

# *Theology* on *the Web.org.uk*

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes.  
Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit  
or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the  
copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the  
ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the  
links below:



*Buy me a coffee*

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbadshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE III.

## THE RELATION OF THE GRECIAN TO CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

Translated from the German of the late Dr. Augustus Neander, by George P. Fisher, Student of Theology in the University at Halle.

[THE Article, of which the following is a translation, was one of the last productions of its venerated author. It was published in 1850, in the "Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben," and has since reappeared in a small volume, containing a collection of his essays. The discussion is regarded as an able and satisfactory one, and as forming a contribution to Christian science, of permanent value. The subject of which it treats has engaged the attention of many thinkers, from the time when Grecian learning began to exert an influence upon the church, until the present day. What relation do those great masters of thought who, though standing on heathen soil, have succeeded, age after age, in winning the love and reverence of the choicest minds in the Christian church — what relation do they sustain to the author and to the doctrines of our holy religion? This question leads to a more comprehensive inquiry. If the Gospel be true, any philosophy that would claim to be Christian, must make the appearance and life of Jesus Christ the centre of history and interpret, or seek to interpret, all the events and epochs of the past, with reference to his advent, doctrine and work. Such an interpretation must be sought as well for the great eras in thought and speculation, as for the migration of nations and the conquest or decay of kingdoms. And the question recurs, — in the chain of History whose links are not fortuitously joined, but are set by Divine Providence, what place has that wonderful phenomenon, the age of Greek Philosophy? Judaism we can understand; the office which Rome, the conqueror and lawgiver, was called to fulfil, is easier to be discerned; but what of the Greek?

It is often said, in reply, that it is well that the futility of the unaided efforts of man to relieve his spiritual wants, should be demonstrated by an experiment, made under the most favorable conditions; and that such an experiment with its sorrowful failure is spread before us in the history of ancient philosophy. So, it is added, may mankind be persuaded of the need and the value of the redemption

of which Jesus is the author. The profound truth which this reply contains, is fully acknowledged in the essay before us. The view of Neander maintains that the ethical systems of antiquity furnish abundant proof of the insufficiency of human reason to cure the disease of human nature. This reply is defective rather than erroneous. In the first place, it is hard to believe that Divine Providence introduced into the order of history this era of philosophic thought *merely* for the negative purpose of showing the inability of man to repair the fatal injury which he had occasioned; and secondly, this theory does not explain the fact that in these very philosophers there is somewhat that charms, and not only charms but instructs, the finest Christian minds from the days of Origen to those of Neander. The view of the present Article goes further, and shows that in heathenism, as in Judaism, though in a far different manner, the way of the Lord was prepared. It proves that without the borders of God's chosen people, among the cultivated Gentiles, there were index-fingers, here and there, which pointed to the cross, dim presages, glimpses, often unconsciously gained, of truths which only the revelation from heaven could unfold. And so the advent of the Saviour is looked upon as the final act in the drama, which completes and explains what in the previous acts was a mystery even to the personages who figured in them, but knew not the significance of their action. In the Gospel is contained what all other religions and philosophies grope after but cannot find. It is no argument against this view that the Gospel, when it appeared, was actually "foolishness" to the Greek; it was also "a stumbling-block" to the Jew, who had the advantage of a supernatural revelation.

As a contribution to Christian evidences, the present Article goes to show, through a comparison of the ethics of the Gospel with Grecian ethics, that Christianity is the absolute, the perfect religion. It is in a denial of this position that unbelief at the present day commonly strives to sustain itself. The mythical theory which would resolve whatever is miraculous in the New Testament into unconscious inventions of imagination and enthusiasm, loses its show of plausibility, upon a little reflection. The historical character of the age in which Christianity appeared, the age of Josephus, the short period of time that elapsed between the death of Christ and the composition of the synoptical Gospels, as well as the independent testimony of the Evangelist John, and the inappositeness of all the examples and analogies adduced by the adherents of this theory for its support, will convince an unprejudiced inquirer of the absurdity of

the mythical hypothesis. Hence the old alternative which has ever been presented by Christian apologists, is the alternative to-day; either Christianity is the holiest truth or a monstrous deception. Yet the number of men is not small, as well in Great Britain and America as in Germany, who would regard themselves as Christians, and sometimes even as Christian ministers, while holding that Christianity is not the absolute truth, but only a single stage in human progress above which future generations will rise. But Christianity *claims* to be the perfect, the absolute religion. Its author claims to be "God manifest in the flesh," "the way, the truth and the life," and demands, not an acknowledgment of his worth as a moral teacher, but an humble and entire and unconditioned faith in him as a Redeemer, and an unreserved submission to him as a Master. These assertions and claims are not something incidental and collateral; but they constitute the very substance, the kernel of Christianity, so that he who denies them is himself expressly denied and cast off by its author. It is impossible, then, to be a Christian, in any proper sense of the term, without receiving the Christian religion as the absolute and perfect religion. There is no middle station between hostility to Christianity and an admission of its supreme authority. Christ is either our Lord and Master, or a great deceiver.

By this it is by no means implied, nor was it the opinion of Neander, that a progress in theology is precluded. An ambiguous use of the word *theology* has led to the confounding of two distinct propositions. The object to which theological inquiries are directed, the Christian faith, admits of neither increase nor diminution, and its essential peculiarities are obvious. But theology is our knowledge of this faith, our scientific apprehension of the Christian religion, and hence, with certain qualifications, it is subjected to the ordinary laws of the intelligence. It may vary its form, and is capable of an indefinite and, we might say, an infinite progress. Instead of its implying an arrogance of men, as it is sometimes charged, to assert that theology is capable of progress, the denial of this proposition, if fully understood, would involve the extreme of arrogance, since it would imply that the depths of wisdom, contained in the Gospel of Christ, can be fathomed by one man or exhausted by a single generation, and that the far-reaching deductions, manifold connections and numberless applications of the truths of Christianity can be, by us, constantly and intuitively perceived. The two truths are, that, on the one hand, our religion is absolute and perfect, while on the other, our theology or our scientific construction of this religion is progres-

sive and imperfect. Both these truths find a confirmation in the following discussion.

It is by such inquiries as those which are pursued in this Article, that the truth and divinity of Christianity are lifted above doubt. They belong to the so-called "internal evidences," which, leaving its outward seals and verifications, discover convincing marks of truth in the doctrine itself. The miracles have their chief value in calling the attention of men to the system of truth of which they are the heralds, and in confirming a belief which has been established by other sources of truth. But few, if any unbelievers, either in the earliest age of Christianity or in subsequent times, have been first convinced by miracles. Where the mind is subjectively unprepared to appreciate the beauty and the truthfulness of the doctrine, it will give to the miracle anything but the true interpretation. It will even prefer, like the Jews of old, to attribute the event to a demoniacal agency. It is a remarkable fact that in the Bible, in the Old Testament even, the people are expressly forbidden to give credence to a mere miracle, without consideration of the doctrine which it accompanies.<sup>1</sup> And Christ will be believed aside from the miracles which he performs.<sup>2</sup> Two or three works, like those of Butler and Erskine, will accomplish far more good than the innumerable imitations of Paley, with which the library of "Defences" is crowded. It is the person of Christ and the irresistible power of his presence, as he moved through the cities and villages of Judaea, and as he now moves, in a form of life, through the pages of the Evangelists, that first wins the acquiescence of the sceptic. When the soul has been once roused to a perception of the grandeur of his doctrine and life, and especially to a perception of their adaptedness to its own inmost and deepest wants, it bows in acknowledgment of the truth and divinity of Christianity. Then the miracles which accompany the appearance of Christ and the promulgation of his doctrine, are looked upon as the natural and appropriate symbols of its majesty. They are expected as truly as we expect that insignia of power and dignity shall attend the march of a sovereign. They confirm the belief

<sup>1</sup> This interesting and important passage is in the Book of Deuteronomy, 18: 1—3.

