

THE MUTUAL INFLUENCE
OF CHRISTIANITY
AND THE STOIC SCHOOL

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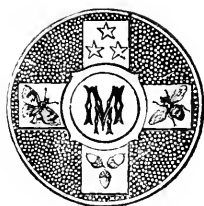
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Christianity and the Stoic

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THE MUTUAL INFLUENCE

OF

CHRISTIANITY AND THE STOIC SCHOOL.

BY

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μάντις εἰμ' ἐσθλῶν ἀγώνων.

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TO HIS GRACE,
WILLIAM, DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G., LL.D.
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY, BEING

THE HULSEAN DISSERTATION

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, FOR THE YEAR 1865, IS

BY HIS GRACE'S KIND PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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CLAUSES *directed by the FOUNDER to be always prefixed
to the HULSEAN DISSERTATION.*

CLAUSES from the WILL of the Rev. JOHN HULSE, late of Elworth, in the County of Chester, clerk, deceased: dated the twenty-first day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven; expressed in the words of the Testator, as he, in order to prevent mistakes, thought proper to draw and write the same himself, and directed that such clauses should every year be printed, to the intent that the several persons, whom it might concern and be of service to, might know that there were such special donations or endowments left for the encouragement of Piety and Learning, in an age so unfortunately addicted to Infidelity and Luxury, and that others might be invited to the like charitable, and, as he humbly hoped, seasonable and useful Benefactions.

He directs that certain rents and profits (now amounting to about a hundred pounds yearly) be paid to such learned and ingenious person, in the University of Cambridge, under the degree of Master of Arts, as shall compose, for that year, the best Dissertation, in the English language, on the Evidences in general, or on the Prophecies or Miracles in particular, or any other particular Argument,

whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian Religion, in order to evince its truth and excellence; the subject of which Dissertation shall be given out by the Vice-Chancellor, and the Masters of Trinity and Saint John's, his Trustees, or by some of them, on New Year's Day annually; and that such Dissertation as shall be by them*, or any two of them, on Christmas Day annually, the best approved, be also printed, and the expense defrayed out of the Author's income under his Will, and the remainder given to him on Saint John the Evangelist's Day following; and he who shall be so rewarded, shall not be admitted at any future time as a Candidate again in the same way, to the intent that others may be invited and encouraged to write on so sacred and sublime a subject.

He also desires, that immediately following the last of the clauses relating to the prize Dissertation, this invocation may be added: "May the Divine Blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions; and may the Greatest and the Best of Beings, by his all-wise Providence and gracious influence, make the same effectual to His own glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures!"

Subject proposed by the TRUSTEES for the Year 1865:

*The mutual Influence of Christianity and the
Stoic School.*

* By the new Regulations, the four Divinity Professors were appointed as additional Adjudicators.

INTRODUCTION.

It was at Athens, "the school of the world," that the first and only contact of Christianity with Gentile Philosophy, recorded in the New Testament, took place. In "the learned city" the mightiest efforts of the human mind had been made to grasp eternal truth. But the contradictions in the teachings of the master-minds of Greece and the consequent doubt and unbelief so prevalent, at the same time, with the most abject superstition, proved that the effort had been vain to arrive at a full comprehension of the Infinite from a consideration of the finite—to rise from man to God. In this same city, about half a century after the birth of the Redeemer, there was unveiled to human souls which had been longing for the knowledge of the unseen, "the mystery of Godliness," that "God" had been "manifest in the flesh." The eyes which had been long looking for the day might now behold the day-star from on high who had visited and blessed the world with light and salvation. Now there could be found repose of soul and certainty of belief, because the Truth had come down from heaven, from God to man, that He might raise man to God. Heavenly wisdom at length encountered human wisdom and pride of intellect in their stronghold.

By this I do not mean that before St Paul came to

Athens there had been no contest of the religion of Christ with mere human conceits. Philosophy is only the endeavour to reduce the thoughts of men to a system, to find a grammar for the language of the mind, or rather, perhaps, to find a language as well as a grammar. Wherever there is mind there will be thought, either with, or without a system. So that Christianity, in winning its way, had met with opposition of human thought before the great Apostle of Jesus reached the metropolis of thought. Indeed the very sects of philosophy, which sneered at the revelation of heavenly truth on its introduction into Athens, had their counterparts in Judæa, and especially at Jerusalem. We have the testimony of a Pharisee, that the "sect of the Pharisees bore a strong affinity to that called Stoic among the Greeks¹." We are led to perceive, also, from the accounts we have of the free-living Sadducees, who claimed absolute freedom for the human will, that the Epicureans were represented in some degree by them. They were sceptics as to the providence of GOD, "believed in neither angel, nor spirit²;" "they took away all fate, and would not allow it to be anything at all, nor to have any power over human affairs, but put all things entirely into the power of our own free will³." Both Pharisees and Sadducees, though disagreeing in other respects, yet were united in their efforts against the spread of the truth. From the earliest preaching of the doctrines of the Gospel, the same spirit of self-seeking and pride of human nature

¹ Ἡ Φαρισαίων αἵρεσις παραπλήσιος ἐστὶ τῇ παρ' Ἑλλήσι Στωϊκῇ λεγομένῃ.—*Jos. in vita sua.*

² Acts xxiii. 8.

³ Τὴν μὲν εἰμαρμένην ἀναιροῦσιν, οὐδὲν εἶναι ταύτην ἀξιοῦντες, οὔτε κατ' αὐτὴν τὰ ἀνθρώπινα τέλος λαμβάνειν, ἅπαντα δὲ ἐφ' ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς τιθέντες.—*Jos. Ant. Jud. XIII. 5.*

which animated the Epicureans and Stoics, showed themselves adverse to the humbling views which Jesus set forth. And we cannot forget that St Paul, immediately after his conversion, having been in great danger at Damascus and at Jerusalem from the rage of the Jews because of his becoming a Christian, dwelt some time in quiet at Tarsus, his native city. We have no record of how he spent his time there on that occasion. But doubtless, as at other places so there, he would proclaim the conviction which he so strongly felt of the excellence and truth of the Gospel. If so, it is probable that he met with the same kind of coldness and contempt for his message from the philosophers of Tarsus, as afterwards from those of Athens. The native city of St Paul was noted for the eagerness for learning displayed by its people. Strabo tells us "the men of this place are so zealous in the study of philosophy and all other subjects of education that they surpass the inhabitants of Athens and Alexandria, and every place that one could mention where schools of philosophy are found. The difference is in this respect. Here they are all natives who are eager after learning, and strangers do not choose a residence here. They themselves (the Tarsians) do not stay, but finish their course of training abroad. Few return home again. Whereas, in the other cities which I have named, except Alexandria, there is a contrary practice; for many come to them and live willingly there: but you will see few of those born there either going to other places for the sake of philosophy, or caring to study it at home. The Alexandrians combine both descriptions, for they receive many strangers, and send abroad not a few of their own people." We learn also from other sources that from Cilicia, and especially from Tarsus, a great many of the most cele-

brated Stoics came, and it appears therefore extremely probable that St Paul would meet with such in his visit to that city. If he met with them, they would hear the truth from his lips. His heart would prompt him, as it did afterwards at Athens, to proclaim glad tidings of salvation to all; and to those who professed to seek the knowledge of deeper mysteries than the ignorant mass cared to inquire about, he would declare "the mystery which" had "been hid for ages," but was now "revealed to the sons of men by Jesus Christ."

Of these meetings between the Apostle and the philosophers of his native city, if they took place, we have no record. The first account we have of the contact of the religion of Christ and the wisdom of men is given us by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, in the seventeenth chapter of the history. We are told that, while St Paul waited at Athens for Silas and Timotheus, "his spirit was stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews and with the devout persons; and in the market (*τῆ ἀγορᾷ*) daily with them that met him. Then certain of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, 'What will this babbler say?' Other some, 'He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods;' because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." It seems necessary in passing, to notice here the two sects of philosophers who encountered the Apostle. They were then the two most prominent in Greece; one might say they divided between them the adherence of all thoughtful minds. The Epicureans were advocates of the doctrine of the absolute freedom of the human will to choose what is agreeable to it. They denied the providence of GOD, or that he concerns himself at all about human affairs.

According to them, the universe was neither formed, nor created, by an intelligent being; but was merely the fortuitous concourse of infinite atoms. They taught that happiness consisted in the pursuit of pleasure, and, as all wish to be happy, all should seek after the greatest amount of pleasure to be obtained. Although Epicurus was fiercely assailed by the disciples of the opposite school, and "the garden," where he taught, was held to be a hot-bed of sensuality, there was probably much exaggeration in the reports that were spread. Epicurus meant by his teaching, perhaps, not that men should seek after every momentary gratification, but for the greatest enjoyment of a whole life. Yet as this doctrine left man to be his own judge, it is not to be wondered at if the moderation of the founder of the sect was little imitated by his disciples. Men took pleasures as they came, not knowing what pleasure might be in the future, and not caring for the morrow; so vice and profligacy were the result, instead of virtue and contentment and true enjoyment.

The Stoics, on the other hand, were absolute fatalists, and taught that virtue consists in following the decrees of nature and acting according to the dictates which ruled all things. We shall not now enter fully into their doctrines, as these will require careful attention and full development in accordance with the purpose of this essay. We shall see, bye and bye, that the principles of their school were of such a nature as to produce in some respects the strongest, in others, the weakest of men. Stoicism and Epicureanism both left man practically to himself. They agreed in looking at self-cultivation and self-interest as the chief good. The controversy between the two systems was what it has continued to be since among ethical philosophers, a controversy as to the sources of

moral rules. Epicurus was an advocate of what has been called "the selfish system of morals." Zeno and the Stoics advocated the contrary system. It seems, however, that though the conflict between them has been so long, and often so fierce, the two systems are not incompatible one with the other. Indeed in the word of GOD both motives are set before us to urge us to right conduct, the loveliness of virtue in itself, and the combined happiness and blessedness to be gained from a certain course of life. This view has been put in a few forcible words by an eminent writer of the present day, who says, "Some moralists employ themselves mainly in deducing the rules of action from considering the tendencies of actions to produce pleasure or pain, as Paley and Bentham. Others take pains to show that man has a faculty by which he apprehends a higher Rule of action than the mere tendency to produce pleasure, as Butler. But though these two sources of morality are thus separate, they are not really independent; and it is, as I conceive, important to present them in a mode which shows their connexion and relation¹." One of these springs of action does not necessarily counteract the other. Doubtless, there is in man an innate appreciation of the beauty of virtue. Though the temple of the human soul has been laid in ruins by the touch of sin, yet does it still retain marks of its primal glory. It was not created for anything but the abode of purity. Hence we perceive naturally the excellence of virtue. When I say naturally, I mean as man is at all times enabled to see by GOD's help. We must remember that, by virtue of the Redeemer's merits, all men are blessed with a certain degree of enlightenment. Speak-

¹ Whewell's *Elements of Morality*, Preface to the 4th Edition.

ing of the Eternal Logos, St John says¹, "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Only because men in their obstinacy close their eyes, the light which is given them often becomes darkness. So St Paul, speaking of those without Revelation, says², "They are a law to themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or else excusing one another." In order to this they must appreciate the beauty and excellence of virtue. So Justin Martyr declares³, "Every race of men participated in the Logos." When we speak of man by nature then, we mean man with the aid of this light given to him by Christ. And we must perceive great force in the statement of Berkeley, that "There is an idea of beauty natural to the mind of man. This all men desire. This they are pleased and delighted with for its own sake, purely from an instinct of nature. A man needs no argument to make him discern and approve what is beautiful; it strikes at first sight and attracts without a reason. And as this beauty is found in the shape and form of corporeal things, so also is there analogous to it a beauty of another kind, an order, a symmetry and comeliness in the moral world. And as the eye perceives the one, so the mind doth by a certain interior sense perceive the other: which sense, talent, or faculty, is even quickest and purest in the noblest minds. Thus, as by sight I discern the beauty of a plant, or an animal, even so the mind approves moral excellence, the beauty and decorum of justice and temperance. And as we readily pronounce a dress becoming, or an attitude graceful, we can, with the same

¹ Chap. i. 9.² Rom. ii. 15.³ *Apol.* i. 46.

free, untutored judgment, at once declare whether this or that conduct or action, be comely or beautiful."

We cannot deny, on the other hand, that men act from a feeling of self-interest. To obtain pleasure or escape pain is motive enough to make men pursue a certain course instinctively, without weighing accurately, or even caring at all for the motives which prompt them. When men see that virtue brings in its train present blessing and eternal hopes, shall we deny that this is a strong reason why they should pursue it? Doubtless such a reason weighs with many and draws them to a right course, without a question arising in their minds as to the motives by which they are actuated.

Then the enquiry naturally occurs, since virtue commends itself to us as both lovely and beneficial, shall we reject the loveliness as a motive, because our self-interest moves us also? On the other hand, shall we reject hope of benefit, because the innate loveliness of the object commends itself to us? May we not be moved by the double influence? Certainly the word of GOD seems to sanction such a double motive to religion and virtue.

Yet here we are brought to the humbling conviction of the weakness of man without Christianity. Men had this combined motive for ages. What was the result on the heart and the life? What effect had even the teaching of the wisest? The masses were still sunk in superstition and sin. The farthest advanced were only looking at a height which they could not hope to reach. The most acute thinkers were often in doubt. We see the extremes meeting. Superstition, in its most debased and enthralling forms, stands boldly in the front of the most exalted teachings of philosophy. What could mere philosophy do? She could perhaps find employment for the

minds of a few of the most gifted. But what had she to give as food for the hungry souls of the multitude? The starving spirits asked for bread, and she gave them the stone of an unattainable moral excellence. They asked for fish, and she gave them the stinging serpent of pleasure and self-enjoyment¹. In Athens the human mind reached its zenith, yet could not rise to happiness or peace. How unspeakably was the world blessed, therefore, when the cross of Christ was raised as the means whereby man might reach heaven. Never before was such life-giving truth offered to the Athenians, as the good news which was now brought by the Apostle who "preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." This was the subject of St Paul's daily discourses in the Agora. Instead of blind theories and abstract ideas, he placed before them a person;—a divine person, who had left an example of how to act and how to suffer;—a Saviour, who had died to open the way to happiness for others; who had risen again to show that his sacrifice was complete and sufficient. The Epicureans wondered and yet were unbelieving, while they heard of one who was Lord of all, that he thought of men's lives and cared for their needs. It was strange and unwelcome to them, who held that happiness was enjoyment and freedom from pain, to hear one proclaimed as worthy of their admiration and trust, who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who even gloried in His sufferings and death; and who had bid those that would be his disciples, take up their cross and follow him, by resisting and subduing self and pride. The Stoics heard the tidings (for "the porch" was in the Agora), and they, stern and self-reliant, were surprised,

¹ See our Lord's words, Matt. vii. 9, 10.

yet not pleased, to hear of one who led a life of self-sacrifice for others' sake; who was meek and lowly; and who had sent his messenger to declare to those very self-satisfied philosophers, that the only way to real virtue for them, as for the rest of mankind, was by trusting in the merits of another, and by a change of heart through His divine power. "The resurrection" was also equally strange and equally contrary to the ideas of the one sect, who regarded death as annihilation; and of the other, who looked on it as the absorption of men into universal nature of which they were component parts. To some the preacher seemed a mere babbler, a picker up of trifles, and therefore contemptible. To others, he was a setter forth of strange gods. But because they are all desirous of hearing anything newer than what they already are acquainted with, they bring the Apostle to Mars' Hill, and desire him more fully to expound to them the strange things which he had brought to their ears. The locality chosen was more suitable than the busy market-place. The associations of the place were solemn and deeply interesting. The subject then brought before the people in the Areopagus was worthy of those associations,—far more important and of more momentous consequences than had ever been deliberated on there in times that were gone by. The place, the speaker, the hearers, the subject, all appeal to our sympathies and interest us most deeply. The discourse of the Apostle was admirably suited to the place and the hearers. He appealed to their deepest convictions, while at the same time the message which he brought thwarted many of their cherished ideas. St Luke has given us a report of this speech, so eloquent, so worthy of the admiration of all time, so well calculated to show how far Christianity coincided with Gentile, and

especially Stoic, philosophy, and how it excelled. This was what St Paul said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all respects you are extremely devout¹. For as I passed through your city and beheld the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar on which was this inscription, 'To the unknown GOD.' Him, therefore, whom you worship though you know him not, I set before you. GOD, who made the world and all things therein, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands as being in need of any, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. And hath made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on the face of the whole earth; having ordained (to all) their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitations, that they might seek GOD, if haply they would feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' We, therefore, being the offspring of GOD, ought not to think the Godhead to be like gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device. Howbeit those (past) times of ignorance GOD hath overlooked; but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all, in that he raised him from the dead²."

