



### The Stoics Albert Stöckl

**T**he School of the Stoics was founded by Zeno of Cittium (in Cyprus), a pupil of Crates the Cynic, of Stilpo the Megarian, and of the Academics Xenocrates and Polemon. He lived between B.C. 350 and B.C. 258. Zeno was the son of a merchant, and was himself, for a time, engaged in trade. It is said that he was compelled to take up his residence in Athens in consequence of a shipwreck. At Athens he attached himself successively to the philosophers named above. Shortly after the year B.C. 310, he founded his own school in the *stoa poikilê* — a portico adorned with the paintings of Polygnotus, whence the title “Stoic,” bestowed on his school. He is said to have taught for fifty-eight years. The Athenians held him in high esteem. His writings (on the State, on Life in accordance with Nature, &c.) have all been lost. His pupils were: Persaeus of Cittium, Aristo of Chios, Herillus of Carchedon (Carthage), and, most remarkable of all, Cleanthes.

Cleanthes of Assus, in Troas, the successor of Zeno in his teaching functions, was originally a pugilist, and during the period of his instruction by Zeno earned his livelihood by working during the night, carrying water and kneading dough. “It was only slowly and with difficulty that he mastered philosophical theories, but when he had once mastered them, he held them tenaciously, for which reason Zeno compared him to a hard slab, on which it is difficult to make an impression, but which preserves indelibly the lines traced on it.” Cleanthes has left us a “Hymn to the Most High God.” His other writings have perished. Sphaerus of Bosphorus, Boethus, and Chrysippus were his pupils.

Chrysippus of Soli or Tarsus, in Cilicia (B.C. 282-209), was the successor of Cleanthes in his school. By his thoroughly systematic development of the doctrines of Stoicism, he deserved to be reckoned the second founder of the Stoic school. He was a very prolific writer. He is said to have written 500 lines daily, and to have composed 750 books. These works contained many quotations from other writers, specially from the poets, and contained also many repetitions and corrections (Diog. Laert. VII. 180). The successors of Chrysippus were Zeno of Tarsus and Diogenes of Babylon — the same who has been mentioned in connection with the embassy to Rome. After these the next head of the school was Antipater of Tarsus.

Thus much with reference to the “older” Stoics, who founded and developed the system of the school. The “later” Stoics we shall have occasion to notice further on. We shall occupy ourselves for the present with the doctrines of Stoicism.

The Stoics regarded philosophy as primarily a practical concern. Regarded in this light, it was for them a striving after virtue, after that which is alone worthy of our desires, and on which the whole happiness of man is based. In a secondary sense, it had a theoretical character. Considered from the theoretical point of view, they regarded it as right insight, depending on a knowledge of things divine and human. The theoretical aspect was, however, subordinate to the practical and found in the latter its end and purpose. For right insight must teach us that Virtue is the highest good, and must show us the way by which we can and must attain to Virtue.

These principles being premised, the Stoics divided philosophy into three parts: Logic, Physics, and Ethics. Theology is included in Physics. For this reason Physics would, of

itself, take precedence of Ethics. As a matter of fact, however, it is subservient to the latter. The Logic of the Stoics is their theory of the *logoi*, *i.e.* of thoughts and language; and they therefore divide it into Dialectic and Rhetoric. Dialectic includes the Theory of Knowledge, Logic (in the Aristotelian sense), and Grammar. To Grammatical Science the Stoics rendered important services, but it would be beyond the scope of our present work to follow them into this field of study. We shall confine ourselves to an exposition, first, of their Logic and Theory of Knowledge; then, of their Physics; and lastly, of their Ethics.

## Logic and Theory of Knowledge of the Stoics.

The Stoics teach that all intellectual knowledge takes rise in sensuous perception. The soul, at first, is like a sheet of blank paper, on which representations of things are afterwards delineated by the senses. The beginning of all knowledge is, therefore, the *aisthêsis* (perception of sense). This, as soon as we are conscious of it, becomes a Representation (*phantasia*) or mental image. During the formation of this Representation the Soul is purely passive, the Representation is like the impression of a seal on wax (*tupôsis en psuchê*, for which Chrysippus, to modify the doctrine, substituted *heteroiôsis psuchês*, an alteration in the Soul). According to this view, the object of itself produces its Representation on the subject, and this Representation manifests itself, and in itself the corresponding object, to the subject. When we have apprehended an object, the remembrance of this object remains after the object has been removed. A large number of memories of this kind constitute experience (*empeiria*).