<sup>2</sup> See John 14: 11. Compare John 2: 23—25 and 3: 2—4. It should be remembered that Christ's miracles were, in almost all instances, at the same time works of kindness and love, as healing the sick; and when he appeals to these, he appeals to them, not merely as demonstrations of his omnipotence, but as proofs of his goodness.

which has been otherwise gained. If it is sometimes said that the miracles prove the doctrine, it might be said with quite as much truth that the doctrine proves the miracles. They are two separate sources of evidence which illustrate and mutually support each other. Neither should be given up nor undervalued. But without depreciating the importance of miracles, especially as against those who would question their historical verity, we maintain it to be a fact of practical value, which both the Scriptures and experience teach, that the first and noblest proof of Christianity is the heavenly image of truth that is stamped upon its doctrine, the radiant light, not of earth, that beams from the person of its founder.—TR.]<sup>1</sup>

What is true of the relation of the Old Testament to the New, is, in some respects, applicable also to classical antiquity in its relation to Christianity. Nowhere else, indeed, can that organic connection be discovered which out of the germ in the Old Testament led on to the full development in the New. For the Old Testament is united with the New by the one theocratic principle which, in a gradual development, guided by the Divine Spirit, must unfold itself in the New Testament, by means of redemption, in the realization of the kingdom of God. But what is to be found in the Old Testament in organic, genetic development, must also discover itself more sporadically in the entire ante-Christian history. The religion of the Old Testament, which contains the preparation for Christianity in a progressive history, must disclose to us the laws according to which we are to consider the relation of ante-Christian times to Christianity. If Christianity is the religion preordained for mankind, by means of which alone the ideal of man can be realized, then in everything on which the essential nature of man has stamped itself, according to the germs which lie in it, though they were early obscured by sin—in everything an element must be discerned that tends toward Christianity. If Christ is the type of humanity, the son of man, we can recognize in everything truly human, something that strives toward him as its goal, that can find only in him its fulfilment and perfection—the *ditjecta membra*, which unite in him in an organic unity. As nature strives toward man, as its goal, and the human may be found prefigured, in manifold ways, in the various kingdoms of nature, so this striving toward Christianity will be perceived in ancient history;

<sup>1</sup> Those who are familiar with the peculiar style of Neander, will understand the difficulty of rendering such an essay, as the following, into the English; and will pardon an occasional awkwardness or obscurity in the style.

and the full understanding of history, and especially of antiquity, will not be attained until Christianity has come to be the central point of all culture. Then men will discern what the position of the ancient world was, regarded in its peculiar, characteristic feature, as a definite stage in the course of human development. They will then, also, learn the significance of antiquity in relation to what is the extreme limit of human culture and improvement — how antiquity carries in itself the germ of a higher development that strives to expand itself above the germ itself.

Regarding the Old Testament as a preparation for Christianity, we distinguish the Law from the Prophets. We must be allowed to find a distinction that is somewhat akin to this, in classical antiquity. The Apostle Paul himself places by the side of this *vōmos* of the Old Testament, the universal, eternal law, engraven upon the moral nature of men. And we are now to search for this law, especially in those Greek philosophers who gave their attention to ethics; in their speculations which strive to go beyond the narrow limits of the popular religion, and are directed to those moral principles which exist in the heart of man. If the development of this law, on the position of the Old Testament, had an advantage in being closely connected with a fundamental religious principle which was to lead from the Old Testament to the New, viz. with the theocratic element, the idea of holiness, as it proceeded from a purer knowledge of God; yet, on the other hand, the moral element on the position of the natural [wildwachsend<sup>1</sup>] religion had this advantage, that the development moved on more freely in all directions. There, in Judaism, was a smaller, narrower sphere, since it was ordered by God that the stream of the Divine life, in a closely-confined sphere, should develop itself, that it might widen more and more. There, in classical antiquity, was a wider sphere, but one which could not be preserved so pure. Hence, out of the ethical elements of classical antiquity, Christianity has adopted and purified much that it could not have derived from Judaism. There, in Judaism, we find the germ of the Divine element, the theocracy, the principle which was to transfigure everything human; here, in antiquity, we find, as it were, the material of human life, which, in this process of transformation was to be taken up by that Divine principle. The fine comparison of Clement of Alexandria is pertinent: as the branch of the noble

<sup>1</sup> This excellent expression of that great man who knows so well how to find the right word for his idea, of Schelling, finds its point of connection with what Paul says (Rom. xi.) of the wild olive-tree.

olive, engrafted on the wild olive-tree, improves the latter, by communicating its own better sap, and appropriates to itself the fruitfulness of the wild tree, which it even by this means improves; so by means of a right Gnosis which is grounded in faith, is the richness of Grecian culture to be appropriated and penetrated by a new transforming principle.<sup>1</sup> So should the higher germ of life that came forth by the productive power of Divine grace, appropriate to itself the entire richness of an earlier natural development, and both should be blended together which belong together and were designed and adapted for each other by the Creator, as Clement of Alexandria says of the noble olive and the wild olive: "both, alike, sprung up by a Divine ordinance."<sup>2</sup>

As the law of the old covenant corresponds to the moral law of nature, so prophecy, though belonging peculiarly to revealed religion which is prophetic in its entire scope, will still find something that corresponds to it in classical antiquity. And the Apostle Paul points us to this fact, when he takes up the presentiment, the preage, of an unknown God in those whom he will lead to the true God. We shall also find this prophetic element in the ancient religion in those features and tendencies which point to their own decline and to a higher development in the future. Still, we have here a darker and more contested province, though one worth the pains which are requisite to search into it; we have a more difficult investigation that does not so easily conduct us to results of scientific certainty and clearness. But the investigation of ancient ethics will be easier and lead us sooner to certain and scientific judgments, if we show how the ideas expressed by the representatives of the ethical element among the Greeks could not, in the connections in which they occur and upon the soil of antiquity, find their true fulfilment and realization; if we show that the entire revolution which has been imparted by Christ to the life of mankind, must first take place, as a necessary condition for the fulfilment of what was aspired after by the spirit of the ancient world, seen in its noblest representatives and striving to rise beyond and above itself. Ideas of such a character that, when once expressed, they are recognized as belonging to the highest stage of moral development and as essential to the realization of the idea of man, of humanity, we shall surely be obliged to regard as unconscious predictions of Christianity. In relation, also, to the moral develop-

<sup>1</sup> Strom. Lib. VI.