There is much, in connexion with the purpose of our essay, that requires careful consideration in this discourse.

¹ There can be no doubt that *δεισιδαιμονεστέρους* = valde religiosos.

² Acts xvii. 22—31.

If we want to understand the influence which Christianity and Stoicism exercised, one on the other, and on the souls of men, we must notice them side by side at this their first public encounter. When we have observed how far the Christian teacher agreed with the Stoic philosopher, and in what he differed and excelled, we shall have a fair starting-place for investigating the mutual consequences which resulted. In order properly to grasp our subject, it will be necessary to place before our minds what Stoicism was as it came from its founder, and how far it was modified at this time. I purpose therefore in another chapter to give a sketch of the life and teaching of Zeno of Cittium, and of the modifications of his system by Cleanthes and Chrysippus. The way will then be clear to compare the Apostle's teaching with theirs, and to appreciate the peculiar excellence of the good news preached by St Paul on Mars' Hill.

CHAPTER I.

THE STOIC SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

Ἀνακάμπτων δὲ ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ τῇ καὶ Πεισιανακτεία καλουμένη, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς γραφῆς τῆς Πολυγνώτου, ποικίλῃ, διέθετο τοὺς λόγους...Προσῆσαν δὴ λοιπὸν ἀκούοντες αὐτοῦ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Στωϊκοὶ ἐκλήθησαν, καὶ οἱ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ὁμοίως, πρότερον Ζηνώνειοι καλούμενοι.

Diog. Laert. *vit. Phil. Lib. vii. 6, 7.*

ZENO was born at Cittium, a small city in the island of Cyprus, founded by Phœnicians, but inhabited by Greeks. His father, who was a merchant, finding his son attracted to the study of philosophy, allowed him to follow his bent. From Athens, whither he had often occasion to go for commercial purposes, the father frequently brought home for his son many writings of the Socratic school of philosophers. Zeno read these with great eagerness and was enchanted with the views which they unfolded. When he was about thirty years of age he made a voyage, probably of business and pleasure combined, to the city which was at once the home of the philosophers who had so delighted him by their works, and a great centre of trade. The story goes that he was shipwrecked on the coast and lost a valuable cargo of Phœnician purple which he had brought with him. Others say he did not lose his property when he first came to Athens, but was, on the contrary, abounding with wealth. The former version of the story would account to those who questioned the disinterestedness of his conduct, for his having attached himself to a sect that professed to despise riches. On his first arrival, having

read, at a bookseller's stall, a few pages of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, he formed a high opinion of the author of a work which so pleased him, and asked the bookseller where such men were to be found. Crates, the Cynic, happened to pass at the time, and the bookseller replied, "Follow that man." Zeno acted on the advice, placed himself under the Cynic philosopher's instruction, and enrolled himself among his disciples; but he did not long remain so. He became disgusted with the manner of the sect, which he found too gross and unrefined for his taste; though at the same time he highly admired their general principles and spirit. Besides, the activity of his mind forbid him to abstain from all scientific enquiry, and indifference to science was a marked characteristic of the Cynics. He became a disciple of the Megaric doctrine, and thought to learn the nature and causes of things. He attended the school of Stilpo, the chief teacher of practical philosophy among the Megaric succession, who declared that the sovereign good was impassivity (*ἀπάθεια*). Zeno was pleased with the teaching of this school. To Crates, his former master, who, being angry at his desertion, endeavoured to draw him by force from his new teacher, he exclaimed, "You may seize my body, but Stilpo has laid hold of my soul." Becoming tired of this teacher after some years, he turned to Diodorus Cronus, who taught him Dialectics, and to Philo; both of these being contemporary Megarics with Stilpo. He also studied under Xenocrates and Polemo, who were expositors of Platonic philosophy; and from the Academies he learnt much, for we can perceive a germ of Stoicism in the Platonic philosophy. But he found much in their teaching also contradictory to his own theories. When he came to Polemo, that teacher, with an insight into his dispo-

sition, said to him, "I am no stranger to your Phœnician arts, Zeno; I see that you intend slyly to creep into my garden and steal my fruit."

Being now, after twenty years' study, well informed as to what others could teach him, as he was either dissatisfied with all, or moved by ambition, he determined to found a new school. The place chosen for his teaching was a public portico, adorned with the paintings of Polygnotus and other masters. Hence it was called *ποικίλη στοά* (the painted porch); more commonly, as it was the most famous in Athens, it was simply called *στοά*. From this arose the name of the Stoics. As a teacher, Zeno was celebrated for subtle reasoning and for enjoining strict morality of conduct. As a man, his conduct corresponded with his teaching. His doctrines and manner of life teach us that he gathered much from various systems. He gathered from Pythagoras and Plato and Aristotle by the teaching of Xenocrates and Polemo, from the Megaric school by the teaching of Stilpo, Diodorus Cronus, and Philo. Cicero, in his *Academic Questions*, tells us that the doctrines of the old Academy were changed by Zeno only in name. He adhered too to the Cynic doctrines, slightly tinged by subsequent training perhaps, especially by Stilpo's teaching that the perfection of wisdom consisted in impassivity. But he did not share in Cynic grossness, insolence, and affectation. He obtained the applause and love of numerous disciples, among whom was Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedon, Cleanthes, and perhaps Chrysippus; though the last may have been the disciple of Cleanthes only. To these two we must refer again. The Athenians are said so to have respected Zeno that they trusted to his keeping the keys of the citadel. This may be questioned; but there is no reason to doubt

that they honoured him with a golden crown, that they gave him a public burial in the Ceramicus when he died, and erected to his memory a statue of brass. By Cyprians and Sidonians, to whom he was allied by descent, he was also held in reverence. He is described as having been a thin withered man, of dark complexion, and with his neck bent. He preserved his health, though naturally feeble, by abstemious living. His diet, even when honoured by noble guests, as he often was, consisted only of figs, bread, and honey. His brow, furrowed with thought, and his look stern and hard, showed his Cynic education; but, in contrast to his first teachers, he was neat and careful in his dress and person. Frugal in his expenses, he was without avarice. He conversed freely, with poor as with rich. He had only one servant; Seneca says, none at all.

Though he was proverbially sober and chaste, he was assailed by various enemies in his lifetime. Arcesilaus and Carneades of the New Academy, and in his latter years, Epicurus, who disliked the philosophy and pride of Zeno, were his powerful antagonists. Little credit is due, however, to the abuse which passed on both sides. He lived to old age. When he died is matter of doubt. He is said to have been alive in the 130th Olympiad. In his 98th year, as he was leaving his school, he stumbled and fell, and broke one of his fingers in the fall. Pain so affected him that he exclaimed, striking the earth, "Ἐρχομαι, τί μ' ἀβείς; "I come, why dost thou call me?" He went home and strangled himself, about the year B. C. 260.

In trying, at the present day, to estimate the teaching of Zeno, it is necessary for us to consider the circumstances of the age in which he lived and taught, and to remember also that it is difficult to find out how much of

the later Stoic philosophy really came from him. His writings were numerous¹, but they are lost. His teaching seems to have been modified, and sometimes even changed altogether, by Chrysippus. Indeed the later professed disciples of the school seldom went back to the works of the first Stoic. Let us, as well as we can, however, lay hold of the circumstances in which he was placed as a philosopher, and the alterations he introduced.

He began his course at a time of decay in Greece, and when the mind of men was become sceptical as to all things in heaven and earth. Philosophers had so quarrelled with one another's dogmas, and proved one another wrong so often, that men began to doubt if there were any foundation on which to rest. GOD was educating the world for the reception of the great truths of revelation. He did this by showing men how helpless they were in divine things by their own unaided nature, how contradictory their speculations, how far short of the truth the highest attainments of human intellects, how uncertain it was which was truth of the various theories proposed, so that men doubted about all truth. Zeno under these circumstances did a great work in educating the world still further, and preparing it for the great Truth. He was to the people of his day in some degree what Socrates was to the men of his age. He brought back the influence of reason and common sense, rescuing them from the Pyrrhonists, as Socrates did from the Sophists. Like the son of Sophroniscus, also, the founder of the Stoics turned men from mere speculation to action. Socrates taught men to look within themselves, and created a desire to live as became them. He was an ethical reformer, and so turned men away from the guesses of a so-called philo-

¹ Diog. Laert. enumerates and quotes many of his writings.

sophy, and from the scepticism consequent on failure. Victor Cousin has well said, "La philosophie Grecque avait été d'abord une philosophie de la nature; arrivée à sa maturité elle change de caractère et de direction et elle devient une philosophie morale, sociale, humaine. C'est Socrate qui ouvre cette nouvelle ère et qui en représente le caractère en sa personne." Plato followed him in this. His fundamental problem was how man might live like GOD. Aristotle turned men's thoughts back again to physics and metaphysics; and then came a period of systematic scepticism, by which the vanity of the guesses of philosophy was exposed and derided. Zeno and Epicurus, so different in other respects, yet both brought men back to a better mind by teaching them that philosophy was the art of living aright rather than merely thinking aright; the former, because living aright was in accordance with nature,—the latter, because it made men happy, and happiness was the great end to be sought by all¹. Zeno and Epicurus both had thus their share in training men to receive the great Truth of GOD; for they both proved that man of himself can do nothing but conceive of perfections that human nature alone cannot reach: while the believer in divine love and mercy learns to say with St Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I have before intimated that Zeno has been said to have borrowed much of his philosophy from former masters, giving the truths new names. The various schools which at different times prevailed in Greece, amidst much contradiction, yet contained some germs of truth, and therefore so far had some agreement one with

¹ "Le caractère commun de Stoïcisme et de l'Epicurisme est de réduire presque entièrement la philosophie à la morale."—V. COUSIN.

the other. But the truth was cumbered with so much rubbish that it was overpowered and hidden. These various schools of thought endeavoured to grasp the same object from different standpoints, and opposed all others. The Ionics looked around them, and from external objects tried to make one natural law for all subjects and combinations. They wished to reduce all things to accord with a settled physical law. They aimed at discovering a principle, a substance, of which every thing that exists is a combination. The Mathematical school reasoned from within themselves. As Thales looked on the external universe and thence turned within, so Pythagoras reasoned on external objects from within himself, from mental harmonies to physical. Then came the Eleatics, contradicting even reason itself. Zeno, the Eleatic, argued against motion and sensible unity. Parmenides declared that "thought and being are the same;" that "thought and that for which thought exists are one." Indeed the great maxim of the school was *τὰ πάντα ἓν*. They taught that the sensible universe was purely phenomenal and accidental: that it was apparent, not real. The Megaric school, which Zeno Citticus attended soon after he came to Athens, taught somewhat similar doctrines, but in a dialectic form. Their tenets, Pliny tells us, produced in daily life, "*rigorem quendam torvitatemque nature duram et inflexibilem.*" I have already said that Stilpo placed the height of wisdom in impassivity. These doctrines, so various, so contradictory to reason oftentimes, made many men professedly sceptics. Pyrrho and his followers, having proved the impossibility of a science superhuman in its height being reached by unaided man, supposed they had destroyed all knowledge and certainty whatever. The state of Athens then was particularly unsatisfactory. Old

creeds were tottering. The spiritual life of Greece was decaying, as was its national. Men wanted some refuge from the distractions of their minds. Their spiritual nature, their soul, began to exert its power, to speak in tones that would be heard. The mind had been trying to still its craving with the noble but unsatisfying theories of Plato, or the subtleties of Aristotle. But the soul, the inner life, had been uncared for. Now it claimed its share of attention and new schools arose to satisfy, as far as they could, the newly felt longings.

At such a time, Zeno founded his system. When Greece was tottering and falling into ruin, out of materials which I have shown to be so contradictory, he built up a structure which outlasted Greece, and was removed (altered a little, but in the main the same), to the new centre of the civilization and power of the world. His system lasted from his day to the time of Marcus Aurelius. It was embraced by the Romans with eagerness, as being congenial with their nature, before they became corrupted by their unrivalled prosperity. When at length it had done its destined work in the world, it yielded to a mightier and holier influence; leaving, however, its impress on the souls of men, even as, before its own decay, it received some of the rays of divine light which came from heaven with the Son of God, though it did not acknowledge the boon.

It would be beside the purpose of the present essay to enter into all the specialities of the Zenonic doctrines; or to enquire at large, how far Zeno differed from Plato, or how nearly he agreed with Aristotle, in defining the manner of perception by the mind. We need not discuss *τὴν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν*, which Sextus Empiricus alleges to have been held by Zeno and his successors as

the one means of judging true from false; respecting which even Cleanthes and Chrysippus differed¹. An outline of the main features of the system will be sufficient. As I have before said, the first Stoic fixed his thoughts chiefly on moral conduct. His philosophy was eminently practical. It referred to the daily life. In order to stem the torrent of scepticism and sensuality, he taught men the value, the absolute necessity, of virtue. They were to apply his dogmas to their daily experience. They were not to speculate, but to act; not to doubt, but to dare. He taught them also that what Socrates had said was true, that the knowledge and practice of good was virtue and wisdom, that vice was therefore error in its worst form. In order to induce men to conform to this knowledge in their way of life, he unfolded to them how they were related to the universe.

Every rational theory respecting the universe admits of an Absolute Being of some sort. The difference begins, when the relation of the universe with the Absolute Infinite is explained and unfolded. One theory would distinguish the Infinite from the universe, but make him act from a kind of necessity. A second theory would allow him to act with perfect freedom of will. A third theory would make the universe itself to be the Absolute Infinite; and a fourth would insist that the Infinite Being is matter, of which the universe is only a modification. Zeno seems to have taught the third of these theories; though in after writers we see traces of the first. According to him, there existed from all eternity a chaos, a confused mass, *ἕλη πρώτη*, which contained the germ of all

¹ Cleanthes said that it was *τύπωσις ἐν ψυχῇ*, an impression made on the soul, similar to that of a stamp on molten wax, *τοῦ κηροῦ τύπωσις*: while Chrysippus said it was a *ἐτερέλωσις*, or modification of the soul itself.

future things. Gradually, order supervened and creation assumed forms of various kinds, resulting in the universe as it is now. The universe is one whole, which comprises all things; yet contains a passive principle, matter, τὸ πάσχον, and an active principle, τὸ ποιοῦν, which is reason, or GOD. The soul of man is part of this divine nature, and will be reabsorbed into it and lose its individual existence. The Deity in action, if we may so speak, is a certain active æther, or fire, possessed of intelligence. This first gave form to the original chaos, and, being an essential part of the universe, sustains it in order. The overruling power, which seems sometimes in idea to have been separated from the Absolute Being, was εἰμαρμένη, fate, or absolute necessity. To this the universe is subject, both in its material and divine nature. Men return to life totally oblivious of the past, and by the decrees of fate are possessed of a renovated existence, but still in imperfection and subject to sorrow as before. The tenets of the later Stoics may have been tinged with Christian truth on this point, as on others; but they had none of the noble hope of the Christian ἀνάστασις. Indeed, respecting their dogma, Seneca said, "This renewal of life many would reject, were it not that their restored existence is accompanied with utter forgetfulness of the past."