In the further progress of the process of thought, Concepts are formed from these Representations. The formation of Concepts is effected in two ways. Some are formed spontaneously and without conscious co-operation on our part (*anepitechnêtôs*). Others are the outcome of a deliberate and methodical process of thought. A number of similar Representations having been produced within us, there arise, spontaneously and without any reflex thought on our part, certain universal notions, which form a basis for the reflex and methodical formation of Concepts. These notions are called by the Stoics *prolêpseis* or *koinai ennoiai*. In a second stage, the reflex activity of thought is exercised. It detects resemblances and analogies, transforms and combines notions, and so forms artificially reflex Concepts, called by the Stoics *ennoiai*. For the ten categories of Aristotle the Stoics substitute, as ultimate universal concepts (*genikôtata*), Substance (or Substratum), Essential Quality, Accidental State or Condition, and Relation.

Judgment and Inference depend upon Concepts. The Stoics added to the theory of inference their doctrine regarding the hypothetical syllogism — a form of reasoning which Aristotle did not specially investigate. By inference, say the Stoics, we are able to advance from one truth to another, and thus are in a position to investigate the causes of phenomena. In this way Science (*epistêmê*) is created — the highest form of human knowledge. The right formation both of Concepts and of Judgments and Inferences is regulated by certain rules, which it is the province of Dialectic to lay down.

With regard to the relation subsisting between Concept and Being, the Stoics seem to have adopted the view which, in the Middle Ages, was known as that of the Nominalists. They combat alike the Platonic and the Aristotelian doctrine of the objective reality of Concepts; they assert that the Concept is something purely subjective, formed by a process of abstraction, to which, however, no real being corresponds in the objective order. The individual, as such, is the only thing which has real existence; the universal concept is a purely subjective product of the process of thought, whether we consider the form of the thought, or the thing given in the thought. In this doctrine we have distinctly brought before us the purely empirical character of the Stoic Theory of Knowledge. For in this theory Concepts are deprived of all relation to the

essential being of things, and are thus reduced to mere generalized sensuous perceptions.

The Stoics, in their Theory of Knowledge, occupy themselves largely with the question of a criterion of truth. They find this criterion in the *katalêpsis* (Apprehension). This *katalêpsis* is attained when the object is represented in the mind with such clearness, force, and energy of conviction, that the truth of the representation cannot be denied. In such circumstances, the representation, and in the representation the object, is grasped or apprehended (*katalambanetai*) with absolute certainty. A representation thus clear, and thus forcing conviction (*phantasia katalêptikê*), is necessarily recognised as indubitably true, while the representation which does not exhibit this clearness or carry this force of conviction (*phantasia akatalêptos*) does not give the same certainty, and must, therefore, be regarded only as more or less probable.

In accordance with these principles, the Stoics define Knowledge as (Stob. Ecl. Eth. II. 128) *katalêpsis asphalês kai ametaptôtos hupo logou* — certain and indisputable apprehension by means of a concept, and define Science as a system from such apprehensions. According to Cicero (Acad. II. 47), Zeno compared Perception to the extension of the fingers, Assent (*sugkatathesis*) to the hand half-closed, the Apprehension of the object (*katalêpsis*) to the hand fully closed (the fist), and Knowledge to the grasping of the fist by the other hand, whereby it is more strongly and securely closed. Knowledge, according to this account of the theory, is *katalêpsis* perfected. It is, however, to be remarked that on the point here in question the several Stoics differ widely from one another.

## Physics of the Stoics.

Empiricists in their logical teaching, the Stoics are realists in their views regarding physical nature; that is to say, they maintain that all real being is corporeal, that there is no incorporeal existence. In their physics they do no more than largely develop the doctrine of Heraclitus that Fire is the ultimate principle of all things, and the further doctrine of the perpetual flux of generation and decay.