<sup>2</sup> Πόντη δὲ ὁμοῦ τὰ γυναικά ἐκ καλεύματος θείου βεβιδοτύχειν.

ment which is here manifested, under the systems of natural religion, we must apply the words of our Lord, so seldom understood in their whole depth and richness, to which, therefore, we must constantly recur, that "he came not to destroy but to fulfil;" to bring no other destruction than that which is employed as an essential factor in fulfilling. Hence, with the destruction of what belongs to the negative and narrow elements in the ante-Christian development, we must perceive the fulfilling of everything truly human which had been closed up and covered in a narrow form. We shall, therefore, be required to discover as well what forms a contrast to Christianity and thus serves to bring to our knowledge Christianity, in its characteristic features, as also what is akin to Christianity and tends toward it. Even what is akin to Christianity, after being freed from the narrow bands which antiquity imposed, must be placed in the connections and order of a higher development. While this view is a proof that Christianity is the religion for mankind, indispensable to the fulfilment of their destination,<sup>1</sup> it will at the same time easily enable us to refute what has been sometimes said by opposers who have selected isolated, ethical expressions of antiquity and have asked, "what more has Christianity given?" — like Celsus, who would find in Christianity only *separatio opus* from the teachings of Plato.<sup>2</sup> It will readily appear, where anything of this kind, akin to Christianity, is really found, that it can still gain its true significance and importance, only in connection with the entire and peculiar position of the Christian life which is grounded in the peculiar qualities of the Christian faith.

If we wished to exhibit the Grecian ethics, in the order of history, it would be necessary to begin with Socrates and to trace the consequences of the impulse which was given by him toward a new development of the ethical consciousness. But this, at present, is not our aim. We here only consider the various positions of Grecian ethics in their relation to Christianity; and with this view, it seems to be the most proper course to consider, in the first place, that system which appears to form the strongest contrast with Christian ideas; and still has so many points of resemblance to them, that it

<sup>1</sup> [The word *bestimmung* might perhaps be here rendered *mission*; but the word "destination," in its original import, comes nearer to the signification of the German word, in the connections in which it occurs in the present Article. *Destiny* carries with it the idea of natural necessity, and hence would be here incorrect.

—Tr.]

<sup>2</sup> Orig. c. Celsum, VI. 15.

could be duly appreciated only in the light of Christianity, viz. the system of Stoicism. We may then pass from Socrates to the Platonic and Aristotelian systems, and finally seek for the concluding point of ancient ethics, in the attempt of the New Platonism to unite them together and to mediate between previous antagonisms.

### I. STOICISM.

Stoicism designates, as its fundamental principle, the life which corresponds to nature, which is likewise the virtuous life.<sup>1</sup> From a Christian point of view, we shall recognize an undeniable truth in these words. The law of its destination [bestimmung] has been stamped by the Creator upon every being, and it is that which the being is to be, provided he correspond to this law. This must be allowed in the case of man. He differs from the other existences in nature only in this, that, inasmuch as the position which he is to occupy in the creation is a higher one, the law that corresponds to this position is also higher, and that he is therefore designed and qualified to fulfil it with consciousness and freedom. But in this law, everything must lie which is required for the realization of the idea of man. All the powers and parts of his nature will find their right proportions and their harmony with one another in fulfilling this law. It were possible at once to apply this law, if man were upon the position of his original, moral nature. But this is not now the fact. There are conflicting elements in human nature, and it follows that we must, in the first place, distinguish what is founded in the true, original nature of man from that which has sprung from the darkening influence of sin. It is only the Christian point of view which teaches us this, which we could not have discovered without this higher light. Hence the indefinite and wavering manner in which Stoicism followed out a principle that, in itself, was well founded. What belongs to the true nature of man, and how this is to be perfectly realized, we first learn in the life of him, who has exhibited, in the unity of all the parts of human nature, its perfect type. Whoever has adopted this as his prototype, with him the ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν can have its right meaning and serve as a complete rule and standard for everything. Moreover, a distinction is here to be made between human nature considered by itself, and nature in general, nature in the sense

<sup>1</sup> Τέλος τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, ὅπερ ἔστι κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν. ἄγει γὰρ πρὸς ταῦτην ἡμᾶς η φύσις. Words of Zeno in his work περὶ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως cfr. Diog. Laert. Zeno c. 53, ed. Huebner, tom. II. p. 144.

of the universe, the man being a part of the whole. The notion of "the life suited to nature," besides the anthropological sense, can have a more general, cosmical meaning, in relation to what coincides with the law that rules in the universe. And it must surely be conceived of, also, in this higher, more general sense. The law for every single being can only subsist in harmony with the law of the universe. And especially that highest position which *man* occupies in the world, can be rightly understood, only when considered as being in harmony with the general law of the universe, the position of the man, as this has been designed to be the highest in the world, to which all other things have a reference and in relation to which he is to fulfil his highest mission. Man would not be able truly to accomplish his moral mission and task, if the world, in which he is to accomplish it, were not ordered in a way that is adapted to this end. Stoicism has likewise acknowledged this truth, and its representative has therefore referred the nature of man back to the nature of the universe. Thus Chrysippus says: "our natures are parts of the nature of the whole [universe];"<sup>1</sup> and in another place: "one can find no other beginning and no other origin of justice than that which proceeds from Jupiter and from universal nature. Here every one must start if he would say anything of good or evil." So he says that, if one would discover what virtue and blessedness are, he must proceed from universal nature and the government of the world.<sup>2</sup> On the Christian position also, this sentiment has maintained its full truth. We know that the whole world is designed for this end, that through mankind, God may be manifested and glorified; that nature is designed to reveal God to man; that man is designed to take up these manifestations and to stamp his Divine impress upon the material taken from nature. Or, in other words, we know that this whole world has been so arranged that it is to attain the goal of its perfection, in so far as the kingdom of God is exhibited in it. Both, indeed, will stand in harmony, so that man may live according to the true, individual nature, and, at the same time, in harmony with the law of the whole, with the Divine government of the world. But Stoicism wanted the knowledge of this design of the world, as a whole. If Chrysippus is right in supposing that ethics must be founded on physics, inasmuch as one must first understand the nature of Jupiter and the law of the world, which law emanates from him, that one may find in it the foundation for the law of

<sup>1</sup> Μέρη αἱ γιγάντες φύονται τῆς τοῦ ὄλον. Diog. Laert. I. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, de Stoic. repugn. Cap. 9.

