of religion might be and sometimes were men of scandalous life and notorious unbelief. Those who desire to study closely the moral infamy, have only to read the pages of Juvenal, the Tacitus of private life, or Suetonius, or Ovid. "It is not more than thirty days," writes Martial, "and Thelesina is marrying her tenth husband." Seneca asks, "Will any woman blush at divorce when some who are illustrious, and of rank, count their years, not by their consulships, but by the number of their husbands?"

The Epicurean school of philosophy appealed strongly to the luxurious, the fashionable, the worldly, and it exercised upon them a feeble restraining influence. The Epicureans were the patrons of the circus, and the theatre, and the banquet, and, indeed, of all the vanities and follies which disgraced the latter days of Rome. Epicurus placed the highest good in happiness, or a happy life. More closely he makes pleasure to be the principal constituent of happiness, and even calls it the highest good. One of the chief and highest pleasures of life Epicurus found in the possession of friends, who provided for each other not only help and protection, but a lifelong joy. By the word pleasure the Epicureans did not understand what was profligate and really sensual, but that state of body and mind which might be called tranquillity, freedom from disturbance and care. But self-love was the foundation of all action, and self-indulgence was the ultimate good. It is a man's duty to endeavor to increase to the utmost his pleasures, and diminish to the utmost his pain. Epicurus denied the providence of God; he maintained that the world was governed by chance; he denied the existence of moral goodness; he affirmed that the soul was mortal, and that pleasure was the only good. Says Ferguson,[1] "the ordinary language of this sect, representing virtue as a mere prudent choice among the pleasures to which men are variously addicted, served to suppress the specific sentiments of conscience and elevation of mind, and to change the reproaches of criminality, profligacy, or vileness, by which even bad men are restrained from iniquity, into mere imputations of mistake, or variations of taste."

The influence of such a philosophy could have but one effect. The accumulation of power and wealth gave rise to universal depravity. Law ceased to be of any value. The social fabric was a festering mass of rottenness. The higher classes on all sides exhibited a total extinction of moral principle; the lower were practical atheists. Says Tacitus:—

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[1] History of the Roman Republic, ch. iv.

"The holy ceremonies of religion were violated; adultery reigned without control; the adjacent islands filled with exiles; rocks and desert places stained with clandestine murders, and Rome itself a theatre of horrors, where nobility of descent and splendor of fortune marked men out for destruction; where the vigor of mind that aimed at civil dignities, and the modesty that declined them, were offenses without distinction; where virtue was a crime that led to certain ruin; where the guilt of informers and the wages of their iniquity were alike detestable; where the sacerdotal order, the consular dignity, the government of provinces, and even the cabinet of the prince, were seized by that execrable race as their lawful prey; where nothing was sacred, nothing safe from the hand of rapacity; where slaves were suborned, or by their own malevolence excited against their masters; where freemen betrayed their patrons, and he who had lived without an enemy died by the treachery of a friend."

In this very corrupt age, Stoicism was the philosophy congenial to the Roman type. The emphasis it laid upon morals, the firmness and austerity of its code, the stern repudiation of emotional considerations or impulses, all commended itself to many noble and powerful minds, because it raised them above the corruption around them, and proclaimed an ideal standard of morality, and the Stoics rallied to themselves all the noble souls who desired to rise above the fearful moral degradation of imperial Rome. The practical-minded Roman did not appreciate the deep speculations of many of the philosophers of the day, but he easily appreciated the Stoical principles of self-control, moral energy, and philosophic indifference to wealth and pleasure, and thus the leaven of Stoicism soon began to work among the social circles of the capital, and furnished strength and solace in the darkest hours of the troubled times. Stoicism enlarged the minds of its worthy votaries by purer conceptions of

Deity, and more literal views of humanity, teaching the unity of God with man, and man with one another. Says Montesquieu, "The sect of the Stoics spread and gained credit in the empire. It seemed as if human nature had made an effort to produce from itself this admirable sect, which was like plants growing in places which the sun had never seen. The Romans owed to it their best emperors."

The Stoics maintained, almost in every particular, the reverse of the tenets of the Epicureans. They maintained the reality of Providence, and of a common interest of goodness and justice; for which Providence was exerted, and in which all rational creatures were concerned. Roman Stoicism placed a firm reliance in the moral energy of man, teaching the necessity of dispensing with, and the absolute worthlessness of external advantages; referring all truth to the sensuous presentation, and recommending in all things, resignation to the divine dispensations. The more serious minded turned to some moralist for consolation, from a desire to find something better

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and more satisfying to the nature of man than could be found in the religions and mythologies of Greece and Rome. Philosophy aspired not only to furnish struggling men with an authoritative standard, but to guide and help and strengthen them in their efforts to attain it. Says Plutarch: —

"As exercise and medicine provide for the body's health and strength, so philosophy alone can cure the weakness or the sickness of the soul. By her help man learns to distinguish the noble from the base, the just from the unjust, the things worthy of our choice from those which we should shun; she teaches him how he ought to act in all the relations of his social life, warning him to fear the gods, honor his parents, respect old age, obey the laws, submit to governors, be loving to his friends, show self-control with womankind, tenderness with children, moderation with his slaves — above all, not to triumph overmuch in prosperous days, or to be cast down in adversity, not to be overmastered by pleasure, or brutalized by passion."[1]

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[1] De Educ. Puer., cp. 10.

The precepts of the Stoics, addressed to the ruling classes of the empire, stood forth in bold and startling hostility to the principles of existing authority, and it therefore at first met with the jealousy of the national authorities, but it soon found a ready acceptance, and made rapid progress among the noblest families. The government heretofore had suffered the philosophers to teach as they pleased, and put no restraints on the spirit of inquiry which was sapping the positive beliefs of the day. But Stoicism gave rise to a new state philosophy and state religion, owing to the blending of the Stoic philosophy and the Roman religion. The speculative element was weakened, but the Stoic philosophy was raised into the semi-official state philosophy. This philosophy was undoubtedly better adapted for Rome than for the land where it first arose, and we meet with its traces in the most diversified spheres of action. Its theories of order and providence were eminently suited to a law-making and an organizing race. But in process of time the unbending strictness of the old Stoicism began to a certain extent to be relaxed, and many of the rigorous definitions and maxims were toned down, and given more warmth and color to meet the demands of the Roman people. Stoicism attached itself to the religion of Rome as closely as science can at all accommodate itself to faith. Its adaptations to the purposes of civil polity, and its stern moral doctrine seemed to appeal to the Romans, and it continued to flourish after the reign of the Antonines, at which time the Stoics were flourishing at Athens, Alexandria and Tarsus, and in the time of Juvenal this sect prevailed almost through the whole Roman empire.

Lorimer, speaking of Stoicism, says:— "With the single exception of Christianity, no form of belief ever took possession of so great a number of Europeans, and held it so long; and it moulded human institutions and affected human destiny to a greater extent than all other philosophical systems, either of the ancient or the modern world."[1]

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[1] Institutes of Law, p. 161.

VII

ROMAN JURISPRUDENCE

The Stoics taught that all things in nature came about by virtue of a natural and unchangeable connection of cause and effect, as the nature of the universe and the general law require. They were therefore strenuous in their teaching of the unconditional dependence of everything on a universal law and the course of the universe. The Grecian philosophers had long ago insisted on a law of nature, distinct from the conventional usages of different lands and ages, consisting of those laws which are common to all mankind, and are supposed to be, as nearly as can be conjectured, independent of the accidents of time and place. The Stoics laid a special emphasis upon it, and made it the keynote of their moral system, as a guide to theory and a rule for practice in all the departments of man's action. They considered that law embodied rights, duties and rules of conduct evolved primarily by social life and intercourse. Hence the social instinct is a primary instinct in man, every manifestation of which contributes, either directly or indirectly, to the good of the whole.

Marcus Aurelius wrote, that the passion of reason is love of society. Rational beings can only be treated on a social footing, and can only feel happy themselves when working for the community ; for all rational beings are related to one another, all from one social unit, of which each individual is an integral part ; one body, of which every individual is an organic member. Cicero, though attached to the speculative doctrines of the New Academy, accepted with little change the ethical principles of the Stoics. He says, that in no kind of discussion can it be more advantageously displayed how much has been bestowed upon man by nature, and how great a capacity for the noblest enterprises is implanted in the mind of man, for the sake of cultivating and perfecting which we were born and sent into the world, and what beautiful association, what natural fellowship, binds men together by reciprocal charities; and when we have explained these grand and universal principles of morals, then the true fountain of laws and rights can be discovered.[1] Cicero instructs, in one of the most beautiful and perfect ethical codes to be met with among ancient writers, the virtues of humanity, liberality, and justice toward other people, as being founded on the universal law of nature.

Two fundamental points are insisted on by the Stoics — the duty of justice and the duty of mercy, and the later Stoics, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Musonius, emphasized the most extended and unreserved charity, beneficence, gentleness, meekness, an unlimited benevolence, and a readiness to forgive in all cases in which forgiveness is possible.

A philosophy so vigorous and elevating had a great influence in moulding the opinions of all those persons who were brought under its influence, and its general spirit and method had a marked influence upon Roman jurisprudence, which in its turn has exerted its influence over all Eastern legislation, and still exists and is obeyed and consulted among most of the nations of modern times. The great jurists of Rome were familiar with the Stoic philosophy, as it was an important element in Roman education and culture, and received the almost uninterrupted support of the state during the period in which the influence of the Roman jurisconsults was most marked. They saw in the law of nature an ideal of simplicity and universal truth for the legal student and reformer, and its general spirit and method affected the jurisprudence of Rome rather than any one doctrine that Stoicism taught.

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[1] De Legibus, iv.

An innate genius for law distinguished the Roman people. The science of jurisprudence was to them the intellectual life that the older philosophy was to the Greek. They took great pride in building up their system of law upon a firm foundation; they were the rational laws of life, to which a man must conform. They embodied in their very beginning the cardinal doctrine of the Stoics, to live according to nature. It taught that there was a nature to which everything should conform; there was a nature of man, a nature of the society in which man lived, and a nature of the world as a whole. With the Stoics, the universe was considered as imbued with an all-pervading soul or power, which was looked upon not only as a dynamical force producing motion, but as a rational principle producing order and perfection. This rational principle is a constituent element of all being. Therefore laws were required as the expression of a divine intelligence, and therefore externally binding.

In their writings and precepts, the Stoics paid great attention to the state and the domestic life. In marriage they required chastity and moderation. Love was to be a matter of reason, not of emotion, not a yielding to personal attractions, nor a seeking of sensual gratification. But it was to the state that the Stoics were the most strenuous. If man is intended to associate with his fellow men in a society regulated by justice and law, how can he withdraw from the most common institution — the state? If laws further the well-being and security of the citizens, if they advance virtue and happiness, how can the wise man fail to regard them as beautiful and praiseworthy?

The status of an individual was a strong point in Roman law. By the status (or standing) of a person is meant the position that he holds with reference to the rights which are recognized and maintained by the law — in other words, his capacity for the exercise and enjoyment of legal rights. This capacity the Roman jurists, who had a highly developed doctrine of status, represented as depending on three conditions, *libertas* (or personal freedom), *civitas* (or citizenship), and *familia* (or family relation). This citizenship affected every relation of life. In daily business, in the payment of taxes, in the making of contracts, in the details of common domestic life, in the disposing of property by will, or in the succeeding to inheritances, the Roman was continually reminded of his status, which differentiated him from all who were not enfranchised.

The Roman jurists derived from Stoicism their ideas of the fundamental principles according to which human conduct should be shaped, and it was owing to their conception of the Stoic laws of nature that they were led to change the *jus gentium* and bring it into harmony with the new theory of natural law. This became the *jus naturale*, or that law which springs from the universal nature of man and the conditions of human life and society, instead of being the product of local, temporary, accidental, and variable causes. Says Lee:—

"By connecting the basis of jurisprudence with the eternal order of things through the conception of a *jus naturale*, a scientific foundation was given to the study of law. It was no longer an empirical study. It comprised more than a mere knowledge of the law of any one age. It was the investigation of the fundamental principles underlying the law of all ages. The lawyer investigated the meaning of the various terms with which he dealt. He sought to express by careful definitions the exact nature of the concepts which entered into the law. He traced the principles involved in the processes of law, and expressed them in terse maxims. All this he did with the conviction that in this logical analysis he was attaining to a real knowledge, not merely a convenient summary of human conventions. But the scientific study of law by analysis of the legal conceptions and processes could not stop with the results of that analysis. If in every generalization the jurist came nearer to the real nature of things, he could also reverse the process; he could apply the generalization to the practical cases which every day came to his notice. By the study of its foundations law was stripped of adventitious matter and seen to be more comprehensive and more widely applicable."[1]

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[1] Lee, Historical Jurisprudence, p. 258.

VIII

RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY

Dr. Caird has said, that it was from Greece that the early fathers of the Christian church borrowed its forms and processes of thought, the general conceptions of nature and human life, of, in short, the general points of view or mental presuppositions which they brought to the interpretation of the facts of Christianity. A very large portion of what we call Christian theology is Greek philosophy in a new application. It was not until Judaism had come into wide and permanent contact with Hellenic culture, and had been fertilized by it in many ways, that Christianity could be developed from it.

If we examine closely the background upon which the structure of Christianity was erected, we shall find serious thought, vigorous life, and genuine piety. The rapid and powerful process of organization in Christianity itself would not have been possible, were it not for the independent efforts of paganism after a similar ideal. If Christianity triumphed in the end, it was by virtue of a very wide sympathy and a very extensive preparation in the mind of paganism. Says St. Augustine, "The very same thing which now is called Christianity existed among the ancients and was not absent from the beginning of mankind until Christ appeared in the flesh, whence the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian."[1]

The second Greek religion which arose under the influence of philosophy and found its way wherever Greek culture spread, is considered by Menzies[2] to have been a preparation for the the coming of Christianity in the Greek world, without which its spread must have been much more doubtful. Says Menzies: —

"In the Græco-Roman religion the advances which appear in Christianity are already prefigured. Thought has been busy in building up a great doctrine of God, such a God as human reason can arrive at, a Being infinitely wise and good, who is the first cause and the hidden ground of all things, the sun of all wisdom, beauty, and goodness, and in whom all men alike may trust. Greek thought also found much occupation in the attempt to reach a true account of man's moral nature and destiny. Both in theory and in practice many an attempt was made to build up the ideal life of man, and thus many minds were prepared for a religion which places the riches of the inner life above all others. The Greek philosopher's school was a semi-religious union, the central point of which was, as is the case with Christianity also, not outward sacrifice but mental activity. It is not wonderful, therefore, if Christian institutions were assimilated to some extent to the Greek schools. It has recently been shown that the celebration of the Eucharist came very near to bear a close resemblance to that of a Greek mystery, and that there is an unbroken line of connection between the discourse of the Greek philosopher and the Christian sermon. In some of the Greek schools pastoral visitation was practised, and the preacher kept up an oversight of the moral conduct of his adherents. While Christianity certainly had vigour enough to shape its own institutions, and may even be seen to be doing so in some of the books of the New Testament, the agreement between Greek and Christian practices amounts to something more than coincidences."

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[1] Ipse res quae nunc Christiana religio nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos nec defuit ab initio generis humani, quousque ipse Christus venerit in carne, unde vera religio quae jam erat, coepit appelari Christiana. Retr., 1, 13.

[2] History of Religion, p. 420.

The thoughtful student may find many points of likeness in which the Christian theology and morals may have been indebted to the doctrines of the Stoics. The Stoics, as we have seen, placed value upon moral sentiments, virtue, and wisdom. In common with Paul they could not paint in colors too glaring the universal depravity of mankind. They classed mankind as wise men and fools, and taught a "birth-day of eternity" which they called the day of death, in deliverance from the bondage of the flesh, the entrance on "the great eternal peace." We see here an affinity with Paul's teachings, who divided mankind into the regenerate and the degenerate; they looked beyond this world to the glories of heaven, and he placed value upon faith alone. Stoicism lacked, however, what we may call Paul's method of salvation, of which the cardinal points are conviction of sin, and salvation by faith. There are many points in Stoicism which harmonize with the doctrine of Christ. But Christ taught, however, that a true spiritual condition is attainable, not by unaided individual will, but by the help of the Divine Spirit, and that inexorable fate is not the ruling power of the universe.