On their physical principles, the moral principles of the Stoics depended. Conceiving themselves to be part of universal nature, that their souls were part of the divinity which actuated matter, they held themselves in some measure to be gods. In human life therefore they must follow nature, of which they formed part. But then this *nature* was not this or that man's natural leaning, but the laws of fate and the universal course of things, from which resulted the unsuitableness of certain courses,

and the excellence of others. To be conformed to the laws of the universe, of which they formed an essential part, was the ultimate end of life. Every man conforming to these laws is happy, notwithstanding external evils. Every man's happiness, then, is in his own power; he is a god to himself in some measure. To live according to his true nature is to live godly; godly life is virtue. This is itself true happiness, independently of pleasure in the common acceptation of the term; because the supreme good is to follow what the law of nature points out as being good. Virtue having its seat in the soul, outward circumstances cannot reach the good man. As he can distinguish good from evil, he is wise; and this suffices for him. External things, forasmuch as they cannot reach him, can neither increase his happiness or cause him misery. Even torture cannot move him, because it cannot reach his inner, true nature. There is no distinction between different virtues as to degree, because they owe their existence to their accordance with nature. All vices are equal in degree, because they run counter to the one law of virtue. These seem to have been the principal features of Zeno's teaching. His morality partook of the evil of its origin. It was essentially artificial. Little regard was paid to real nature in the pursuit of what was called natural law: there was little common sense, oftentimes, in the ideas set forth under pretence of philosophy.

We cannot lose sight of the fact, however, that Stoicism, as it came in contact with Christianity, was a system that owed much to Cleanthes, and still more to Chrysippus. Indeed, regarding the latter, we are told¹ that it was said, *Εὐ μὴ γὰρ ἦν Χρύσιππος, οὐκ ἂν ἦν στοά*. The former was the earnest Stoic; the latter the philosophical and

¹ By Diog. Laert. Lib. vii. c. vii. § v.

dialectic setter forth of the system. Under his hands, in his various and most copious writings, the system was probably not merely developed, but materially modified in some respects, and systematized. Cleanthes has left few records of his opinions behind him: but his Hymn to Jupiter will ever stand as a marvellous memorial of his worth and intellect. It bears strong evidence to the Monotheism of the system which he espoused. It has been a matter of controversy whether the Stoics were monotheists, or polytheists. The hymn to which I have just referred, and to which I shall refer again in another chapter, bears strong evidence, on the face of it, to the belief in one absolute supreme being. Yet other passages in many Stoic writers would seem to convey a different idea. But it will be well for us not to forget that the system was founded on a notion of the divine nature totally different from our conception of a divine being. The monotheism of some of the Stoic writers may have been the result of previous education. The fact may be that one, or two, rose to higher conceptions of the Eternal, than others were privileged with. This may have resulted from their having come of a different stock¹, and

¹ I cannot refrain from quoting here the following excellent remarks on the origin of many Stoic philosophers who had great influence on the system, from the article, "The Ancient Stoics," in the *Oxford Essays* of 1858, by Sir Alexander Grant, Bart.: "If we cast our eyes on a list of the early Stoics and their native places, we cannot avoid noticing how many of this school appear to have come of an Eastern and often of a Semitic stock. Zeno, their founder, was from Cittium, in Cyprus, by all accounts of a Phœnician family. Of his disciples Persæus came also from Cittium; Herillus was from Carthage; Athenodorus from Tarsus; Cleanthes from Assos, in the Troad. The chief disciples of Cleanthes were Iphœrus of the Bosphorus, and Chrysippus from Soli in Cilicia. Chrysippus was succeeded by Zeno of Sidon, and Diogenes of Babylon. The latter taught Antipater of Tarsus; who taught Panælius of Rhodus; who taught Posidonius of Apamea

having had a different early bent—a deeper intuition, as it were, by nature—a purer speculation as to the unseen—than those with which others of the sect were endowed. Those who were of a stock which deified almost all things, might carry their phantasies into the system itself. And indeed it is possible that the same persons, under different influences, may have had rather varied views of the hidden world. The system was one of ethics and not of speculative philosophy. And if Christianity, with all its divine testimonials and influences, does not bring all minds into one accord about all things—even those who are of one school of theology varying in opinion on certain points—how very probable it is that men of the same school of philosophy, with merely the authority of one man, neither possessing, nor claiming a divine mission as founder, should have somewhat different shades of thought. How possible it is that they should, while viewing things from different points of view, be almost inconsistent with themselves. This kind of inconsistency was urged again and again against Chrysippus, the most voluminous writer and chief dialectician of the Stoics. Cleanthes has left few memorials behind him, but his earnest pursuit of knowledge, his struggles to obtain the time and means of study, show the pre-eminent zeal of the man. This zeal was the great motive of his life. Possessed of a strong frame, of great powers of endurance, we are told that he earned by night what enabled him to live in study by day. His determination was so strong that he even made use of potsherds in Syria. There was another Athenodorus, from Cana, in Cilicia; and the early Stoic Archedemus is mentioned by Cicero as belonging to Tarsus. When we notice the frequent connexion of Cilicia with this list of names, we may well be reminded of one who was born at Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and we may be led to ask, is there not something in the mental characteristics of the early Stoics analogous to his?"

and bones as his note-tablets. Such a man would impress his earnestness on the system he espoused. His disciple, Chrysippus, does not seem to have possessed his earnestness of purpose to find out the truth, so much as to establish the system and wage war in its favour against all adversaries. We have remarked that some inconsistencies of doctrine were alleged against him. These appear to have been owing to his desire to reconcile irreconcilable things; as, divine sovereignty with human freedom in any respect:—universal goodness in the ordering of nature with the presence of moral evil in the world. Such subjects must always remain mysteries. He who will explain them will be inconsistent either with himself or with truth.

I shall proceed, in another chapter, to place the system of Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus (that is, Stoicism as it came, in its perfected condition, into contact with divine truth) side by side with the doctrines and precepts taught us in the religion of Christ. We shall see much to admire, much to lament in the sect that wished to raise the individual almost to the level of the deity, and yet showed, by the suicides of the first two of its founders, and by other proofs of human error, the fallacy on which the system was built, that man himself is part of the divinity, and so has only to act on his own influence to rise to perfection.

CHAPTER II.

STOICISM IN COMPARISON WITH CHRISTIANITY.

Ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τῶν Θεῶν.

1 *Ep. ad Cor.* 1. 21.

OUR way is now plain to compare this system of philosophy, which has thus been sketched, with the teaching of Christianity. We shall see, if we place the address of St Paul on Mars' Hill as the foundation of our thought, how much the Christian Apostle had in common with the Stoic teachers. As we go further and ask ourselves the foundations on which the tenets of the religion of Jesus, and those of the philosophy of Zeno, rest, we shall see that herein they widely differ. It will be our work, in order to distinguish the two things to be compared, again to refer to the address to the Athenians: and although an exhaustive commentary on that address would be out of place here; yet the subject seems to claim that we refer to certain parts somewhat minutely.

We cannot fail to be struck with the fact that, first of all, the Apostle wished to draw the minds of his hearers, from themselves and all surrounding objects, to one great and supreme Creator and Governor of the world. This infinite Being he shows to be a distinct personal existence, separate from and superior to all things; yet one who

concerns Himself intimately with the affairs of men. He is not a something vivifying and permeating all things, and forming part of the essence of all things. He is the great first cause of all, and existed before and independently of all. The Apostle implies that none of the guesses of the wisest among his hearers had reached the truth. Yet they had been feeling after Him, as men in the dark try to feel their way to light. They had shown their conviction that there was a great GOD, to the knowledge of whom they were strangers. To Him they had erected an altar calling him by his title of Unknown. Thus St Paul appeals to deep convictions impressed on their minds. At the same time, he does not shrink from showing that GOD does not require men's help, nor love the worship of idolators; though the announcement ran counter to strong prejudices, deeply seated in the minds of his hearers. Men, he told them, are the offspring of GOD. They should therefore render him the intelligent and loving service due from children to a wise and beneficent parent. Now in this great view of truth there was presented to the Stoic much that he could agree with, and yet a great deal opposed to, or in advance of, his preconceived notions. The idea of the philosopher had been of a supreme power which was a principle rather than a person. Looking at himself, in connexion with the universe, he had not thought it impious to consider himself a very part of this divine essence, rather than a creature made by the divine power. Hence he had not a humbling sense of his nothingness in comparison with the Eternal. His philosophy rather gave him a feeling of pride, from the conviction of his individual worth and greatness, as an essential part of the great supreme. He did not see that there was a mighty Being, a self-existent

Person, infinitely removed in power and nature from all that he has made; and that by Him men are cared for and loved, as the members of a vast family, of which he is the Creator and Father. And in saying this, I do not lose sight of the fact that some of the Stoics, at times, seem to have risen superior to their own doctrines, and to have listened to the inner voice which whispered to them of the everlasting Father. Whether it was from Aratus, or Cleanthes, that St Paul quoted, in his address to the Athenians, yet we are forcibly reminded, by his words, of the noble hymn of the second in the Stoic succession, a song of praise almost unparalleled among the writings of heathen antiquity for nobility of utterance and purity of thought. Addressing the chief of the gods, who, he says, has many names and is the omnipotent prince of nature, he sings:

“We are Thy offspring; and of living things we alone have the gift of speech, the image of reason. Therefore I will for ever sing thee and celebrate thy power. All this universe revolving round the earth obeys thee, and willingly pursues its course at thy command. In thine unconquerable hands thou holdest such a minister as the two-edged, flaming, vivid thunderbolt. O King, most high, nothing is done without thee, either in heaven, or on the earth, or in the sea, except what the wicked do in their foolishness. Thou makest order out of confusion, and what is worthless becomes precious in thy sight; for thou hast fitted together good and evil into one, and hast set up one law that is everlasting. But the wicked, unhappy ones, fly from thy law, and though they desire to possess what is good, yet do they not see, nor do they hear the universal law of God. If they would follow it with understanding they might have a good life. But

they go astray, each after his own devices, some vainly ambitious of fame, others turning aside after gain avariciously, others after riotous living and wantonness. Nay, but, O Zeus, giver of all things, who dwellest in dark clouds and rulest over the thunder, deliver men from their foolishness; scatter it from their souls. Grant them also to obtain wisdom, for by wisdom thou dost rightly govern all things; that being honoured we may repay thee with honour, singing thy works without ceasing, as is right for us to do. For there is no greater thing than this, either for mortal men, or for the gods, to sing aright the universal law."

One cannot fail to be struck with the marvellous insight into the holiest truths revealed in these lines. A candid mind must acknowledge with thankfulness how graciously GOD was training the mind of man for the reception of the mystery of godliness unfolded in the Gospel. This fact St Paul acknowledged. He told the Athenians that he was come to bring them further intelligence of a Being, whom they, as the words of some of their poets proved, acknowledged as the Lord and Father of all; whom they were desirous of knowing more fully. Yet if we read the writings of the Stoics we cannot but be saddened by the reflection that such views of God were exceptional; that such desires to know more of him were evanescent, if they existed at all in the minds of some. These feelings were the work of some inner power, not the result of their system of philosophy. The theory of the universe which this system taught was one that did not bow down the human soul in humble obedience and in abasement before the Almighty; but rather caused a sense of pride and self-dependence at variance with this feeling. Hence we meet with such expressions as we find

urged against the sect by Plutarch¹, who informs us that Chrysippus said that “the sage is not less useful to Zeus than Zeus is to the sage.” Similarly, how often are there recurring in various forms such a sentiment as we find, for instance, in Marcus Antoninus², ὅτι ὁ ἐκάστου τοῦς Θεός, καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐρρήηκε. While this was a cause of pride, it was also one of sadness. Each man felt, in a great measure, left to himself. He was an atom broken off from a vast whole, and would, bye and bye, be restored to his former union. But he did not feel in this life that there was an intimate personal loving union with a wise and holy being, who was his personal friend and father.

This brings us to another point in which Christianity and Stoicism were a contrast, yet at first sight not very far removed one from the other. Both allowed and taught an universal law, by which all nature and all events are regulated; but while the one teaches that this universal law is the wisdom of an infallible Lord constantly superintending and ordering all things well, the other held that all things were arranged according to the decrees of a blind and unalterable fate. The Apostle of Christ taught the Athenians that there was no truth in the wild speculation of the Epicurean, who held that all things happened by chance: but he brought before them, as a ruler, a being full of intelligence and constantly superintending the course of events; not some inexorable fate. He told them of one who, having created of one blood all nations that dwell on the face of the earth, arranged the period of their existence and fixed the bounds of their habitation. And He did this all in wisdom, with the intention that all men might seek Him, and find their happiness in the knowledge of His goodness and by participating in His

¹ *Adversus Stoicos*, 33.

² Lib. XII. Cap. 26, collat. queq. v. 10.

love. Contrasted with this was the doctrine of fatalism which the Stoics taught. All things proceeded, they said, from destiny, which was omnipotent. To its decrees both gods and men must bow. From its power not the highest even were exempt. This destiny was "the law according to which what has been, has been; what is, is; and what shall be, shall be!" Instead of an overruling Providence constantly superintending the affairs of the universe, there was a law binding the highest God, as well as the lowest in creation. So we read in Seneca (*De Providentia*, cap. VI.): "Eadem necessitas et Deos alligat. Irrevocabilis divina pariter atque humana cursus vehit. Ille ipse omnium conditor ac rector scripsit quidem Fata, sed sequitur. Semper paret, semel jussit." The Stoical doctrine then was that GOD himself is a servant to the necessity of the material scheme; that He is bound by eternal decrees; that he could not have created an atom different from what it is, and cannot change anything merely according to what He may will in the future. So Cicero quotes a Greek poet, and puts these words as his meaning, "Quod fore paratum est, id summum exuperat Jovem." Indeed the first Stoics adopted this fatalism as their belief, and seem to have held firmly as a truth, what Herodotus states, *δοῦλος Θεὸς ἀνάγκης*. We shall see that this necessitarian scheme had an influence, of no small extent, on certain parts of the Church of Christ in after ages.

I must proceed here, however, to point out another aspect in which, though they seem to have had the same end before them, namely, the raising man to moral excellence, yet Christianity and Stoicism differed entirely—the means whereby human perfection is to be attained. Chris-

¹ Plutarch, *De Placitis Philosophorum*, I. 28.

tianity pointed men to the way of humility and self-renunciation. Stoicism pointed them to the perfectibility of man by his own exertion, without trusting on divine aid. St Paul preached Jesus to the enquiring minds of Greece; Jesus, as a Saviour:—Jesus, as an Example to those who would attain holiness of life,—as a pattern of a perfect man. Now no lesson is more plainly taught in the Gospel of Christ, than the truth that penitence and humility are the necessary precursors of holiness and true glory. The Stoic would look on repentance as a confession that he had failed in his philosophy. It was no part of his scheme to lower himself in order to rise. Much less had he any idea of trusting in another's merits, and in another's self-sacrifice, in order to have any chance at all of becoming perfect for ever. But then, his idea of perfection was perfection as a philosopher in this life. The glorious hope of an eternal future, in which he would take part as a purified being, freed from all sin and defilement by the power of the omnipotent Father, and by the furnace through which he had to pass in struggling during a lifetime with temptation and with affliction, was no part of his creed. Like the Christian, he had a lofty purpose, but his purpose was confined to this life; to be conformed to the course of nature; to rise by his philosophy to a region of indifference about outward things. His end was attained, he thought, if he subdued his own nature; if he learnt to bear, without flinching, whatever might cause him pain or inconvenience; if what men commonly call natural feelings and affections were done violence to, without compunction, that he might thus attain to conformity with the rule of universal nature. All this he did, or professed to do, of his own power. He did not require a power from on high, to forgive his errors, and to give him

strength to be virtuous. Rather, he was to be virtuous as a means of making GOD propitious. Just as Seneca says¹, "Inter bonos viros ac Deum amicitia est, conciliante virtute." So that between this system and the Christian doctrine, though they both professedly inculcate a life of virtue and self-denial, there is an impassable gulph. Stoicism raised pride in human excellence into a part of its teaching. Indeed, the Stoic was, as has been justly observed, a Pharisee among heathens. He prided himself upon being not as others around him; upon being better and more exalted in virtue than they; and therefore upon being nearer GOD, and more worthy of the love of the Most High. Now Christianity goes on exactly the opposite principle to this. She teaches men that they must obtain the divine favour and aid, not by means of their innate superiority, but as the means of rising to holiness and virtue. We cannot take any steps at all in true moral excellence, till we are possessed of the love of GOD. This is the foundation of Christian truth. The divine life must have its beginning in repentance and renunciation of self, in deep humility and consequent trust in divine aid, given to all who ask it for Christ's sake; because GOD is love. We shall see, nevertheless, that the views of many Christians have been tinged with the Stoic belief, that by self-mortification, and even by trying to uproot natural affections and feelings, planted in man by GOD himself for wise ends, the human soul renders herself worthier of the friendship of heaven. We hear St Paul, however, setting before the Athenians this great duty, first of all, that they feel and acknowledge themselves in error, in order to amendment of life; and that they trust in the merits of another, in order to atone for their own de-

