

STOICS

P.135 - §9 Unspiritual animals know only the past and live in the present. Spirit-indwelt man has powers of prevision (insight); he may visualize the future. Only forward-looking and progressive attitudes are personally real. Static ethics and traditional morality are just slightly superanimal. Nor is stoicism a high order of self-realization. Ethics and morals become truly human when they are dynamic and progressive, alive with universe reality.

P.1083 - §2 Occidental religion thus languished until the days of the Sceptics, Cynics, Epicureans, and Stoics, but most important of all, until the times of the great contest between Mithraism and Paul's new religion of Christianity.

P.1268 - §1 If man recognized that his Creators--his immediate supervisors--while being divine were also finite, and that the God of time and space was an evolving and nonabsolute Deity, then would the inconsistencies of temporal inequalities cease to be profound religious paradoxes. No longer would religious faith be prostituted to the promotion of social smugness in the fortunate while serving only to encourage stoical resignation in the unfortunate victims of social deprivation.

P.1336 - §1 2. The Stoic. Stoicism was the superior philosophy of the better classes. The Stoics believed that a controlling Reason-Fate dominated all nature. They taught that the soul of man was divine; that it was imprisoned in the evil body of physical nature. Man's soul achieved liberty by living in harmony with nature, with God; thus virtue came to be its own reward. Stoicism ascended to a sublime morality, ideals never since transcended by any purely human system of philosophy. While the Stoics professed to be the "offspring of God," they failed to know him and therefore failed to find him. Stoicism remained a philosophy; it never became a religion. Its followers sought to attune their minds to the harmony of the Universal Mind, but they failed to envisage themselves as the children of a loving Father. Paul leaned heavily toward Stoicism when he wrote, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

P.1338 - §6 Though the Hellenized Jewish beliefs were very little influenced by the teachings of the Epicureans, they were very materially affected by the philosophy of Plato and the self-abnegation doctrines of the Stoics. The great inroad of Stoicism is exemplified by the Fourth Book of the Maccabees; the penetration of both Platonic philosophy and Stoic doctrines is exhibited in the Wisdom of Solomon. The Hellenized Jews brought to the Hebrew scriptures such an allegorical interpretation that they found no difficulty in conforming Hebrew theology with their revered Aristotelian philosophy. But this all led to disastrous confusion until these problems were taken in hand by Philo of Alexandria, who proceeded to harmonize and systemize Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology into a compact and fairly consistent system of religious belief and practice. And it was this later teaching of combined Greek philosophy and Hebrew theology that prevailed in Palestine when Jesus lived and taught, and which Paul utilized as the foundation on which to build his more advanced and enlightening cult of Christianity.

P.1339 - §1 Many, but not all, of Philo's inconsistencies resulting from an effort to combine Greek mystical philosophy and Roman Stoic doctrines with the legalistic theology of the Hebrews, Paul recognized and wisely eliminated from his pre-Christian basic theology. Philo led the way for Paul more fully to restore the concept of the Paradise Trinity, which had long been dormant in Jewish theology. In only one matter did Paul fail to keep pace with Philo or to transcend the teachings of this wealthy and educated Jew of Alexandria, and that was the doctrine of the atonement; Philo taught deliverance from the doctrine of forgiveness only by the shedding of blood. He also possibly glimpsed the reality and presence of the Thought Adjusters more clearly than did Paul. But Paul's theory of original sin, the doctrines of hereditary guilt and innate evil and redemption therefrom, was partially Mithraic in origin, having little in common with Hebrew theology, Philo's philosophy, or Jesus' teachings. Some phases of Paul's teachings regarding original sin and the atonement were original with himself.

P.1340 - §5 Paul's cult of Christianity exhibited its morality as a Jewish birthmark. The Jews viewed history as the providence of God--Yahweh at work. The Greeks brought to the new teaching clearer concepts of the eternal life. Paul's doctrines were influenced in theology and philosophy not only by Jesus' teachings but also by Plato and Philo. In ethics he was inspired not only by Christ but also by the Stoics.

P.1433 - §5 Jesus commended to Ganid much in the Greek philosophy and the Stoic doctrines, but he impressed upon the lad the truth that these systems of belief, like the indefinite teachings of some of his own people, were religions only in the sense that they led men to find God and enjoy a living experience in knowing the Eternal.

P.1455 - §4 Jesus learned much about men while in Rome, but the most valuable of all the manifold experiences of his six months' sojourn in that city was his contact with, and influence upon, the religious leaders of the empire's capital. Before the end of the first week in Rome Jesus had sought out, and had made the acquaintance of, the worth-while leaders of the Cynics, the Stoics, and the mystery cults, in particular the Mithraic group. Whether or not it was apparent to Jesus that the Jews were going to reject his mission, he most certainly foresaw that his messengers were presently coming to Rome to proclaim the kingdom of heaven; and he therefore set about, in the most amazing manner, to prepare the way for the better and more certain reception of their message. He selected five of the leading Stoics, eleven of the Cynics, and sixteen of the mystery-cult leaders and spent much of his spare time for almost six months in intimate association with these religious teachers. And this was his method of instruction: Never once did he attack their errors or even mention the flaws in their teachings. In each case he would select the truth in what they taught and then proceed so to embellish and illuminate this truth in their minds that in a very short time this enhancement of the truth effectively crowded out the associated error; and thus were these Jesus-taught men and women prepared for the subsequent recognition of additional and similar truths in the teachings of the early Christian missionaries. It was this early acceptance of the teachings of the gospel preachers which gave that powerful impetus to the rapid spread of Christianity in Rome and from there throughout the empire.