"It is difficult," says Lightfoot, "to estimate, and perhaps not very easy to over-rate the extent to which Stoic philosophy had leavened the moral vocabulary of the civilized world at the time of the Christian era." And he refers to conscience (*conscientia*), "the most important of moral terms, the crowning triumph of ethical nomenclature . . . if not struck in the mint of the Stoics, at all events became current coin through their influence." To a great extent, therefore, the general diffusion of Stoic language would lead to its adoption by the first teachers of Christianity. Vignoli[1] has shown that when Christianity began, pagan rationalism had arrived at the idea of a spiritual and directing power, originally identical with the universe. It was neither the Olympus of the common people, nor the Semitic Jehovah, but rather the conscious and inevitable order of nature. Says Vignoli: —

"Christianity proclaimed the spiritual unity of God, the unity of the race, the brotherhood of all peoples, the redemption of the world, and consequently a providential influence on mankind. Christianity taught that God himself was made man, and lived among men. Such teaching was offered to the people as a truth of consciousness rather than a dogma, although it was afterwards preserved in a theological form by the preaching of Paul, and the pagan mind was more affected by sentiment than by reason. The unity of God was associated in their æsthetic imagination with the earlier conception of the supreme Zeus, which now took a more Semitic form, and Olympus was gloriously transformed into a company of elect Christians and holy fathers of the new faith. A confused sentiment as to the mystic union of peoples, who became brothers in Christ, had a powerful effect on the imagination and the heart, since they had already learned to regard the world as the creation of one eternal Being. In the ardor of proselytism and of the diffusion of the new creed, they hailed the historical transformation of the earthly endeavour after temporal acquisitions and pleasures into a providential preparation for the heavenly kingdom."

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[1] Myths and Science, p. 184.

It very early resulted that Christianity came in contact with the contemporaneous philosophy. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others, were working at the same problem which occupied the prophets of Israel, and in many ways the schools of Greece were the forerunners of Christianity. Some of the early fathers recognized a Christian element in Plato, and they sought to explain the striking resemblance between the doctrines of Plato and those of Christianity. Justin was, as he himself relates, an enthusiastic admirer of Plato before he found in the Gospel that full satisfaction which he had sought earnestly, but in vain, in philosophy. And, although the Gospel stood infinitely higher in his view than the Platonic philosophy, yet he regarded the latter as a preliminary stage to the former. Justin was successively, as he says in his *Dialogues*, a Stoic, a Peripatetic, a Pythagorean, and a follower of Plato, and hoped to have finally reached the goal of intellectual contentment in the Platonic philosophy.

Clement of Alexandria tried to harmonize Greek philosophy and Christianity, an independent reason, and an authority based on tradition. He says:—"I give the name philosophy to that which is really excellent in all the doctrines of the Greek philosophers, and above all to that of Socrates, such as Plato describes him to have been. The opinion of Plato upon ideas is the true Christian and orthodox philosophy. These intellectual lights among the Greeks have been communicated by God himself."

Origen was a student of the doctrines of

Plato, Pythagoras, and the Stoics, and in his *Stromata* he compares the doctrines of Christianity with the teachings of the philosophers, particularly those of Plato, confirming the former by the latter. Many of the Greek Fathers strove to base their apologetics upon the theism and ethics of Plato, and even to court the mysteries of the trinity, the incarnation, and the atonement, in terms of Platonic metaphysics.

It was at Alexandria that Greek and Roman philosophy and Jewish religion, and Oriental mysticism met each other face to face, and were all struggling for preëminence and mutually influencing each other. All the previous systems were struggling together, but with no satisfactory result from the conflict. Nothing was settled, every one was groping, no one was recognized as "one having authority." One attempt to mediate between these contrasts was made from the Jewish side by Philo the Jew. In harmony with the ideas of his nation he derived all philosophy and useful knowledge from the Mosaic record. His power of appreciating and assimilating Greek conceptions is admirable, but he did not hesitate to wrest Scripture to his use by various allegorical interpretations, asserting that man had fallen from his primitive wisdom and purity; that physical inquiry was of very little avail, but that an innocent life and burning faith are what we must trust to. In this respect he followed the Stoics, who liked to dissolve the Greek myths into abstract ideas, to reduce to simple observations the images and personifications contained in the traditions of the popular religion; and the method they employed was the allegory. The attempt of Philo at a combination of Greek and Hebrew wisdom, was a process of assimilation of these two elements, which had gone on for a long time at Alexandria. It may be traced back even to the translators of the Septuagint. The influence of Greek thought on the minds of the translators of the Septuagint is often seen, by the suggestion for a Platonic interpretation. The Platonism of this period, however, was not so much a regularly constituted school as a pervading influence which had impressed certain of its tendencies, more or less strongly, upon most of the religious and philosophic speculations of the time.

Another attempt to mediate between Greek philosophy and Judaism was made from the Greek side by the Neo-Platonists. It was the last form of philosophy which the Greek civilization developed, and stood in a curious relation to Christianity, alternately attracting and repulsing it. Their expositions of the relations between God and the world, the divine and human, spirit and matter, are often ingenious. But in their speculations that which is specifically Greek is lost.

This new philosophy may more properly be called a theosophy, although it also inclined towards dogmatism, mysticism, asceticism, and even thaumaturgy. Although firmly planted on the basis of the preceding Greek philosophy, it may be considered a new manifestation of the genuine creative power of the Greek spirit. It attained its highest principle, from which all the rest was derived, by means of ecstacy, by a mystical self-destruction of the individual person. They considered the spiritual knowledge of religion to be attainable only by the philosophers, who lived in contemplation. The new Platonists took some of the more popular and especially Oriental conceptions of Plato, and by an artful admixture of truth and falsehood, they combined many superstitions into their system. The doctrine of Plato was fused with the most important elements in the Aristotelian and Stoic systems and with Oriental speculations.

Platonism awakened an indefinite desire after the supernatural, and after a communion with the invisible world, which it was unable to satisfy. In fact, as Hegel says, "the peculiarity of the Platonic philosophy is precisely this direction towards the supersensuous world, —it seeks the elevation of consciousness into the realm of spirit. The Christian religion has also set up this high principle, that the internal spiritual essence of man is his true essence, and has made it the universal principle." In the course of time, it was through the source of the Neo-Platonists that errors and corruptions crept into the church, but it also from the same source received no small addition, both to its numbers and its strength.

Says Santayana,[1] "Neo-Platonism responded as well as Christianity to the needs of the time, and had besides great external advantages in its alliance with tradition, with civil power, and with philosophy. If the demands of the age were for a revealed religion and an ascetic morality, Neo-Platonism could satisfy them to the full. . . . But the avenues of approach which it had chosen and the principle which had given form to its system foreordained it to failure as a religion. The avenue was dialectic, and the principle the hypostasis of abstractions."

The great exponent of Neo-Platonism, Plotinus, held philosophy to consist in a mental flight from this world to a higher region, in becoming "like God," an ascent to the Idea of the Good. His theory was a combination of the theologies of Parmenides, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, but he found the germs, at least, of all the doctrines in Plato. After the death of the Emperor Julian, Neo-Platonism declined and finally became a scholastic tradition, but it had been to many a bridge, as Augustine said, which led them to Christianity, and besides this, Neo-Platonism exercised a discernible influence on the historical development of Christianity, and more especially on the mysticism of Western theology during the middle ages.

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[1] Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, p. 76.

From the speculative side of the church sprang the philosophical heretics. The oldest of these were the Gnostics. Gnostic means one that knows, and the word seems to have been applied to all the heretics whose speculations on nature and being did not agree with the speculations approved of by the church. Gnosticism stands on the border line between the philosophical systems of Plato and the Stoics and the Christian system. The Gnostics also drew largely from Oriental theosophy and the Jewish religion. They seem, indeed, to have been of every form of professed religion, Jewish, Christian and Pagan, exalting their own doctrines above all. In fact, Gnosticism presents a combination of Persian, Chaldæan, and Egyptian doctrines, united to conceptions of Oriental or Hindu origin, and to the cabalistic science of the Jews. The influence of Indian philosophy on Gnosticism seems undoubted. The Gnostic doctrine of the opposition between soul and matter, of the personal existence of intellect, will, and so forth, and the identification of soul and light are derived from the Sankhya system. The division, peculiar to several Gnostics, of men into three classes is also based on the Sankhya doctrine of the three dunas or triple constituents of primeval matter. Again, the many heavens of the Gnostics are evidently derived from the fantastic cosmogony of later Buddhism.

In trying to harmonize Christian revelation with its own system it gave up the monotheism of the Scriptures, and allegorized away, in part or in whole, the great facts of Christ's work and person. Unlike Greek philosophies, however, its thought was not methodical, but poetical, and charged with Oriental imagery and freedom. The Gnostics considered their doctrines as superior—

1. To the pagan rites and symbols, which they professed to explain.

2. To the Hebrew doctrines, the errors

and imperfections of which it pretended to unfold.

3. To the common belief of the Christian church, which, in the view of the Greeks, was nothing but the weak or corrupted envelope of the transcendent Christianity of which they claimed to be the depositaries.

Influenced by Greek philosophy, the Gnostics represented experimental Christianity as knowledge rather than faith, and made knowledge the standard of the moral condition.

The influence of Gnosticism was good in arousing the church to a clearer definition of her fundamental doctrines, and gave her an impulse towards thought, and a more comprehensive discussion of doctrine.

It is interesting to note how the pagan Stoic philosophy was revived again in the sixth century by Boethius. He became the connecting link between the logical and metaphysical science of antiquity and the scientific attempts of the middle ages. His *Consolations of Philosophy* exercised a very profound influence upon the thought and feeling of nascent Christendom.

It is difficult to trace the influence of Greek philosophy, the logical and metaphysical science of antiquity, upon mediæval thought. Boethius was a thorough student of Greek philosophy, and in an uncompleted work he had endeavored to reconcile the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. During the century in which he lived Boethius shone forth with the brightest lustre in the republic of letters, as a philosopher, an orator, a poet, and a divine. His greatest work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, was read during the middle ages with the greatest reverence by all Christendom. King Alfred translated it into Anglo-Saxon, and Thomas Aquinas wrote a commentary on it. In the fourteenth century Chaucer made an English translation, and before the sixteenth century it was translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Greek. We know what position it occupies in the spiritual development of Dante.

The *Consolatio* is theistic in its language, but affords no indication that Boethius was a Christian. This work is tinctured with the Stoic philosophy, and thus its great influence in promulgating the Stoic doctrine among the scholars of later times. "It was the last work dealing with Greek philosophy, prior to the breaking up of the empire, which stayed the study of the literature of Greece for nearly a thousand years. The last voice which sounded from the old classical civilization through the thousand years during which Western Christendom was growing to its manhood, was that of this very noble teacher of the Stoic school. Through Boethius, accordingly, Stoicism has become an appreciable factor in the thought of Christendom, and carries on the ancient philosophy into the life of the modern world."[1] Although Aristotle, called *par eminence* "the philosopher," dominated the minds of the scholars for three or four hundred years, yet during that time not one unequivocal truth was added to the domain of philosophy. Occasionally, however, the Stoic system found its champions and exponents, such as Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), whose edition of Tacitus is almost epoch-making in the completeness and elaboration of its exhaustive commentary.

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[1] Brown, Stoics and Saints, p. 76.

SOME ROMAN STOICS

IX

EPICTETUS

Very little is known of the life of Epictetus. The year of his birth is not known, he must have been born, however, before the end of Nero's reign, 68 A.D., probably during one of the last eight years, else he could not have been more than twenty-one when Domitian published that edict against philosophers, and "cleared Rome of what most shamed him," in 89 A.D., in consequence of which Epictetus retired from Rome to Nicopolis, in Epirus, a city built by Augustus to commemorate the victory of Actium. We know that he was born at Hierapolis in Phrygia, a town on the Lycus, not far from Laodicea and Colopæ. Epictetus was a slave of Epaphroditus, a profligate freedman of the emperor Nero, and who had been one of his body-guard. The names and condition of his parents are unknown, but he appears to have come of a humble stock, and Simplicius, the commentator on the *Encheiridion*, says that he was sickly, deformed, and lame from a very early age. Origen preserved an anecdote of him, that when his master put his leg in the torture, Epictetus quietly said, "You will break it"; and when he did break it, only observed, "Did I not tell you that you would do so?" This circumstance is adduced by Celsus in his famous controversy with Origen as an instance of Pagan fortitude equal to anything which Christian martyrology had to show.

We are not told how Epictetus managed to effect his freedom, but he could not have been a slave when he left Rome in consequence of the edict against philosophers. We learn that Epictetus was permitted to attend the lectures of C. Musonius Rufus, a Stoic philosopher. Epictetus refers to Rufus in his *Discourses*, and he evidently had for him a great admiration. "It is not easy," says Epictetus, "to train effeminate youths, any more than it is easy to take up whey with a hook. But those of fine nature, even if you discourage them, desire instruction all the more. For which reason Rufus often discouraged pupils, using this as a criterion of fine and of common natures; for he used to say, that just as a stone, even if you fling it into the air, will fall down to the earth by its own gravitating force, so also a noble nature, in proportion as it is repulsed, in that proportion tends more in its own natural direction." In his *Discourse on Ostentation*, Epictetus says that Rufus was in the habit of remarking to his pupils, "If you have leisure to praise me, I can have done you no good." "He used indeed so to address us that each one of us, sitting there, thought that some one had been privately telling tales against *him* in particular, so completely did Rufus seize hold of his characteristics, so vividly did he portray our individual faults."

Garnier, the author of a *Mémoire sur les ouvrages d'Epictète*, says: that Epictetus was indebted "apparently for the advantages of a good education to the whim, very common at the end of the Republic and under the first emperors, among the great of Rome to reckon among their numerous slaves, grammarians, poets, rhetoricians, and philosophers, in the same way as rich financiers in these later ages have been led to form at a great cost rich and numerous libraries. This supposition is the only one which can explain to us, how a wretched child, born as poor as Irus, had received a good education, and how a rigid Stoic was the slave of Epaphroditus, one of the officers of the imperial guard. For we cannot suspect that it was predilection for the Stoic doctrine and for his own use, that the confidant and the minister of the debaucheries of Nero would have desired to possess such a slave."

It is a question whether Epictetus ever returned to Rome. After Hadrian became emperor (A.D. 117), Epictetus was treated with favor, as we learn from Spartian's life of Hadrian, but there is no evidence of any of his discourses having been delivered at Rome, but they contain frequent mention of Nicopolis. At Nicopolis Epictetus opened a school where he taught his philosophy until he became an old man. Suidas says that he lived until the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but Aulus Gellius, writing during the reign of the first Antonine, speaks of Epictetus as being dead. " Epictetus, a slave, maimed in body, an Irus in poverty, and favored by the Immortals."

Epictetus lived for a long while in a small hut, with no other furniture than a bed and a lamp, and without an attendant. However, he adopted and brought up a child whom a friend of his was about to expose to death, on account of his poverty. He was obliged also to take a woman into his house as a nurse for the child. We learn from Lucian that Epictetus was never married. We are also told by Lucian that on the death of Epictetus, his lamp was purchased by some enthusiastic admirer, for three thousand drachmas, or over five hundred dollars of our currency. Lucian ridicules this purchaser, as hoping to acquire the wisdom of Epictetus by study over it.

We are told by Arrian, in his preface to the *Discourses*, that he was a powerful and exciting lecturer; and according to Origen, his style was superior to that of Plato.

Epictetus wrote nothing; and all that we have under his name was written by his pupil Arrian, afterwards the historian of Alexander the Great, who, as he tells us, took down in writing the philosopher's discourses. Arrian had become a disciple of Epictetus during his residence at Rome. Like Xenophon, he united the literary with the military character, and while prefect of Cappadocia he distinguished himself by his valor in the war against the Massagetæ. No less than seven of the epistles of Pliny the younger are addressed to Arrian. He was a prolific writer, but we are interested here with the conversations of his teacher. There were originally eight books of them, besides the *Encheiridion*, which was compiled from them, and an account of the life and death of Epictetus. Only four of the original eight books are extant. These, with the *Encheiridion*, and a few fragments preserved in quotations by various authors, are all that we know of his teachings.

The following preface to the *Discourses*, was written by Arrian in the form of a letter to a friend, Lucius Gellius, which indirectly throws some light on the origin of the *Encheiridion*:—

"I did not write the words of Epictetus in the manner in which a man might write such things. Neither have I put them forth among men, since, as I say, I did not even write them (in literary form). But whatever I heard him speak, these things I have endeavored to set down in his very words, that having written them I might preserve to myself for future times a memorial of his thought and unstudied speech. Naturally, therefore, they are such things as one man might say to another on the impulse of the moment, not such as he would write in the idea of finding readers long afterwards. Such they are, and I know not how, without my will or knowledge, they fell among men. But to me it matters little if I shall appear an incompetent writer, and to Epictetus not at all, if any one shall despise his words. For when he was speaking them it was evident that he had only one aim — to stir the minds of his hearers towards the best things. And if, indeed, the words here written should do this, then they will do, I think, that which the words of philosophers ought to do. But if not, let those who read them know this, that when he himself spoke them it was impossible for the hearer to avoid feeling whatever Epictetus desired he should feel.

And if his words, when they are merely words, have not this effect, perhaps it is that I am in fault, perhaps it could not have been otherwise."

In the sixth century an elaborate commentary on the *Encheiridion* was written in Greek, by Simplicius, a native of Cilicia, who also wrote a commentary on Aristotle. Simplicius states that the *Encheiridion* was put together by Arrian, who selected from the *Discourses* of Epictetus what he considered to be most useful, and most necessary, and most adapted to move men's minds. Each chapter is dissected, discussed, and its lessons applied. It was one of the most valuable moral treatises that has come down to us from antiquity, and, as Simplicius says, it tells us what kind of man Epictetus was.