¹ *De Providentia*, Cap. 1.

merits. "He commandeth all men everywhere to repent," This was the testimony of the messenger of the true God. From the mention of the resurrection of Jesus, immediately after this, and the manner in which that resurrection is spoken of, it would seem that St Paul gave the Athenians some particulars of the Redeemer's life and death either on Mars' Hill or in the Agora. Now the life of Christ would teach the Stoic, that true philosophy is not trying to eradicate human feelings and instincts, but controlling them. Nothing is so striking and so lovely in the divine life of the Son of God, as its *humanity*. He is a "man with men," in every sense of the word. He is not ashamed to show ordinary human feelings. He was truly noble, yet not the less meek and lowly. He was truly brave, yet did not think it unworthy of himself to show how intensely he suffered. He was truly resigned to the will of Heaven, yet thought it not contrary to right to express his sorrow when he was bereaved. He dignified human sympathy by even weeping with those that wept. How incomparably does this true nobility rise above the Stoic apathy, which condemned such feelings, and led Seneca, in an Epistle to Lucilius, to deprecate the indulgence of grief for a friend's loss. "I myself," says he, "wept so immoderately for Annæus Serenus,...that I must, against my will, be reckoned among the examples of those whom grief has overcome. Nevertheless, to-day I condemn my error¹." The last days of our Saviour's life gave the world a perfect example of true dignity; yet, we can see, he counted it only fit, as a man, to show that he felt keenly reproach and pain. But it was the Saviour's

¹ "Hæc tibi scribo, is qui Annæum Serenum, carissimum mihi, tam immodice flevi, ut quod minime velim, inter exempla sim eorum quos dolor vicit: hodie tamen factum meum damno," &c.—*Ep.* LXIII. 12.

death, and the reason for which his death was deemed necessary by eternal justice, that took away for ever any foundation for Stoic pride and self-dependence. Nothing less than this was sufficient to atone for human error, and make it possible for man to obtain pardon, and be restored to the divine image which he had lost. It is thus he can become truly wise and lead a life worthy of himself as a man. And by the divine aid he will be able to rise to greater heights of self-control, than any to which pride of philosophy could raise him. The Stoics claimed for the wise man that he is infallible and impassive, that he is unmoved by outward events, with his mind ever in an even state¹. That which the Stoic dreamed of, the Christian may become, but in a spiritual and far higher sense. There were those in the early Church, and there have been many since, who showed themselves philosophers indeed, "in honour and dishonour, in evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, they lived; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things²." The great Christian Apostle was able to say, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me³." In this last sentence is the real secret of all true heroism. Christ is the source of true philosophy. He alone gives true strength of mind: He can render the believer omnipotent for good. "I can do all things," says

¹ *φασί δὲ καὶ ἀπαθῆ εἶναι τὸν σοφόν*, κ. τ. λ.—Diog. Laert. vi. i. 64.

² 2 Cor. vi. 8—10.

³ Phil. iv. 11—13.

the Apostle ; the power is from above, however. Without God, the strongest becomes a child. This fact, that God prepares the heart for virtue, and gives us strength to resist evil and do good, takes away all cause for boasting from even the most advanced in moral excellence. Whereas, the Stoic system, beginning and ending in self, with nothing else to trust to, caused man to become proud of his supposed advances. He thought even to become equal to the Most High. Indeed, so far was this feeling carried, that we have from a disciple of the system, such a boastful and (to our feeling) profane assertion as the following. Seneca, writing to Lucilius, after persuading him to diligently cultivate philosophy, says, then "Thou wilt excel all men, nor will the gods much excel thee...To the wise man his own age lies open, as much as every age to God. There is one respect in which the wise man may be said to excel God; the latter is fearless by the gift of nature, the wise man by his own merits¹."

We have one other point that requires attention in connexion with St Paul's speech, and that is the future state. He laid before the Stoics, who heard him, the great fact of the existence of men, as individuals, after death; and not merely their existence, but their having to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, after being raised from the dead. The whole of this was foreign to the Stoic system. They had nothing, in their wisest speculations, approaching to these grand ideas, which the Apostle unfolded to them as divine mysteries. The early Stoics held that they would, after death, return to union with the universe. Their plan for getting rid of evil and regenerating all

¹ "Omnes mortales multo anteedes, non multo te dii anteedent...Tantum sapienti sua, quantum Deo, omnis ætas patet. Est aliquid, quo sapiens anteedat Deum: ille naturæ beneficio non timet, suo sapiens."—*Ep.* LIII.

things, was one of periodical conflagrations. The Christian *anastasis* was something which unaided human intellects could not reach. Moreover, the future judgment of men, if it could have been received by the Stoics, would have modified their system in many respects. They would have had different views of the deity, if they had felt that, after all, they were to stand at his bar, to give an account of their words and works. They would have had a different view of life and of death, if they had known that when they ceased to live on earth, they would begin a new existence, in which they would be happy, or miserable, according as they submitted to, or rejected the will of GOD here. For the want of this great truth, their system was shortsighted and, in some respects, evil. If death were the end of man, as a separate person, why should it not be also held to be under the control of each? In fact the great lesson to learn was to become master in the last act, as well as in others. The system was not a training for immortality. This life was the scene of battle and of victory, to the Stoic. To the Christian, this life is the battle-field. He is contented to wait till another state of existence, for victory and peace. He can understand the meaning of the words of St Paul, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable¹." With the hope of the future before him, however, he is content to suffer. He can bear suffering with fortitude, and can even triumph over it. For him, "this light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while he looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The restoration of the body and soul to a state of perfection opens before the mind a treasure in future,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 19.

for which present poverty is lightly borne. But to this glorious hope the Stoic was a stranger. He lived for this world. His sufferings, his trials, must all be borne unflinchingly, because only here would he bear them; only here would he, an offshoot of the deity, dwell as such. Therefore it was beneath him to say he suffered. He lived for himself, to raise himself above others. He must despise what lowered his existence. He must trample on pain. When the conflict was too severe, then the end also was at his command, and he might leave a scene which he could adorn no longer. Then there was an end to the whole matter¹. The sublime doctrines of the Gospel, however, which open a splendid future to the virtuous soul, teach men a far different lesson. Moreover, the certainty of a just judgment leads them to be careful, how they pass through a scene, which is to them the only state of probation. They know that the future will be pregnant with evil to them, if they neglect, or abuse the time given to them for preparation. They look forward with no less certainty to a reward for well doing. They are sure there will be no mistake in the final adjudication. All these thoughts tend one way; to the promotion of holiness of life, and to those acts of kindness and charity, which are evidences of the love of GOD in the heart. These acts the great Judge has promised to reward, as though they were done to Himself. He says that, in that

¹ On this part the following words of Cousin are worthy of attention :
 “Le Stoïcisme est essentiellement solitaire : c'est le soin exclusif de son âme, sans regard à celles des autres ; et comme la seule chose importante est la pureté de l'âme, quand cette pureté est trop en péril, quand on désespère d'être victorieux dans la lutte, on peut la terminer, comme l'a terminée Caton. Ainsi la philosophie n'est plus qu'un apprentissage de la mort, et non de la vie ; elle tend à la mort par son image, l'apathie et l'ataraxie, et se resout définitivement en son égoïsme sublime.”

day, he will declare respecting each of these deeds of love, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me¹."

I have thus endeavoured to point out the distinctive features of the two systems, where they came in contact. In the Christian religion, there is presented to the mind a GOD of holiness and purity and almighty power, a being who rules over all and works in man's heart. In the Stoic philosophy, the Supreme Being is rather an idea than a person; a part of the universe, just as the soul is part of man. In the Christian system, the Lord of all is represented as constantly exercising a wise and judicious superintendence over all creation, blessing His works, and with unerring foresight, arranging all things by His providence. In the Stoic system, all things in heaven and earth were the subjects of an unalterable fate. Christianity teaches men that moral excellence is to be attained only by divine aid, and this aid is given to those who are penitent and humble; who seek GOD first, and show their love to Him in their lives. Stoicism taught that moral excellence was attainable by man alone, and that he might, unaided, raise himself to perfection, and make himself worthy of GOD. In the religion of Jesus, men are furnished with glorious views of a future life. The world to come is presented to the faithful, as a reward for virtue and piety. The resurrection of man, and the final setting in order of the universe at the great day of regeneration, when just judgment will be passed on good and evil angels and men, are held out as the great facts of future ages. In the Stoic philosophy, there is no future personal

¹ St Matt. xxv. 40.

existence promised ; and the regeneration is to be by fire consuming, at certain cycles, the works of the universe. Christianity had an influence on the later Stoics. Wherever we see, in the works of these philosophers, clearer views of God, His providence, His work in the spirit ; wherever we see clearer perceptions of human depravity and need for divine aid ; where we perceive dawnings of hope of a future life for the soul ; there we see, if not the direct influence, yet at least the spirit of Christianity making itself felt. On the other hand, if, in the Christian church, we see the necessitarian theory taking possession of men's belief ; if we perceive human pride asserting itself in raising moral virtues, or works of self-denial, or self-imposed austerities, into the place of Christ's sacrifice, as the means of obtaining the divine favour ; we shall not be mistaken, if we say that, in these respects, the Church has borrowed from the Porch, and departed from the simplicity of the Gospel.

Before I proceed to investigate the influence which the two systems have exerted one on the other, I purpose to devote a few pages to the consideration of the relative influence they have exerted on the world at large. Let us compare what Stoic philosophy did for those nations among whom it exerted an influence, with the effect which Christianity has wrought on those who have embraced its tenets and acknowledged its power. If we look at Athens, and ask ourselves what result the doctrines of the Stoic school had there, we shall find that, after centuries of effort, very little was effected for the benefit of our race. Doubtless a strong impression was made on certain minds ; but, as far as the masses were concerned, the influence of the sect seems to have been small, and the beneficial result very insignificant indeed. With regard to the adherents

of the system, we have little trustworthy information as to whether, in private life, their practice corresponded with their public professions. One is almost led, from their declarations that their philosophy raised them above the law of conduct binding the common herd, to suppose that, for some, the profession of being a Stoic was only a cloak. There seem to have been among them, men of similar feelings to the Antinomians of the Christian church. If a man were a philosopher, he was out of the ordinary pale, and might be almost what else he liked. The early Stoics were doubtless men of purer life than the masses around them, yet, from the remarks of those who have written very favourably of them, one is led to perceive that they were looked on more as professors of a system of excellent ethical philosophy, than as strict adherents to its precepts. Their principles were considered rather as intellectual, than heartfelt. As an instance, we may notice what Diogenes Laertes reports concerning Zeno. He says¹, “*Παιδαρίοις τε ἐχρήτο σπανίως, ἅπαξ ἢ δὶς που παιδισκαρίω τινὶ, ἵνα μὴ δοκοίη μισογύνης εἶναι.*” Now one must see that, if the record be true, then the purity of the Stoic was not thorough, though he was better than others perhaps. If the report be a myth, we perceive that in the writer’s opinion, gathered probably from observation, the precepts of philosophy were not so very binding, but that a professor of it might be none the less esteemed as a philosopher, for acting, now and then, as an ordinary man. He evidently thought that Zeno was not to be blamed, but rather commended, for showing, occasionally, that he did not wish to be thought too austere. The dogmas of this philosophy were public professions,

¹ Lib. VII. c. I. §. XIII.

but did not alter the heart, and control the whole life. It was powerless, as a moral lever, to raise the people. The masses remained idolatrous and deeply superstitious. Indeed the philosophers themselves conformed to the prevailing worship, and were not free from the prevailing superstitions. As ethical reformers, they seemed to have despaired of raising men, except in small numbers, to a better state. We look in vain for evidences of a wide-spread philanthropy. In fact, the system was one of egoism; and beginning in self, inculcating trust on self, it had no wide grasp of the duty and love, which men owe one to another, as children of a common Father.

If from Athens we go to Rome, and notice the effect produced when Stoic influence was at its highest point and most wide-spread, we are saddened by a similar absence of evidence that it effected any great amelioration. We are led to see the truth of Niebuhr's remarks¹ respecting the state of the community, upon which Stoicism had exerted all its power. "Viewed as a national, or political history, the history of the Roman Empire is sad and discouraging in the last degree. We see that things had come to a point, at which no earthly power could afford any help: we now have the development of dead powers instead of that of a vital energy." The age of the greatest fame of Rome, when Augustus ruled her destinies, and her power and wealth and wide-spread influence were so vast, was not a happy one for the people. There was no fellowship between men, uniting them in feeling and for mutual benefit. Perhaps half the people were slaves and degraded, in the midst of surrounding splendour. Arnold² has well described the moral deficiency;

¹ Lect. v. 194.

² *Later Roman Commonwealth*, II. 398.

“There were no public hospitals, no institutions for the relief of the infirm and poor, no societies for the improvement of the condition of mankind, from motives of charity. Nothing was done to promote the instruction of the lower classes, nothing to mitigate the evils of domestic slavery. Charity and general philanthropy were so little regarded as duties, that it requires a very extensive acquaintance with the literature of the time to find any allusion to them.” As long as it had an influence, Stoicism taught men rather to bear the evils of life with indifference, than to get rid of the evils that were in the world, by schemes for the social happiness and moral elevation of the people. So that superstition and grossest idolatry were rampant, and vices of the most lamentable kind were indulged in, almost without producing any shame.

In proportion as Christianity won its way, these things disappeared; and in proportion to the purity of the Christian religion, and its freedom from admixture of extraneous principles and influences, has been its success in raising a fallen world. Whatever power Stoicism possessed for good, the religion of Jesus also possessed, and in a higher degree. In addition, it brought into play enormous and superhuman resources; high and holy motives; and doctrines which originated in heaven, and partook of the purity of their origin. The consequence has been marvellous. The progress of this religion in face of opposition was such as to afford ample proof of its divinity. And as it progressed, it proved its mission by raising the fallen, blessing the wretched, despising not even the most lowly, seeking the most sinful; that by miracles wrought in the souls of men, it might show that it was fitted for the high mission which it claimed. Men

were no longer left to grovel in idolatry, and consequent imitation in their lives of the conduct of the unholy beings whom they worshipped. Like St Paul on Mars' Hill, every true herald of the cross has set before men a holy God, as the sole object of the reverence and obedience of their hearts. They have been taught love to GOD, as the highest duty of the creature; and as a consequence, love to their fellow-men. Mutual kindness and charity have done marvels, in removing the various calamities of this life; and where these have been irremovable, the efforts of the disciples of the Crucified One have been put forth, to make them weigh less heavily on the sons of affliction. The poor have been cared and provided for. To them the gospel of mercy has been preached, and they have been taught to have faith in a future life, in which the wrongs of this will be set right. Christianity has brought civilization in its train. The marvellous progress of men in these latter days may be traced to the exalting influence of this noble creed, which builds again the ruins of the human soul; and has nothing less for its object than man's restoration to the image of GOD. No one that reflects on the wonders it has produced; on the efforts it has put forth for the regeneration of our race; on the energy it still displays, in trying to give blessing and help to those who sit in darkness, and are in need; on the success that has crowned the efforts of the past, inciting to fresh ones for the future; can fail to see the finger of GOD. We gratefully acknowledge that all praise is due to Him for the gift of such grand means for raising a fallen world; for a system, which "has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come."

By these remarks, I am far from wishing to imply that there is not much to lament in Christian countries, or that

since Christianity has been acknowledged and professed by a great part of the world, she has succeeded in making even the noblest of her sons faultless and sinless. Only one such man has ever trod our earth, and He was more than man, and shewed His divinity in the midst of human weakness and pain. All others are liable to error. And we must confess that, when we see the evils still remaining in Christendom, there is room for sadness; but there is none for despair.