man—yet, just here the stamp of the Stoical ethics shows itself. This lies in the defective notion of the nature of Jupiter and of the course of the world, which is ordered by him. In Stoicism, the idea of the absolute, personal spirit who is the type of all personality, did not have the highest place; and therefore the signification of personality itself, its destination to an endless development, the relation which the course of the world sustains to it, are not understood. It does not rise above a Pantheistic view of the world. All personal existence, that of the gods themselves, is a phenomenon of longer or shorter continuance, but something that passes away. There is only a revolution of the circle of development; at last, everything will be lost again in that primordial nature out of which all things flowed; the nature of Jupiter.<sup>1</sup> Hence there was wanting every teleological-ethical element, any determination of the aim of the world-development and the development of human life, both which systems of development, in their mutual connection, Christianity teaches us to recognize, in the doctrine of the kingdom of God. For Stoicism, that principle remains entirely unfruitful. Therefore, it can neither deduce a standard nor an aim for ethics. Everything remains in the fluctuating notion of an unchecked life, corresponding to life in the universe, the *εὐραιά τοῦ βίου*, which has no higher measure or standard.<sup>2</sup>

• Therefore we cannot speak of an accommodation between the antagonisms of the personal and the universal, but only of the subjection of the personal, individual being under the unintelligible law of an immutable, iron necessity that rules the universe, whether it be called the nature of Jupiter or the *εἰμαρτήτης*. Nothing is left, but the cold logical resignation to self-annihilation. Here we find the two tendencies which are in diametrical opposition to one another, the height of egotistical self-exaltation where one makes himself equal to God, with self-annihilation in resignation to an iron necessity that absorbs all individuality. When the sage is required to sacrifice everything, renounce his own personal being, he takes refuge in the autonomy of his mind. He knows that he is entirely like Jupiter in the possession of his virtue. “As it becomes Jupiter to have pride in himself and in his life, since he so lives that he may with truth speak highly of himself, so all this becomes the good, they being conscious that Jupiter has no advantage over them.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plut. II. Cap. 89: *Τὸν διὸν αἰγαλόδων, μέχρις ἣν εἰς αἴρετο ἀπαρνασσόν.*

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laert. II. p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, II. Cap. 13.

The virtue of antiquity, *μεγαλοψυχία*, is here prominent; a virtue of which we shall speak hereafter, in connection with Aristotle. We discover here in Stoicism the spirit of self-assertion which characterizes the virtue of antiquity and forms the strongest contrast with that feature of Christianity which gives the highest place to humility, as the foundation of all moral development. There are essential contrarieties in human nature, in its ante-Christian development; the summit of self-exaltation that has no firm ground on which to maintain itself, and passes over to the other extreme of self-annihilation. Christianity first enables us to discover the right adjustment of these contrarieties, since it finds the acme of moral elevation upon the act of deepest self-denial, revealing itself in Christian humility, of which virtue the *εἰς κυριόν καυχάσθαι* is another side. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, on the other hand, with whom, in consequence of his education, Stoicism had assumed a certain religious element, knows of nothing higher than a cold resignation to an iron necessity, with the sacrifice of his own personal being. He is only able to console himself with the thought that, in the circle of life, the same thing is constantly repeated, and that here a longer life has no advantage over a shorter. And on such a position of cold, philosophical resignation, which one should be able to commend demonstratively to all men by arguments of reason, the animation with which the Christian martyrs, in the consciousness of their faith, met death, seemed to him to be mere declamation.

That consciousness of a law of the universe with which the law of the man should be in harmony, gave to the Stoical ethics a certain universality which broke through the restraining limits [schränken] of the ancient world. But we are obliged to recognize their defect, that this consciousness appeared in a Pantheistic form. The personal, the individual, could not gain its rights; a knowledge of the true relation of the universal to the particular, could not be attained. There was an endeavor to rise above the narrow limits of the ancient world, anticipating the historical development which would have manifested itself in the gradual overthrow and natural removal of these limits. There was a tendency to universality and community which, in the course of human development, was adapted to blend together essential peculiarities and differences. Upon the position of antiquity, the mind was still confined by the limits of nature [gebunden in den schranken der natur]; hence the antagonisms, founded in nature, must hinder the unity of human development [menscheitsentwicklung]; and while they were active in the work of separat-

ing and dividing, they could not let the consciousness of this unity prominently appear. The particular spheres or provinces of nature were bars, above which the consciousness of man could not rise. The contrasts which were founded on them had a separating influence upon the life. The type of humanity sunk into the particularism of single nations. Each nation thought, that the true character of man was fully embodied only in itself, and did not recognize this character in other relations which had as good a claim to it. We see this in the contrast of Greek and Barbarian, and we find similar contrasts [gegensätze] among all nations. The State, in which the unity of the nations develops itself in an organism, was therefore the absolute and highest form for the realization of the highest good. The religion of the Old Testament, to be sure, through its theism and theocracy, placed itself in opposition to this prevailing principle that deified nature; but this religion even, for the position of that time, could exhibit itself only in the general form which prevailed in the ante-Christian period. In contrast with the principle of the separating national religions and national divinities, theism itself must assume such a national form; the kingdom of God must itself come within the boundaries of a national theocracy; the one God of mankind must be known as the God of a single nation. In common with the development of all antiquity, the State must be taken as the highest form of moral development, only with this difference, that the religious element was not here, as elsewhere, subordinated to the political, but the political element to the religious, as the idea of the theocracy required. Only through Christ the Redeemer, could the mind, set free from these narrow limits, be raised to a real dominion over nature. We find in Zeno, from the position above mentioned, a remarkable expression, disclosing a striving toward the unity which rests upon that Divine consciousness that establishes unity and community, so soon as it has raised itself above the narrow limits of nature. In his work *neq̄i pol̄ieis*, he predicts, as the ultimate point of progress, that men will no more live, divided according to cities and nations, separated from each other by peculiar civil institutions, but they will regard all as countrymen and fellow-citizens, that there may be one life and one world, like one united flock, guided by a common law.<sup>1</sup> We perceive here a remarkable anticipation of the idea of the kingdom of God which should embrace all mankind, of an animation of all mankind, proceeding from within

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch de fort. Alex. Cap. 6.

through the Divine consciousness that determines all and unites all; a correspondence to the words of Christ, there shall be but one flock and one shepherd. But Zeno expressed such a thought without showing how it could be actually realized. In the form of science, the only means, with which Zeno was acquainted for bringing about such a common consciousness, this must appear impossible, since science itself could not rise above the character of a national peculiarity, and must itself give rise to a principle of division among men, on account of the contrast between the small number of the scientific and the greater number of those who are unfit for science.