Epictetus was the prophet, preacher, and theologian of the Stoic sect. A figure of unique grandeur, with the moral stamina of Socrates, and a reverent piety, no one, as Pascal shows, among philosophers, has more truly recognized man's duties toward God and himself. No other philosopher before him has revealed precepts so much in accordance with the spirit of Christianity. Epictetus formulated clearly enough the doctrine which was expressed in the hymn of Cleanthes, that we are the offspring of God, and he rises to a height of lyric fervor when he speaks of the providence of God, of the moral beauty of his works, and the strange insensibility of ungrateful men. He felt he owed all to God; that all was his gift, and that we should be grateful not only for our bodies, but for our souls, and reason, by which we attain to greatness. And if God has given us a priceless gift, we should be contented, and not even seek to alter our external relations, which are doubtless for the best. We should wish, indeed, for only what God wills and sends, and we should avoid pride and haughtiness, as well as discontent, and seek to fulfill our allotted part. Nowhere in heathen literature do we find such a joyful conception of God and his beneficence as in the following passage:—

"For if we had understanding, ought we to do anything else both jointly and severally than to sing hymns and bless the Deity, and to tell of his benefits? Ought we not, when we are digging and ploughing and eating, to sing this hymn to God? 'Great is God who has given us such implements with which we shall cultivate the earth; great is God who has given us hands, the power of swallowing our food, imperceptible growth, and the power of breathing while we sleep.' This is what we ought to sing on every occasion, and to sing the greatest and most divine hymn for giving us the faculty of comprehending these things and using a proper way. . . . I am a rational creature, and I ought to praise God; this is my work: I do it, nor will I desert this post so long as I am allowed to keep it; and I exhort you to join in this same song."

Says Canon Farrar,[1] "There is an almost lyric beauty about these expressions of resignation and faith in God, and it is the utterance of such warm feelings toward Divine Providence that constitutes the chief originality of Epictetus. It is interesting to think that the oppressed heathen philosopher found the same consolation, and enjoyed the same contentment, as the persecuted Christian apostle. 'Whether ye eat or drink,' says St. Paul, 'or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' 'Think of God,' says Epictetus, 'oftener than you breathe. Let discourse of God be renewed daily more surely than your food.'"

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[1] Seekers after God, p. 197.

Epictetus would not have his disciples rest content with the selfish hope of saving their own souls; rather, he would have them ever think of the human brotherhood, and live not for themselves but for the world. As a child of God, he must imitate and obey him; as a citizen of the world, he must have no selfish interests; as a brother to his fellow men, he must love and help them, being members one of another. Epictetus speaks of the true philosopher as set apart by a special call, anointed with the unction of God's grace to a missionary work of lifelong self-devotion, as the apostle of a high social creed. He said that heaven's wrath would light on him who intruded rashly into a ministry so holy.

Epictetus insists, as few creeds have ever done, upon the strength and dignity of manhood. All men are brothers, since all have in the same degree God, for their father. Man, therefore, who and whatever else he may be, is the object of our solicitude, simply as being man. No hostility and ill-treatment should quench our benevolence. No one is so low but that he has claims on the love and justice of his fellow men. Even the slave is a man deserving our esteem, and able to claim from us his rights. The same thought leads Epictetus to give a wider range to the conceptions of nationality and race, and advises all men to call themselves citizens of the world when asked to what country they belong, and not say that they are an Athenian or Corinthian.

Epictetus would have us always ready to resign the blessings which God's providence has lent us for awhile. "Never say about anything I have lost it, but say I have restored it. Is your child dead? It has been restored. Is your wife dead? She has been restored. Has your estate been taken from you? Has not this, then, also been restored? 'But he who has taken it from me is a bad man.' But what is it to you by whose hands the giver demanded it back? So long as he may allow you, take care of it as a thing which belongs to another, as travelers do with their inn."

Epictetus mentions three topics or classes under which the whole of moral philosophy is comprehended. There are the desires and aversions, the pursuits and avoidances, or the exercise of active powers, and the assents which are given by the understanding. His moral precepts are mainly summed up in two words: endure and abstain. He urges contentment upon the principle that all things occur under the allotment of Providence, that is, that an inexorable fate presided over all things.

Epictetus illustrated the difference of his age from that of Plato and also of Chrysippus, in that he practically abandoned all speculation, and confined himself to dogmatic practical ethics. While he accepted and handed on the speculative basis of morality as laid down by the earlier Stoics, his real strength was in his preaching and teaching. He called his school a "healing-place for diseased souls."

Says he:—"Before all, must the future teacher of the human race undertake himself to extinguish his own passions, and say to himself, my own soul is the material at which I must work, as does the carpenter at wood and the shoemaker at leather."

X

SENECA

Lucius Annæus Seneca was born in Cordova, Spain, about 8 B.C. His father, M. Annæus Seneca, a rhetorician, was a man of considerable wealth, enjoying the privileges of Roman knighthood, and the friendship of many distinguished Romans. He was a native of Spain, but lived a good part of his life in Rome. While visiting Spain he married Helvia, and had by her three sons. The youngest, Mela, was the father of the poet Lucan, and shared in the misfortunes of that unlucky poet. The eldest son was adopted by his father's friend, Gallio, and became the Roman governor of Greece who "cared for none of these things."[1] The second son, Lucius Annæus, when a child, was brought by his father to Rome, where he was trained in his father's art, but subsequently forsook rhetoric for philosophy. He traveled in Greece and Egypt; and, in obedience to his father's wishes, he pleaded in courts of law, and as an orator achieved considerable success. But his success as an advocate exposed him to the dangerous jealousy of Caligula, and he finally left the bar, fearing the vengeance of Caligula, who sought to destroy him, but spared his life when it was represented to him that Seneca's health was feeble, and that he would, in all probability, be only short lived. He afterwards attained the quæstorship, and had already risen high in the favor of the Emperor Claudius, when, through the efforts of Messalina, the wife of Claudius, who accused Seneca of some disgraceful actions with the daughter of Germanicus, the brother of Claudius, he was exiled to Corsica, where he remained eight years, deriving from philosophy what consolation he could, cultivating the practical ethics of the Stoic school.

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[1] Acts xviii, 12–17.

During his exile, Seneca composed *De consolatione ad Helviam liber*, "On Consolation, addressed to his mother Helvia," and *De consolatione ad Polybium liber*, "On Consolation, addressed to Polybius." The work was addressed to his mother to console her not only under the misfortune that had befallen her in his sentence, but under all that had been experienced by her. The second work was addressed to the dissolute freedman Polybius, a favorite of Claudius, who had lately lost a brother, a young man of great promise, and contained the most fulsome flatteries intended for the ears of both. It contains some fine passages, but is unworthy of coming from the pen of Seneca. Diderot, in his *Essay on the Life of Seneca*, has attacked the authenticity of the work, and Ruhkoff, one of the later editors of Seneca, considers it of doubtful authority.

In A.D. 49, Seneca was recalled to Rome, and raised to the prætorship by Agrippina, when she had destroyed her imperial rival, to undertake the education of her son Lucius Domitius, afterwards the Emperor Nero, in conjunction with Burrus, who was his governor and military tutor. Under his two tutors Nero gave some promise of statesmanlike development, but upon the death of Burrus, Nero began rapidly to develop the worst side of his character, and was soon beyond all restraint. As Tacitus says, "By the death of Burrus, Seneca lost the chief support of his power. The friend of upright measures was snatched away, and virtue could no longer make head against the corruptions of a court, governed altogether by the wild and profligate. By that set of men Seneca was undermined."

While Seneca was his favorite minister, writing the young emperor's addresses to the senate, etc., he had obtained great influence over his pupil, and he had also taken the opportunity to greatly enrich himself, having accumulated 300,000 sestertia, or over $12,000,000 of our money. It is uncertain how far Seneca was implicated in the murder of Britannicus, but there seems but little doubt that he at least consented to the assassination of Agrippina, which Nero defended in a letter to the senate, penned, according to Tacitus, by Seneca, condoning at least, and justifying the deed as a political necessity. Seneca now became the object of popular censure, particularly after being attacked by

Suillius, who accused him of usury, avarice, and rapacity. Nero listened to evil counsellors, who charged Seneca with having exorbitant wealth, above the condition of a private citizen; he was accused of courting the affections of the people, and, by the grandeur of his villas, and the beauty of his gardens, hoping to vie with imperial splendor. In matters of taste and genius, too, and especially in poetic composition, he had the hardihood to become the rival of his imperial master. Seneca was now sixty years of age, and when these accusations reached him, he avoided the court, and lived an abstemious life, in constant danger. His speech to the emperor, in which he offers to resign all his wealth and power, and asks permission to retire, is a fine specimen of apologetic eloquence. But he was accused of treason, and Sylvanus the tribune, by order of Nero, surrounded Seneca's magnificent villa, near Rome, with a troop of soldiers, and then sent a centurion to acquaint him with the emperor's orders, that he should put himself to death. Says Tacitus:[1] —

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[1] Annals, xv, lxii.

"Seneca heard the message with calm composure. He called for his will, and being deprived of that right of a Roman citizen by the centurion, he turned to his friends, and 'you see,' he said, 'that I am not at liberty to requite your services with the last marks of my esteem. One thing, however, still remains. I leave you the example of my life, the best and most precious legacy now in my power. Cherish it in your memory, and you will gain at once the applause due to virtue, and the fame of a sincere and generous friendship.' All who were present melted into tears. He endeavored to assuage their sorrows; he offered his advice with mild persuasion; he used the tone of authority. 'Where,' he said, 'are the precepts of philosophy, and where the words of wisdom, which for years have taught us to meet the calamities of life with firmness and a well-prepared spirit? Was the cruelty of Nero unknown to any of us? He murdered his mother; he destroyed his brother; and, after those deeds of horror, what remains to fill the measure of his guilt but the death of his guardian and his tutor?'

"Having delivered himself in these pathetic terms, he directed his attention to his wife. He clasped her in his arms, and in that fond embrace yielded for a while to the tenderness of his nature. Recovering his resolution, he entreated her to appease her grief, and bear in mind that his life was spent in a constant course of honor and of virtue. That consideration would serve to heal affliction, and sweeten all her sorrows. Paulina was still inconsolable. She was determined to die with her husband; she invoked the aid of the executioners, and begged them to end her wretched being. Seneca saw that she was animated by the love of glory, and that generous principle he thought ought not to be restrained. The idea of leaving a beloved object to the insults of the world, and the malice of her enemies, pierced him to the quick. 'It has been my care,' he said, 'to instruct you in that best philosophy, the art of mitigating the ills of life; but you prefer an honorable death. I will not envy you the vast renown that must attend your fall. Since you will have it so, we will die together. We will leave behind us an example of equal constancy; but the glory will be all your own.'

"These words were no sooner uttered, than the veins of both their arms were opened. At Seneca's time of life the blood was slow and languid. The decay of nature, and the impoverishing diet to which he had used himself, left him in a feeble condition. He ordered the vessels of his legs and joints to be punctured. After that operation he began to labor with excruciating pains. Lest his sufferings should overpower the constancy of his wife, or the sight of her afflictions prove too much for his own sensibility, he persuaded her to retire into another room. His eloquence continued to flow with its usual purity. He called for his secretaries, and dictated, while life was ebbing away, that farewell discourse, which has been published, and is in everybody's hands."

In order to hasten his death, Seneca also took hemlock, and had himself suffocated in a vapor bath. His wife was saved against her wishes by the soldiers at the entreaty of her slaves and freedmen. Seneca's body was buried privately without ceremony, as he had directed by his will (A.D. 65). Owing to his tutor Attalus, Seneca early became a vegetarian, but his father prevailed upon him to use flesh meat lest he should be suspected of abstaining upon superstitious grounds. However, he persistently renounced the two great dainties of the time, mushrooms and oysters, because they served not to nourishment, but to appetite. Tacitus says that at one time Seneca lived on wild apples, that grew in the woods, and his sole drink was water.

Seneca's extant writings are mainly on moral subjects, and consist of *Epistles*, and *Treatises* on Anger, Consolation, Providence, Tranquillity of Mind, Philosophical Constancy, Clemency, The Shortness of Life, A Happy Life, Philosophical Retirement, and Benefits. Seneca also wrote seven books entitled *Questiones Naturales*, in which he is thought to have anticipated some notions regarded as principles in modern physics. "The theory of earthquakes," says Humboldt, "as given by Seneca, contains the germs of all that has been stated in our times concerning the action of elastic vapors enclosed in the interior of the globe. We learn from Seneca the point to which the ancients carried their scientific researches without the aid of instruments."

Teuffel,[1] referring to the philosophical writings of Seneca, says, that they "charm the reader by their breadth of view, their large and fine observation, their abundance of knowledge unalloyed with pedantry, their nobility of thought and warmth of feeling, and their gorgeous style enlivened with all the resources of rhetoric." Says Coleridge, "You may get a motto for every sect in religion, or live thought in morals and philosophy from Seneca, but nothing is ever thought out by him."

Seneca was unquestionably the most brilliant figure of his time, and he may also be regarded as the most important of the Roman Stoic school, for he was the most elaborate of all the interpreters of the Stoic philosophy. Seneca excels all other writers of antiquity in the particular department of morals by which he is best known. In many of his educational and social doctrines he is surprisingly in advance of his age, and it is astonishing how penetrating is the knowledge that he displays. He became to a certain extent the director of conscience, guide, and adviser in all matters, bodily as well as spiritual, and he gives minute precepts for every circumstance of life. At all times he gave the wealth of his knowledge and his varied experience to his friends, and appealed strongly, and reiterated his appeals to men's hearts rather than to convincing their intellect. He says, "To knock once at the door when you come at night is never enough; the blow must be hard, and it must be seconded. Repetition is not a fault, it is a necessity."

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[1] History of Roman Literature, p. 288.

In an age of unbelief and compromise, Seneca taught that truth was positive and virtue objective. His teaching was a refined and spiritual Stoicism, yet he culled his precepts from every form of doctrine with impartial appreciation. He taught how to act so as to win happiness here; (1) by subduing the flesh to the spirit through feeling, mortification and retirement; (2) by living for one's family, friends, and country, and treating slaves and inferiors kindly as fellow servants in the work and welfare of existence; (3) by devotion to philosophy as the awakener of conscience and the best preparation for death; (4) by self-examination, self-knowledge, simplicity of living, and patience under suffering. "The remedies of the soul," he says, "have been discovered long ago; it is for us to learn how to apply them."

Seneca was too practical to care for abstract speculations, but when he places himself under any banner it is always that of Zeus; but while he started from the Stoic system, its barren austerity was toned down, its harshness softened, and its crotchets were laid aside. His system, however, taken in its main outline is rigid enough, but it is full of concessions, and Seneca deserves praise for the cleverness with which he steers over dangerous ground. For instance, he taught that riches being indifferent need not be given up, that the good rich man differs from the bad in spirit, not in externals, etc. He was the first moralist to enunciate the brotherhood of man, the unholiness of war, the sanctity of human life, the rights of slaves, and their claims to our affections.

Seneca was intensely practical, and he had many of the noble qualities of an old Roman, but he set his ideal too high, and he lacked the firmness to live up to his own standard. As a man he dishonored the doctrines which he expounded and defended with so much eloquence and power. As a writer has said, "He was rich, cultivated and famous ; in the foremost rank in the foremost city in the world ; the friend, the tutor, the counsellor of the imperial masters of the whole realm of civilization, it was about as hard for him to live out the Stoic doctrine, as, according to a higher master than Seneca, it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."[1]

"Philosophy," declares Seneca, "depends on acts and not on words ; it is disgraceful to say one thing and to think and write another. The writings of a philosopher ought to be capable of application to his own conduct." But it is difficult to reconcile the theory and the practice, when we consider the immense wealth of Seneca, dishonestly obtained, and recognize him as the writer of the apology for the murder of Agrippina by Nero, her son. Tacitus says[1] *fuit illi vero ingenium amoenum et temporis ejus auribus accommodatum.* "He possessed a most agreeable wit, and knew perfectly what was likely to tickle the ears of his contemporaries."

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[1] Brown, Stoic and Saints, p. 39.

Dio Cassius makes gross charges against the private character of Seneca, but they do not rest on a particle of evidence. Living as he did amidst the splendors and vices of the court, a friend of one of Rome's most wicked emperors, Seneca lived purely, temperately and lovingly. From his earliest days he was capable of adopting self-denial as a principle, in the very midst of wealth and splendor, and all the temptations which they involve, he retained the simplicity of his habits, and was claimed as a convert to a church with which he shows no sympathy. The Fathers of the church called him "the divine pagan," and they accepted the view that he had adopted their faith, so often did his religious and moral maxims approximate to those of Christianity. Indeed, some writers, like M. Fleury, have endeavored to show that they can only be accounted for by the supposition that Seneca had some acquaintance with the sacred writings. Zeller has shown, however, that the statements of Seneca—that this life is a prelude to a better; that the body is a lodging house, from which the soul will return to its own home; his joy in looking forward to the day which will rend the bonds of the body asunder, which he, in common with the early Christians, calls the birthday of eternal life; his description of the peace of the eternity there awaiting us, of the freedom and bliss of the heavenly life, of the light of knowledge which will there be shed on all the secrets of nature; his language on the future recognition and happy society of souls made perfect; his seeing in death a great day of judgment, when sentence will be pronounced on every one; his making the thought of a future life the great stimulus to moral conduct here; even the way in which he consoles himself for the destruction of the soul by the thought that it will live again in another form hereafter — all contain nothing at variance with the Stoic teaching, however near they may approach to Platonic or even Christian modes of thought.[1]

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[1] Annals, xiii, 3.

