virtuous life manifested ? In a series of external acts, each one of which is the choice of some natural end, some object according to nature, as possessing at the moment the highest value. The same external act may be done by an irrational agent, and in his case the act is not virtuous. For there is as great a gulf fixed between fitting and virtuous actions as between things indifferent having positive value and the good. No increase of value can raise a thing indifferent to the class of good ; no degree of fitness in the external act done can render it virtuous. As right actions consist in following reason in the selection of things according to nature, it follows that such right actions (as distinct from the fitting actions of which all living things are capable) are the exclusive privilege of rational beings. So, too, with wrong actions : only rational beings can perform them ; although children or the brutes may run counter to fitness, and pursue objects contrary to nature, they cannot be said to sin or do wrong. All actions, then, of rational beings must be either virtuous or vicious ; there is no mean between the two. But what of fitting actions ? Are not they also done by rational agents ? Is not the distinction between right conduct and mere external fitness continually drawn when the Stoics are referring to the activity of rational human beings ? Unquestionably so ; but in examining a given act it is necessary to view it on the formal as well as on the material side,—as pro­ceeding from a virtuous or vicious disposition, and again as tend­ing, when taken in itself and apart from this disposition, to pro­mote or destroy the agent’s nature or constitution, *i.e.,* as some­thing “meet and fit” to do, or as contrary to fitness (or, in rare cases, as having no tendency in either direction). Lastly, the analysis of conduct is incomplete unless the external object which the agent aims at attaining by the act is also taken into account : it may be natural, and may therefore excite desire ; or it may be contrary to nature, and excite aversion ; or it may be absolutely indifferent. Now the Stoic classifications of (*a*) external objects and (*b*) actions (as they have come down to us from not very dis­criminating sources) are hampered by the inclusion of right actions and wrong actions, which are made species of the wider genera. Under objects according to nature come (*α*) fitting actions, (*β*) right actions, (*γ*) virtues ; *i.e.,* conduct which is perfect contains all that in the imperfect imitates perfection : a right action has *ipso facto* all the fitness of a fitting action, and all the accord with nature of a thing according to nature. So with the opposite class : the vicious man, by the very fact of not having the tension of soul which is virtue, commits a sin in his every action ; all that he does, there­fore, is on this ground contrary to fitness and contrary to nature. Any defect in external conduct proves it to be a sin ; the mere ab­sence of defect does not establish its claim to be right conduct. It is as easy to prove a given person is unwise (and therefore a sinner) as it is hard to prove him a sage. Virtue is one, vice is manifold.

No act in itself is either noble or base; even the grossest violation of fitness, if it could be done with the right intention, would count as virtue, and the most fitting deeds without that intention are naught (see Orig., *C. Ccls.,* iv. 45; Scxt. Emp., *Aclv. Math.,* xi. 190; *Pyrrh. Hyp.,* iii. 245, is therefore wrong). It does not appear, then, that there is any divergence in principle between the doctrine of the end of action and the doctrine of fitness or relative duty ; nor should the latter be regarded (as is done by Cicero and some modern expositors) as an afterthought, intended to soften the too rigorous demands of the Stoic ideal. For from the first it was an integral part of the system : Zeno wrote a treatise *περι* *τού* *καθήκοντος* ; indeed he adopted it as a technical term. That this doctrine was a stumbling-block to the small band of his early disciples seems not unlikely; for Aristo and Herillus, who left him, as is believed, on independent grounds, modified it in their own ethical theories afterwards put forth. According to Hirzel *(Untersuch.,* ii. p. 54), however, the views of these two heterodox Stoics more closely approximated than at first sight appears : Herillus, as well as Aristo, maintained that all actions intermed­iate to vice and virtue are absolutely indifferent (Diog. Laer., vii. 155) ; and Aristo, like Herillus, defined virtue as knowledge, and held that the wise man will never form opinions, i.e., will not act upon anything short of knowledge.

In their view of man’s social relations the Stoics are greatly in advance of preceding schools. We saw that virtue is a law which governs the universe : that which Reason and God ordain must be accepted as binding upon the particle of reason which is in each one of us. Human law comes into existence when men recognize this obli­gation ; justice is therefore natural, and not something merely conventional. The opposite tendencies, to allow to the individual responsibility and freedom, and to demand of him obedience to law, are both features of the system ; but in virtue even of the freedom which belongs to him *οua* rational, he must recognize the society of

rational beings of which he is a member, and subordinate his own ends to the ends and needs of this society. Those who own one law are citizens of one state, the city of Zeus, in which men and gods have their dwelling. In that city all is ordained by reason working intelligently, and the members exist for the sake of one another ; there is an intimate connexion *(σvρπαθεια)* between them which makes all the wise and virtuous friends, even if personally unknown, and leads them to contribute to one another’s good. Their intercourse should find expression in justice, in friendship, in family and political life. But practically the Stoic philosopher always had some good excuse for withdrawing from the narrow political life of the city in which he found himself. The circumstances of the time, such as the decay of Greek city-life, the foundation of large territorial states under absolute Greek rulers which followed upon Alexander’s conquests, and afterwards the rise of the world-empire of Rome, aided to develop the leading idea of Zeno’s *Republic.* There he had anticipated a state without family life, without law courts or coins, without schools or temples, in which all differences of nationality would be merged in the common brotherhood of man. This cosmopolitan citizenship remained all through a distinctive Stoic dogma ; when first announced it must have had a powerful influence upon the minds of men, diverting them from the distractions of almost parochial politics to a boundless vista. There was, then, no longer any difference between Greek and barbarian, between male and female, bond and free. All are members of one body as partaking in reason, all are equally men. Not that this led to any movement for the abolition of slavery. For the Stoics attached but slight importance to external circumstances, since only the wise man is really free, and all the unwise are slaves. Yet, while they accepted slavery as a permanent institution, philosophers as wide apart as Chrysippus and Seneca sought to mitigate its evils in practice, and urged upon masters humanity in the treatment of their slaves.

The religious problem had peculiar interest for the school which discerned God everywhere as the ruler and upholder, and at the same time the law, of the world that He had evolved from Himself. The physical groundwork lends a religious sanction to all moral duties, and Cleanthes’s noble hymn is evidence\* how far a system of natural religion could go in providing satisfaction for the cravings of the religious temper :—

“Most glorious of immortals, O Zeus of many names, almighty and everlasting, sovereign of nature, directing all in accord­ance with law, thee it is fitting that all mortals should address. . . Thee all this universe, as it rolls circling round the earth, obeys wheresoever thou dost guide, and gladly owns thy sway. Such a minister thou holdest in thy invincible hands,—the two-edged, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt, under whose stroke all nature shudders. No work upon earth is wrought apart from thee, lord, nor through the divine ethereal sphere, nor upon the sea; save only whatsoever deeds wicked men do in their own foolishness. Nay, thou knowest how to make even the rough smooth, and to bring order out of disorder ; and things not friendly are friendly in thy sight. For so hast thou fitted all things together, the good with the evil, that there might be one eternal law over all. . . Deliver men from fell ignorance. Banish it, father, from their soul, and grant them to obtain wisdom, whereon relying thou rulest all things with justice.”

To the orthodox theology of Greece and Rome the sys­tem stood in a twofold relation, as criticism and rational­ism. That the popular religion contained gross errors hardly needed to be pointed out. The forms of worship were known to be trivial or mischievous, the myths, un­worthy or immoral. But Zeno declared images, shrines, temples, sacrifices, prayers, and worship to be of no avail. A really acceptable prayer, he taught, can only have re­ference to a virtuous and devout mind : God is best wor­shipped in the shrine of the heart by the desire to know