Moreover, what Zeno here expressed, in the way in which he meant it, from its very nature, could not be realized. His conception of this higher unity and community involved the defect, which has been already pointed out, of anticipating the course of historical development. He would have a community without acknowledging the individual rights, founded in the laws of creation and resting in the development of reason — a unity and community, with the blending of all peculiarities and peculiar differences, a community only in the destruction and not in the fulfilling of the peculiar systems of order [ordmungenen]. Mankind would so be fused together in an inorganic mass. What Zeno here aimed at, thinking that it could be realized before the time, what the anticipation of his soul foresaw — this, in a similar way, a dim idea of community [*Gemeinschaftsidee*] at present supposes itself capable of realizing — an idea that emanates from the Pantheistic principle, consciously or unconsciously held, and belongs to a mistaken Philanthropism and Communism, while it is dissevered from Christianity and antagonistic to the historical development that Christianity leads on. But those words of Christ designate the higher unity that does not destroy those individual forms of humanity which are founded in nature and in the course of history, but subordinates and transforms them. Here, also, the destruction is but a factor in the fulfilment. The kingdom of God does not appear in antagonism to the particular organisms of nations and States, but allows them to develop themselves according to their peculiar nature and law, and appropriates to itself only as different, subordinate forms for the realization of the highest good in mankind. When the Apostle Paul says, in Christ is neither Jew nor Greek but all are one in him, he does not, by means of this unity, annul the peculiarities of nations and their differences, but only what forms in the nations irreconcilable antagonisms. Here we have a unity which offers no violence to what is truly natural, and exactly in this

gives the guarantee for the possibility of its realization amidst all the relations of men, the unity, revealing itself in natural variety. Plutarch, who quotes these remarkable words of Zeno and acknowledges the greatness, the novelty of the idea which they express, yet knew well that in the way in which Zeno meant them, they could not be realized. He believed that what Zeno presaged, would be seen realized in another way, by means of the great community of nations, the community embracing the East and the West, which Alexander the Great had established. He says: what Zeno saw only in a dream, Alexander has actually realized.<sup>1</sup> But it is clear that by the agency of Alexander this unity could not be realized. By his means there was brought to pass a mingling of the nations which lost their vigorous peculiarities, the conditions of all genuine, vital culture and progress. The grand union of the Orient and Occident, effected by Alexander, was important only as a preparation and foundation for the true unity that could be realized only by the agency of Christianity; and this, as subsequent history teaches us, was its teleological significance.

Moreover, with the influence of the Pantheistic view of the world, the Stoical idea of evil is intimately connected. It is a consequence of the Stoical view of the world that all things must be alike subservient to the fulfilment of the law of the world. Evil, also, has here its essential place in the harmony of the universe, as is expressed in these words of Chrysippus: "Evil also appears, in some way, according to the law of nature, and, so to speak, not without being useful to the whole [system], for without it, good would not exist."<sup>2</sup> From such a view results the cold calmness with which the sage resigns himself to everything that occurs, since he recognizes the same unqualified necessity in the moral development as in the fulfilment of the laws of nature. With untroubled apathy, with complacent indifference, he looks upon the evil that occurs in the world, without feeling any holy repugnance. We see such a temper of mind expressed in the sentiments of Marcus Aurelius, in his *Monologues*. But how meaningless does life become, when man is looked upon as nothing but a puppet in a show, where the evil not less than the good play a necessary part! How can we speak of moral earnestness in the strife with evil! Such a notion is, in the truest sense, at war with the ethico-theological view which Christianity takes of the world, according to which man, in the fulfilment of his moral task, regards

<sup>1</sup> L. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *de stoic. repugn.* Cap. 35.

himself as one who contends for the ends of the kingdom of God against the abuse of creaturely freedom that opposes the realization of them. He knows, at the same time, that evil is a result of free will, and, against its will, must serve a law that is higher and mighty over all. He himself acts in unison with that law, being conscious that in fulfilling it for the suppression of evil in order to render evil subservient to the Divine purposes, his own active coöperation is counted upon. His sympathetic love for those who have incurred the penalty of suffering by their rebellion against the Divine order, and his trust in an Almighty love to which everything, even evil, though against its own will, must be subservient, cannot weaken in him the holy repugnance to evil as to something that has its foundation solely in the abuse of creaturely freedom. This spiritual repose of the struggling Christian is something widely different from the supreme indifference and cold resignation of the Stoical sage.

We see in the Stoical ethics the necessity not merely of thinking of morality in an abstract, general way, but of presenting a picture of moral conduct, stamped in clear, individual features. Such a picture, the idea of the sage should furnish. But as it is the defect of the Stoical ethics that they cannot rise above an undefined generality, this defect belongs to the idea of the sage. From the contemplation of this general picture, one will not learn what the moral task or mission of man is, and how every one has his particular part in the same, and under the definite, historical conditions in which he is situated, ought to contribute to its realization. One cannot deduce from it what the moral conduct should be, in given circumstances. Indeed, the idea of the sage can only be regarded as an ideal. The sage, in the empirical manifestation, exhibits himself as aiming, in his efforts, at the ideal. But he who is conceived of as endeavoring to reach the ideal, involuntarily confounds himself with this ideal, and this leads to the sage's self-exaltation, to the deifying of human virtue, as have we already observed it in the words of Chrysippus, which liken the wise man to Jupiter. The consideration of ethics from the position of Christianity, does not proceed from abstract ethical laws, but from the contemplation of a living ideal of the just and the holy, which answers to the idea of the sage in Stoicism; but this is not a fancied ideal, but one that exhibits itself as actually realized. Christianity presents to our view morality, realized in a life. We here see before us how the man who corresponds perfectly to the idea of man, has acted, under all relations, in fulfilling the moral task and problem of his life [*seiner sittlichen lebens-aufgabe*]; and

after this type, which has become historical, the whole life of mankind should be moulded. That one divine-human type is to be exhibited by every one, in his particular circumstances, in the fulfilment of the moral mission which he recognizes as prescribed for him. So nothing remains in undefined generalness, but everything has in it individual life. And the Christian cannot incur the danger of confounding himself with the ideal toward which he strives. He is ever conscious of the perpetual contrast between himself and the ideal. And although he recognises in this ideal an immutable rule for his conduct and the guarantee that he himself, by faithful and persevering endeavors, shall one day fully correspond in character to his ideal, yet the contemplation of this ideal, which has become historical, will always lead him anew to perceive how far he falls short of a perfect agreement with the same. In this is founded an essential mark of that humility which is at the basis of all Christian virtue and was most of all wanting in Stoicism.

The idealizing of the sage leads Stoicism to ascribe to him an autonomy by which he sometimes raises himself above the moral laws and makes his own law for himself. This is manifest in the sentiment concerning suicide. If Stoicism had consistently carried out the principle of harmony with the law of the universe, of an agreement between the law of human life and the law of the whole, the inference would have been apparent, that no real contradiction could exist between the position and circumstances into which man has been led by the development of the whole world and what his moral dignity would require of him; but that the circumstances in which fortune has placed him must show to him the mode in which he is to manifest his moral dignity and fulfil the moral task and mission of his life. But we have already observed how Stoicism — because it wanted the true conception of the Divine guidance of the world to a definite goal, because it wanted the teleological element, and so a perception of the meaning and significance of personal life — we have observed how Stoicism could not remain faithful to its principle, could not here close the conflict and strife, whose adjustment can be formed only from the position of Christian faith. Hence Stoicism admits cases in which such a conflict exists between the fortunes and the moral dignity of the individual that he thinks it impossible for him, in justice to the latter, to continue to live, and the sage makes himself master of his own life — the *εὐλογὸς ἀξιωμῆ* of the Stoics. The younger Cato acted according to this principle, when he would not survive the Roman Republic. Since, during the times of the