There has been much discussion regarding Seneca's relation to Christianity. Jerome speaks of letters which passed between Paul and Seneca, and says they were read by many (*leguntur a pluribus*), and he ranks him in the catalogue of saints. Augustine also refers to this correspondence. But Erasmus and others have declared these letters apocryphal, and it would be difficult to find any one now who would deny this conclusion. However, we know that Paul dwelt in Rome (Acts xxviii, 30; Phil. i, 13; 2 Tim. iv, 17), and was acquainted with Seneca's brother Gallio (Acts xviii, 12 sqq.), and possibly he may have met Seneca, but how much one was influenced by the other we do not know.

M. Fleury has made an elaborate collection of the passages in Seneca's writings which seem to be Christian in tone. Seneca's relation to Christianity has been exhaustively treated by Aubertin,[1] and a carefully selected list of parallel passages is given by Bishop Lightfoot, in an essay in his treatise on the "Epistle to the Philippians."

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[1] Zeller, The Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics, p. 219.

There are many striking resemblances between Seneca and St. Paul, and we even find traces of some of the best known parables of Christ, as of the sower, and the rich fool, and the debtor, and the talents out at usury. He speaks of the house built upon the rock; of life regarded as a warfare and a pilgrimage; of the athlete's crown of victory; of hypocrites like whited walls, etc.

Seneca was very urgent that there should be a framework of general theory, which would serve as a rule of life. The mass of men, he says, are weak, irresolute, passionate, and forgetful, soon blinded by sophistry, or led astray by bad example. The world in which they live is full of specious falsehoods and misleading maxims. They need, therefore, the help, the sympathy, the guidance of a living rule, a voice that can speak with some

[1] Sénèque et St. Paul.

authority to heart and conscience, friendly counsel, proverbial maxims or striking illustrations, which would tend to implant the right convictions in the mind.

Says Seneca, God dwells not in temples of wood or stone, nor waits the ministrations of human hands; that he has no delight in the blood of victims; that he is near to all his creatures; that his spirit resides in men's hearts; that all men are truly his offspring; that we are members of one body, which is God or nature; that men must believe in God before they can approach him; that the true service of God is to be like unto him; that all men have sinned, and none performed all the works of the law; that God is no respecter of nations, ranks, or conditions, but all, barbarian, and Roman, bond and free, are alike under his all-seeing providence.

XI

MARCUS AURELIUS

Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus have been considered to be the real heroes of the Stoicism of which Seneca was only the elegant preacher, for they both conformed their lives to their teaching. Rendall has shown that Epictetus is the teacher to whom Marcus Aurelius is most allied — in age, in doctrine, and in scope of thought. Says Rendall: —

"In the emphasis, as well as in the substance, of their teaching there is a close resemblance; their psychology and their epistemology agree; they insist on the same main ethical dogmas; they take the same attitude towards abstract dialectic, and to rival schools of philosophy — Cynic, Epicurean, or Sceptic. In their concentration upon practical ethics, their recurrence to Socratic formulas, their abandonment of Stoic arrogations of certitude and indefectibility, their extension and enforcement of social obligation, their ethical realization of the omnipresent immanence of God, they occupy the same position towards Stoicism."[1]

Marcus Aurelius was by no means so deep or so strong a thinker as Epictetus, but he was one of the purest, gentlest, and most conscientious of men. His innate benevolence of heart served to chasten the severity of the pure Stoic system. Niebuhr says that it is more delightful to speak of him than of any man in history, and "if there is any sublime virtue, it is his." He adds: "He was certainly the noblest character of his time; and I know of no other man who combined such unaffected kindness, mildness, and humility with such conscientiousness and severity towards himself."

Nearly five hundred years before Marcus Aurelius, Pythagoras had taught the benefit and necessity of self-inquiry. Night and morning he prescribed for himself and his followers an examination. At these times especially was it meet to take account of our

[1] Rendall, Marcus Aurelius to Himself, cx.

soul and its doings; in the evening to ask, "Wherein have I transgressed? what done? what failed to do?" In the morning, "What must I do? wherein repair past days' forgetfulness?" Socrates pressed this introspection upon his followers and taught that it was the duty of every man to know himself. Know thyself, that is, to realize thyself; by obedience and self-control come to thy full stature; be in fact what you are in possibility; satisfy yourself, in the only way in which true self-satisfaction is possible, by realizing in yourself the law which constitutes your real being. This introspection occupied the attention of many philosophers. Men were searching into their relations with each other, their duties to each other, with the idea to inspire them, that brotherhood, love and kindness, and not enmity, was the normal relation to mankind.

With Marcus Aurelius, his whole life was given to self-inquiry. There was in him a certain childlike piety which he owed, not entirely to Stoicism, but, as he says, to the influence of a pious mother on his education. He often speaks not only of contentment, but of joy in God, and in all the mercies with which he crowned his life. He is confident that all the woes and wrongs of life, and even death itself, cannot be evils, since God allows them to exist within the sphere of his benign and righteous reign. One of his rules was to fix his thoughts as much as possible on the virtues of others, rather than on their vices. "When thou wishest to delight thyself, think of the virtues of those who live with thee — the activity of one, the modesty of another, the liberality of a third, and some other good quality of a fourth."

Says Marcus Aurelius, "Men exist for the sake of one another. Teach them or bear with them." "The best way of avenging thyself is not to become like the wrongdoer." "If any man has done wrong, the harm is his own. But perhaps he has not done wrong." "Believe that men are your brethren and you will love them."

Marcus Aurelius taught that our fellow men ought to be loved from the heart. They ought to be benefited, not for the sake of outward decency, but because the benefactor is penetrated with the joy of benevolence, and thereby benefits himself. Whatever hinders union with others has a tendency to separate the members from the body, from which all derive their life; and he who estranges himself from one of his fellow men voluntarily severs himself from the stock of mankind.

"If any one can show me that I do not think or act correctly, I will change gladly, for I seek the truth, by which no one was ever harmed." "It is not right that I should give myself pain, for I have never given it willingly to another." "It is a great thing to live in truth and justice, with kind feelings even to the lying and unjust." "He who wrongs me is my kinsman in unity of the spirit and divine sonship, and I cannot be angry with my brother." "Let me remember that men exist for each other, and that they do wrong unwillingly." "It is peculiarly human to love even those who do wrong." When asked if he had seen the gods or had learned of their existence, Aurelius replied, "I have never seen any soul, and yet I treat it with reverence; so, also, when I constantly experience the power of the gods, I learn to recognize their existence, and I honor them." Aurelius realized the distinction between an outward abstinence from evil, and a true inward holiness, and recognized the sinfulness of all mankind. "When thou seest another sin, think that thou thyself sinnest sometimes, and art just such an one thyself. And even though thou abstainest from many sins, yet thou hast within thee the inclination to such practices, though from fear, from vanity, or some similar disposition, thou avoidest them."

Aurelius was by turns the accused, the witness, advocate and judge. No more noble thoughts, or pure and lofty spiritual utterances have issued from the heathen world. He recognized that the universe is wisely ordered, that every man is part of it or must conform to that order which he cannot change, that whatever the Deity has done is good, and that all mankind are brothers, and that it is the duty of every man to love and cherish his brethren and try to make them better, even those who would do him harm. It was a tenet of ancient philosophy that the life of the wise man should be a contemplation of, and a preparation for, death.

The keynote of the life of Aurelius we find in his saying, "Since it is possible that thou mayest depart from life this very moment, regulate every act and thought accordingly." Aurelius believed that life is the presence of God; the course of the world is the evolution of Providence; the hand of the Deity is operative everywhere; above all his voice is articulate within man's self, as his indwelling life and soul. In philosophy sought for and found, justice, truth, wisdom, and courage, lie the cardinal virtues of Stoicism. Yet, while firmly believing in the tenets of the Stoics, Aurelius was broad-minded, and so loved freedom of thought, that he made an impartial distribution of the lectureships in philosophy among the four great schools, so that Platonists, Aristotelians, and Epicureans were paid for proclaiming their views.

The contemplative Stoicism of Aurelius proceeded from philosophic speculation, and a resignation which could coolly contemplate even the annihilation of our personality; but he had no sympathy with calmness and resignation that arose from a living faith. As Neander says, the spirit with which the Christian martyrs met death and even sought it, appeared to Aurelius a mere delusion of enthusiasm. Says Aurelius, "The soul must be prepared when it must leave the body, either to be extinguished, or to be dissolved, or to remain a little longer with the body. This readiness must proceed from free choice, and not from mere obstinacy, as the Christians; and it must also be the result of contemplation, and a lofty spirit, without any theatrical effect, so that a man should be able to persuade another to the same course."

While Aurelius was one of the most benign, philanthropic, and conscientious rulers who ever adorned a throne, yet in his reign the Christians were subjected to persecutions more severe than even under Nero. He could see in Christianity only a "foolish and boundless" superstition; and he felt compelled, as Roman emperor, from political as well as religious motives, to protect the religion of the state from its pronounced enemies. He sought to base the stability of the throne on a rigid morality, on self-denial and self-sacrifice. The educated Romans looked with disdain upon a doctrine which required only a blind belief; they demanded philosophical grounds for what they believed.

Celsus, the first writer against Christianity, a broadly and philosophically educated scholar, and a friend of the noted satirist, Lucian of Samosata, makes it a matter of mockery, that laborers, shoemakers, farmers, and the more ignorant class of men, should be zealous preachers of the Gospel, and that they chiefly addressed themselves to slaves, women, and children. A strong argument of Celsus was, that the Christians not only set themselves in opposition to the religious life of the people, but they also opposed the emperor and the empire. A ruler there must be, and the rule of the emperor is a bulwark against the threatening danger of the barbarians, on the frontier of the empire. But the Christians, by seeking to stand separate, striving for the general supremacy of their cause, endangered the existence of the empire, and prevented the execution of public benefits, which can be effected only under a strong and united government. In the interests of the empire, therefore, and of public order, Christians must be made to submit to the whole community, to serve the emperor, to assist him in the ruling of the empire, and to protect it, thus saving civilization from barbarism.

Aurelius saw in the new religion an immoral superstition, and a mysterious political conspiracy which was secretly spreading throughout the empire, and that it condemned the prevalent religion in the strongest terms. The Christians rejected all the heathen ceremonies, and declared that all the heathen religions were false, and this was a declaration of hostility against the Roman government. Mr. John Stuart Mill draws a lesson from the course taken by Aurelius, a most striking warning against the danger of interfering with the liberty of thought. He says:—

"If ever any one possessed of power had grounds for thinking himself the best and most enlightened among his contemporaries, it was the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Absolute monarch of the whole civilized world, he preserved through life not only the most unblemished justice, but, what was less to be expected from his stoical breeding, the tenderest heart. The few failings which are attributed to him were all on the side of indulgence; while his writings, the highest ethical product of the ancient mind, differ scarcely preceptibly, if they differ at all, from the most characteristic teachings of Christ. This man, a better Christian, in all but the dogmatic sense of the word, than almost any of the ostensibly Christian sovereigns who have since reigned, persecuted Christianity. Placed at the summit of all the previous attainments of humanity, with an open, unfettered intellect, and a character which led him, of himself, to embody in his moral writings the Christian ideal, he yet failed to see that Christianity was to be a good and not an evil to the world, with his duties to which he was so deeply penetrated. Existing society he knew to be in a deplorable state. But such as it was, he saw, or thought he saw, that it was held together, and prevented from being worse, by belief and reverence of the received divinities. As a ruler of mankind, he deemed it his duty not to suffer society to fall in pieces, and saw not how, if its existing ties were removed, any others could be formed which could again knit it together. The new religion aimed openly at dissolving these ties; unless, therefore, it was his duty to adopt that religion, it seemed to be his duty to put it down. Inasmuch, then, as the theology of Christianity did not appear to him true, or of divine origin —inasmuch as this strange history of a crucified God was not credible to him, and a system which purported to rest entirely upon a foundation to him so wholly unbelievable, could not be foreseen by him to be that renovating agency which, after all abatements, it has in fact proved to be, the gentlest and most amiable of philosophers and rulers, under a solemn sense of duty, authorized the persecution of Christianity. To my mind, this is one of the most tragical facts in all history. It is a bitter thought, how different a thing the Christianity of the world might have been, if the Christian faith had been adopted as the religion of the empire, under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius, instead of those of Constantine. But it is equally unjust to him, and false to truth, to deny, that no one plea which can be urged for punishing anti-Christian teaching, was wanting to Marcus Aurelius, for punishing, as he did, the propagation of Christianity. No Christian more firmly believes that atheism is false, and tends to the dissolution of society, than Marcus Aurelius believed the same things of Christianity; he who, of all men then living, might have been thought the most capable of appreciating it. Unless any one who approves of punishment for the promulgation of opinions, flatters himself that he is a wiser and better man than Marcus Aurelius — more deeply versed in the wisdom of his time — more elevated in his intellect above it — more earnest in his search for truth, or more single-minded in his devotion to it when found — let him abstain from that assumption of the joint infallibility of himself and the multitude, which the great Aurelius made with so unfortunate a result."

Aurelius speaks of the Christians as obstinate fanatics in his *Meditations*, and he no doubt accepted the current prejudices of the ruling classes, and neglected to look deeper into the real doctrines of the church. However, he remained the very loftiest expression of that purified Stoicism which bordered on Christianity without entering its territory or taking anything from it. He is the great link or connection between the heathen and Christian schools. He brought heathenism as near as in its strength and wisdom it could come to Christianity; and he seems to carry to a higher point and nearer to the Christian faith the great religious ideas which formed the basis of the Roman Stoic school. "It seems," says M. Martha, "that in him the philosophy of heathendom grows less proud, draws nearer and nearer to a Christianity which it ignored, or which it despised, and is ready to fling itself into the arms of the 'Unknown God.' In the said *Meditations* of Aurelius we find a pure serenity, sweetness, and docility to the commands of God, which before him were unknown, and which Christian grace has alone surpassed. If he has not yet attained to charity in all that fullness of meaning which Christianity has given to the world, he has already gained its unction, and one cannot read his book, unique in the history of pagan philosophy, without thinking of the sadness of Pascal and the gentleness of Fénelon. We must pause before this soul, so lofty and so pure, to contemplate ancient virtue in its softest brilliancy, to see the moral delicacy to which profane doctrines have attained — how they laid down their pride, and how penetrating a grace they have found in their new simplicity."[1]

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the son-in-law and successor of Antoninus Pius, was born April 25, A.D. 121; he ascended the throne in 161, and died March 17, 180. He came of a family which had long been settled in the south of Spain, and which was summoned to Rome to fill the highest offices of the state. The father of Marcus Aurelius was Annius Verus, who died in his prætorship, and was descended from a long line of illustrious men who claimed descent from Numa, the second King of Rome. His mother, Domitia Calvilla, was also a lady of consular and kingly race. On the death of his father, Marcus Aurelius was adopted by his grandfather, who spared no pains to give him a good education. Aurelius says that from his grandfather he learned good morals and the government of his temper; from the reputation and remembrance of his father, modesty and manliness; from his mother, piety and beneficence, and abstinence not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and, further, simplicity of life far removed from the habits of the rich.

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[1] Martha, Les Moralistes sur l'Empire Romain.

His fine qualities early attracted the notice of the emperor Hadrian, who used to term him Verissimus, a name which Aurelius liked well enough in later years to have it put at times upon the coins struck in his mints. When only seventeen years of age, he was adopted, along with Lucius C. Commodus, by Antoninus Pius, the successor of Hadrian; and Faustina, the daughter of Pius, was selected for his wife. In the year 140 A.D. he was made consul; and from this period to the death of Pius, in 161 A.D., he continued to discharge the duties of his various offices with the greatest promptitude and fidelity. When Antoninus Pius was chosen by Hadrian as his successor, he was fifty-two years old, and he was selected on the express condition that he should in turn adopt both Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. But the latter had so far disgraced himself by his early profligacy, that his adoptive father disinherited him, and procuring the nomination of Aurelius as sole successor by the senate, associated him with himself in the empire. On his accession, however, Aurelius, who now assumed the name of Antoninus, gave an equal share of the government to Commodus, who henceforth bore the name of Lucius Aurelius Verus, and Rome saw for the first time, two co-rulers share between them on an equal footing all the dignity of absolute power.

During his early years, before ascending the throne, no pains were spared to fit Aurelius for his high station, and the greatest teachers of his day took part in his instruction. He had a great love of reading, taste for antiquities, addiction to philosophy, and extreme docility of temperament. Like many young Romans he tried his hand at poetry and studied rhetoric. Finally, he abandoned poetry and rhetoric for philosophy, and he attached himself to the sect of the Stoics. We learn from contemporary sources, that "from childhood he was of a serious cast"; that his demeanor was that of "a courteous gentleman, modest and strenuous, grave but affable"; that "he never changed his countenance for grief or gladness." We read that during three and twenty years, he absented himself but two nights from the side of Antoninus; he never missed a meeting of the senate, or left before its close; he would give days to the hearing of a single case, and extended the days of assize to two hundred and thirty in the year.