For the four Aristotelian principles of things the Stoics substitute two — *to poioun* and *to paschon*, the active principle and the passive, Matter and Force. In order that a thing may come to exist, there must be a Matter, *hulê*, out of which the thing is formed, and a Force, which communicates to it the form it receives. Matter is, in itself, without motion and without form, but capable of receiving any motion and any form. Force, on the other hand, is the active, moving, formative principle. It is inseparably united with Matter.

On these notions are constructed the theological and cosmological systems of the Stoics. To explain the origin of the world, two principles, they think, must be assumed — Matter, out of which the world is formed, and a formative principle. The latter is God. These two principles, God and Matter, must not, however, be regarded as substantially different from one another. God, being the active force, is substantially one with the passive principle — Matter. The relation of God to the world is the relation of soul to body. The world is the body of God. This pantheistical view, which unites God and the world in one being, is resolutely maintained by the Stoics.

But, we may ask, what is the nature of this God, who is the active formative force of the universe? To this question the Stoics reply: —

(a) God, as the Efficient Cause in the Universe, must be conceived as of the nature of Fire or AEther, who under the form of heat pervades the universe, and thereby gives it actual existence (*to pur technikon*, the creative or forming fire). For experience shows us that being and life in nature are dependent upon internal vital heat. Under this aspect, God appears as universal energy in nature (*phusis*), pervading, animating, and vivifying the world; hence we sometimes

find that the Stoics use interchangeably the notions “Nature” and “God.”

(b) God, as the formative principle of the world, is to be regarded as an universal cosmical Reason, which forms the universe, and establishes it in order, in obedience to the inherent law of His being, which obliges Him to act according to plan and purpose. That the divine nature must be regarded as a Living Reason, is evident from the facts:

(1) That beauty, order, and purpose, prevail throughout the universe, and these suppose a reasoning cause;

(2) That certain parts of the universe of things are possessed of consciousness, an impossibility, if the universe, as a whole, were not conscious; for the whole, as such, must always be more perfect than any of its parts.

(c) The divine nature is, therefore, to be conceived as a rational, artistically working Fire, which is at once the Soul and the Reason of the universe. As Universal Reason, God contains within Himself, in the rational state, the germs of the objects which constitute the world (*logos spermatikos*, “seminal reason”); these germs receive actuality, and become manifest in the individual objects of the real world by the action of God as the Soul of the Universe.

After this statement of general principles, the Stoics further distinguish two aspects of the divine nature. The Divine Fire manifests itself, on the one hand, as vital heat; as such it is wholly sunk in material nature; in another of its manifestations it is, to a certain extent, liberated and independent. This nobler portion of the Divine Being is the pure luminous Aether, the proper region of which is the higher parts of the universe. This luminous aether is, therefore, the *égemonikon meros*, or governing part of the Godhead, the Zeus of mythology, the proper principle of universal Reason, the highest wisdom, and the supreme law of all things.

Having thus explained the nature of God — the creative and formative principle in the universe — the Stoics next describe the process by which the universe was formed. The Divine Primal Fire was first condensed into Air and Water; the Water in part turned into Earth, in part remained Water, and in part was rarefied into Air, which again returned to the state of Fire. The two more condensed elements, Earth and Water, are chiefly passive, the two more rarefied, Air and Fire, are chiefly active. This theory, like that of Heraclitus, involves the universe in a cycle of perpetual changes. By continual condensation, the elements are ever coming forth from the Primal Fire, and by continual rarefactions they are returning to it again. The denser elements give rise to individual objects, in which the *logoi spermatikoi* attain actual existence.

From the principles here laid down are readily deduced the attributes which the Stoics assigned to the world. Considered as forming one being:

(a) The visible, or, as we may say, corporeal world, is indeed the body of God; but the world, taken in its entirety, is God himself. In essential intrinsic nature, it is nothing more than the Being of God, evolving itself into a visible world.

(b) The world being, in a certain sense, God rendered concrete, is furthermore the best and most excellent world conceivable. All the predicates which express the highest perfection, may therefore be attributed to it. It is rational, wise, provident, and the fulness of beauty. How could rational beings form part of it, if it were not rational itself?

(c) The world, as a whole, is God; its parts considered as forming subordinate wholes, in which the Divine Force manifests itself, must be regarded as subordinate gods. This is more especially true of the Stars and the Elements. By the aid of this principle the Stoics endeavour to explain the whole mythological system.