Moreover, no one would depreciate the Stoic system, because its disciples did not act up to its precepts, in every respect. Epictetus declared¹, there were many who were philosophers in name, far from being so in deed; and Seneca assures us², that Stoic philosophers "did not say how they themselves lived, but how men ought to live." Yet I quite agree with Gataker³, that there were well-attested instances, in almost every age, of adherents to the system, who, by their faithful observance of their principles in the conduct of their lives, might put to shame many professors of Christianity, and cause them to blush.

But I have been speaking of the effect of each system, as a whole, on nations and masses of men, and on individuals. And we see that Stoicism, after cen-

¹ Ἄνευ τοῦ πράττειν, μέχρι τοῦ λέγειν. Quoted by Gataker from Gellius, *Noct. Attic.* 17, 19.

² "Non dicebant, quemadmodum ipsi viverent, sed quemadmodum vivendum esset."—Seneca, *de Vit. Beat.* c. 18.

³ The words of Gataker, in the Preface to his *Marc. Anton.*, are: "Veruntamen ex eis qui sectæ hujus in disciplinam serio seduloque sese dederunt, per singulas quasque fere ætates reperti sunt, qui fide dignorum scriptorum suffragiis consensu consono attestantibus, ita dogmata sua factis consentaneis consignata, decretaque vitæ instituto æquabili fere comprobata exhibuerint, ut nominis etiam Christiani professoribus plerisque pudorem incutere, ruborem suffundere merito queant."

turies of effort, proved itself unequal to the regeneration of men, and as completely failed as any other merely human scheme, in this respect. We should keep in mind, that systems are not relatively superior in proportion to the adherence of their disciples. Unwavering obedience, on the part of certain of its followers, does not necessarily imply the excellence of a system; it simply proves that some of its disciples are faithful. On the contrary, the excellence of a system is seen, when it does a great work and raises a fallen world, in spite of the apparent inadequacy of its means; in spite of the lukewarm attachment and want of consistency, often displayed by its followers. In this way, the more than human perfection of Christianity has been shown. If her children had been as faithful to her, as many of the Stoics were to their school, she had, ere this, made our earth a paradise. Even as things are, notwithstanding the introduction, into her midst, of doctrines and practices, foreign to her in origin, and opposed to her principles; notwithstanding the many shortcomings of her friends, and the unceasing opposition of her foes, and the resistance ever offered by the pride of man's heart to her humbling doctrines; she carries on her glorious work successfully, and proves herself equal to her destined purpose.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON STOICISM.

“Victi victoribus leges dederunt.”

SEN. quoted by St Aug. in *Civ. Dei*.

THERE is nothing unreasonable in the supposition, that when two systems such as Christianity and Stoicism came into contact, they would naturally exert considerable influence, one on the other. We perceive, if we trace the history of the religion of Christ, that it felt the effect of the philosophy of the Gentile world, and especially of the Greeks, in various ways. Platonism proved itself so powerful as to cause the rise of the Alexandrian school, with its vast influences. In other cases, we see Christianity so strongly impregnated with notions drawn from heathenism, that various baneful heresies arose, which sometimes threatened the very existence of the truth. Tertullian¹ complains that “philosophy furnished the arms and the subjects of heresy.” During the middle of the life of Christianity in the world, so evil were the results, to the Church, of principles external to it in origin, and antagonistic to purity, that we look back on those centuries with deep sorrow, and call them “the dark ages.”

¹ *Præc. Her.* 7.

Among other systems of philosophy Stoicism made itself felt by the Church of Christ. In allusion to this Tertullian says, "Our training is from the porch of Solomon." Again he says, "Let those take care who help forward a Stoic, a Platonic, a dialectic Christianity. We have no need of curious enquiries about the coming of Jesus Christ, nor of investigation after the gospel." But though Stoic philosophy made itself felt, yet, being practical rather than speculative, it did not produce a distinct school, such as resulted from the Academic system. Still it left its impress on after times, as I shall endeavour to point out in future pages.

Christianity also made a great impression on Stoicism, while the latter continued to exist as a system of philosophy. We do not find its power and principles acknowledged in the writings of any of the school. Yet, from certain expressions in Epictetus and M. Antoninus, we perceive they were fully aware how nearly allied Christian virtue was to their high aspirations; how closely those who were disciples of Christ approached to their own standard. But they were displeased at the principles from which the Christian excellence proceeded; and probably also at the living protest which these men afforded against the philosophy which could not produce results such as their religion produced among the people. So Epictetus¹ in B. IV. Ch. 7, speaking of fearlessness, allows by implication that it was possessed by the Galileans, but puts down their fortitude to *habit*, and commends much more that coming from reason. So Antoninus² allows that Christians are ready to

¹ Εἶτα ὑπὸ μανίας μὲν δύναται τις οὕτω διατεθῆναι πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ ὑπὸ ἔθους οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι ὑπὸ λόγου δὲ, κ.τ.λ.

² Τὸ δὲ ἔτοιμον τοῦτο, ἵνα ἀπὸ ἰδικῆς κρίσεως ἐρχηται. μὴ κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν, ὡς οἱ Χριστιανοί, ἀλλὰ λελογισμένως, κ.τ.λ.—*Com.* XI. 3.

die, but says that, whereas this readiness should proceed from personal judgment, resulting from due calculation, the readiness of the Christians to die came of mere obstinacy. In other words, they had so strong a faith in the gospel that they would rather die than give it up. Such passing notices as these show decisively that the religion of Jesus was doing a great work of which philosophers became jealous. This work was of the same kind as that which the Stoics professed to have as their object; yet what they failed in achieving was wrought out successfully on principles which they despised. They were vexed and annoyed, and would naturally ignore any influence which the Christian doctrines might have in modifying their opinions. I shall proceed to point out in this chapter that this influence was nevertheless remarkable. What changes occurred in the views of the sect at Athens we do not know: there are no records of the Stoics at Athens at that time. The only writers to whom we can refer, in order to come to any correct estimate as to the development of thought among the sect, of a nature to show Christian influence, were Romans. They are only three in number—Seneca, Epicetetus, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. I shall refer to the writings of each in this, their proper order.

When I speak of Seneca as a Roman, I do not forget that he was born in Spain; but being a Roman in thought and feeling, as well as by residence and by birth-right, he is rightly reckoned among Roman philosophers. It is not my business, however, to give even a sketch of his life; nor shall I refer to his voluminous writings, except as they show the influence which Christianity seems to have exerted on the Stoic sect in his day. He lived at the same time that St Paul laboured for the truth, and there have been traditions of his having been taught the pre-

cepts of the Gospel by the great Apostle himself. These are probably without foundation, but their being so does not prove that Christianity had no influence on his speculations. Their very existence serves to show how apparent that influence was to various readers, so as at least to make the intercourse between the Apostle and the philosopher seem to them not an improbable thing. We must remember that Judaism was the pioneer of Christianity at Rome, as well as elsewhere. Possessed of much divine truth, it necessarily exerted considerable influence there on the world of thought; and so prepared the way for the fuller light which the gospel furnished. Christianity also had now a firm hold on many. Its influence, as we learn from different sources, was beginning to be felt in various ways, and even in the imperial court were found some who acknowledged its power. It is likely therefore that Seneca would study its teaching, or at least would be moved by its presence in the very centre of the world, to listen, even though without conscious sympathy, perhaps with contempt, to what was told him respecting its tenets. We see in his writings that he had many clearer views of truth than the Stoics who preceded him¹. For

¹ The remarks of Gataker with reference to Seneca are so apposite that I quote them here: "Certe quæcunque Dominus ipse Christus in concionibus collationibusque suis Historiæ Evangelicæ insertis, intextisque; de mali cogitatione etiam abstinentia; de affectibus vitiosis suppressendis; de sermone otioso non insuper habendo; de animo cumprimis excolendo, et ad imaginem divinam effingendo; de beneficentiâ simplicissime exhibendâ; de injuriis æquanimitè ferendis; de admonitione et increpatione cum moderatione cautioneque accuratâ exercendis; de rebus quibuslibet, adeoque vitâ ipsâ, ubi res ratioque poscit, nihili habendis; de aliis denique plerisque pietatis, caritatis, æquitatis, humanitatis officiis quam exquisitissime obendis exequendisque, præcepta dedit; apud nostrum hunc eadem, perinde ac si illa lectitasset ipse, in dissertationum commentationumque congerie inspersa passim, nec sine vehementia et vivacitate insigni, quæ in præcordia ipsa

instance, with reference to the Deity, his providential care avowed as being exercised over men not merely collectively but individually; his sovereignty, his power and glory, not as a mere part of universal nature, but as a being, fully set forth; his work in the human soul recognized as a truth and a necessity for man's well-doing; these and various other enlarged views of the Lord of all show a vast advance on past Stoicism in the direction of Christian doctrine. Then again, with regard to man, we perceive how clearly he saw that necessary and primary truth, that man is by nature depraved and can only lead a holy life by divine aid. We notice also how he inculcates the duty of love to God and to man, of forgiveness of injuries and of the cultivation of other graces, which have a Christian likeness, if not a Christian parentage. It is doubtless true that these doctrines were the strong and approved opinions of one who was, as Gataker calls him, "homo exterior, nec nomini Christiano favens:" but when we read, "cum nec mysterii nostri gnarus esset, nec fidei rationes assequeretur," the words must be taken in a qualified sense. Experimentally, he was ignorant of the glorious mystery of redemption; but of the religion of Jesus, and of Judaism which prepared the Roman mind for Christianity, he was at least informed, if only by rumour. And we see, from the effect of the religion of the cross at the present time, that its doctrines of purity and mercy may mightily influence even those nations and individuals who do not acknowledge its authority.

Let us look at some of the passages in the writings of Seneca, which serve to bear out the views above ex-

penitibus penetret, atque in animo infixos altius relinquat aculeos inculcata subinde, Lector quivis sedulus advertet, ingenuus agnoscet."—*Proel. Marc. Ant. Com.*

pressed; and first, with regard to the divine being and his care of man, we find such expressions as the following: "GOD comes to men, yea, what is nearer still, he comes into men¹. No mind is good without GOD. Seeds (of good) are sown in human bodies. And if a good husbandman receives them, there are produced fruits like the original and equal to those from which they sprung: but if a bad husbandman receives them, the ground, not being otherwise than barren and marshy, kills them and thence creates rubbish instead of fruit." One cannot fail to be struck with the likeness this passage bears to our Lord's words recorded by St Matt. xiii. 18—23. Again, in the 41st Epistle, we read, "God is near thee, is with thee, is within. So I say, Lucilius, the holy spirit has his seat within us, the observer and guard of the evil and the good of our lives: as he is treated by us, so he treats us." Intimately connected with this view of an indwelling God, was the theory which Seneca held, that man could not be good and perfect without His help. The view which he had of human weakness by nature and of the depravity of the human heart was a great advance in the direction of Christian truth, from Stoic principles, which held so much to the idea of man's unaided progress to perfection. Yet the views which Seneca entertained were not unmixed with the old speculations. Indeed his mind was evidently struggling to reconcile old doctrines with some new light, which was dawning on his mind. Hence he is often apparently contradictory, as men are when in a transition state, or rather when they are endeavouring to graft doc-

¹ "Deus ad homines venit, immo, quod proprius est, in homines venit," &c.—Sen. *Ep.* 73.

I do not think it necessary to give the original of these passages, except in special cases.

trines of a totally different type on the old stock. We see, in the passage first quoted above, how plainly he says that no mind is good without GOD, who sows the seeds of all virtues in the soul, and by his blessing enables a willing heart to bring forth fruit. Again, in the 41st Epistle, he writes, "There is no good man without GOD. Can any one rise above fortune, unless aided by Him? He inspires grand and upright designs. In every good man he dwells." But he adds, as if to show the struggle going on within, that He whom he had in the former part of the letter called the holy spirit was to him, as to the Athenians, an "unknown GOD." "Quis deus incertum est," he says of the deity who dwells in every good man. With regard to man's moral nature requiring the aid of one who is strong enough to purify it, he speaks very clearly. He sees the need of a change from evil to good in order to become what man should be. Yet he does not mention the need of pardon for sin that is past. In *De Clementia*, I. 6, this passage occurs: "Reflect, in this city, in which a crowd pours through the widest street without intermission, and like a rapid stream dashes against any obstacle that impedes its course; where accommodation is required in three theatres at the same time; where is consumed whatever grain is produced in all lands; what a solitude and desolation were the result, if nothing were left but what a severe judge would pronounce free from fault." A little further on he adds, "We have all sinned¹; some deeply, others more lightly; some from design, others driven by chance impulses, or borne away by wickedness not their own; others of us have shown little steadfastness in sticking to our good

¹ "Peccavimus omnes, alii graviora, alii leviora," &c.

resolutions, and, against our will and in spite of our endeavours, have lost our innocence. Nor is it only that we have erred, but to the end of time we shall err¹. Even if any one has so purified his mind that nothing can shake, or seduce him any more, yet he has arrived at innocence through sin." These are remarkable expressions, and show how much advanced the views of the philosopher were in the direction of the truth, even though it was by the path of self-humiliation. The writer of the article on "The Ancient Stoics" in the Oxford Essays, remarks: "Those who have been anxious to obtain the authority of Aristotle for the doctrine of human corruption, will find on consideration that this idea, which was historically impossible for a Greek of the fourth century B.C., came with sufficient vividness into the consciousness of persons in the position of Seneca; but not till much later than Aristotle, probably not before the beginning of our era. On the other hand, we are not to fancy that the thoughts of Seneca received any influence from Christianity." With this last sentence I do not agree. It seems scarcely reasonable to ignore the power of a system which we know was already exercising attention at Rome; a system of high and holy principles, presenting much for the Stoic mind to admire. That similar thoughts struck Paul the Apostle, and Seneca the philosopher, at the same era, is certain. It was a remarkable coincidence, but it was something more. We know that those thoughts in the mind of the converted Jew were the result, not of self-reflection, nor of communing with his own heart, merely, but of a power outside of himself, more mighty and convincing than any inner influence; but still, acting

¹ "Nec delinquimus tantum sed usque ad extremum ævi delinquemus."

on a strong mind, already trained in many uncommon and elevating doctrines by Judaism ; which had also been training the Roman world to look for something purer and higher than the superstition and vain guesses at truth, which were so prevalent heretofore. When Christianity supplied all the demands of the soul, and gave to the Roman world a divine system of doctrine and morals, it soon commanded the attention which it deserved¹. This being so, there would seem to be no reason for saying that it had no influence direct or indirect on the mind of the Stoic philosopher : especially when, on the very face of it, the inconsistency of his writings shows that he owed his conclusions to two distinct sources ; one, the old Stoic system—the other, a new class of thoughts which might at least be supposed to have a Christian origin. There is no doubt that, among the Romans at the time of Seneca, Christianity was not distinguished from Judaism, but reckoned a part of that system. We see, in the 95th letter of the philosopher, plain reference to Jewish forms and prohibitions. The word sabbath² is used ; and the whole of the expressions show how conversant the writer must have been with the tenets of the people brought from Palestine. We are struck too with the lessons of piety and charity which he deduces from his reflections. He sets forth the necessity of having, as the end of our endeavours, the attainment of the highest good ; and to

¹ We find from Seneca's observation respecting the Jews, which St Augustin quotes, "victi victoribus leges dederunt," how strongly he was impressed with the power the Jews exercised spiritually. The Satires of Juvenal and the complaints of Tacitus present us with similar views on their part. That Christianity was supposed to be a part of Judaism is seen from the words of Suetonius (*Vit. Claud.*) : "Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Româ expulit."