Aurelius has recorded the names of his teachers and the obligations which he owed to each of them. His gratitude to them was warm and profound. This sketch, which was written during one of his campaigns, forms the first book of his *Meditations*, and is characterized by the most unaffected simplicity and modesty.

Of his teachers Fronto was one of the most famous. Not many years ago, the letters which passed between Fronto and Aurelius were found in an old manuscript, over which another work had been written. From Rusticus he learned that his character required improvement and discipline, and many other things, among them, to abstain from fine writing; and he made him acquainted with the memoirs of Epictetus. Says he, "From Rusticus, I first conceived the need of moral correction and amendment; renounced sophistic ambitions and essays on philosophy, discourses provocative of virtue, or fancy portraiture of the sage or the philanthropist; learned to eschew rhetoric and poetry and fine language." He gave in after years to Rusticus the credit of his conversion from letters to philosophy. "It was he who made me feel how much I needed to reform and train my character. He warned me from the treacherous paths of sophistry, from formal speeches of parade which aim at nothing higher than applause. Thanks to him I am weaned from rhetoric and poetry, from affected elegance of style, and can write now with simplicity. From him I have learned to concentrate my thoughts on serious study, and not to be surprised into agreeing with all the random utterance of fluent speech."

Diognetus, Bacchius, Tandasis, and Marcianus were his chief instructors in philosophy. Apollonius taught him freedom of will and undeviating steadiness of purpose, and to look to nothing else, not even for a moment, except to reason. He taught how to receive factitious favors, without either sacrifice of self-respect or churlish regard. Then follow Alexander the Platonist, and Catulus, and his brother Severus, with Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, and Bentus, from whose lives and recorded words he learned "the idea of polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed." And so on through a long list of instructors, with a methodical account of what he learned from each.

Marcus Aurelius was in very poor physical health from his boyhood, and was strained by overwork, and in later life his power of digestion and sleep wholly gave way. His private life was one of extreme simplicity. His only pleasure was in books and meditation, and in his family relations. He was one of the gentlest, purest, and most conscientious of men. Yet by the irony of fate, after Aurelius had become emperor, he led a most strenuous life. His delight was meditation, yet the best years of his life were spent in the turmoil of camp life. To the gentle heart of Aurelius, all war, even when accompanied with victories, was extremely distasteful. The surroundings and associates of war were harsh and uncongenial, yet his presence was necessary with the legions.

Soon after his accession to the throne an inundation of the Tiber caused great ruin and distress which ended in a widespread famine. Then came the horrors of war and rumors of war. First came the Parthian war, in which Verus was sent to command, but he did nothing. The Parthians defeated and all but destroyed the Roman army, and devastated with impunity the Roman province of Syria. What little success the Romans had was not due to Verus, but to other Roman generals, but Verus took all the credit. The north of Italy was threatened by the rude people beyond the Alps, and many years were spent by Aurelius in driving back the invaders. A formidable insurrection had long been preparing in the German provinces; the Britons were on the point of revolt, and the Catti were waiting for an opportunity to devastate the Rhenish provinces. Aurelius spent five years in the north, without ever returning to Rome, enduring the greatest hardships with the serenity of a philosopher. But the constant struggle to preserve his dominions from hostile invaders, and the hardships of camp life, undermined his originally weak condition, shattered by perpetual anxiety and fatigue, and he died, it is supposed, in Vienna, the then Sirmium, on the seventeenth of March, A.D. 180, in his fifty-ninth year, after a reign of twenty years, the greater part of which was spent in the most uncongenial work, amid the tumults of perpetual war, and the distraction necessarily arising from the government of so vast an empire. As a writer has said: "The man who loved peace with his whole soul, died without beholding it, and yet the everlasting presence of war never tempted him to sink into a mere warrior. He maintained uncorrupted to the end of his noble life, his philosophic and philanthropic aspirations. After his decease, which was felt to be a national calamity, every Roman citizen, and many others in distant portions of the empire, procured an image or statue of him, which more than a hundred years after was still found among their household gods."

It was during his camp life, surrounded by uncongenial associates, that Aurelius wrote down his thoughts, or reflections, which have come down to us as his *Meditations*. They were written, not for effect like Seneca, not for instruction like Epictetus, but only for relief of sleeplessness and solitude, and for no eye but his own. Hence the brief, unconnected and paragraphic form, wherein his *Meditations* have come down to us. They are a collection of maxims and reflections in the spirit of the Stoic philosophy, which, without much connection or skill in composition, breathe the purest sentiments of piety and benevolence; "yet the centuries still turn to him for wisdom; and the thoughts remain imperishable, dignifying duty, shaming weakness, and rebuking discontent." Nowhere else is the morality of paganism couched in so pure and high and reverent a spirit, and the *Meditations* form, as it were, an indispensable supplement to Holy Writ.

Matthew Arnold calls Aurelius "perhaps the most beautiful figure in history." Lecky says that he was "the purest and gentlest spirit of all the pagan world." Says Montesquieu, "If there is any sublime virtue it is his. I know no other man who combined such unaffected kindness, mildness and humility with such conscientiousness and severity toward himself." Taine pronounces him "the noblest soul that ever lived." Says Dr. Lightfoot, "As Epictetus gives a higher tone to the theology of the Stoic school, so the writings of M. Aurelius manifest an improvement in its ethical teaching. . . . As a conscious witness of God and a stern preacher of righteousness, the Phrygian slave holds a higher place: but as a kindly philanthropist, conscientiously alive to the claims of all men far and near, the Roman emperor commands deeper respect. His natural disposition softened the harsher features of Stoical ethics. The brooding melancholy and the almost feminine tenderness are a marked contrast to the hard outlines in the portraiture of the older Stoics."

XII

SELECTIONS FROM EPICTETUS[1]

1. *The imitation of God.*

It is not enough simply to wish to be honorable and good; it is necessary besides to be instructed in certain points; we must inquire accordingly, what these are.

The philosophers tell us that before all things it is necessary to learn that God is, and that he provides for all things, and that from him nothing can be hid—not deeds only, but even thoughts and purposes. Next must be learned of what nature the gods are; for such as they are found to be, he who would please and obey them must endeavor with all his might to become like unto them. If, *e.g.*, the Divine be faithful, so must he be faithful; if free, so must he be free; if beneficent, so must he be beneficent; if high minded, so must he do all such things as are agreeable to the same.

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[1] Selections from the "Encheiridion," "Dissertations" and "Fragments" of Epictetus.

2. *Divine government of the world.*

We conduct ourselves in the assembly of life much as people do at a fair. Beasts are brought to be sold, and oxen; and the greater part of the men come to buy and sell, and there are some few who come to look at the market and to inquire how it is carried on, and why, and who fixes the meeting and for what purpose. So it is here also in this assembly (of life): some, like cattle, trouble themselves about nothing except their fodder. For to all of you who are busy about possessions and lands and slaves and magisterial offices, these are nothing except fodder. But there are a few who attend the fair, men who love to look on and consider what is the world, who governs it. Has it no governor? And how is it possible that a city or a family cannot continue to exist, not even the shortest time without an administrator and guardian, and that so great and beautiful a system should be administered with such order and yet without a purpose and by chance? There is then an administrator. What kind of administrator and how does he govern? And who are we, who were produced by him, and for what purpose? Have we some connection with him and some relation towards him, or none? This is the way in which these few are affected, and then they apply themselves only to this one thing, to examine the meeting and then to go away. What then? They are ridiculed by the many, as the spectators at the fair are by the traders; and if the beasts had any understanding, they would ridicule those who admired anything else than fodder.

3. *The providence of God.*

Concerning the gods, there are some who say that a Divine Being does not exist; and others, that it exists indeed, but is idle and uncaring, and hath no forethought for anything; and a third class say that there is such a Being, and he taketh forethought also, but only in respect of great and heavenly things, but of nothing that is on the earth; and a fourth class, that he taketh thought of things both in heaven and earth, but only in general, and not of each thing severally. And there is a fifth class, whereof are Odysseus and Socrates, who say, *Nor can I move without thy knowledge.*

Before all things, then, it is necessary to investigate each of these opinions, whether it be justly affirmed or no. For if there be no gods, how can the following of the gods be an end? And if there are gods, but such as take no care for anything, then, also, how can the following of them be truly an end? And how, again, if the gods both exist and take care for things, yet if there be no communication from them to men, aye, and by heaven, and even to mine own self? The wise and good man, having investigated all these things, will submit his own mind to him that governeth the universe, even as good citizens to the laws of their state.

4. *Omniscience and omnipotence of God.*

On being asked how we could be convinced that everything done is observed by God, Epictetus replied: Do you not believe that all things in the universe are united in one?

Yes! said the other. Well, then, do you not think that there must be a sympathy between the things of earth and those of heaven? I do, said he. For how else do plants, as if at the command of God, when he bids them, flower in due season? and shoot forth when he bids them shoot, and bear fruit when he bids them bear? and ripen when he bids them ripen? and again they drop their fruit when he bids them drop it, and shed their leaves when he bids them shed them? and how else at his bidding do they fold themselves together, and remain motionless and at rest? and how else at the waxing and waning of the moon, and the approach and withdrawal of the sun, do we behold such a change and reversal in earthly things? But are the plants and our bodies so bound up in the whole, and have sympathy with it, and are our spirits not much more so? And our souls being thus bound up and in touch with God, seeing, indeed, that they are portions and fragments of him, shall not every movement of them, inasmuch as it is something inward and akin to God, be perceived by him? But you are able to meditate upon the divine government, and upon all divine and all human affairs, and to be affected at the same time in the senses and in the intellect by ten thousand things, and at the same time to assent to some and dissent to others, or suspend your judgment; and you preserve in your mind so many impressions of so many and various things, and being affected by them, you strike upon ideas similar to earlier impressions, and you retain many different arts, and memories of ten thousand things; and shall not God have the power to overlook all things, and be present with all, and have a certain communication with all? But is the sun able to illuminate so great a part of the All, and to leave so little without light,—that part, namely, which is filled with the shadow of the earth,—and shall he who made the sun, and guideth it in its sphere,—a small part of him beside the whole,—shall he not be capable of perceiving all things?

But I, saith the man, cannot take heed of all these things at once. And who said you could do this? that you had equal powers with God? But, nevertheless, he hath placed at every man's side a guardian, the genius of each man, who is charged to watch over him, a genius that cannot sleep, nor be deceived. To what greater and more watchful guardian could he have committed us? So, when ye have shut the doors, and made darkness in the house, remember never to say that ye are alone; for ye are not alone, but God is there, and your genius is there; and what need have these of light to mark what ye are doing? To this God it were fitting also that ye should swear an oath, as soldiers do to Cæsar. But those indeed who receive pay swear to prefer the safety of Cæsar before all things; but ye, receiving so many and great things, will ye not swear? Or swearing, will ye not abide by it? And what shall ye swear? Never to disobey, never to accuse, never to blame aught that he hath given, never unwillingly to do or suffer any necessary thing. Is this oath like unto that other? The soldiers swear to esteem no other man before Cæsar; ye to esteem yourselves above all.

5. *The great Designer.*

From everything which is or happens in the world, it is easy to praise Providence, if a man possesses these two qualities—the faculty of seeing what belongs and happens to all persons and things, and a grateful disposition. If he does not possess these two qualities, one man will not see the use of things which are and which happen; another will not be thankful for them, even if he does know them. If God had made colors, but had not made the faculty of seeing them, what would have been their use? None at all. On the other hand, if he had made the faculty of vision, but had not made objects such as to fall under the faculty, what in that case also would have been the use of it? None at all. Well, suppose that he had made both, but had not made light? In that case, also, they would have been of no use. Who is it, then, who has fitted this to that and that to this? And who is it that has fitted the knife to the case and the case to the knife? Is it no one? And, indeed, from the very structure of things which have attained their completion, we are accustomed to show that the work is certainly the act of some artificer, and that it has not been constructed without a purpose. Does, then, each of these things demonstrate the workman, and do not visible things and the faculty of seeing and light demonstrate him? If they do not, let us consider the constitution of our understanding according to which, when we meet with sensible objects, we do not simply receive impressions from them, but we also select something from them, and subtract something, and add, and compound by means of them these things or those, and, in fact, pass from some to other things which, in a manner, resemble them; is not even this sufficient to move some men, and to induce them not to forget the workman? If not so, let them explain to us what it is that makes each several thing, or how it is possible that things so wonderful and like the contrivances of art should exist by chance and from their own proper motion.

6. *Man more than animal.*

We have several points in common with the animals. Use is one thing, observation is another. God requires of the animals that they should simply use and submit to objects of sense; of us that we should observe and investigate these. Consequently for them it is enough to eat and drink and rest and breed, and whatever else each of them performs; but for us, who have been further endowed with the faculty of observation, these things are not enough. . . .

Man has been brought into the world by God to contemplate him and his works, and not only to contemplate these, but to interpret them. And, therefore, it is a shame for man to begin and end where do the animals; it is his business rather to begin from the point they end at, and to end only where Nature in our case ends—namely, with contemplation and study and a life in harmony with herself. Take heed, then, that ye die not without having considered these things.

7. *Man equal to his fortune.*

Come, then, do you also having observed these things look to the faculties which you have, and when you have looked at them, say: Bring now, O Zeus, any difficulty that thou pleasest, for I have means given me by thee and the powers for honoring myself through the things which happen. You do not so; but you sit still, trembling with fear that some things will happen, and weeping, and lamenting, and groaning for what does happen; and then you blame the gods; for cowardice of this kind is sure to be followed by impiety. And yet God not only bestowed on us such faculties to bear all that may happen without being depressed or crushed by it; but, like a good king and true father, accompanied his gift with no hindrance, compulsion or restraint, but put it all in our own hands, not even reserving to himself any power to prevent or impede its use. And yet with such means at their free disposal, men do not use them, do not realize what they have received, and from whose hands; but they sit moaning and groaning, some quite blind as regards the giver, and not recognizing their benefactor; while others are sordid enough to resort to complaints and accusations against God. Yet, while I can show that we have been fitted and fashioned to exercise courage and high mindedness, what proof can you show me that we were constituted to complain and reproach.

8. *The praise of God.*

Are these the only works of Providence in us?—but what may suffice to rightly praise and tell them? For had we understanding thereof, would any other thing better beseem us, either in company or alone, than to hymn the Divine Being, and laud him and rehearse his gracious deeds? Should we not, as we dig or plough or eat, sing this hymn to God. Great is God who hath given us such instruments whereby we shall till the earth; great is God, who hath given us hands, and swallowing, and a stomach; who maketh us to grow without our knowledge, and to breathe while we sleep. These things it were fitting that every man should sing, and to chant the greatest and divinest hymns for this, that he hath given us the power to observe and consider his works and a way of life to follow. What then? Since the most of you have become blind, should there not be one to fill this place, and in the name of all to sing this hymn to God? For what else can I do, an old man and lame, than sing hymns to God? If I were a nightingale I would do after the nature of a nightingale; if a swan, after that of a swan. But now I am a reasoning creature and it behooves me to sing the praise of God: this is my task, and this I do, nor, as long as it is granted me, will I ever abandon this post. And you, too, I summon to join me in the same song.

9. *God's care of individuals.*

Is any good man afraid lest means of sustenance should fail him? But they do not fail the blind and the lame, and are they likely to fail the virtuous? The good soldier never wants for some one to pay him; neither does the laborer, nor shoemaker, and yet shall the good man want for such? What! Is God so indifferent to his instruments, his ministers, his witnesses, whom alone he employs as living proofs to the ignorant, that he not only exists, but governs all things well, and never neglects the interest of man, and that to the virtuous, whether living or dead, there is no such thing as evil. Well, but how, supposing that he does not give me food? Is not this, however, just what a good general does, when he gives me the signal for retreat?

I obey, I follow, all the while praising my commander, and singing his deeds.

For, as I came into the world when he pleased, so again when it pleases him, I depart. And so long as I lived, it was my business to sing praises unto God, both by myself and with individuals, and in the presence of many.

10. *His real presence in man.*

You, O man, are God's chief work — thou art a part of God, thou hast in thee something that is a portion of him. Why, then, art thou ignorant of thy high ancestry? Why knowest thou not whence thou camest? Wilt thou not remember, in thine eating, who it is that eats, and whom thou dost nourish? In society, in exercise, in debate, do you not know that it is God you keep, exert, and bear about with you, although, unhappy man, you are unconscious of it. Thinkest thou I speak of some god of gold and silver, and external to thee? Nay, but in thyself thou dost bear him, and seest not that thou defilest him with thine impure thoughts and filthy deeds. In the presence even of an image of God thou hadst not dared to do one of those things which thou doest. But in the presence of God himself within thee, who seeth and heareth all things, thou art not ashamed of the things thou dost both desire and do. O thou unwitting of thine own nature, and subject to the wrath of God.