In its material aspect, *i.e.*, viewed as it manifests itself to our experience, the world, according to the Stoics, is a well-ordered unity, limited in extent, and spherical in shape. Beyond the world there is only an endless vacuum. Time is the range of the world’s motion; it is without limit in the past, and without limit in the future. Individual objects in the universe are all different from

one another. No two leaves, no two living things, are perfectly alike.

Turning from the consideration of the constitution of the universe as a whole, and directing our attention to the course of its existence, *i.e.*, to the succession in time of the events that are accomplished in the world, we meet with another notion, to which special prominence is given in the system of the Stoics — the notion of Providence (*pronoia*). Since God is the Reason of the universe, it follows that the whole series of events accomplished in the world is controlled and guided by the Divine Reason. Here we arrive at the notion of a Providence. This Reason acts according to plan and purpose, and guides all things with intelligence and wisdom.

Owing to their pantheistical conceptions, the Stoics could not admit a theory of Providence which would leave room for liberty, and for the occurrence of merely casual incidents in the world. Their notion of Providence led immediately to the notion of Destiny or Fate (*heimarmenē*). They taught that all things happen from necessity, and this necessity, they explained, rests upon an inexorable Fate. God Himself is not free. He must act according to the necessities of His nature; the same necessity must control the course of events in the world, for the world is nothing more than the evolution of the Divine Nature. This necessity is called Fate. To the dominion of Fate all things are subject.

It is clear that the liberty of the human will could not be reconciled with these fatalistic notions. Hence we find that it was peremptorily denied by the older Stoics. Chrysippus, however, endeavoured to assert it in a modified form. He distinguished between a man's individual acts, and his general inner character, from which these individual acts proceed. The general inner character, according to which a man is obliged to act, is, in every case, determined by Fate, and to this extent is pre-determined, but in individual actions man determines himself, and in this sense acts with freedom.

Man must, therefore, be compared to a stone rolling down a mountain. The stone, once set in motion, rolls downwards of itself without a further impulse; so the human will, once determined by Fate, accomplishes the individual acts in which its general character manifests itself, without need of a further impulse from Fate. This is sufficient for freedom. If we fancy at times that we are acting with absolute freedom, *i.e.*, without any pre-determination whatever, this is because, in certain cases, we are not conscious of the motives which influence our will.

The course of events in the world comes to an end when, after a certain period, the Godhead absorbs all things into itself. This is accomplished by a general conflagration, in which all things perish in fire. But after every such catastrophe a new world is again evolved, which in all its parts resembles the old — the all-controlling Necessity not permitting a difference. These successive processes of the destruction and renewed creation of the world continue without end.

The human soul is a part of the Deity, an emanation from God, between whom and the soul there is mutual action and re-action. The soul, like God, is of the nature of fire; it is the warm breath within us; the heart is the centre from which its influence radiates. It is generated at the same time as the body. It consists of eight parts — one principal part *hēgemonikon meros*, to which Reason belongs, located in the heart; five Senses; the Faculty of Speech; and the Reproductive Faculty. The last-named parts may be described, in contrast with the first or rational part, as the irrational parts of the soul. These extend like so many polyps from the central part, and ramify through their respective organs.

The soul is, of its nature, destructible; it can, however, survive the body. Whether the soul does actually outlive the body, is a point on which the Stoics are divided. Cleanthes asserted that all souls survive till the conflagration of the world; Chrysippus allowed this privilege only to the souls of the wise. Panaetius (Cic. *Tusc.* I. 32), appears to have denied all immortality to the soul. He would, however, seem to have been alone in this opinion. Those who held that all



souls exist till the conflagration of the world, taught further that only the souls of the wise lived after this life in the condition of pure fire; the souls of fools, they held, retained a kind of body after death.

Man is the most perfect product of nature. He stands at the top of the scale of natural beings; the gods alone are above him. All things else exist for the gods and for man; man's destiny is to contemplate and admire the universe. The human race, in conjunction with the gods, forms a sort of divine polity, the fundamental law of which is that Natural Law which reveals itself on all sides in the world. This leads us to the Ethical System of the Stoics.