first Roman emperors, many noble souls, feeling the contrast between themselves and the sad form of the public life, the shameful bondage and the degradation of morals, sought a refuge in the Stoical autonomy, many instances of such a self-destruction occurred. Many noble Romans gave themselves up to death in order to escape an unworthy treatment at the hands of despotism, or when they saw their activity stopped by an incurable disease which paralyzed all their powers, and supposed that they could not live longer in a worthy manner. But Christianity carries out to its consequences the principle of the harmony between the individual and the universal law. So in the circumstances ordered by God, the man ever perceives what is, in all relations, his life-task, the thought of the Divine government of the world which rules the circumstances and guides the man in his conduct under them; as he desires to be nothing but the organ of this thought. Hence he perceives, in all relations and situations, what he has to do in order to fulfil his moral task and mission; how he is to evince his true moral dignity, in glorifying God. This is the true, invincible greatness of the Christian, by means of which he is lifted above the whole power of outward circumstances, since he makes all things, however narrowing and depressing they may appear to others, subservient to the Divine life that is in him; uses all things only to perfect this life. So long as God has not brought the thread of his earthly life to an end, by the course of nature or by a casualty that befalls him, unsought, while he is engaged in fulfilling his moral mission, he will think himself able to fulfil this mission only by preserving his life, and just in this to exercise real courage which can be overcome neither by life nor death. To this have many suffering and struggling Christians borne witness, under all the circumstances by which those men of antiquity believed themselves to be called to terminate their life; Christians, like poor Servulus, who shines forth in his grandeur, as a beggar; in that divine, servant's form of Christian virtue.

The view of the moral ideal, in the idea of the sage, has led Stoicism to testify to many truths which contradict the common ways of thinking, and belong to the so-called Paradoxes. There, a relationship between Stoicism and Christianity will discover itself. The truth which is drawn up from the depths of the religious or moral consciousness, must appear paradoxical to the common standards of the world; the paradox, the sign of the Divine, the Divine wisdom, foolishness to the world. Thus Christianity also has its paradoxes, not only in matters of faith, which are called mysteries, but also in

ethics, as both are parts of one whole. A religion which comes from Divine revelation, must have paradoxes in its ethics. But it will also here be shown, how what is foreshadowed in the Stoical ethics, cannot receive its true significance and be actually realized, except in connection with the Christian life. What, on the Stoical position, has its basis in self-exaltation and can be expressed much more than exemplified, will become a thing of real life, having its root in Christian humility. Origen's recognition of this analogy is a part of the fine observations of this able and ingenious man.<sup>1</sup> We refer to all those predicates which are said to be true, only when applied to the sage, but with reference to all others are said to have but a semblance of truth. Thus, for example, that "*the sage is alone truly free, all others are slaves.*" Freedom was defined as the power of independent activity, of self-determination according to one's will, the ἐξοντοσία αὐτονομίας;<sup>2</sup> or, as Origen quotes,<sup>3</sup> the guidance of life that corresponds to law, the νομίμη ἐπιφύση. This agrees with what Christ says, that he who commits sin, is the slave of sin, and that only he whom the Son of God makes free, is in truth free. So long as man has not yet attained this freedom, he continues to be the sport of outward influences which operate upon him. While he is disposed to direct himself by his own volitions, he is yet constantly dependent upon the outward world, and must, against his will, serve an extraneous law. The will which is grounded in the higher, original nature, attaining to a free development, is the only true and free will; because it is in harmony with the Almighty will that governs the world, it can be forced by no power. This is the only true ἐξοντοσία αὐτονομίας, and without this freedom, everything else that is called freedom, is only slavery. But yet the Stoical sage could not attain to this freedom. We have seen the irreconcilable contradiction between one's determination of his own will and the law of the universe. The σύλογος ἔξαγωγή is a proof of the absence of this true freedom. By means of this true freedom, the dependence even, which men cannot escape, will become a chosen, a free dependence, a subject of the exertion of moral freedom.

In this connection belongs the saying that *the sage is the only king.*<sup>4</sup> The sage is the real sovereign of himself and is accountable to no other. An ἀρχὴ ἀρνεύθυνος was ascribed to him. Chrysippus says that the ruler must have a correct knowledge of what good and

<sup>1</sup> Orig. in Joh. tom. 2. Cap. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Words of Zeno in Diog. Laert. Zeno, Cap. 64.

<sup>3</sup> L. I.

<sup>4</sup> Οἱ μόνοι δὲ ἀλευθέροι εἰναι τοὺς νοοῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλεῖς.

evil are, and that no one of the wicked has this knowledge. This will remind us that Christians are designated in the New Testament as a royal race, and it is said of them that they are called, with Christ, to rule the world. We must recognize the deep ethical significance of this promise, in which the shallowness of rationalism has often seen merely an accommodation to sensuous Jewish conceptions or an actual imprisonment of the mind in such conceptions. As the idea of true freedom could not be realized in the sage, no more could this idea of ruling the world. As the freedom of the man's own will must be subject to an extraneous law, so also this pretended sovereignty over himself must be subject to the law of a destiny, in opposition to which it can only take refuge in self-destruction. This assertion of a sovereignty can maintain its full truth only in connection with the teleological, historical view which makes man a co-worker in the realization of that problem [*aufgabe*] to which the whole course of the world must be subservient, and whose perfect accomplishment is its last aim [*ziel*]. All those who belong to the kingdom of God, to the realization of which all history must contribute, have a share in that sovereignty over the world which belongs to this kingdom; a sovereignty that is coming nearer and nearer to its actual realization. They carry in themselves the principle which is destined to transform the whole world; and, while they carry out this principle victoriously, in conflict with the world, they exercise this sovereignty. In the kingdom of God, the will of a single being is the common will, and all rule together with this one King, as his free organs, whose wills are in harmony with His will. This is the true *ἀνεύθυντος ἀρχῆς*, the kingship, to which every other must be subservient.

Chrysippus says further, in this passage, that *the sages are the only true judges*.<sup>1</sup> The function of the judge stands here in close connection with that of king. We shall here think of the promise, often misunderstood or not thoroughly comprehended in its deep import, that Christians shall one day be judges over all. They bear in themselves the highest standard [*richtschnur*], according to which alone good and evil can be truly judged, according to which everything shall one day be judged, and which is even now everywhere the rule for their moral judgment. In this sense, the Apostle Paul says that the *πνευματικός*, who regulates his whole conduct by this standard, cannot be fairly judged by another who is not on the same position, but that he himself is called to judge every other.

With this, belongs the saying that *the sage is the only rich man*,

<sup>1</sup> *Αιναστικοῖς.*

since he not only has the true riches, with which no others are acquainted, but, moreover, he alone possesses earthly goods, not as a slave, but using them without constraint, with reference to the aims of the kingdom of God. This it is which Christ designates in the parable, when he speaks of the true possession of that which one knows how to use rightly, and which Paul means, when he says of the Christian, that, having nothing, he possesses all things.