11. *Man's sonship and brotherhood.*

Next, remember that you are a son. What is the profession answering to this character? To consider everything of his as belonging to a father, to obey him in all things, never to complain of him to any one, never to say or do anything injurious to him, to yield and give way before him in all things, and work with him to the utmost of your power.

Once more, remember that you are a brother; and to this character corresponds the duty of readiness to yield, of compliance, of right speech, the never claiming for one's self any of the things that depend not on our will, but the cheerfully resigning of these, that you may have a greater interest in what your will can determine.

12. *The ideal philosopher.*

But so much I have to say to you, that whosoever shall without God attempt so great a matter stirreth up the wrath of God against him, and desireth only to behave himself unseemly before the people. For in no well-ordered house doth one come in and say to himself: I should be the steward of the house, else, when the lord of the house shall have observed it, and seeth him insolently giving orders, he will drag him forth and chastise him. So it is also in this great city of the universe, for here, too, there is a master of the house who ordereth each and all, saying to the sun: Thou art the sun; thou hast the power to make thy circuit and to constitute the year and the season, and to increase and nourish the fruits, and to stir the winds, and still them, and temperately to warm the bodies of men. Go forth, run thy course, and minister thus to the greatest things and to the least. Or, thou hast the power to lead the host against Ilium, be then an Agamemnon. Thou canst fight a duel with Hector, be an Achilles. But supposing that Thersites came forward and claimed the command; either he would not gain it, or else, gaining it, he would disgrace himself before many witnesses.

First, in all things that concern thyself, thou must appear in nothing like unto what thou now doest. Thou must not accuse God nor man; thou must utterly give over pursuit, and avoid only those things that are in the power of thy will; anger is not meet for thee, nor resentment, nor envy, nor pity, nor compassion — neither amorousness, nor vanity, nor a craving even for the smallest luxury. For it must be understood that other men shelter themselves by walls and houses and by darkness when they do such things, and many means of concealment have they. One shutteth the door, placeth some one before the chamber; if any one should come, say, he is out, he is busy. But in place of all these things it behooves the philosopher to shelter himself behind his own piety and reverence; but if he doth not, he shall be put to shame, naked under the sky. This is his house, this his door, this the guards of his chamber, this his darkness. For he must not seek to hide aught that he doeth, else he is gone, the philosopher hath perished, the man who lived under the open sky, the freeman. He hath begun to fear something from without, he hath begun to need concealment; nor can he find it when he would, for where shall he hide himself, and how? And if by chance this tutor, this public teacher, should be found in guilt, what things must he not suffer? And fearing these things, can he yet take heart with his whole soul to guide the rest of mankind? That can he never: it is impossible!

First, then, thou must purify thy ruling faculty, and this vocation of thine also, saying: My mind is the material I have to deal with, just as wood is to the carpenter, and leather is to the shoemaker; and my work is the right employment of objects. Neither the body nor its parts have anything to do with me. Death? let it come when it will — death either of the whole, or any part of it. What! flee it? but whither? Can any one cast me altogether out of the universe? It is impossible; for wheresoever I shall go, there will be the sun and moon and stars; there will be visions, omens, and communion with God.

And furthermore, when he hath thus fashioned himself, he will not be content with these things, who is a philosopher indeed. But know that he is a herald from God to men, declaring to them the truth about good and evil things, that they have gone astray and are seeking the reality of good and evil where it is not, and do not consider where it is. . . . For the philosopher really is a kind of spy, to report what is friendly, and what is hostile, to mankind. And having carefully spied out these things by himself, he must come and report the exact truth, neither being so stricken with panic as to report enemies where there are none, nor in any other way being confused, or bewildered by vain impressions.

In what, then, is the good, seeing that in these things it is not? Tell us, thou, my lord missionary and spy! It is there where ye deem it not, and where ye have no desire to seek it. For did ye desire, ye would have found it in yourselves, nor would ye wander to things without, nor pursue things alien, as if they were your own concerns. Turn to your own selves; understand the natural conceptions which ye possess. What kind of thing do ye take the good to be? Peace? happiness? freedom? Come, then, do ye not naturally conceive it as great, as precious, and that cannot be harmed? What kind of material, then, will ye take to shape peace and freedom withal—that which is enslaved or in that which is free? That which is free. Have ye the flesh enslaved or free? We know not. Know ye not that it is the slave of fever, of gout, of ophthalmia, of dysentery, of tyranny, and fire, and steel, and everything that is mightier than itself? Yea, it is enslaved. How, then, can aught that is of the body be free? and how can that be great or precious which by nature is dead, mere dust or clay? What then! do ye possess nothing that is free? Nothing perhaps! But say, who can force you to assent to what appears to be false? No one; or to refuse assent to what appears to be true? No one. Well, then, you see by this, that there is in you something which is by nature free. Or, again, which of you can desire or avoid, pursue or shrink, purpose or prepare for anything without having formed a conception of what is profitable or unbecoming? No one. Here, too, then, you have something that is unimpeded and free; this part of you, miserable men, ye should cultivate, and attend to, and in this seek for the good.

And how is it possible that one can live prosperously who hath nothing; a naked, homeless, hearthless, beggarly man, without servants, without a country? Lo, God hath sent you a man to show you in very deed that it is possible. Look at me! I have neither country, nor house, nor goods, nor servants; I sleep on the ground; I have no wife nor children, nor garret; I possess nothing but earth, sky, and one poor cloak. Yet what lack I? Am I not free from grief and fear? Am I not free? When did any of you see me fail of my pursuit or meet with what I had avoided? When did I blame God or man? When did I accuse any man? When did any of you see me of a sullen countenance? How do I meet those whom ye fear and marvel at? Do I not treat them as my slaves? Who that seeth me, but thinketh he beholdeth his king and his lord?

13. *Life a voyage.*

We must act in life as when starting on a voyage. What is it possible for me to do? To select the captain and the crew, the season and the day. Then perhaps a storm bursts upon us. Well! but what does it matter to me any more? because all that was mine to do has been already done; the problem is now another's, namely, the captain's. But the ship is actually sinking. What have I to do then?

Why, simply the only thing I can — drown — without terror or screaming or accusing God, but knowing that what is born must also perish.

For I am no eternal, but a man — a fragment of the whole, just as an hour is of the day; like the hour, then, I must arrive, as an hour pass away. What does it matter therefore how I pass away, whether by drowning, or by a fever? For pass I must — in this, or some other way.

14. *Man an actor on the world's stage.*

Remember that thou art an actor in a play, of such a kind as the manager may choose — with a short part, if he assigns you a short part, or a long one, if he shall choose a long; if he wishes you to act the part of a beggar, see that you act the part naturally; if the part of a cripple, of a magistrate, of a private person, see that you act each gracefully. For this is your duty, to act well the part that is given to you; but to select the part, belongs to another.

15. *How Death should find us.*

Do you not know that both disease and death must surprise us while we are doing something? the husbandman while he is tilling the ground, the sailor while he is on his voyage? What would you be doing when death surprises you, for you must be surprised while you are doing something? If you can be doing anything better than this when you are surprised, do it. For I wish to be surprised by disease or death when I am looking after nothing else than my own will, that I may be free from perturbation, that I may be free from hindrance, free from compulsion, and in a state of liberty. I wish to be found practising these things that I may be able to say to God: Have I in any respect transgressed thy commands? have I in any respect wrongly used the powers which thou gavest me? have I misused my perceptions or my preconceptions? have I ever blamed thee? have I ever found fault with thy administration? I have been sick, because it was thy will, and so have others, but I was content to be sick. I have been poor because it was thy will, but I was content also. I have not filled a magisterial office, because it was not thy pleasure that I should; I have never desired it. Hast thou ever seen me for this reason discontented? have I not always approached thee with a cheerful countenance, ready to do thy commands and to obey thy signals? Is it now thy will that I should depart from the assemblage of men? I depart. I give thee all thanks that thou hast allowed me to join in this thy assemblage of men and to see thy works, and to comprehend this, thy administration. May death surprise me while I am thinking of these things, while I am thus writing and reading.

16. *Loss truly restitution.*

Never say, in any case,— I have lost so and so, but only, I have returned it. Is your child dead? it is returned. Is your wife dead? she is returned. Have you had your property taken away? well! is not this, too, merely returned?

But you tell me—he that took it was a

rogue. I answer—what does it concern you, through whose action he that gave it you demands it back; so long as he allows it to you, manage it as you would the property of another, use it as wayfarers use an inn.

17. *Good habits, their nature and attainment.*

Every skill and faculty is maintained and increased by the corresponding acts; as, the faculty of walking by walking, of running by running. If you will read aloud well, then do it constantly; if you will write, then write. But when you have not read aloud for thirty days together, but done something else, you shall see the result. Thus, if you have lain down for ten days, then rise up and endeavor to walk a good distance, and you shall see how your legs are enfeebled. In general, then, if you would make yourself skilled in anything, then do it; and if you would refrain from anything, then do it not, but use yourself to do rather some other thing instead of it.

And thus in spiritual things also. When thou art wrathful, know that not this single evil hath happened to thee, but that thou hast increased the aptness to it, and, as it were, poured oil upon the fire. When thou art overcome in passion, think not that this defeat is all; but thou hast nourished thy incontinence, and increased it. For it is impossible but that aptitudes and faculties should spring up where they were not before, or spread and grow mightier, by the corresponding acts. And thus, surely, do also, as the philosophers say, the infirmities of the soul grow up. For when thou hast once been covetous of money, if reason, which leadeth to a sense of the vice, be called to aid, then both the desire is set at rest, and our ruling faculty is re-established, as it was in the beginning. But if thou bring no remedy to aid, then shall the soul return no more to the first estate; but when next excited by the corresponding appearance, shall be kindled to desire even more quickly than before. And when this is continually happening, the soul becomes callous in the end, and through its infirmity the love of money is strengthened. For he that hath had a fever, when the illness hath left him, is not what he was before his fever, unless he have been entirely healed. And somewhat on this wise also it happens in the affections of the soul; certain traces and scars are left in it, the which if a man do not wholly eradicate, when he hath been again scourged on the same place, it shall make no longer scars, but sores.

Wouldst thou, then, be no longer of a wrathful temper? Then do not nourish the aptness to it, give it nothing that will increase it, be tranquil from the outset, and number the days when thou hast not been wrathful. I have not been wrathful now for one, now for two, now for three days; but if thou have raved thirty days, then sacrifice to God. For the aptness is at first enfeebled, and then destroyed. To-day I was not vexed, nor to-morrow, nor for two or three months together; but I was heedful when anything happened to move me thus. Know that thou art in good care.

But how is this to be done? Resolve at last to seek thine own commendation, to appear fair in the eyes of God; desire to become pure with thine own pure self, and with God. Then when thou shalt fall in with any appearance such as we have spoken of, what saith Plato? Go to the purifying sacrifices, go and pray in the temples of the protecting gods. It shall even suffice if thou seek the company of good and wise men, and try thyself by one of them, whether he be one of the living or of the dead.

This is the genuine athlete, he who exerciseth himself against such appearances. Stand fast, unhappy man, and be not swept away. Great is the struggle, divine the enterprise; it is for sovereignty, for freedom, for prosperity, for peace. Think upon God: call on him to be your helper and defender; even as a sailor calls upon the Twin Gods (Dioscuri) in a storm; for what storm is greater than that which arises from objects strong enough to dash reason from her seat? Aye, what is a storm itself but a thing of sense? since you have only to take away the fear of death, and then you may stand as many lightnings and thunderings as you please, for you will find what a great calm and serenity there will be in the ruling faculty of your soul. But if you be once worsted, and say that you will conquer the next time, and then the same again and again, be sure you will at last become so cowardly and weak, as not even to perceive henceforward that you are doing wrong, but you will begin to frame excuses for your misdoing, and thus confirm the truth of Hesiod's words: "With ruin ever the procrastinator wrestles!"

18. *How to live.*

How long wilt thou delay to hold thyself worthy of the best things, and to transgress in nothing the decrees of reason? Thou hast received the maxims by which it behooves thee to live; and dost thou live by them? What teacher dost thou still look for to whom to hand over the task of thy correction? Thou art no longer a boy, but already a man full grown. If, then, thou art neglectful and sluggish, and ever making resolve after resolve, and fixing one day after another on which thou wilt begin to attend to thyself, thou wilt forget that thou art making no advance, but will go on as one of the vulgar sort, both living and dying.

Now, at last, therefore, hold thyself worthy to live as a man of full age and one who is pressing forward, and let everything that appeareth the best be to thee as an inviolable law. And if any toil or pleasure or reputation or the loss of it be laid upon thee, remember that now is the contest, here already are the Olympian games, and there is no deferring them any longer, and that in a single day and in a single trial, ground is to be lost or gained.

It was thus that Socrates made himself what he was, in all things that befell him, having regard to no other things than reason. But thou, albeit thou be yet no Socrates, yet as one that would be Socrates, so it behooveth thee to live.

19. *Why we should bear with wrong.*

When some one may do you an injury, or speak ill of you, remember that he either does it or speaks it believing that it is right and meet for him to do so. It is not possible, then, that he can follow the thing that appears to you, but the thing that appears to him. Wherefore, if it appear evil to him, it is he that is injured, being deceived. For also if any one should take a true consequence to be false, it is not the consequence that is injured but he which is deceived. Setting out, then, from these opinions, you will bear a gentle mind towards any man who may revile you. For, say on each occasion, so it appeared to him.

20. *That we should be open in our dealings.*

In doing aught which thou hast clearly discerned a right to do, seek never to avoid being seen in the doing of it, even though the multitude should be destined to form some wrong opinion concerning it. For if thou dost not right, avoid the deed itself. But if rightly, why fear thou who will wrongly rebuke thee?

XIII

SELECTIONS FROM SENECA[1]

1. *The intention, not the matter, that makes the benefit.*

THE good will of the benefactor is the fountain of all benefits; nay, it is the benefit itself, or, at least the stamp, that makes it valuable and current. Some there are, I know, that take the matter for the benefit; and tax the obligation by weight and measure. When anything is given them, they presently cast it up: "What may such a house be worth? such an office? such an estate?" as if that were the benefit, which is only the sign and mark of it: for the obligation rests in the mind, not in the matter; and all those advantages which we see, handle, or hold in actual possession by the courtesy of another, are but several modes or ways of explaining, and putting the good will in execution. There needs no great subtlety to prove that both benefits and injuries receive their value from the intention, when even brutes themselves are able to decide this question. . . . The benefit is immortal, the gift perishable: for the benefit still continues, when we have no longer the use or the matter of it.

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[1] Selections from the "Morals" of Seneca.

2. *The manner of obliging.*

There is not any benefit so glorious in itself, but it may yet be exceedingly sweetened, and improved by the manner of conferring it. The virtue, I know, rests in the intent; the profit, in the judicious application of the matter; but the beauty and ornament of an obligation lies in the manner of it; and it is then perfect, when the dignity of the office is accompanied with all the charms and delicacies of humanity, good nature, and address: and with despatch too; for he that puts a man off from time to time, was never right at heart.

3. *Of a happy life, and wherein it consists.*

There is not anything in this world, perhaps, that is more talked of, and less understood, than the business of a happy life. It is every man's wish and design; and yet not one of a thousand that knows wherein that happiness consists. We live, however, in a blind and eager pursuit of it; and the more haste we make in a wrong way, the farther we are from our journey's end.

The true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations; to understand our duties toward God and man; to enjoy the present, without any anxious dependence upon the future. Not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears, but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient; for he that is so, wants nothing. The great blessings of mankind are within us, and within our reach; but we shut our eyes, and like people in the dark, we fall foul upon the very thing we search for, without finding it. "Tranquillity is a certain quality of mind, which no condition of fortune can either exalt or depress." Nothing can make it less; for it is the state of human perfection: it raises us as high as we can go, and makes every man his own supporter; whereas he that is borne up by anything else, may fall. He that judges aright, and perseveres in it, enjoys a perpetual calm: he takes a true prospect of things; he observes an order, measure, a decorum in all his actions: he has a benevolence in his nature; he squares his life according to reason; he draws to himself love and admiration.

4. *There can be no happiness without virtue.*

Virtue is that perfect good, which is the compliment of a happy life; the only immortal thing that belongs to mortality: it is the knowledge both of others and itself; it is an invincible greatness of mind, not to be elevated or dejected, with good or ill fortune. It is sociable and gentle; free, steady, and fearless; content within itself; full of inexhaustible delights; and it is valued for itself. One may be a good physician, a good governor, a good grammarian, without being a good man; so that all things from without, are only accessories; for the seat of it is a pure and holy mind.

5. *Philosophy is the guide of life.*

If it be true, that the understanding and the will are the two eminent faculties of the reasonable soul, it follows necessarily, that wisdom and virtue (which are the best improvement of these two faculties), must be the perfection also of our reasonable being; and consequently the undeniable foundation of a happy life. There is not any duty to which providence has not annexed a blessing; nor any institution of heaven which, even in this life, we may not be the better for; not any temptation, either of fortune or of appetite, that is not subject to our reason; nor any passion or affliction for which virtue has not provided a remedy. So that it is our own fault if we either fear or hope for anything; which two affections are the root of all our miseries. From this general prospect of the foundation of our tranquillity, we shall pass by degrees to a particular consideration of the means by which it may be acquired; and of the impediments that obstruct it; beginning with that philosophy which principally regards our manners, and instructs us in the measures of a virtuous and quiet life.