### **Ethical System of the Stoics.**

In accordance with the fundamental principles of their physical theories, the Stoics taught that the supreme duty and highest purpose of man's life is "to live according to Nature." By Nature they did not here understand the individual nature of man; they used the term in its wide and universal sense. In Nature the eternal and divine law manifests itself, and as this law is the measure to which all things in the universe must conform in their action, it is the standard to which human action must conform, the standard according to which man must live if he would fulfil the purpose of his existence. The expression, "to live according to Nature" (*homologoumenôs tê phusei zên*) means no more than the accord of man's conduct with the sovereign law of Nature, or the accord of man's will with the Divine Will. The fundamental law of human conduct may therefore be expressed in the formula: "Thou shalt live according to Nature, *i.e.*, according to the Divine Law which manifests itself in Nature."

The highest purpose of human life is not, then, to be found in *theoria* (contemplation), but in action, and in that action which is according to Nature. Virtue consists in thus living according to Nature. The man who acts in accordance with right understanding is the only man who acts virtuously, and the man who acts according to the natural law, as manifested to reason, is the only man who follows right understanding. We have found it to be the ultimate destiny of man that he should live according to Nature; we may now substitute the notion of Virtue in the formula, and say that to strive after virtue, or to be virtuous, is the highest duty of man.

If Virtue is the ultimate destiny of man, it follows that Virtue is to be sought not for sake of anything apart from itself, but for its own sake only. Virtue is its own end. If it were directed to a higher purpose, it would, by the fact, cease to be the ultimate destiny and the highest purpose of human life. Man must be virtuous for Virtue's sake.

We must not, then, make Pleasure or Self-gratification the end of our actions. Pleasure is merely an accessory of our action — not the end after which we must strive. The instinctive impulse of nature is not directed to gratification or pleasure as to its end, but to self-preservation, to integrity and health of body, to true knowledge and science, &c.; in all these cases pleasure accompanies the satisfaction of nature's tendency, but is not the end at which nature aims. Much more should this be the case when there is question of a rational action. Virtue is here the only end.

This being so, it follows further that Virtue is the supreme good of man, as well as his highest end. The supreme good must be that good which is sought purely for its own sake, which cannot serve as a means for the obtaining of something else. From what we have said, it is manifest that Virtue is an ultimate good of this kind, for it is essentially its own end. Virtue is, then, the highest good of man, and the true and highest happiness of man can only be found in Virtue.

More than this: Virtue is not only the highest good, it is the only true good of man. There is, in fact, only one good, the *kalon*, *i.e.*, that good which is desirable for its own sake, not for sake of the advantage which it confers, and this good is Virtue, and Virtue only. Everything other

than Virtue which men regard as good, is merely an *adiaphoron* — something indifferent, not a good in the proper sense of the term. Such things cannot contribute to happiness. Virtue alone is the measure of happiness.

We must, however, make a distinction between various kinds of indifferent objects. Some are to be preferred (*proêgmena*), others not to be preferred (*apoproêgmena*); others again not worthy of preference or rejection, indifferent in the strictest sense of the word. There are, therefore, certain things of value (*axian echonta*), and certain things of no value, and worthy rather of contempt (*anaxian echonta*), and lastly, things that are not of the one class or the other. Things in the first of these categories are to be preferred, things in the second to be rejected, things in the third are absolutely indifferent.

The *proêgmena* accord with the natural desires of man, and can, therefore, be the aim of his efforts; but they do not contribute to real happiness, and must, therefore, be included in the category of things indifferent. On the other hand, the *apoproêgmena* have no power to disturb or diminish the happiness of the virtuous man. This, with greater reason, is true of things which are absolutely indifferent. The true and highest good is, therefore, Virtue. Virtue alone is not subject to abuse; everything besides can be abused.

9. Virtue is essentially one. If a distinction is drawn between virtues, the difference is a difference of relation — that is, it is a question of one and the same virtue manifesting itself in different ways. In this sense we may distinguish between cardinal and secondary or derivative virtues. In the first class are included Prudence or Practical Wisdom (*phronêsis*), Courage, Temperance, and Justice. In their definition of these several virtues the Stoics follow the teaching of Aristotle. In the second category are included Magnanimity, Continence, Patience, Diligence, Deliberation. All these virtues depend upon right understanding, and can, therefore, be communicated by teaching.