² "Accendere aliquem lucernam sabbathis prohibeamus," &c.

this we should have respect in every act and word, "as sailors direct their course to some star." When we read the words, "non querit ministros Deus: quidni? Ipse humano generi ministrat: ubique et omnibus presto est:" how naturally our minds recal the words of St Paul to the Athenians: "neither is He served by men's hands, as being in need of any; seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things¹." We see too that Seneca had clearer notions than his predecessors of the personal existence of the deity and of his intimate care of each individual, as well as of the whole race of men. He perceived the need of knowing and believing GOD and of offering him spiritual worship; that mere sacrifice and outward homage were vain. In the following passages from the same letter these views are clearly expressed; as is also the great truth which the Saviour taught, that to love GOD with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves, is the essence of religion and virtue: that it is indeed "more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices²." He writes, "He who knows GOD, worships Him....A man should learn how to conduct himself in offering sacrifices, to recoil very far from disquiet of mind and superstitious observances: never will he be advanced enough unless he conceive in his mind what kind of a being GOD must be, possessing all things, bestowing all things, freely giving His benefits.....The beginning of the worship of the gods, is to believe the gods³; then, to ascribe to them their majesty; to ascribe to them their goodness, without which there is no majesty; to know that they who rule the world, who control the

¹ Acts xvii. 25.

² Mark xii. 33.

³ Compare this with the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 6: "He that cometh unto GOD must believe that He is."

universe, who are guardians of the human race, are also at the same time full of care for each man...Look at another question, our proper conduct towards men. How do we deal with this matter? What instructions do we give? That there be a sparing of human life? How small a matter it is not to hurt him to whom you owe benefits. Truly it is great praise if man is gentle to man. Shall we teach that he stretch out his hand to the shipwrecked, that he show the right way to the erring, that he divide his loaf with the hungry? When shall I declare all things which are to be performed, or avoided, since I can furnish in few words this formula of human duty? All this that you see, in which divine and human affairs are included, is comprised in one fact, as a foundation for our rule of action—we are members of one great body. Nature has made us all akin, since she begat us from the same originals and for the same destinies. She has indued us with mutual love, and made us companionable: she has arranged what is equitable and just: by her institution, it is more wretched to hurt, than to suffer injury: and by her command, the hands are ready for the assistance of others. That verse should be in the breast, as well as in the mouth,

‘Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.’

We should hold it as a common bond, that we have been born. Our fellowship is most like an arch of stones; which will fall, if each in turn do not afford support, one sustaining the other¹.” In the 47th letter (to Lucilius), he speaks of the value of kindness even to slaves: “I have gladly learnt from those who have come from

¹ Sen. *Ep.* 95.

you, that you live familiarly with your slaves. This is worthy of your wisdom and of your learning. Are they slaves? Yes, but they are also men. Are they slaves? Yes, but they are also comrades. Are they slaves? Yes, but they are also humble friends."

He also shows how advanced his feelings were by depicting the wickedness and debasing nature of revenge and cruelty. He paints in beautiful language the opposite virtue. Yet, lest he should seem to forget his Stoicism altogether, he draws a nice distinction between clemency (*clementia*) and compassion (*misericordia*). He ascribes to the former, however, nearly all that we ascribe to the latter, except the outward manifestation of sympathy. There must be an apparent Stoicism veiling real humanity. He calls cruelty proceeding from revenge "An evil in no degree human, and unworthy therefore of a gentle mind. It is a madness like that of wild beasts, to delight in blood and wounds, and, manhood being laid aside, to change into a brute." (*De Clem.* I. 24.) "As he is not the large minded man, who is liberal of another's property; but he who deprives himself of what he gives to another: so I will call him clement, not who is easy under another person's wrong, but who does not break out, when spurred on by his personal feelings; who understands that it is the attribute of a great mind to suffer injuries though possessed of the fullest power to avenge them." (*De Clem.* I. 20.) "I know that the Stoic sect are in bad repute among the inexperienced, as being too harsh, and inclined to give advice which is far from good to princes and kings. It is objected against the sect that it says the wise man should not be compassionate, should not forgive. These, if taken by themselves, are hateful doctrines; for they seem to leave no

hope to human errors, but to bring every fault to punishment. But if this be a true report, what is this system of knowledge but one which commands us to unlearn humanity, and shuts a most certain door against mutual help in misfortune? Yet there is no sect kinder or more gentle, none more loving of men, and more attentive to the common good: as it is a principle with us to provide for being of use, or to afford help, not only where self is concerned, but to all and to each. Compassion (*misericordia*) is an unquiet of the mind (*ægritudo animi*) from the sight of others' miseries; or a sadness contracted from the misfortunes of others, which one believes to have fallen on those who did not deserve them. Now unquiet does not come to the wise man; his mind is calm, nor can anything happen to overthrow it: and nothing but magnanimity becomes him. But the same man cannot be magnanimous whom fear and sorrow assail, whose mind these feelings overthrow and contract. To the wise man this does not happen even in his own calamities; but he will, on the contrary, beat back all the anger of fortune and break it before him. He will always preserve the same countenance, calm and undisturbed; which he could not do, if he gave way to sadness. Therefore he is not compassionate, because this cannot be without misery: all other things which those do who are compassionate, he does willingly and in another frame of mind. He will succour the tears of others; he will not give way to them. He will give a helping hand to the shipwrecked, shelter to the exile, alms to the needy; he does not do this disdainfully, like the greater part of those who wish to seem compassionate, who disdain those whom they help and fear to be touched by them: but he will give as an equal, a man to a man. He will give the son to his mother's

tears, and will command the fetters to be loosened ; he will redeem from the arena the man condemned to fight, and he will even bury the noxious dead body. But he will do this with a peaceful mind and a countenance worthy of himself. Therefore the wise man will not pity, but he will help ; he will benefit, as one born for mutual help and the public good ; from which he will give each his share ; even to the troublesome, in due proportion—to those who are to be disapproved of and reformed, he shows kindness. But he much more willingly comes to the help of the afflicted, and heavily laden.” (*De Clem.* II. 5, 6.)

With regard to the life of the soul in a future world as a separate being, Seneca’s mind seems, from his different writings, to have been in an undecided state. Sometimes, however, he rises superior to his doubts and to his Stoic bias, and rejoices in the hope of real immortality. We see the uncertainty under which he laboured in his book written to console Polybius for the loss of his brother. He tells him that, if he lamented, it was either on his own account, or on account of the departed. If on his own account, then he was not wisely submissive to the wisdom which ruled all things. If he lamented for his brother’s sake, then he should reflect that one of two events must have occurred ; either that his brother by death had lost consciousness and individuality ; or, he was still sensible and conscious. In either case Polybius should reason himself out of grief. He should reflect in this way : “If there remain no sense to the departed, then he has escaped all the inconveniences of life, and is restored to that place where he was before he was born : and, free from all evil, fears nothing, desires nothing, suffers nothing. What madness is it then for me not to cease

grieving for him, who never will grieve any more?" In this hypothesis, we see a reference to the ancient Stoic belief respecting the dead. But Seneca proceeds to point out to Polybius a nobler reason for ceasing to mourn. He bids him think, "If there be any consciousness in the dead; now the mind of my brother, as though released from a long imprisonment, at length acts according to its own reason and will; and enjoys the spectacle of the universe, and from a higher place looks down on all human affairs; yet has a nearer insight into those divine mysteries, the design of which he had so long sought in vain to understand." He adds, "Do not then grieve for your brother; he is at rest. At length he is free, at length he is safe, at length he is immortal. Now he enjoys an open and free heaven; he has ascended from a low and sunken place to that, whatever it be, which receives those souls that are released from their fetters into its happy bosom: and now he wanders freely, and beholds with highest delight all the treasures of the universe. You are wrong; your brother has not lost his life; but has attained to one more secure. He has not left us, but has gone before." (Ch. 28.) To this idea of a happy future existence for the soul, he sometimes recurs in other parts of his writings. In his 102nd letter he complains of having been disturbed by a letter from Lucilius, in his happy thoughts of this nature. "Just as he is a troublesome fellow who wakes one that has a pleasant dream, so did your letter injure me. It called me back when indulging in suitable thought and about to venture further, if one might. I was delighting myself with enquiring respecting the immortality of souls, yes and more than that, with believing in it. I gave my belief readily to the opinions of great men, who rather pro-

mised this most welcome thing, than proved it. I gave myself up to so great a hope. Already I was disdainful of my present self, already I despised the fragments of my broken existence, about to pass, as I was, into that immense duration and into the possession of eternity: when suddenly I was awakened by the receipt of your letter, and lost my beautiful dream. But I will seek it again, when I have sent you away, and try to get it back." In the latter part of the same letter he compares our present life to the period of gestation. When we cast off our skin and bones and sinews at death, we shall be like infants escaping from what has enfolded them previously to their birth. When we die, then we shall be born to a nobler life. We need not mourn over our dying bodies. "The coverings always perish of those who are born. Therefore look hence to something more lofty and sublime. Hereafter the mysteries of the universe shall be revealed to you, the darkness shall be dispelled, and clear light shall break upon you from every side. Imagine within yourself how great will be that brightness, so many stars commingling their light. No cloud will disturb the peaceful scene. The whole expanse of heaven will shine with equal splendour. Then you will say you have lived in darkness, when you shall have full vision of that perfect light. This thought allows nothing filthy, nothing low, nothing cruel to find place in the mind; and he who has embraced this doctrine, dreads no hosts, trembles not at the trumpet's blast, fears no threats."

No one would pretend to say that there are definite traces of Christian influence in these lofty thoughts. Indeed one's mind naturally turns from them to similar musings in the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero, and else-

where. We remember too the noble surmises of Plato respecting the soul's immortality; and how Cato, the Stoic, improved on his Stoicism, by indulging in lofty views of a future life, drawn from this source, before his suicide. Yet one cannot but feel that Seneca, at times, nearly reached the truth, and owed to the influence of the religion of Jesus on the age in which he lived, much of the peculiar excellence of his philosophy.

If from him we turn to Epictetus, we see one still more steadily approaching the light. He seems almost more than a pagan philosopher, but less than a Christian disciple. His discourses preserved to us by the care of Arrian, who wrote in Greek what he heard as the disciple of the philosopher, show a pious spirit and a disrelish for the harsher doctrines of the Stoic system. They bear in some parts a striking likeness to the teachings of the Gospel. Just as our Saviour taught that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted, and that the soul needed His care, as a sick man needs a physician: so we read in Epictetus, "The beginning of philosophy is, according to those who enter, even as they ought, through this gate to her, a perception of their weakness and powerlessness in necessary matters...Does the philosopher beseech men to listen to him? What doctor asks that any one should suffer himself to be healed by him? Although I hear that at Rome now, doctors call patients to them, yet in my time, they were called to their patients. I invite you to come and hear that you are ill; that you take care of anything rather than what is worthy of care; that you are ignorant of good and evil; that you are unhappy and wretched. The school of the philosopher is a doctor's shop, from which one should go away, not joyful, but suffering: for you did not come to it whole, but

sick, one with a dislocated shoulder, another afflicted with a tumour, another with an ulcer, and another with headache¹." We find also how clearly he saw the necessity for divine aid in doing right, and the need for submission to the divine will, self-will being cast aside. He says, "Call to mind, man, what is said about tranquillity, liberty, magnanimity. Lift up your head now, like one freed from slavery. Dare at length, with eyes raised to God, to say, 'Henceforth deal with me as thou wilt: Thy thought is my thought; Thy will the same as mine; I refuse nothing that seemeth good to Thee. Lead me whither Thou wilt. Clothe me as Thou wilt. Dost Thou wish me to lead a public life, to live in private, to remain, to flee, to be in need, to abound with wealth? I will defend Thee as to all these dispensations of thy providence before men: I will show what is the nature of each. Cleanse Thou Thine own. Of Thine own will cast out thence grief, and fear, and avarice, and envy, and ill-will, and covetousness, and effeminacy, and intemperance.' These things cannot be cast out except you look to GOD alone, and cleave to him alone, and sacrifice yourself to his commands²." At another place, we find Epictetus acknowledging that the change of his life from sin to virtue was due to divine mercy, and called for grateful acknowledgement. "I observe what men say and by what they are influenced; and I do this not malevolently, nor that I may find something to blame, or ridicule, but I turn it to myself, lest I also sin in the same way. How then shall I cease from sin? Once I also sinned,

¹ *Diss.* III. 23. Compare our Lord's words, Matt. ix. 12. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

² *Diss.* II. 16.

but now do so no longer, *thanks be to God*¹." Of the providence of GOD, some of the most elevated, reverent, and grateful records are contained in the Dissertations. For instance, we have the following noble passage in B. I. c. 16: "What language will be sufficient to praise and set forth these works of Providence towards us. For, if we are mindful, what else does it behove us to do, both in public and private, than to praise and bless the Deity, and to utter thanksgivings? Ought we not both while we dig, and while we plough, and while we eat, to sing this hymn to GOD? 'Great is GOD who hath provided such implements for us, by which we work the ground: great is GOD, who hath given us hands; and the power of swallowing our food, as well as a place for its digestion; who hath caused us to grow without our own care, and to breathe even while we sleep.' These things should be sung, one by one; even the grandest and holiest hymn should be sung, because He has given us a power of attending to these things and making use of them by a proper method². What then? Since ye, the multitude, are blinded to this, ought not one to be found to fulfil this part and sing, in place of all, the hymn to GOD? For what other duty can I, a lame old man, discharge, except sing the praises of GOD? If I were a nightingale, I would fulfil my part like the nightingale; if a swan, like the swan. But now, since I am possessed of reason, I ought to sing the praises of GOD. This is my work, I do it: nor will I leave this post, so long as

¹ *Diss. B. III. c. 4.* Πότε καὶ ἐγὼ ἡμάρτανον νῦν δ' οὐκέτι, χάρις τῷ Θεῷ.

² Gataker has the following apposite and judicious remark on this passage, "Et quæ sequuntur his gemina, homine Christiano quovis non indigna, Christum modo donatum nobis adjecisset."—*Pærolq. M. Ant. Com.*

power is given me to hold it, and I exhort you to join in the singing of this same song¹." He speaks also of the freedom of the human will to perform certain acts, and dwells on the acts that are within the power of the will. He shows the folly of valuing too highly what is beyond our power, and the necessity of submitting our will to the divine will. But though he speaks of the freedom of the human will, he is a firm believer in fatalism; so that his idea of the true freedom of man was limited. "I have one whom it behoves me to please, to whom I must submit, whom I ought to obey—GOD, and those who hold a place near him. He has committed me to myself and placed my free will in subjection to myself alone, giving me rules for its right use: and when I follow these in my reasonings, I do not care what else any one says²." "Remember this, that if you esteem every thing that is beyond your choice, you lose the power of choosing³." He tells us we are the children of God, and that this relationship should lead us to act worthily of Him. "If any one will embrace this truth as he ought, that we are especially the children of God, and that GOD is the Father, as well of men, as of the gods, I think he will allow no ignoble or low thoughts about himself....On account of this relationship, those of us who fall away become, some like wolves, faithless, and cunning, and baneful; others, like lions, fierce, savage, and uncivilized; more of us still become foxes and whatever else among beasts are monstrous. For what else is an evil-tongued and depraved man than a wolf, or whatever besides is more wretched and debased? See, then, and take care lest you fall away into one of these monsters⁴." Nothing is more remarkable in Epic-

¹ *Diss.* B. II. c. 16.

² *Diss.* B. IV. c. 12.

³ *Diss.* B. IV. c. 4.