6. *No felicity like peace of conscience.*

" A good conscience is the testimony of a good life, and the reward of it." This is it that fortifies the mind against fortune, when a man has gotten the mastery of his passions; placed his treasure and his security within himself; learned to be content with his condition; and that death is no evil in itself, but only the end of man. He that has dedicated his mind to virtue, and to the good of human society, whereof he is a member, has consummated all that is either profitable or necessary for him to know or do toward the establishment of his peace. Every man has a judge and witness within himself, of all the good and ill that he does; which inspires us with great thoughts, and administers to us wholesome counsels. We have a veneration for all the works of nature, the heads of rivers, and the springs of medicinal waters; the horrors of groves, and of caves, strike us with an impression of religion and worship. To see a man fearless in dangers, untainted with lusts, happy in adversity, composed in a tumult, and laughing at all those things which are generally either coveted or feared; all men must acknowledge, that this can be nothing else but a beam of divinity that influences a mortal body.

7. *Hope and fear are the bane of human life.*

No man can be said to be perfectly happy, that runs the risk of disappointment; which is the case of every man that fears or hopes for anything. For hope and fear, how distant forever they may seem to be the one from the other, they are both of them yet coupled in the same chain, as the guard and the prisoner; and the one treads upon the heel of the other. The reason of this is obvious, for they are passions that look forward, and are ever solicitous for the future; only hope is the more plausible weakness of the two, which in truth, upon the main, are inseparable, for the one cannot be without the other: but when the hope is stronger than the fear, or the fear than the hope, we call it the one or the other; for without fear it were no longer hope, but certainty; as without hope it were no longer fear, but despair. We may come to understand, whether our disputes are vain or no, if we do but consider, that we are either troubled about the present, the future, or both. If the present, it is easy to judge, and the future is uncertain. It is a foolish thing to be miserable beforehand, for fear of misery to come; for a man loses the present which he might enjoy, in expectation of the future; nay, the fear of losing anything is as bad as the loss itself. I will be as prudent as I can, but not timorous or careless; and I will bethink myself, and forecast what inconveniences may happen, before they come. It is true, a man may fear, and yet not be fearful; which is no more than to have the affection of fear, without the vice of it; but yet a frequent admittance of it runs into a habit. It is a shameful and an unmanly thing to be doubtful, timorous, and uncertain; to set one step forward, and another backward; and to be irresolute. Can there be any man so fearful, that had not rather fall once, than hang always in suspense?

8. *The blessings of temperance and moderation.*

There is not anything that is necessary to us but we have it either cheap or gratis; and this is the provision that our Heavenly Father has made for us, whose bounty was never wanting to our needs. It is true, the stomach craves and calls upon us, but then a small matter contents it; a little bread and water is sufficient, and all the rest is but superfluous. He that lives according to reason shall never be poor, and he that governs his life by opinion shall never be rich; for nature is limited, but fancy is boundless. As for meat, clothes, and lodging, a little needs the body, and as little covers it; so that if mankind would only attend human nature, without gaping at superfluities, a cook would be found as needless as a soldier; for we may have necessaries on very easy terms; whereas we put ourselves to great pains for excesses. . . .

It is the mind that makes us rich and happy, in what condition soever we are; and money signifies no more to it than it does to the gods; if the religion be sincere, no matter for the ornaments; it is only luxury and avarice that makes poverty grievous to us; for it is a very small matter that does our business; and when we have provided against cold, hunger, and thirst, all the rest is but vanity and excess; and there is no need of expense upon foreign delicacies, or the artifices of the kitchen. . . .

Happy is that man that eats only for hunger, and drinks only for thirst; that stands upon his own legs, and lives by reason, not by example; and provides for use and necessity, not for ostentation and pomp. Let us curb our appetites, encourage virtue, and rather be beholden to ourselves for riches than to fortune, who when a man draws himself into a narrow compass, has the least mark at him. Let my bed be plain and clean, and my clothes so too; my meat without much expense, or many waiters, and neither a burden to my purse nor to my body, not to go out the same way it came in. That which is too little for luxury, is abundantly enough for nature.

9. *What makes life worth living.*

Why should one take pleasure in being alive? merely to act as a sort of filter for so much food and drink? merely to pamper and doctor for all one's life a sickly and wasting body, which is only kept from death by repeated nourishment?

Or to abide in fear of death, the one event we are born for? No! Take away the priceless blessing of thought, and life is not worth the sweat and fever it entails. Oh! what an abject thing is man, if he does not rise above the level of human things! Is it a very great matter to contend against our passions, and even when we conquer these, have we done such wonders after all? . . . The virtue we aspire to is grand in its way, not, however, because emancipation from evil is by itself such a blessed thing, but because virtue expands the mind, fits it for the knowledge of heavenly things, and renders it worthy of communion with the gods. Man only then attains the fullness and perfection of his destiny, when having trodden all evil under his feet he lifts his mind above, and penetrates into the inner heart of nature. . . .

Then at last he learns, what he has long sought to know. Then he begins to apprehend God; for what is God but the mind of the universe? What is God but the sum of all that is visible and invisible. Then only do we ascribe to him the absolute perfection that is his due, when we acknowledge him to constitute all things by himself, and his operation to extend over all without and within. What difference then is there between God's nature and our own? Simply this: while with us the mind is the nobler part, he is nothing but mind; he is all reason.

10. *Consolations against death.*

This life is only a prelude to eternity, where we are to expect another original, and another state of things; we have no prospect of heaven here but at a distance; let us therefore expect our last and decretory hour with courage. The last (I say) to our bodies, but not to our minds; our luggage we must leave behind us, and return as naked out of the world as we came into it. The day which we fear as our last, is but the birthday of our eternity; and it is the only way to it. So that what we fear as a rock, proves to be but a port; in many cases to be desired, never to be refused; and he that dies young, has only made a quick voyage of it. Some are becalmed, others cut it away before wind; and we live just as we sail: first, we run our childhood out of sight; our youth next; and then our middle age; after that follows old age, and brings us to the common end of mankind. It is a great providence that we have more ways out of the world than we have into it. Our security stands on a point, the very article of death. It draws a great many blessings into a very narrow compass; and although the fruit of it does not seem to extend to the deceased, yet the difficulty of it is more than balanced by the contemplation of the future. Nay, suppose that all the business of this world should be forgotten, or my memory traduced, what is all this to me? "I have done my duty." Undoubtedly that which puts an end to all other evils cannot be a very great evil itself, and yet it is no easy thing for flesh and blood to despise life. . . .

To suffer death is but the law of nature; and it is a great comfort that it can be done but once; in the very convulsions of it we have this consolation, that our pain is near an end, and that it frees us from all the miseries of life. What it is we know not, and it were rash to condemn what we do not understand; but this we presume, either that we shall pass out of this into a better life, where we shall live with tranquillity and splendor in divine mansions, or else return to our first principles, free from the sense of any inconvenience. There is nothing immortal, nor many things lasting; but by divers ways everything comes to an end. What an arrogance it is then, when the world itself stands condemned to a dissolution, that man alone should expect to live forever? It is unjust not to allow unto the giver the power of disposing of his own bounty, and a folly, only to value the present.

Death is as much a debt as money, and life is but a journey towards it: some despatch it sooner, others later, but we must all have the same period. The thunderbolt is undoubtedly just, that draws even from those that are struck with it a veneration. A great soul takes no delight in staying with the body, it considers whence it came, and knows whither it is to go. The day will come that shall separate this mixture of soul and body, of divine and human; my body I will leave where I found it, my soul I will restore to heaven, which would have been there already, but for the clog that keeps it down: and beside, how many men have been the worse for longer living, that might have died with reputation, if they had been sooner taken away? How many disappointments of hopeful youths, that have proved dissolute men? Over and above the ruins, shipwrecks, torments, prisons, that attend long life; a blessing so deceitful, that if a child were in condition to judge of it, and at liberty to refuse it, he would not take it.

11. *Poverty a blessing.*

No man shall ever be poor, that goes to

himself for what he wants; and that is the readiest way to riches: nature indeed will have her due, but yet whatsoever is beyond necessity, is precarious, and not necessary. It is not her business to gratify the palate, but to satisfy a craving stomach: bread, when a man is hungry, does his work, let it be never so coarse; and water when he is adry; let his thirst be quenched, and nature is satisfied; no matter whence it comes, or whether he drinks in gold, silver, or in the hollow of his hand. To promise a man riches, and to teach him poverty, is to deceive him: but shall I call him poor, that wants nothing; though he may be beholden for it to his patience, rather than to his fortune? Or shall any man deny him to be rich, whose riches can never be taken away? Whether it is better to have much or enough? He that has much desires more, which shows that he has not yet enough; but he that has enough is at rest.

12. *Of Anger.*

We have here to encounter the most dangerous, outrageous, brutal and intractable of all passions; the most loathsome and unmannerly; nay, the most ridiculous too; and the subduing of this monster will do a great deal toward the establishment of human peace. . . .

Anger is not only a vice, but a vice point-blank against nature; for it divides, instead of joining; and in some measure frustrates the end of providence in human society. One man was born to help another; anger makes us destroy one another; the one unites, the other separates; the one is beneficial to us, the other mischievous; the one succors even strangers, the other destroys the most intimate friends; the one ventures all to save another, the other ruins himself to undo another. Nature is bountiful, but anger is pernicious; for it is not fear, but mutual love, that binds up mankind.

13. *Consolation in exile.*

Man's best gifts lie beyond the power of man either to give or to take away. This universe, the grandest and loveliest work of nature, and the intellect which was created to observe and to admire it, are our special and eternal possessions, which shall last as long as we last ourselves. Cheerful, therefore, and erect, let us hasten with undaunted footsteps whithersoever our fortunes lead us.

There is no land where man cannot dwell, — no land where he cannot uplift his eyes to heaven. Wherever we are, the distance of the divine from the human remains the same. So then, so long as my eyes are not robbed of that spectacle with which they cannot be satiated, so long I may look upon the sun and moon, and fix my lingering gaze on the other constellations, and consider their rising and setting and the spaces between them and the causes of their less and greater speed, — while I may contemplate the multitude of stars glittering throughout the heaven, some stationary, some revolving, some suddenly blazing forth, others dazzling the gaze with a flood of fire as though they fell, and others leaving over a long space their trails of light; while I am in the midst of such phenomena, and mingle myself, as far as a man may, with things celestial, — while my soul is ever occupied in contemplations so sublime as these, what matters it what ground I tread?

What though fortune has thrown me where the most magnificent abode is but a cottage? The humblest cottage, if it be but the home of virtue, may be more beautiful than all temples; no place is narrow which can contain the crowd of glorious virtues; no exile severe into which you may go with such a reliance.

14. *Profitable reading.*

Take care lest your habit of reading many authors and all sorts of books, involve giddiness and inconstancy of mind. If you would extract anything that may settle permanently in your memory, you must dwell and feed upon a few choice and definite spirits. He is nowhere that is everywhere. Those who pass their life in travel find many inns, but form no friendships; and it is necessarily the same with those who devote themselves closely to no one work of genius, but hastily skim every book they come across. That meat can never benefit, nor be assimilated with, the body, which is no sooner taken in than it is passed out. . . .

"But [you tell me] I like to turn over now this work and now that." Ah! it is only a dainty stomach that is fond of tasting numerous and diverse dishes, which disorder and do not nourish it. Therefore I say, always read well approved authors; and if at any time you turn for amusement to others, still always come back to the former.

Procure every day from them some help against poverty, death, and other plagues of humanity; and after running through several such passages, pick out some one that you may on that day inwardly digest.

This I always do myself; out of the many things I read, I select a particular one to appreciate.

15. *The discipline of God.*

Those whom God approves and loves, he examines, tries, and hardens; such as he appears to favor and to spare, only become effeminate, and are reserved by him for evil to come.

For it is a mistake to suppose that any one is exempt from ills; however long his prosperity may have lasted, his share will come at length. It may *seem* to have been remitted; it *is* but deferred. Why does God visit the best of men with ill health, or affliction, or troubles of other kinds? On the same principle that in war the bravest soldiers have the hazardous enterprises entrusted to them, and it is the picked men whom the general sends to a night attack, to reconnoitre a road, or storm a fortress. In their case no one thinks of saying, "My general has dealt hardly with me," but rather, "He must have thought highly of me"; such should be the language of those who are called to suffer what none but cowards and weaklings grieve at. It just comes to this, that God has deemed us worthy subjects whereon to try how much human nature could bear.

16. *The presence of God in man.*

We need not lift our hands to heaven, nor beseech the sacristan for permission to approach the idol's ear, as though we should be heard the better for that.

No! God is near you, with you, in you.

There dwells within us (believe me) a holy spirit, the watcher and guardian of all we do, good or bad. According as we deal with him so he deals with us. No one is virtuous without God's influence, and no one without his aid can rise superior to fortune: he it is from whom all high and noble counsels proceed.

17. *The eye of God.*

So must we live as under the eye of One; so must we think as though One could look into our inmost heart. For what is the good of hiding anything from man, when from God no secrets are hid? He is present to our minds; he enters into the very core of our thoughts.

So should we live with our fellow men as in the sight of God; so should we speak to God, as within the hearing of man.

18. *What is God?*

What is God? The mind of the universe. What is he? All that you see, and all that you do not see.

Guide and guardian of the universe; soul and spirit of the world; builder and master of so great a work — to him all names belong.

Would you call him Destiny? You will not err: cause of causes, on him all depends. Had you rather say Providence? This will be right: by his plan the world is watched over, so that it goes safely through its motions. Or Nature? This title does him no wrong: of him are all things born, and in him we live. Or Universe? You are not mistaken: he is all that we see, wholly present in every part, and sustaining all things.

19. *The worship of God.*

Worship will never be satisfactory till a right conception has been formed of God as possessing all things, and bestowing all things freely in love. To believe in the gods is the first step in worship, the next is to ascribe to them their proper majesty, and, what is essential to majesty, the attribute of goodness; and then to feel that it is the gods who govern the world, who guide all things by their power, who exercise guardianship over the human race while not neglecting the individual. They neither inflict, nor are susceptible of, harm; though offenders they correct, coerce, condemn, and sometimes visit with punishment in the form of blessing. If you would win the divine favor, you have only to be virtuous; the truest worship of the gods is to imitate them.

20. *Prayer as evidence of divine providence.*

I know that it is contended that God bestows no blessings on us at all, but is indifferent and regardless, not deigning to look upon the world, either busied about other matter, or (what Epicurus thought to be the height of bliss) doing nothing at all, and unaffected alike by benefits or injuries. The man who maintains this can never have heard the accents of prayers nor the vows everywhere made with uplifted hands to heaven as well in private as in public. Surely this would never be done, and the whole of mankind could never have joined in such madness as to implore deaf gods who had no power to help, but that they were sure that the gods bestow benefits, sometimes of their own proper motion, at other times in answer to prayer, and that such benefits are large, reasonable, and efficacious in freeing them from great and impending danger. Is there a single being so wretched, so despised, so born to a hard and penal destiny as not to have experienced at one time or another this liberality of the gods?

XIV

SELECTIONS FROM MARCUS AURELIUS[1]

1. *Charity for everybody.*

When you wake, say to yourself — to-day I shall encounter meddling, ingratitude, violence, cunning, malice, self-seeking; all of them the results of men not knowing what is good and what is evil. But as for me who have understood the nature of the good, that it is beautiful, and of the evil, that it is ugly, and also the nature of the offender himself, that he is related to me not by community of flesh and blood, but in the same mind and partnership with the divine, I cannot be injured by any of them; for no one can force me into what is disgraceful, nor can I hate, or be angry with, one who is related to me. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth.

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[1] Selections from the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius.

To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to show resentment or aversion.

2. *The ordering of providence.*

All that is from the gods is full of providence. That which is from fortune is not separated from nature or without an interweaving and involution with the things which are ordered by providence. From thence all things flow; and there is besides necessity, and that which is for the advantage of the whole universe, of which you are a part. To every part of nature that which nature brings, and which helps towards its conservation, is good. The conservation of the world-order depends not only on the changes of the elements, but also on those of the compounded wholes. Be content with what you have, find there your principles of life. But cast away the thirst after books, that you may not die murmuring, but cheerfully, truly, and from the heart thankful to the gods.

Think how long you have gone on postponing, how often the gods have granted days of grace, which you have failed to use. It is high time to give heed to the order of which you are a part, and to the great disposer, of whom your being is an effluence, and to note that a limit of time is fixed for you, which if you do not use for clearing away the clouds from your mind, it will go and you will go, and you will never return.