We mention further the remarkable analogy in the designation by Zeno of *the sages as the only priests*. We will here quote, in full, his fine words, that we may afterwards speak of their relation to the Christian position : "The sages are divine, for they have, as it were, God in themselves. But the bad man is an atheist. But the word atheist is used in a two-fold sense. One is called an atheist on account of his life which opposes the Divine; another, because he contemns the gods, and this last is not the case with every bad man. The true reverers of the gods are the good, for they are familiar with the laws which relate to the worship of the gods; since piety is the science of the true worship of the gods. They alone understand the right mode of making offerings to the gods (they have the purity which is requisite in order to make offerings to the gods aright); for they avoid crimes against the gods. And the gods have joy in them, for they are pious and upright in relation to the Divinity. The sages are the only priests, for they have a correct knowledge with respect to offerings, statues of the gods, purifications and the other services which are due to the gods."<sup>1</sup> As to the distinction here made between the two kinds of atheism, the theoretical and the practical, the conscious and the unconscious; all this we can transfer to the Christian position. When, in the Holy Scriptures, the wicked are characterized as those who know not God, we perceive in this a designation of practical atheism. When it is said of the sages that they are divine because they bear God in themselves, we recognize even in those who are called sages from the Stoical position, who have arrived at a consciousness of the higher nature of man, that Divine lineage (as Paul in his speech at Athens designates it) unfolding itself; we discern a forth-coming consciousness of God, in whom we live and move and have our being. In this meaning, there is truth in the words which were spoken from this ante-Christian position that was striving toward Christianity; and to this the fine admonition of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius has reference: "Honor the God within you."<sup>1</sup> But Stoicism wanted the correct conscious-

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laert. Zeno, Cap. 119.

<sup>1</sup> Τὸν εἰτός δαιμόνον φέρειν.

ness of what forms the contrast with this divine element in man, viz. the right consciousness of sin, against which consciousness, it often happens that the nobler a man is, the more he struggles, but not because he is nobler. Where this consciousness has manifested its power, not because it stands so written, but because it is a painful fact, undeniable by the true moral consciousness, one will also see that he must be first delivered from this ungodly element in order that he may attain to the possession of the true life that is victorious over evil; in order that he may be divine, in a higher sense, and have God in himself — the God who has communicated himself to a sinful race and with whom he can enter into real fellowship and communion, only through Christ. When Zeno, moreover, characterizes the sages as the only priests, we recognize the error which is the prevailing error of Stoicism and of the Grecian philosophy in general, viz. the predominant theoretical tendency, the principle that everything is derived from knowledge, and, we need not say, that what is here described as the true knowledge, is not the true knowledge. Still, we discern here a prophetic hint that a higher position would remove that contrast between the priests and not-priests, which was necessary in the religious development of antiquity. In Christianity, that which Stoicism could only presage, could not realize, has its full truth. The Christians are, in life and in knowledge, the true priests, since they alone are acquainted with and practise the true worship of God, and each one regards and conducts his vocation as a priestly one. The contrast between priests and not-priests, as well as between a priestly and unpriestly mode of conduct, is abrogated. All action in that earthly calling which is conceived of as a divine one, is priestly action.

We will, in the first place, bring to view another subordinate point to which we alluded in another connection. Among the characteristics of the Stoical sage belongs the *ἀναθασία*. To be sure, we are not allowed to confound this *ἀναθασία* in the Stoic's sense of the word, with a destitution of sensibility, with a dulness of feeling that is unsusceptible to the emotions of pleasure or pain, with a want of the *πάθη* which are founded in human nature. Stoicism readily perceives that this state of mind would be not at all moral, would be no virtue, but would be a want of natural capacities or an unnatural suppression of natural, human feelings. Zeno is aware that there is an *ἀναθασία* in a bad sense. He says that there is also another *ἀναθασία*, where the term designates a hardness of feeling, an insensibility to all emotion. Zeno opposes to this the moral *ἀναθασία* as the

*ἀνέπτυξεν*, that fortitude of the soul which cannot be shaken by the *στρῆτη*. It is, then, the perfect supremacy of reason, the dominion of the soul over nature, and in this contrast of the moral and the immoral *ἀναθεῖα*, Christianity is at one with Stoicism. But there is still a difference here which rests in the general difference of the two positions with respect to the relation of ethics to religion. In Stoicism, there is always this self-government of the reason, which stands opposed to the Christian virtue of humility; the spirit which subjects everything to itself, that desires to preclude any reaction of nature. On the contrary, the Christian, when in sorrow, gives himself up to the full feeling of human weakness, becomes in this way conscious of his dependence, and does not desire to divest himself of it; but through the strength of the Divine life, he overcomes the human weakness. In feeling his weakness, he feels strong. It is not with his own strength, but with the strength of God, that he strives. While he receives suffering as something sent by God, recognizes in it the educating wisdom of eternal love, he triumphs in suffering by the strength of the same God. The offering which is brought to God in suffering, one must, with full reflection and devotion, feel to be of such a character, in order that it may have its true meaning and significance. Thus Christ himself affords the highest example of the death of the martyr, in his victory over the *στρῆτη* which are felt in their full force. It is humility which—keeping asunder the Divine and the human, preserving the Divine pure when the reaction of nature threatens to intermingle itself—thus approves itself as the real power which holds the *στρῆτη* within their bounds; the *ἀναθεῖα* of the Divine life, not founded on the autonomy of reason or upon the spirit of moral self-assertion, but proceeding from this ground-principle of conscious dependence on God that directs and determines the whole life; the perfect balance in the harmony between the human and the Divine, as Schleiermacher rightly names it, the true beauty of the soul.

To the ideal of the sage belongs the unity of the moral virtues, that in the one, animating principle of the mind, in the dominion of the reason, all the single virtues have their basis. This unity does not take away the variety of the virtues, but they all appear only as different forms in which the single moral principle of the dominion of the reason manifests itself; all appear as but manifold *οὐγέσαις* of the one fundamental virtue.<sup>1</sup> In this also the Christian position will coincide with that of the Stoic. Here all the virtues appear only as

---

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laert. Zeno, Cap. 54.

various *εγκένειας* of the love which governs the whole life, as Paul (1 Cor. xiii.) refers all the fundamental Christian virtues back to the single principle of love. From the ideal position, we should also be able to say that all the virtues are implied in love, and whoever possesses the one virtue, has likewise all virtues. But the matter appears otherwise in that gradual process of appropriation and education that goes forth from enlivening love over all the powers of the soul. Indeed, love will not be able to accomplish its work in the development of the moral life and in the fulfilment of the moral mission [aufgabe] without the co-operation of all the active and formative virtues, all which become pervaded by the animating power of love; but yet a progress will be observed in the gradual establishment of its dominion over the whole spiritual life. Here comes the difference: love, inasmuch as it determines the judgment of the mind and carries on a conflict with the inner and outer world, in order gradually to subject all to itself, appears as *εργάσιας*, *σοφίας*, *ἀρεταίας*, wisdom, discretion, courage, patience, and in the gradual process of development, proceeding from the one, fundamental moral tendency, the one virtue can the more prevail, the other the more recede, until the whole work is completed and harmoniously consummated. The peculiarity of the Christian position in comparison with that of the Stoic may now be seen, on the one side, in this, that, as the consciousness of the contrast between the ideal and the phenomenal has a place in it, so the right relation between the unity in the idea and variety and diversity in the phenomenal appearance, comes plainly to view; on the other side, in this, that the principle of moral unity itself is a different one: the contrast between the intellectual and the practical position, on the one hand, virtue being regarded as the only knowledge of what is good, on the other hand, love having the highest place. This apprehension of the essential nature of morality, as consisting in knowledge, belongs not merely to Stoicism, but is a characteristic of the whole ethical tendency which proceeds from Socrates, and we shall therefore reserve for subsequent paragraphs the accurate investigation of the relation of this to the Christian idea.