10. The principles here established as to the nature of Virtue lead to the following conclusions:

(a) The person who possesses one virtue possesses all; for virtue being essentially one, each single virtue includes in itself all the others.

(b) There is no difference of degree in virtue, *i.e.*, virtue cannot be attained in a higher or lower degree. The nature of virtue does not admit of a *more* and a *less*. A man cannot live according to nature in a greater or less degree — and the essence of virtue consists in living thus. The good actions of virtuous men are, therefore, all equally good; in the goodness of actions *more* and *less* are not admissible.

11. The opposite of Virtue is Vice. A man is vicious who lives not in harmony with the law of nature, but at variance with it. What is true of virtue is true analogously of vice.

(a) The man who is stained with one vice is stained with all vices. As a man cannot be virtuous in one respect, without being virtuous in every respect, so he cannot be wicked in one respect without being wicked in every respect.

(b) In the same way, there cannot be a distinction of degree in vice any more than in virtue. A man cannot be wicked in a higher or lower degree; as all virtuous men are equally virtuous, so all wicked men are equally wicked. And for this reason all evil deeds are equally evil (*omnia peccata paria*), there is not in this matter a *more* and a *less*.

Furthermore, the Stoics teach that there is no mean between Virtue and Vice (*aretê kai kakia*). There is indeed such a thing as an approximation to virtue. But the individual who only approaches virtue, is still without virtue quite as much as the absolutely wicked. A middle state does not exist. Man either possesses virtue, or does not possess it. In the former case he is virtuous, in the latter wicked; he is not, and can never be, neither virtuous nor wicked.

In human actions, considered in themselves, the Stoics distinguish between *kathôrthôma*, or complete fulfilment of duty, and *kathêkon*, or mere right action. A rightful, befitting action

is, no doubt, conformable to nature, and is therefore justifiable; it is not, however, performed from a purely virtuous motive, but for the attainment of some ulterior end to which it leads. An action is the perfect fulfilment of duty *katorthôma*, when it is performed purely out of a virtuous disposition, and for sake of the good done. The *katorthôma* alone fulfils the requirements of virtue, for virtue essentially excludes the notion of a further end.

No act is, in itself, praiseworthy or reprehensible; all acts, even those which are accounted wicked, are good if performed with a righteous, virtuous disposition. With a contrary disposition every action is evil, even though, in outward appearance, it seem good. The wicked man sins in every action; the virtuous man in every action is doing good. "Unnatural love, prostitution, violation of tombs, and the like deeds, are no longer immoral in themselves; it is no longer forbidden to eat the flesh of men; the deeds of Oedipus and Jocasta become indifferent in character." The virtuous man, as such, is incapable of wickedness; the wicked man, as such, is incapable of good.

The emotions (*pathê*), be they of what kind they may, are aberrations from the right practical judgment as to what is good and evil. The principal forms of emotion are Fear and Anxiety, resulting from the apprehension of a future or present evil; Desire and Delectation, which result from the apprehension of a future or present good. The emotions proceed from a false practical judgment; they are not, therefore, in any case, in accordance with nature, and thus they cannot be reconciled, with virtue. The virtuous man must yield to no emotion or *pathos*, he must be raised above them all.

In keeping with these ethical principles is the Ideal of the Sage which the Stoics put before us. The true sage is the man who possesses virtue. As such he is indifferent to everything except virtue, for he understands that other things are not truly and really good. He is indifferent to pleasures and desires, for he knows that neither any pleasure nor any desire is in accordance with nature and with virtue. He is indifferent to all pain, to all fear, and to all anxiety, for he knows that these things cannot trouble the happiness which he possesses in virtue. He frees himself from all passions; and if, in certain cases, he cannot help feeling pain or pleasure, he does not permit himself to be influenced by these feelings, but remains always unmoved and immovable. In every gratification and success, in every misfortune and accident of life, he maintains imperturbable equanimity; no sickness can trouble this evenness of mind, no fear can disturb him, no fate, however hard, affect him — in a word, he is *apathês* (without feeling). In this *apatheia* consists the ideal perfection of the sage.