⁴ *Diss.* B. I. c. 3.

tetus than his earnest piety. "I esteem what GOD wills as better than what I will. I cleave to him as a servant and follower; with him, I go eagerly forward; with him, I stretch myself out: in short, what he wishes, I wish¹." But we find that he does not rise to any glorious hopes of a future separate existence for the soul. Instead of this, he cleaves to the Stoic idea, of the distribution of man, at death, into his component parts. "What was fire in thee," he says, "will return to fire; what was earthy, to earth; what belonged to the wind will return to the wind; what was watery, to water²." He was not, however, without some knowledge of the power of Christianity, on those who embraced it, to make them brave all things for the gospel's sake. He speaks of the "Galileans braving the tyrant, his satellites, and their swords, from madness and custom." He says he prefers reason to this influence which sustained them. Yet, though he remains without the personal knowledge of the power of Christ, what I have produced from his works serves to show that there was a work going on in the world, by means of the gospel, which extended further than the Church, and gave to the Stoic purer and holier views of the truth. He felt himself an erring being in need of divine aid. He felt that he was under the care of a loving Father, to whom he turned for aid. And he strongly brings before us the need all men have by self-abasement to seek the love of the supreme being, and to rise by his help to perfection. This was a great advance on old Stoic pride and self-dependence. Moreover, others began to have a share of attention. All mankind were recognized as justly entitled to the love and support of each other. Indeed, Stoicism came down

¹ *Diss. B. IV. c. 6.*

² *Diss. B. III. c. 13.*

from the height of its self-sufficiency. Its disciples learnt to mistrust themselves and to trust in God. They were making progress in true wisdom. Plutarch had urged against the sect their belief, that "God does not give men virtue; but that goodness is in their own power: that He gives riches and health, without virtue; and does not afford assistance for their benefit¹." They had to learn the lesson, that man is incapable of goodness without divine aid; and, as we have seen, Epictetus did learn it in some degree. Yet we shall perceive, from what Marcus Aurelius wrote, that the old leaven remained mightily at work, and the advance was not thorough. In proportion as the sect felt their need of divine aid, they came also to give up some of their selfishness and exclusiveness. Epictetus urges the propriety of mingling with men and helping them. He would do them good, teach them their need of humility, and of a cure for their mental maladies. "Will you not," he says, "do as sick people do, call the physician? 'Lord, I am sick, help me; see what I ought to do; it is for me to obey thee.' So also again, 'What to do I know not; I have come to thee to learn.'" (*Diss. B. II. 15.*) He wished to benefit the multitude, and had imbibed some of the spirit of that lesson so full of truth, that "he who loves God will love his brother also."

These remarks will be applicable, but not in so high a degree, to Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the Emperor. He was the last of the Stoics who has left a memorial behind. With him the sect ceased as a sect of philosophy. If we read his meditations we perceive that while much

¹ Εἴπερ ὁ θεὸς ἀρετὴν μὲν οὐ δίδωσιν ἀνθρώποις· ἀλλὰ τὸ καλὸν αἰθαιρετόν ἐστι· πλοῦτον δὲ καὶ ὑγίαιον χωρὶς ἀρετῆς δίδωσιν· οὐκ ὠφελεῖ. *Plut. de Stoic. cont. c. 27.*

of their doctrines remained unchanged, many were considerably modified. The modification was in a direction similar to that noticed in the previous pages, which we should expect to find, if Christianity exercised a collateral influence. Antoninus claims the care of the supreme being for men, and shows the duty of men to believe in the goodness of the gods. "It behoves thee so to do and think about every thing, as to be able to depart out of life now. But to depart from among men is nothing dreadful, if there be gods, for they will lay no evil on thee. If, on the other hand, there be no gods, or if they do not concern themselves about human affairs, what good is it to me to live in a world without gods, and without a Providence? But there are gods, and they concern themselves about human affairs." (B. II. ch. 11). "The soul, when it must depart from the body, should be ready to be extinguished, to be dispersed, or to subsist a while longer with the body." (B. XI. 3). Yet he would have this readiness to proceed from similar feelings to his own. He knew the bravery and resignation of Christians. Alas! he had not large-heartedness enough to tolerate what seemed an opposing influence to his favourite philosophy, and tried by persecution to extirpate the faith of the cross. The faith, however, proved itself stronger than philosophy; Christ crucified was to the Greek foolishness, but was mightier than the wisdom of men, and "the weakness of GOD was stronger than men." Antoninus could not but see the inability of persecution to check the religion of Jesus; yet he put down the earnest faith and determination of its disciples to obstinacy. So after the words just quoted from his work, on the propriety of being ready for whatever may come, he adds, "But this readiness must proceed from the soul's own

judgment, and not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians; it must be arrived at with reflection and dignity, so that you could even convince another without declamation."

There is a resemblance in the description of the nature of man given by this Stoic, to that given by the Apostle Paul. This is noticed in the Essay by Sir A. Grant, to which reference has already been made. He says, "we find in him (Antoninus) the same psychological division of man into body, soul, and spirit, as was employed by St Paul." A similar observation was made by Gataker in a note which I shall presently quote. Antoninus writes in this way (B. II. c. 2), "What I am, consists entirely of the fleshly (*σαρκία*) and spiritual (*πνευμάτιον*), and the chief part (*τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*). But now, as being about to die, despise thou thy fleshly parts; gore, and bones, and a network woven of nerves, veins, and arteries. Look also at thy spiritual part of what nature it is; a breath of air which is never the same, but continually breathed out and drawn in again. The third remaining is the principal part. Thou art old, no longer shouldst thou suffer this to be enslaved." Again, in B. III. 16, his words are, "Body (*σῶμα*), soul (*ψυχή*), mind (*νοῦς*). To thy body belong senses; to thy soul, affections; to thy mind, opinions." Again, (XII. 3), "There are three things of which thou art composed, body (*σώματιον*), spirit (*πνευμάτιον*), mind (*νοῦς*). Of these the first two are thine, so far as the care of them is concerned. But the third alone is really thy own." On the first of these quotations, Gataker has the following note¹. "Almost the same thing, in other words, the Apostle writes to the Thessa-

¹ "Idem fere, aliis verbis, Apostolus ad Thessal. Ep. I. c. 5. v. 23," &c.—*Gat. not. in M. Ant.* B. II. c. 2.

lonians in the first Epistle, ch. 5, v. 23, where he says, ‘Τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα:’ in which place τὸ σῶμα is what Marcus here calls *σαρκία*; ἡ ψυχὴ is here *πνευμάτιον*; and τὸ πνεῦμα is here τὸ ἡγεμονικόν.” We may notice, in addition, that this last is called *νοῦς* in B. III. 16, and B. XII. 3. We read in Epictetus, B. III. 7, “That three things belong to man no one will deny—soul (*ψυχὴ*), and body (*σῶμα*), and things without” (*τὰ ἔκτος*). The “τὰ ἔκτος” here include the “τὸ πνεῦμα” of Antoninus, which he says is “*ἄνεμος*,” and is “breathed out and drawn in continuously.”

With regard to a future existence for the soul, freed from sin and pain at death, though Aurelius denies the hope in some places, yet in others the light of the truth seems to stagger him. So when he says, B. XII. 1, “How comes it to pass, that the gods, who order all things well and lovingly for the human race, have overlooked this alone, namely, that men innately good, and who have had, as it were, frequent communions with the deity, and by holy deeds and sacred services have become friends of the deity, when once they die, no longer have any being, but go away to be absorbed in the universe?” He shows his doubts by adding, “if this be the fact,” concerning them; and, further on, “if the fact be otherwise.” Evidently he wavered in his belief.

Antoninus was ascetic in his views. He was fond of retirement and seclusion, thinking his mental progress furthered thereby. He does not seem so intensely earnest, nor so pious and nobly gifted as Epictetus: yet his aspirations were noble. “Oh, my soul!” we hear him saying¹, “wilt thou ever be good, and simple, and one,

¹ M. Aur. Com. x. 1.

and naked, and more transparent than the body which clothes thee?" Though philosophy with him was all in all, yet the cause of truth was advancing; the light from heaven was beginning to penetrate the darkness. One cannot put down his record of self-communings without feeling sad, and wishing he had opened his eyes to the perfection of that gospel which he professedly rejected and despised.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INFLUENCE OF STOICISM ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

*ἰὼ φρενῶν δυσφρόνων
ἁμαρτήματα στερεά.*

Soph. Antig. 1261, 2.

HAVING in the previous chapter described the influence which Christianity had in modifying the tenets of the Stoic school, we come now to the consideration of the influence which the latter exercised on the Christian Church. Beyond the bounds of the sect a widespread impression was made by the force of Stoic principles: and by these Christianity became affected in no small degree. There was so much about them which was real, and they appealed so strongly to the sympathies and pride of human nature, that even where their influence was unperceived and unacknowledged, it was nevertheless deep and lasting. The Stoic spirit gradually spread within the Church, and found there a new home for itself after the destruction of the school of philosophy to which it had given life. Even to the present day it has continued to exist, and still manifests undiminished energy.

The early Fathers, who came into contact with the Stoic system in its strength, saw its many excellences as well as its many defects. Being a wonderful advance on merely

speculative philosophy, drawing men to the cultivation of the moral sense instead of indulging in wild dreams, there was much for the Christian to admire in its purpose. Still he would naturally be discontented with a great deal that it contained, as well as disappointed at the absence of much that it omitted. There was something to commend the system to many minds, in the fact that it taught the duty of cultivating the nobler part, of self-denial, of bringing the appetites into subjection to the will. There was a great deal of pretension also in the outward appearance of the philosophers and of their disciples, and this had an influence on many Christians, which became stronger as time wore on.

In endeavouring to decide how the Church was affected by this spirit, we perceive that there were two principal dangers to which the religion of Jesus was liable from Stoicism. These dangers were lest the purity of the Gospel should be overridden by the asceticism born of the Stoic spirit; and lest the foreknowledge and providential care of the great Father should be confounded with the fatalism which was so marked a feature of the Stoic belief. These dangers include others which will be noticed as we proceed.

There is a great proneness in many minds to look on self-imposed austerities as in themselves a mark of virtue. Hence men who have been discontented with the ordinary duties of life and attempted to find higher walks of excellence, have been looked on as superior to others. This spirit has shown itself in all countries and systems. Those who have yielded to it have generally affected a superiority over the rest of the world, and a peculiarity in their garb and manners. The Stoics were greatly influenced in this way. We read of their long robes, just

as we read of the long robes of the Pharisees. Horace and Persius, in their Satires, bring before us the assumption of superiority by "the wise man."

This spirit of asceticism found its way into the Christian Church. Perhaps jealousy lest the Stoic philosophy, or Jewish Pharisaism, should seem to have a more marked influence than Christianity, produced a desire to make a display of asceticism. Or it might be that a persuasion of the excellence of this, for its own sake, led Christian men to adhere to it. Whatever the motive, there was soon manifested, in the Church, an exaggeration of self-restraint. Men began to withdraw from the ordinary walks of Christian life. They began to despise the performance of merely common duties; and to sketch out new ways to perfection, which they thought better than those taught by the Saviour. They began to do violence to their natures. In fact they became Stoical, as if they thought the being so was an advance on being Christian.

Christianity is a religion eminently suited for the daily life of men. It teaches us to do our duty in the world. We are taught that the highest degree of piety is consistent with, and indeed implies, the performance of one's proper part, as belonging to a great family, which has a right to the energy and service of each of its members. To do our duty amongst men, wisely and bravely, is taught us too by the example of the divine founder of our religion. A man's interests and desires may often lie in the direction of his ordinary duties. There can be no true piety in relinquishing the post GOD has given him merely because his interest would induce him to retain it. On the other hand, our duties may often be difficult and distracting. In that case, we have no right to leave them. There is often greater victory in doing our work

in the world than in fleeing into solitude for the exercises of devotion. He who makes his religion to consist of care for self only, who for selfish ends neglects the duties which every man owes to his fellow-men, has a very unsatisfactory sense of the doctrines of the Gospel. Yet we find early mention in the records of the Church, of men who cut themselves off from intercourse with their fellow-Christians, leaving their place in the human family vacant, their work undone. They assumed the air of peculiar sanctity, clad themselves in coarse garments, slept on the hardest of couches, often on the ground, covered only by a sheepskin, or some similar coverlet, lived on the humblest fare, and many of them thought it a peculiar virtue to forego the joys of the marriage-life. When we look at this state of things with the eye of reason, we see that it has really no claim on the veneration of mankind. If it was good for one, why not for another? If certain persons, by means of their seclusion and mortification of the flesh, as they termed it, made themselves peculiarly the loved of GOD, then might all men do so; for we are told, "there is no respect of persons with" Him¹. But, if all were to adopt this system of living, what would become of human society? The earth would soon cease to be the scene of busy industry, commerce would die, and religion would be a bane instead of a blessing. If one man makes himself peculiarly the favourite of heaven by forswearing marriage, then of course all men might make themselves so by the same means. But if celibacy were universal, what would become of the human race? Yet it is the duty of every man to make himself as much like what GOD would approve as he can. And if celibacy is pecu-

¹ Rom. ii. 11.

liarily acceptable to heaven, all should be celibates. This, however, would make it to be agreeable to the wishes of the Most High, that the race of man should come to an end. As this cannot be GOD'S will, so neither can celibacy be the state in which a man must be holiest and most approved by his maker. The fact is that Christianity does not teach any such an idea as this mistaken one, to which I have referred. This has its origin in the spirit to which Stoicism gave birth. The religion of Jesus is one of faith in another's merits, as the first step of all ; and then, from the loyalty to GOD which this produces, the believer is anxious to do the utmost he can to show his gratitude. He tries his best to please his King and Lord, by whatever means. He counts no sacrifice too great if called on to make it. But he is not to mark out a way different from the rule of the Gospel. He must be content to do GOD'S work in the place and by the means which His providence may point out. Since the Most High has implanted certain feelings and affections in all our natures, though it may be Stoical, it is hardly Christian to try to uproot them. The Gospel does not teach us to destroy natural affections, but to control them. It is true our appetites are not to be our masters ; yet they are not evils ; they are sent to be our servants, and are good gifts of heaven, if used aright. We are nowhere taught by GOD, that, to be His peculiar people, we must go out of the world, and live selfish and un-social lives. The word of GOD lays it down as a mark of evil to be "without natural affections." Our blessed Lord, in His prayer for His disciples and the future Church of all ages, said¹, "I pray not that Thou wouldest

¹ St John xvii. 15.

take them out of the world, but that Thou wouldest keep them from the evil." The noble duty laid upon us is to show in our daily life the excellence and power of virtue.

Yet we find that very early in the history of the Church there were great numbers of persons leading lives of selfish seclusion, and claiming peculiar sanctity because of this. Their solitude, and the lonely places in which they chose to live, gave rise to the name of Monk, Hermit, and Anchorite. Very soon these men occupied the same position in the religious world that the Stoics held in the heathen. And because Christianity gave woman her proper place, as an heir of immortality, and did not neglect her as philosophy had done, the same rules of living became also common with that part of the Christian women which aimed at superiority, as prevailed with regard to the men. They separated themselves, were placed under peculiar discipline, and bound by special vows.

It is surprising to observe how soon the notion became widespread, that these men and women were worthy of more reverence than others. Religion became divorced, in thought at least, from the daily life, and began to be considered as a system apart; as if it inculcated the excellence of certain courses, which were impracticable to ordinary men. This divorce of Christianity from its duty of raising the world by permeating all classes, and imparting to all its life-giving influence, had a most disastrous result on the souls of men. They who were obliged by the necessity of things to devote themselves to the affairs of time, almost ceased to care about being religious, since they thought religion to be the peculiar possession of others, who performed certain acts and submitted to austerities, to which they could not devote their time. Those

who neglected their worldly duties, at the same time that they forewent certain advantages, arrogated to themselves the name of piety, and monopolised the right to the title of religious. So, pure, vigorous Christianity decayed before a hybrid system born of superstition and asceticism. Those who devoted themselves to the monastic life became so much esteemed because of their pretensions, that they acquired more influence than the ministers of GOD'S holy word and sacraments. The unscriptural merit attached to celibacy caused people to reckon those who embraced it as better than those who did not. Hence the clergy, to retain their influence, gave in to the idea. As early as the Council of Nice, we find that it was the custom for those who were unmarried when they were ordained, to continue single. Not only so, but an attempt was made, at that Council, to order all married clergy to separate from their wives: and this decree would probably have been carried, but for Paphnutius, an African Bishop, who was himself, however, a celibate.