3. *The right way of living.*

Do not waste the remainder of life in regarding other men, except when bent upon some unselfish gain. For you lose the opportunity of doing something else when you have such thoughts as these: what is such a person doing, and why, and what is he saying, and what is he thinking of, and what is he contriving, and whatever else of the kind makes us wander away from the observation of our own ruling power. We ought then to check in the series of our thoughts everything that is without a purpose and useless, and above all, meddling and ill nature; and a man should use himself to think of those things only about which if one should suddenly ask, "What is in your thoughts now?" with perfect truth you might immediately answer, that all your thoughts were simple and in charity, such as befit a social being, who eschews voluptuous or even self-indulgent fancies, or jealousy of any kind, or malice and suspicion, or any other mood which one would blush to own. A man so minded, and committed finally to the pursuit of virtue, is indeed a priest and minister of gods, true to that inward and implanted power, which keeps a man unsoiled by pleasure, invulnerable by pain, free from all touch of arrogance, innocent of all baseness, a combatant in the greatest of all combats, which is the mastery of passion, steeped in justice to the core, and with his whole heart welcoming all that befalls him as his portion; seldom, and only in view of some large unselfish gain, does he regard what other men say or do or think. In action his own conduct is his sole concern, and he realizes without fail the web of his own destiny; action he makes high, convinced that destiny is good; for his apportioned destiny sweeps man on with the vaster sweep of things.

And he remembers also that every rational creature is his kinsman, and that to care for all men is according to man's nature; and a man should hold on to the opinion not of all, but of those only who confessedly live according to nature. But as to those who live not so, he always bears in mind what kind of men they are both at home and from home; both by night and by day, and what they are, and with what men they live an impure life. Accordingly he does not value at all the praise which comes from such men, since they are not even satisfied with themselves.

4. *The blessings of retirement.*

Men seek retreats for themselves, houses in the country, sea-shores, and mountains; and you, too, know full well what that yearning means. But this is altogether a mark of the most common sort of men, for it is in your power, whenever you choose, to retire into yourself. For nowhere either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble does a man retire than into his own soul, particularly when he has within him such thoughts that by looking into them he is immediately in perfect tranquillity; and I affirm that tranquillity is nothing else than the good ordering of the mind. Ever and anon grant yourself this retirement; and so renew yourself. Have a few principles brief and elemental, recurrence to which will suffice to shut out the court and all its ways, and anon send you back unchafing to the tasks to which you must return.

With what are you discontented? With the badness of men? Recall to your mind this conclusion, that rational creatures exist for one another, and that to endure is a part of justice, and that men do wrong involuntarily; and consider how many already, after mutual enmity, suspicion, hatred, and fighting, have been stretched dead, reduced to ashes; and be quiet at last.— Or is it the portion assigned you in the universe, with which you are dissatisfied? Recall to mind the alternative—either a foreseeing providence, or blind atoms — and all the abounding proofs that the world is as it were a city. Or is it bodily troubles that assail? Consider then further that the mind mingles not with the breath, whether moving gently or violently, when it has once drawn itself apart and discovered its own power. Or does some bubble of fame torment you? Then fix your gaze on swift oblivion, on the gulf of infinity this way and that, on the empty rattle of plaudits and the indiscriminating fickleness of professed applause, on the narrow range within which you are circumscribed. For the whole earth is a point, and how small a nook in it is this your dwelling, and how few are there in it, and what kind of people are they who will praise you.

This then remains. Remember to retire into this territory of your own. Above all do not strain or strive, but be free, and look at things as a man, as a human being, as a citizen, as a mortal. But among the things readiest to your hand to which you shall turn, let there be these, which are two — first, things cannot touch the soul, but stand without it stationary; tumult can arise only from views within ourselves: secondly, all things you see, in a moment change and will be no more; ay, think of all the changes in which you have yourself borne part. The world is a process of variation; life a process of views.

5. *The universe as a living organism.*

Constantly regard the universe as a living organism, having one substance and one soul; and observe how all things have reference to one perception, the perception of this one living being; and how all things act with one movement; and all coöperate towards all that come to pass; observe too the continuous spinning of the thread and the contexture of the web.

Thou art a little soul bearing about a corpse, as Epictetus said.

It is no evil for things to undergo change, and no good for things to subsist in consequence of change.

Time is like a river made up of the events which happen, and a violent stream; for as soon as a thing has been seen, it is carried away, and another comes in its place, and this will be carried away too.

All that happens is as accustomed and familiar as spring rose, or summer fruit; so it is with disease, death, slander, intrigue, and all else that joys or vexes fools.

6. *The wrongfulness of sloth.*

In the morning when you feel loth to rise, let this thought be present to you: I am getting up to perform the duty of a man; why then am I out of humor, if I am going to do the very things for which I was born, and have been brought into the world? Or, was I made only for this, that I might lie abed and keep warm beneath the sheets? But (do you say?) this is more comfortable. Were you then born only to be comfortable, and not rather for action and exertion? Do you not observe how the plants and birds, the ants and spiders and the bees contribute to improve their several departments of the universe; and yet do you refuse to perform the duties of a human being, slow to act according to your nature? But, say you, one requires rest as well as work. True! but then Nature has assigned limits to this also, just as she has done in regard to eating and drinking; and yet you go beyond these limits, beyond what is sufficient. In your action, on the contrary, it is not so, but you stop short of what you could do; for you have no true love for yourself; else you would love both your own nature and that nature's purpose.

Why! those, for instance, who love their trade will wear themselves out at work, regardless of washing and food; and yet you honor your own nature less than the turner his art of turning, or the dancer his skill in dancing, less than the miser his coin, or the vainglorious man his pretty praise. Such persons, moreover, when passionately inclined to anything, care neither for food nor sleep, compared with advancing what they are set upon; and yet do you regard social actions as of less value, or deserving of less devotion.

7. *Man made for coöperation.*

One and all we work towards one consummation, some knowingly and intelligently, others unconsciously. Just as Heraclitus, was it not, said of those who sleep, that they too are at work, fellow-workers in the conduct of the universe. But men work together in different ways; nay, even the man who complains and endeavors to resist and subvert the course of things, does a full share of coöperation; for the universe had need of even such persons as these. Consider, therefore, among whom you range yourself; for you may be sure that he who governs all things will make some good use of you, and welcome you into the ranks of those who are engaged in, or disposed to, coöperative service.

8. *Man's true interest.*

If the gods took counsel about me and what ought to befall me, doubtless they counselled well; a god of ill counsel one can scarce imagine. And what should impel them to seek my hurt? What advantage were it either to them or to the universe, which is the first object of their providence? But if the gods have not decreed anything about me individually, they have at all events certainly decreed about the general course of things; and whatever happens by way of consequence therefrom, I am bound to welcome and be content with. But if perchance they make no decree about anything, — a wicked belief to entertain, for then we must give up sacrifices and prayers, and adjurations, and everything else we do on the faith of the gods being present and living with us, — if, I say, they make no decree about what concerns us, I am free in that case to provide for myself, and it belongs to me to consider what is for my interest. But the true interest of every man is that which is conformable to his constitution and nature; and my nature is rational and social. My city and country, so far as I am Antoninus, is Rome; so far as I am a human being, it is the world.

These are the societies, whose advantage can alone be good for me.

9. *Life a mimic pageant.*

What is evil? It is what you have seen again and again. And on the occasion of everything which happens keep this in mind, that it is that which you have often seen. Everywhere, up and down, you will find the same things, with which the old histories are filled, those mediæval are those of our own day; repeating themselves every day in our own cities and homes. There is nothing new; all is stale and fleeting.

How can our principles become dead, unless the impressions which correspond to them are extinguished? But it is your power continuously to fan these thoughts into a flame. I can have that opinion about anything, which I ought to have. If I can, why am I disturbed? The things which are external to my mind have no relation at all to my mind. — Grasp that, and you stand upright; you can ever renew your life. See things once more as you saw them before; and therein you have new life.

A mimic pageant, plays on the stage, flocks of sheep, exercises with spears, a bone cast to dogs, a crumb dropped in the fish-tanks, laboring of ants and burden-carrying, the scamper of scurrying mice, puppets pulled by strings — such is life. In such surroundings you must take your stand, considerate and undisdainful; yet understand the while, that the measure of the man's worth is the worth of his aims.

10. *Self introspection.*

A scowl upon the face is a violation of nature; when it is often assumed, the result is that all comeliness dies away, and at last is so completely extinguished that it is past all rekindling. Try to conclude from this very fact that it is contrary to reason; if once sensibility to sin is lost, what object in still living on?

Nature which governs the whole will soon change all things which you see, and out of their substance will make other things, and again other things from the substance of them, in order that the world may be ever new.

When any one does you a wrong, set yourself at once to consider, what was the point of view, good or bad, that led him wrong. As soon as you perceive it, you will be sorry for him, not surprised or angry. For your own view of good is either the same as his, or something like in kind; and you will make allowance. Or supposing your own view of good and bad has altered, you will find charity for his mistakes come easier.

11. *The pursuit of happiness.*

One good corrective to vainglory is to remember that you cannot claim to have lived your entire life, nor even from youth up, as a philosopher. But both to many others and to yourself it is plain that you are far from philosophy. You have fallen into disorder then, so that it is no longer easy for you to get the reputation of a philosopher; and your plan of life also opposes it. Now that your eyes are really open to what the facts are, never mind what others think of you; be self-content, if only for life's remainder, just so long as nature wills you to live on. You have but to apprehend that will, and let nothing else distract you; you have tried much, and in misguided ways, and nowhere have you found the unhappy life; not in systems, nor wealth, nor fame, nor self-indulgence, nowhere. Where then is happiness? In doing that which man's nature craves. How do it? By holding principles from which come endeavors and actions. What principles? Principles touching good and bad — to wit, that nothing is good for a man, which does not make him just, temperate, brave, free; nothing evil, that does not produce opposite results.

On the occasion of every act ask yourself: How is this with respect to me? Shall I repent of it? A little time and I am dead, and all is gone. What more do I seek, if what I am now doing is the work of an intelligent human being, and a social being, and one who is under the same law with God?

12. *The object of life.*

In every action try to make life a whole: if each, so far as it can, contributes its part, be satisfied; and that, no man can hinder.— "Some outer obstacle," you say, "will interfere."—"Nay, but nothing can touch the justice, wisdom, reasonableness of the intention." —"But may not some form of action be prevented?"—"Possibly; but by welcoming that prevention, and with a good grace adopting the alternative, you at once substitute a course that will fit into its place in the whole we have in view."

Modestly take, cheerfully resign.

13. *The present to be lived for, not the past.*

Do not disturb yourself by thinking of the whole of your life. Let not your thoughts at once embrace all the various troubles which you may expect to befall you; but as each trouble comes, say to yourself, what is there here too hard to bear or to endure? and you will be ashamed to confess. And yet again remember, that you have not to bear up against the future or the past, but always against the present only. But this is reduced to a very little, when you strictly circumscribe it to itself, and repudiate moral inability to hold out merely against that.

14. *Death should be welcomed.*

Do not despise death, but accept it cheerfully, as being one of those events which nature wills. As youth and age, as growth and prime, as the coming of teeth and beard and gray hairs, as begetting and pregnancy and bearing of children, as all other operations of nature, which come with the seasons of your life, such also is the process of dissolution. A thoughtful man therefore will not regard death in a careless, impatient and contemptuous spirit, but will wait for it as one of the operations of nature. Just as you wait now for the time when the embryo shall issue from the womb of your wife, so should you be expecting the hour when your soul shall drop out of its shell. But if you want, besides, a commonplace consideration to touch and console your heart, you will be most favorably disposed towards death, if you reflect on the objects you are about to part with, and the characters with which your soul will cease to converse. Far be it to take offence at them; nay, rather, care for them and deal gently with them; yet remember, that you are parting with men whose principles are not your principles. The one thing, if any, which could hold you back and chain you still to life, would be companionship of kindred spirits. As it is, however, you see what great trouble arises from the want of harmony in those who live together, enough to make one cry, "Come quickly, O Death, for fear I too forget myself!"

15. *The inner self.*

Hasten (to examine) your own inner self and that of the universe and that of your neighbor; your own that you may make it just; and that of the universe, that you may remember of what you are a part; and that of your neighbor, that you may know whether he has acted ignorantly or with knowledge, and that you may also take into account the bond of brotherhood.

As you yourself are a component part of a social system, so let every act of yours be a component part of social life. Any action of yours that does not tend, directly or remotely, to this social end, dislocates life and infringes its unity. It is of the nature of a mutiny, just as when in a popular assembly, a man acting by himself stands apart from the general agreement.

16. *Impulses and actions should govern.*

Let there be freedom from perturbations

with respect to the things which come from external cause; and let there be justice in the things done by virtue of the internal cause; in other words, let impulse and act make social action their one end, and so fulfil the law of nature.

The agitations that beset you are superfluous, and depend wholly upon judgments of your own. You can rid yourself of them, and in so doing will indeed live at large, by embracing the whole universe in your view and comprehending all eternity and imagining the swiftness of change in each particular, seeing how short is the time from birth to dissolution, and the illimitable time before birth as well as the equally boundless time after dissolution.

All that you see will quickly perish, and those who have been spectators of its dissolution will very soon perish too. And he who dies at the extreme old age will be brought into the same condition with him who died prematurely.

17. *The soul at peace.*

Wilt thou one day, O my soul, be good

and simple, all one, all naked, more manifest than the body which surrounds thee? Wilt thou never enjoy an affectionate and contented disposition? Wilt thou never be full and without a want of any kind, longing for nothing more, nor desiring anything, either animate or inanimate, for the enjoyment of pleasures? nor yet desiring time wherein thou shalt have longer enjoyment, or place, or pleasant climate, or society of men with whom thou mayst live in harmony? Wilt thou be content with thine actual estate? happy in all thou hast? Convinced that all things are thine, that all is well with thee, that all comes from the gods, that all must be well which is their good pleasure, and which they bring to pass for the salvation of the living whole, good, just and beautiful, from which all things have their being, their unity and their scope, and into which they are received at dissolution for the production of new forms of being like themselves? Wilt thou never be such that thou shalt so dwell in community with gods and men as neither to find fault with them at all, nor to be condemned by them?

18. *Do not belie your good attributes.*

When you have claimed for yourself the attributes good, modest, true, open-minded, even-minded, high-minded, take care that you do not change these names; and if you should lose them quickly return them. And should you forfeit them, make haste to reclaim them. The open mind, remember, should import discriminating observation and attention; the even mind unforced acceptance of the apportionments of nature; the high mind sovereignty of the intelligence over the physical currents, smooth or rough, over vainglory, death, or any other trial. Keep true to these attributes, without pining for recognition of the same by others, and a changed man you will enter upon a changed life. To go on being what you have been hitherto, to lead a life still so distracted and polluted, were stupidity and cowardice indeed, worthy of the mangled gladiators who, torn and disfigured, cry out to be remanded till to-morrow, to be flung once more to the same fangs and claws. Enter your claim then to these few attributes. And if stand fast in them you can, stand fast — as one translated indeed to Islands of the Blessed. But if you find yourself falling away and beaten in the fight, be a man and get away to some quiet corner, where you can still hold on, or in the last resort take leave of life, not angrily but simply, freely, modestly, achieving at least this much of life, brave leaving of it. In order, however, to the remembrance of these attributes, it will greatly help you, if you keep in mind the gods, and that they wish not to be flattered, but wish all reasonable beings to be made like themselves; and if you remember that what does the work of a fig-tree is a fig-tree, and that what does the work of a dog is a dog, and that what does the work of a bee is a bee, and that what does the work of a man is a man.

19. *One universe, one God, one reason, one truth.*

All things are interwoven one with the other, and are tied together in a sacred bond; and no one thing hardly is unrelated to another; since all things are coördinated, and combine to adorn the same universe. For there is but one universe made up of all things, and one God pervading all, one substance and one law, one common reason in all intelligent creatures, and one truth; if so be, that there is also one perfection for all creatures possessing the same nature and partaking the same reason.

20. *Imitation of Antoninus the way of life and comfort in death.*

Take care that you become not too much of a Cæsar, or be dyed with that dye; for it may happen so. Keep yourself simple, good, sincere, grave, unaffected, a friend to justice, God-fearing, considerate, affectionate, and strenuous in duty. Struggle to remain such as philosophy would have you. Reverence the gods and help mankind. Life is short; and the one fruit of this earthly existence is a pious disposition, and unselfish acts. Do everything as a disciple of Antoninus. Remember his resolute championship of reason, his unvarying equability, his holiness, his serenity of look, his affability, his dislike of ostentation, his keenness for certitude about the facts; how he would never drop a subject until he saw into it thoroughly and understood clearly; how he bore unjust reproaches without a word; how he was never in a hurry; how he gave no ear to slander; how accurately he scrutinized character and action; not given to reprimand nor frightened by clamor, not suspicious nor sophistical; how little contented him in the way of lodging, bed, clothes, food and service; how industrious and patient he was, how firm and steady in his friendships, how tolerant of such as openly opposed his views, and how pleased if any one pointed out a better course; finally, how religious without a spark of superstition. Imitate him in these, that your last hour may find you with a conscience as clear as his.

Recall your true, your sober self; shake off the slumber and realize that they were dreams that troubled you. Now wide awake once more, look on it all as a dream.

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