The sage is thus the really free man, the really rich man, the true king and ruler, the true priest, prophet, and poet; he unites in himself all perfection; in intrinsic dignity he is second to no rational being, not even to Zeus himself, except that he is not, like Zeus, immortal. He is a god after his fashion. All that he does is good, he cannot lose his virtue. "Notwithstanding this moral independence, he is yet in practical communion with other rational beings. He has his part in the affairs of the State, and this part is the larger the nearer the State approaches the perfection of that one ideal State in which all men are embraced. But he exercises towards other men, as towards himself, not forbearance, but justice. He is permitted community of wives. He is master of his own life and of his own choice can put an end to it; suicide is allowed him."

The fool is, in all respects, the contrary of the sage. We may assert of him the contrary of all that we have attributed to the wise man. The fool, not possessing virtue, is subject to the influence of every emotion and every passion; he is a slave in the true sense; a godless being, who sins in every action that he performs. Between the sage and the fool a chasm intervenes, so wide that we can institute no comparison between them. As there is no middle state between the condition of virtue and the condition of vice, it follows that all men are either sages or fools, either perfect in goodness (*spoudaioi*) or thoroughly wicked (*phauloi*).



It must be allowed that the later Stoics abandoned to some extent this extravagant exaltation of the wise man, and this exaggerated contrast between the condition of the sage and of other men. They taught that no individual attains to the ideal state of the wise man, that in actual fact the only distinction existing is the distinction between the state of fools and the state of those who are advancing to wisdom (*prokoptontes*).

Such, in brief, is the ethical system of the Stoics. It is noticeable that this system, though it denies the very basis of moral life — liberty, immortality, &c., — increases nevertheless the measure of man's moral obligations exorbitantly. Herein it is unreasonable and unnatural, and leads finally to excesses, with which its first principles are in glaring contradiction. The demands made upon the Stoic sage become wholly unnatural in their extent, and are wholly irreconcilable with the needs of practical life. Yet the only ultimate result is that the sage proudly exalts himself to an equality with the gods, and looks down with contempt on all men who have not reached the level he has attained; that he is permitted every licence, even the most shameful, and that ethical antinomies are made the laws of morals. The principles which underlay the system of the Stoics, notably their thoroughly pantheistical doctrine of Necessity, and denial of Immortality, could lead to no more than a caricature of ethical science, and it was in the nature of things that such a system should at last degenerate into unrestrained immorality.

We have now to notice briefly the "later" Stoics, followers of the older school, who either maintained its principles intact, or accepted them with some modification. To the later Stoics belong:

(a) Panaetius of Rhodes (B.C. 180-111), a pupil of Diogenes. He modified somewhat the rigid character of the Stoic teaching (Cic. *De Fin.* IV., 28), and gave it that special form which secured it favour among the Romans. He himself won for the Stoic school such Roman nobles as Laelius and Scipio. "He aimed at a less rugged, and a more brilliant exposition of the Stoic philosophy; and in his exposition he appealed not only to the older Stoics, but also to Plato, Aristotle, Xenocrates, Theophrastus, and Dicaearchus, and by this method prepared the way for Eclecticism." He rejected the astrological soothsaying and divination which had been in favour with the older Stoics, in consequence of their fatalistic notions; he abandoned the doctrine of a conflagration of the world, and with Socratic modesty disclaimed all title to perfect wisdom. His work (*peri tou kathêkontos*) is the foundation of Cicero's work, *De Officiis*. (Cic. *De Off.* III. 2.)

(b) Posidonius of Apamea, in Syria (B.C. 90), held his school at Rhodes, where, amongst others, Cicero and Pompey attended his lectures. He was esteemed the most learned (*polumathestatos kai epistêmonikôtatos*) of the Stoics. He inclined to Eclecticism, blended Platonic and Aristotelian with Stoic doctrines, and delighted in a lofty rhetorical style.

We may further mention: Apollodorus of Athens (B.C. 144); Athenodorus of Tarsus, President of the Library of Pergamus, and, at a later period, friend and companion of Cato the Younger (Uticensis), who strove to confirm the Stoic doctrines by the example of his own life; Antipater of Tyre (B.C. 45), a teacher of Cato the Younger; Apollonides, a friend of Cato; Diodotus (B.C. 55), one of Cicero's instructors, later a member of his household, and his friend; and lastly, Athenodorus, the teacher of Octavianus Augustus. Cfr. Ueberweg.