We are reminded by the hermits of the Christian Church of those Stoic anchorites from whom they differed but little. We see in the work, which M. Aurelius has left as the record of his self-communications, the following observation on the fondness for seclusion among his fellow-philosophers. "They seek places of retreat for themselves, lone dwellings in the country, and the sea-shore, and the mountains." Then he goes on to say to himself, "And thou thyself art wont most earnestly to long for such retreats¹." This spirit of abstraction found, in the Church of Christ, more and more adherents as

¹ M. Aurelius uses the very word from which the anchorite took his name, *Ἀναχωρήσεις αὐτοῖς ζητοῦσιν*, κ.τ.λ. — B. IV. c. 3.

time wore on, and exacted a more absolute attention. We find from the writings of SS. Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, Pachomius and Basil, how fast a hold it obtained of the minds of men. Basil was a student at Athens from A. D. 351 to A. D. 355, with Gregory Nazianzene and at the same time as the Emperor Julian. Philosophy doubtless still flourished there. We find Julian renouncing Christ altogether, for its sake. Basil, probably from the education which he received at the old home of Stoicism, was peculiarly in love with asceticism. He places before us the secluded life in its best light. We see how his ideas of piety were warped, however, by this spirit of asceticism. We hear him saying to a young monk, his disciple, "Hast thou left thy cell? Thou hast left there thy virtue." "Shun the society of those of thine own age; yea, flee from it as from a burning flame." "It is the devil's craft," he says (*Mon. Con. Cap. xx.*), "to keep alive in the mind of the monk a recollection of his parents and natural relatives, so that under colour of rendering them some aid, *he may be drawn aside from his heavenly course.*" He tells us that some objected to this, because the Apostle declared, "If a man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own kindred, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But he gives the Antinomian reply that a monk, being one of a peculiar class, was virtually dead to the world and to his duty in it; "As dead thou art free from all contributions for the benefit of thy natural relatives, and, as utterly a pauper, thou hast nothing which thou canst bestow."

This same spirit has continued to animate many parts of the Christian Church to this day. It has given rise to a vast variety of bodies, bound together by various rules, all more or less austere and unnatural. Among the

Roman Catholics it has developed itself in the Trappists, the Jesuits, and other societies; and even in the English Church we have seen movements which tend to show that this spirit is confined within no certain limits, but exists in all quarters.

It is not my purpose to pursue the subject further in this direction. But there is one view of it to which I shall slightly allude. I would gladly pass over this, only it serves to show the influence exerted by the ascetic spirit on certain members of the Church, and therefore seems to claim a passing notice. I allude to the practical Antinomianism of the ancient ascetics. Respecting those who have followed in their steps, in more recent ages, I will be silent. When we turn to the writings of the ancient Fathers, however, we are struck with the testimony they bear to the fact that just as among the Stoics the long robe covered very often gross licentiousness; just as the sanctimonious look and the formality and pretension were thought enough by some¹ to take away the sinfulness of sin; so it was too much the case also with the Christian anchorites. They fell into grievous sins which were a disgrace to their natures. Epiphanius informs us

¹ Juvenal, in reference to this says, *Sat.* II. 8:

“Frontis nulla fides, quis enim non vicus abundat
Tristibus obscœnis?”

So *Sat.* III. 105, he has the following:

“Audi facinus majoris abollæ.
Stoïcus occidit Baram, delator amicum,
Discipulumque senex.”

Respecting this man (P. Egnatius), Tacitus says (*Ann.* XVI. 32): “Clens hic Sorani, et tunc emptus ad opprimendum amicum, auctoritatem Stoicæ sectæ præferebat, habitu et ore ad exprimendam imaginem honesti exercitus, ceterum animo perfidiosus, subdolos, avaritiam ac libidinem occultans.” He goes on to say we should be on our guard against those “specie bonarum artium falsos.”

that when Nicolaus affected to live a celibate life, he did not, either from want of power or will, restrain his lusts, but rushed into promiscuous intercourse, urging others to follow his example. The descriptions which this writer, and Irenæus, and others have given of the failings of those who professed extraordinary sanctity among the early heretics is such as forbid their being produced for public perusal. The Christian Fathers complained of similar conduct among the professed ascetics of the orthodox Church in the first ages. St Cyprian describes the iniquity of their conduct in his reply to Pomponius: among men and women who had devoted themselves to the monastic life great disorders prevailed. There can be no mistake, as he enters into minute particulars. Allusions were made to these by writers before his time. Monks had professed virgin sisters of the Church, under vows of perpetual chastity, living with them. These were called *συνεισάκτοι* by the Greeks, *mulieres subintroductæ* by the Latins. With these the single men lived, lodging in the same cell by day, and even sleeping on the same couch by night. But they called their marriage that of the soul and not of the body. They pretended to have reached such a height of excellence and self-control, as to be able to despise temptation, and to brave moral dangers with impunity. St Chrysostom, who was a great admirer of the ascetic life, thus bewails the evil result¹. “Alas, my soul! Well may I exclaim, and repeat the lamentable cry with the Prophet, Alas, my soul! Our virginity is fallen into contempt; the veil that parted it off from matrimony is rent by impudent hands: the holy of holies is trodden under foot, and its

¹ Chrysostomi, *Opera*, Tom. I. p. 309. Ed. Ben. 8vo. Paris, 1834.

weighty and awful sanctities have been profaned and thrown open to all; and that which was once held in reverence, as far more excellent than matrimony, is now sunk so low, as that one should call the married blessed, rather than those who profess celibacy. Nor is it the enemy that has effected all this, but the virgins themselves." St Basil's works show even more plainly the evils resulting from the system. St Jerome also intimates the same facts. There is indeed nothing wonderful in all this. Men and women were fighting against human nature, common sense, yea, even against Christianity itself, possessed by an evil spirit; which was of Stoic birth, but assumed the garb of preeminent sanctity.

Other vices, besides those hinted at above, were the necessary offspring of the system. St Jerome tells us that men who wore the garb of poverty and wished to excite admiration as avowedly poor, were gathering wealth within their ragged sleeves. But I need go no further in this disagreeable direction, and shall content myself with having said what the subject seemed to demand.

Another phase of the same ascetic bias in the human mind is what we understand by Puritanism. This turn of religious sentiment led men, and leads men still, to forego pleasures and to look with suspicion on enjoyments, however innocent in themselves. It is a persuasion of the same kind as that which led the Stoic to exclaim¹, "Thou wilt despise the pleasant song, the dance, the 'pancratium,' if thou dividest the harmonious strain into each of its notes, and askest thyself am I overcome by that? For thou wouldst blush to confess as much. Having done the like

¹ Ὡδοῦς ἐπιτεροῦς, καὶ ὀρχήσεως καὶ πανκρατίου καταφρονήσεις, κ.τ.λ.
M. Aurelii Ant. Com. xi. 2.

with regard to dancing, and considered each separate motion and action, thou wouldst come to the same conclusion, with respect to it: and the same also about the 'paneratum.' In short, except virtue and the things relating to virtue, remember in all things to consider the parts of which they consist, one by one, that by their dissection thou mayest learn to despise them." The closely cut hair, which Persius gives us¹ as a characteristic of the Stoic youth, has had its counterpart among those whom the Cavaliers for this cause called Roundheads. And we find that these men were animated by a zeal for what they considered the cause of God, which led them to defy danger, and apparently to court difficulties. Yet there was often an exaggeration of feeling and sentiment in many, similar to that which led to the asceticism of the first ages of the Church; and which leads men still to seek the monastic life. Among the Puritans, though distinguished from them in history, in name, and in many peculiarities, we see the Quakers standing prominently forth. In fact, they were more puritanic than the Puritans, and seem the personification of Stoicism among Christian people.

Another feature of Stoicism which has exerted great influence on the Church of Christ is its fatalism. This has been developed into a system of Christian doctrine, which we shall designate sufficiently, when we call it Calvinism; though it existed, in a considerable degree, before Calvin; and though, in the system, the necessitarian

¹ Haud tibi inexpertum curvos deprendere mores
 Quæque docet sapiens braccatis illita Medis
 Porticus, insomnis quibus et *detonsa* juvenctus
 Invigilat, &c.

element is a variable quantity. The Supralapsarians carry their belief so far as to hold that GOD decreed man's fall into sin, with all the dreadful consequences. Others, with less of this fatalism in their faith, restrict the decrees of the Almighty to the disposal of man after the fall. St Augustin was considerably influenced by doctrines bearing a resemblance to certain phases of Calvinism: but he argued stoutly for man's freedom of will. He was essentially a Latin in his scholarship, and did not draw his information from the Hebrew and Greek. His views were tinged with the fatalism of the Stoical philosophy which had widely influenced those with whom he came in contact in early life. With these views he came to the perusal of the Epistle to the Romans, and thought he read there a confirmation of them. Respecting the 9th chapter of that Epistle, Dodwell says¹, "St Paul, being bred a Pharisee, spake there and is to be interpreted according to the doctrine of the Pharisees² concerning fate, which they had borrowed from the Stoics." St Augustin and Prosper and Fulgentius understood St Paul to mean almost the same predestination that the Stoic belief would imply. Yet they did not contradict and explain away other parts of Scripture, nor utterly ignore reason and common sense. The same difficulty met them that had occurred to the Stoic Chrysippus. How was this absolute predestination to be reconciled with human freedom? Cicero tells us (*De Fato*, VII. 11) that Chrysippus laboured painfully to show how all things were ordered by fate, and yet that there was something in ourselves; and tried to reconcile the inconsistencies of the system by saying that while fate predisposed, the human will determined. So, naturally

¹ Proleg. ad J. Stearn, *de Obst. Sect.* 41, p. 147.

² "Ex mente Pharisæorum."

the reasoning would occur that, if GOD has predestined us to be saved, there is no need for striving; if he has not, there is no use in any effort we can make. St Augustin, however, does not seem to set before men such absolute fatalism as this; at least, he strongly impresses on us the fact, that GOD is willing to receive every sinner coming to Him; and gives us our choice of good and evil. The Jansenists adopted and upheld similar views to these on predestination. So did Luther and Beza. Calvin advanced more decidedly necessitarian views, and many of his followers to the present day have set out with eternal fate as the foundation of their creed, and have interpreted all other doctrines so as to harmonize with this. The essential tenet of Calvin was that GOD, from no other motive than His good pleasure and freewill, has predestinated from all eternity certain members of the human family to everlasting happiness, and the rest to endless misery. Calvin says¹, "Many indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from GOD, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd, because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation. Whom GOD passes by therefore he reprobates, and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for His children." Such a doctrine as this requires that other doctrines, such as "The Lord is not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance²," be taken in a qualified sense. Moreover, since salvation is entirely independent of the individual, there can be no danger to one predestinated, whatever he may do or neglect. He cannot fall and be lost. Again, as Christ would not die for men whom he repro-

¹ Calv. *Inst.* III. 25. 1.

² 2 Peter iii. 9.

bated, his death was not for the sins of the whole world, but for the elect only. The first five of "the Lambeth Articles" thus set forth that part of the Calvinistic doctrine which is necessary for our present purpose. 1. "GOD hath from eternity predestinated some persons to life; others he hath reprobated to death. 2. This predestination to life proceeds not from the faith, perseverance, good works, or any other quality in the predestinated, but from the sole will or pleasure of GOD. 3. The number predestinated is limited before, and cannot be increased, nor lessened. 4. Those not predestinated to life will of necessity be damned. 5. True faith and sanctification in the elect never fails either in part, or totally." The ninth Article stated, "It is not in every one's will, or power, to be saved." The Synod of Dort, A.D. 1618, reduced the system under five heads, which it is not necessary to produce here, as they are a reiteration of what I have adduced above. The Puritans were firm adherents to the doctrines of Calvinism, and rejoiced in the belief that they were the peculiar people of GOD; so that in their doctrine, as well as discipline, they partook of the spirit which animated, though in a different manner, the Stoic sect. Of the Church party, at the same time, many held a mitigated form of Calvinistic doctrine, though others rejected it altogether.

From Calvinism, carried to its extreme limits, resulted violent Antinomianism. In this also Stoicism repeated itself. Just as the Stoics declared that nothing could be a crime which the wise man did; so the believers in Antinomian doctrines declare there can be no sin in those who are the elect; that Christ obeyed the law and fulfilled all righteousness in their stead, and that his righteousness being imputed to them, whatever their conduct

may be, they are righteous still. Hence they call observance of the will of GOD, and a sense of the duty of obeying his law, "the bondage of legality." They cry down morality, as a worthless thing in the sight of GOD. The Stoics divided the world into the wise and fools. These two classes included all mankind. They called ordinary men, who did not come up to their standard, fools and mad. "The school and sect of Chrysippus," says Horace¹, "deem every man mad, whom vicious folly, or the ignorance of any truth, drives blindly forward. This definition takes in whole nations, yea, even great kings themselves, the wise man alone being excepted." When once a man was a "wise" man, however, they held that all things, even the most revolting crimes, were indifferent to him. So, if mankind be divided into two classes, the elect and the reprobate, not one of whom can ever change from either class to the other, "then," some men argue, "do what I will it does not matter." The Antinomian claims to be free from the law of GOD, and believes that whatever he does, he cannot bring himself under the condemnation which it denounces against the transgressor. Hence have resulted fatal mistakes. We see how evil was the result in the case of the Anabaptists in Germany. They were men who called themselves, and perhaps believed themselves, the elect of GOD; and, as such, despised all law, human and divine. The excesses which they committed, their crimes and subsequent misfortunes, have left a fearful record behind them of the height to which this

¹ Quem mala stultitia, et quæcunque inscitia veri
Cæcum agit, insanum Chrysippi porticus et grex
Autumat. Hæc populos, hæc magnos formula reges,
Excepto sapiente, tenet.

spirit may be carried, and how it may bereave men of their reason and virtue. The sixth of the Lambeth Articles declares, that “an assurance of having justifying faith is certain of remission of sins, and of eternal salvation through Christ.” One cannot but see how possible it is that men may be deceived in such a matter as this, and how fatal such self-deception may be in its consequences. Indeed, it may lead a man on in false security and unfounded presumption till he is undone.

CONCLUSION.

WE have now examined the several parts of the subject which claimed our consideration. In the course of our investigation we have seen that, while Christianity and Stoicism have many things in common, all that which is excellent in the Stoic system is contained in the Christian. There is in philosophy this irremediable defect, that though it may point out man's duty, it does not give him power to fulfil it. It shows him a height of excellence which he cannot reach. Christianity also points man to noble and exalted paths. She gives him lessons of the highest wisdom, and furnishes him with an example of a perfect life. She does more. She furnishes him with the power to obtain what she pictures to him of excellence. Stoicism is like the dry bones which Ezekiel saw in his vision, the frames of men without the life. Christianity is like those bodies after they had been endowed with beauty, and strength, and vital energy, by His power, to whom alone it belongs to pronounce the decree, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live¹."

Nothing is more marked in our holy religion than its reality. It enters into the every-day life of men, preparing them for their duty, and helping them to perform it. It would extend its blessed influence to all. Not like

¹ Ezekiel xxxvii. 9.

philosophy, which separated a distinct class from their fellow-men, and considered the mass of mankind as far removed from any hope of their becoming wise; this divine system seeks the lost, and the lowly, and the foolish of this world, and raises them so that in their several spheres they may be holy and happy. We are warned in strong language against allowing our souls to be surfeited with the cares and pleasures of this world. We are to be spiritual, thoughtful, and earnest in our purely religious exercises. Yet we must guard against the mistake that religion is merely an abstract thing. It does not end when our ordinary duties begin: but follows us from the mercy-seat, when we have finished our communions with GOD and go about those duties which his Providence has laid upon us. It does not deny us innocent pleasure, though we are forbidden to waste time in pursuit of even harmless amusement. The sentiment which would divorce religion from the burdens and joys of ordinary men, is more of Stoic, than of Christian birth. If we read the history of the Saviour, we see him presenting a marked contrast to John the Baptist, the ascetic and solitary. "The Son of man came eating and drinking," and mingling as a man with men so freely as to scandalize the Pharisees, the Stoics of the Jewish Church. Our place also is in the world, doing the will of GOD. Not choosing our own path, or our own will, we are to resist the temptation to separation and spiritual pride which sometimes assails us. GOD has given us life, spiritual as well as bodily life, that it may be used in his service; not to serve our own selves. Yet many a man has served self and has followed a false light, that has deceived him and led him into bye-ways; while the deceived one thought he was doing GOD service, and practising self-denial. We want no special circumstances

made for us, no extraordinary opportunities granted: for each man has by infinite wisdom been placed in his position, whatever it may be; and has, every day and all day long, opportunity for honouring GOD, and helping on His designs in the world. This St Paul felt when, writing to the Corinthians, he says (2 Ep. v. 14), "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again." The great lesson to learn is real self-sacrifice. We shall not fail in learning this lesson if, depending on divine aid, we study to conform ourselves to His example, whose life was summed up in a few words by the Apostle Peter, when he described Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, who went about doing good."

THE END.

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