P.1456 - §7 It was with Angamon, the leader of the Stoics, that Jesus had an all-night talk early during his sojourn in Rome. This man subsequently became a great friend of Paul and proved to be one of the strong supporters of the Christian church at Rome. In substance, and restated in modern phraseology, Jesus taught Angamon:

The standard of true values must be looked for in the spiritual world and on divine levels of eternal reality. To an ascending mortal all lower and material standards must be recognized as transient, partial, and inferior. The scientist, as such, is limited to the discovery of the relatedness of material facts. Technically, he has no right to assert that he is either materialist or idealist, for in so doing he has assumed to forsake the attitude of a true scientist since any and all such assertions of attitude are the very essence of philosophy.

Unless the moral insight and the spiritual attainment of mankind are proportionately augmented, the unlimited advancement of a purely materialistic culture may eventually become a menace to civilization. A purely materialistic science harbors within itself the potential seed of the destruction of all scientific striving, for this very attitude presages the ultimate collapse of a civilization which has abandoned its sense of moral values and has repudiated its spiritual goal of attainment.

The materialistic scientist and the extreme idealist are destined always to be at loggerheads. This is not true of those scientists and idealists who are in possession of a common standard of high moral values and spiritual test levels. In every age scientists and religionists must recognize that they are on trial before the bar of human need. They must eschew all warfare between themselves while they strive valiantly to justify their continued survival by enhanced devotion to the service of human progress. If the so-called science or religion of any age is false, then must it either purify its activities or pass away before the emergence of a material science or spiritual religion of a truer and more worthy order.

P.1462 - §2 A certain rich man, a Roman citizen and a Stoic, became greatly interested in Jesus' teaching, having been introduced by Angamon. After many intimate conferences this wealthy citizen asked Jesus what he would do with wealth if he had it, and Jesus answered him: "I would bestow material wealth for the enhancement of material life, even as I would minister knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual service for the enrichment of the intellectual life, the ennoblement of the social life, and the advancement of the spiritual life. I would administer material wealth as a wise and effective trustee of the resources of one generation for the benefit and ennoblement of the next and succeeding generations."

P.1468 - §1 When preparing to leave Rome, Jesus said good-bye to none of his friends. The scribe of Damascus appeared in Rome without announcement and disappeared in like manner. It was a full year before those who knew and loved him gave up hope of seeing him again. Before the end of the second year small groups of those who had known him found themselves drawn together by their common interest in his teachings and through mutual memory of their good times with him. And these small groups of Stoics, Cynics, and mystery cultists continued to hold these irregular and informal

meetings right up to the time of the appearance in Rome of the first preachers of the Christian religion.

P.1954 - §4 Jesus gives peace to his fellow doers of the will of God but not on the order of the joys and satisfactions of this material world. Unbelieving materialists and fatalists can hope to enjoy only two kinds of peace and soul comfort: Either they must be stoics, with steadfast resolution determined to face the inevitable and to endure the worst; or they must be optimists, ever indulging that hope which springs eternal in the human breast, vainly longing for a peace which never really comes.

P.1954 - §5 A certain amount of both stoicism and optimism are serviceable in living a life on earth, but neither has aught to do with that superb peace which the Son of God bestows upon his brethren in the flesh. The peace which Michael gives his children on earth is that very peace which filled his own soul when he himself lived the mortal life in the flesh and on this very world. The peace of Jesus is the joy and satisfaction of a God-knowing individual who has achieved the triumph of learning fully how to do the will of God while living the mortal life in the flesh. The peace of Jesus' mind was founded on an absolute human faith in the actuality of the divine Father's wise and sympathetic overcare. Jesus had trouble on earth, he has even been falsely called the "man of sorrows," but in and through all of these experiences he enjoyed the comfort of that confidence which ever empowered him to proceed with his life purpose in the full assurance that he was achieving the Father's will.

P.1954 - §6 Jesus was determined, persistent, and thoroughly devoted to the accomplishment of his mission, but he was not an unfeeling and calloused stoic; he ever sought for the cheerful aspects of his life experiences, but he was not a blind and self-deceived optimist. The Master knew all that was to befall him, and he was unafraid. After he had bestowed this peace upon each of his followers, he could consistently say, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

P.1991 - §6 Pilate was not able to fathom Jesus' words, nor was he able to understand the nature of his spiritual kingdom, but he was now certain that the prisoner had done nothing worthy of death. One look at Jesus, face to face, was enough to convince even Pilate that this gentle and weary, but majestic and upright, man was no wild and dangerous revolutionary who aspired to establish himself on the temporal throne of Israel. Pilate thought he understood something of what Jesus meant when he called himself a king, for he was familiar with the teachings of the Stoics, who declared that "the wise man is king." Pilate was thoroughly convinced that, instead of being a dangerous seditionmonger, Jesus was nothing more or less than a harmless visionary, an innocent fanatic.

P.2073 - §1 The Stoic and his sturdy appeal to "nature and conscience" had only the better prepared all Rome to receive Christ, at least in an intellectual sense. The Roman was by nature and training a lawyer; he revered even the laws of nature. And now, in Christianity, he discerned in the laws of nature the laws of God. A people that could produce Cicero and Vergil were ripe for Paul's Hellenized Christianity.

P.2073 - §7 Christianity came into favor in Rome at a time when there was great contention between the vigorous teachings of the Stoics and the salvation promises of the mystery cults. Christianity came with refreshing comfort and liberating power to a spiritually hungry people whose language had no word for "unselfishness."