(c) Under the Roman Empire immorality and corruption were ever on the increase. The men who set themselves to struggle against the prevailing evils, turned for the most part to Stoicism, seeking from the calmer study of this philosophy consolation and tranquillity of mind, or borrowing from it a haughty virtue to resist the masters of the State. It thus came to pass that, at this period, the philosophy of the Stoics began to assume a political character, to render those who professed it objects of suspicion, and even to expose them to persecution. The most remarkable amongst the Stoics of this period are:

(*alpha*) L. Annaeus Seneca, a native of Cordova, in Spain (B.C. 3 to A.D. 63), the tutor of

Nero. He directed his attention to Ethics rather than to Physics, and he was more concerned to exhort to the practice of virtue than to inquire into its nature. His views on the latter point do not differ materially from those of the older Stoics. Of his philosophical writings the following have been preserved: *Quaestionum Naturalium*, Libri VII., and a number of religious and moral treatises: *De Providentia*; *De Brevitate Vitae*; *De Otio aut Secessu Sapientis*; *De Animi Tranquillitate*; *De Constantia*; *De Ira*; *De Clementia*; *De Beneficiis*; and the *Epp. ad Lucilium*. He exalted the Stoic Sage above the gods; for the independence of the Sage, he holds, is the work of his own will, and this is not the case with the gods. Nevertheless he is profuse in despairing lamentations over the corruption and misery of human life, and he makes large concessions indeed to human weakness. The same contradiction he exhibited in his private life. In theory a gloomy Stoic, looking down with contempt on all things human, he was in practice a dainty courtier, by no means averse to the pleasures of the table and other like indulgences.

(beta) Following Seneca, we have L. Annaeus Cornutus (B.C. 20 to A.D. 66), the Satirist A. Persius Flaccus (B.C. 34 to A.D. 62) a pupil and friend of Cornutus, and C. Musonius Rufus of Volsiniuni, a Stoic whose views corresponded with those of Seneca. Musonius Rufus was banished from Rome by Nero at the same time as the other philosophers (A.D. 65); he was recalled at a later period, probably by Galba; he was exempted from the order of banishment issued against the philosophers by Vespasian, and was personally acquainted with Titus. His pupil, Pollio, composed the *apomnêmonemata Mousôniou* (Memoirs of Musonius), from which Stobaeus has probably derived what he tells us of the life of Musonius. To him is attributed the maxim: "If thou doest good under difficulty, the difficulty will pass, but the good will endure; if thou doest evil with pleasure, the pleasure will pass, but the evil will endure."

(gamma) Epictetus, a native of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, was first the slave, and afterwards the freedman of a soldier of Nero's body-guard. He was a pupil of Musonius Rufus, and subsequently taught philosophy in Rome till the philosophers were banished from Italy by Domitian (A.D. 94.) He then retired to Nicopolis, in Epirus, where Arrian became his pupil, and wrote down his lectures. According to Epictetus, the whole duty of man consists in living entirely for God, in reverencing God, and being obedient to Him rather than to man. The god within us (*theos* or *daimôn*) we should reverence most. The efforts of the Sage are directed to make himself independent of all external goods which are not under his own control; man must endeavour to have all his fortune in himself. He will attain this perfection by self-denial and patience. Hence the rule of life: "Bear and forbear." (*anechou kai apechou*)

(delta) Lastly, we must mention here the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. Stoicism had hitherto been only on the side of those who were discontented with the circumstances of the time, and the general condition of society; but with Marcus Aurelius it took possession of the imperial throne. The treatise of this prince (*ta heauton*), the last remarkable outcome of Stoic philosophy, contains short proverbs and aphorisms, in which the doctrines of philosophy are applied to the concerns of practical life. In this teaching a certain tendency to mysticism betrays itself, revealing an affinity between this form of the Stoic doctrines and the Neo-Platonism, which was soon to succeed them. Theoretical views are adopted by the Emperor merely as a basis for some religious or moral precept. We also notice that concentration in self, and an abandonment to the will of the Deity, are the dispositions of mind which his moral teaching requires from man.

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Albert Stöckl. *Handbook of the History of Philosophy. (Part 1: Pre-Scholastic Philosophy)*. Trans. T.A. Finlay. Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1887.

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