With the consideration of morality, in its unity, is connected the consideration of immorality, in a similar respect. Here is to be mentioned the Stoical paradox, that all sins are equal to one another, like all virtues. Chrysippus says: "If one truth is not more true than another, and one falsehood not more false than another, then, too, between fraud and fraud, sin and sin, there is no difference.

And he who is distant a hundred stadia from Canobus and he who is distant but one stadium are, in like manner, not in Canobus. So he who sins more and he who sins less, are both distant from the good."<sup>1</sup> Also here Stoicism agrees with Christianity in the ideal position. On this position, Christianity makes but one antagonism between the godly and the ungodly life, the practice of the moral law in all its requirements and variance with that law, love or selfishness governing the life. Between the two, there lies no middle point. And for the purpose of self-examination in relation to the requirements of the moral law, it is important to recognize this principle, with respect to all sin, inward and external, in all its forms of manifestation. This is the moral mirror which Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, holds up that men may contemplate themselves. Accordingly James says (2: 10) that he who has broken but one commandment, is guilty of breaking the whole law. And John, from this position, places every one who hates his brother, in the same category with the murderer. On this position, he says that whoever is born of God, does not sin, without making any distinction, because all sins stand, in like manner, in contradiction to the essential principle of the Divine life. But Christianity here also teaches us to observe the true relation of the ideal position to that of the phenomenal manifestation. It leads us to the consciousness, that if, on the ideal position, all appear as one and only the distinction of the principles is held fast, yet, in the phenomenal manifestation, manifold steps or stages are to be distinguished. In proportion as the Divine life, in its development in conflict with sin, has pressed forward more or less victoriously, in this proportion is the reaction of the ungodly principle more or less prominent. So the same John who makes this unqualified contrast and distinction in the ideal position, still makes a distinction in the empirical judgment and condemnation of sin; as the one is required for the strictness of self-examination, the other for the loving, righteous judgment of the different forms of phenomenal manifestation which the moral life assumes.

The conception of the ideal of the sage and of the moral unity accounts, moreover, for the saying of Stoicism that the law *forbids* many things to the wicked but commands nothing positive; for they cannot do what is good.<sup>2</sup> We may be here allowed to compare what Paul says of the *rōmos* in relation to sin; how the *rōmos* is able to exert a certain coercive discipline by means of which the might of evil in the outward manifestation is repressed, but cannot produce

<sup>1</sup> Diog. Laert. Zeno, Cap. 64, § 120.

<sup>2</sup> Plut. de Stoic. repugn. Cap. 11.

real goodness in man, the law being given only as a wall of protection against the sins which break forth in outward actions (Gal. 3: 19); for the true *κατόρθωμα* there is required a new principle which moulds the moral life, such a principle as the law, notwithstanding from without the sin that reigns within, could not furnish.

## II. SOCRATES AND PLATO.

Having treated of Stoicism as an isolated phase of ethics in relation to Christianity, we recur to the connected historical development of the Grecian ethics. Hence we must begin with him who imparted the impulse to every predominantly ethical element in Grecian science, and from whom emanated all the rays of that higher development of life which was prophetic of Christianity and tended toward it; with Socrates, the highest phenomenon upon the position of antiquity, where its spirit rises above its own natural limits [*über sich selbst hinausgeht*]. This phenomenon, for the very reason that it stands so alone upon the soil of the ancient world, that it bears, shut up in itself the pregnant germ of a hidden future, which could not form itself out of the elements of the ancient world; just for this reason, it has in it something so mysterious and concealed, being in this respect like the outward appearance of Socrates; the light shining in a dark place, as the harbinger of the full day that was afterwards to break. Not without reason has Marcilius Ficinus styled Socrates the John the Baptist of the ancient world. The analogy between Socrates and Christ himself has been often held up to view; and, although it has been misunderstood from many positions, it still has its truth. Only with the points of resemblance, we must also regard the points of difference. It is a characteristic fact to indicate the greatness of both, that no single man was in a position to gain a view of the entire picture. In the conception of them, contrasts could and must arise, which allow their higher unity to be overlooked, and both which have yet a single truth at their basis. We can look upon the true picture, only by regarding, as united together, what these contrasts have separated; by grasping both the opposite modes of view, and everything which, in the way of mediation and explanation, lies between them. This holds true, as well of the Synoptical Gospels and John, as of Xenophon and Plato. But a distinction is here manifest, as Schleiermacher, in his Hermeneutics, has finely shown, in that there went forth from the Spirit of Christ an overwhelming attractive power toward unity, such as could not go forth

from the mind of Socrates; and we shall therefore learn far more of the real Christ in comparing the Synoptical Gospels and John, than we shall discover of the real Socrates in comparing Xenophon and Plato. Socrates is the representative of the aspiration after the divine, in the form in which it attained its clearest self-consciousness, the representative of the insufficiency of human knowledge and action. So by means of his dialetic, which was the offspring of this consciousness, he sought to lead others to an understanding of this fact. He prefigures the Christian position, closing his life in the consciousness of the restoration to health, which he goes to attain in a higher state of being, with the injunction that a cock should be offered for him to Aesculapius — for we cannot look upon this narrative as something merely mythical; we must recognize, as signified in it, a profound truth. We are also disposed to discover a higher earnestness and a genuine Socratic element, in what Plato makes Socrates say with respect to the need of a Divine revelation, where he distinguishes from the *ἀρθώντως λόγος*, a *λόγος θεῖος*, as the sure guide.<sup>1</sup> Whoever sees in Socrates only the man who brought to human consciousness the true idea of knowledge — and this is indeed one aspect of this great man — to him will such an expression, if spoken in earnest, appear unworthy of Socrates, inasmuch as by it the autonomy of science is denied and the same is made dependent upon an external authority. But one must see in Socrates more than the representative of this single side of human nature. We shall recognize in him the highest embodiment of the idea of man, to be found upon the soil of all antiquity, and ascribe to what is purely human [dem rein Menschlichen] the latent aspiration after something higher than human science; something, not irreconcilable with the position of him who, with the idea of knowledge, at the same time bore witness to its insufficiency. In the *δαιμόνιος* of Socrates, we shall likewise be obliged to recognize a mystical element, a gravitating impulse toward God [unmittelbaren Zug des Göttlichen], which transcends the reasoning faculty. But even if we are forced to admit that these words were not meant in full earnest, we shall still continue to discern in them a truth, unconsciously expressed, of a prophetic character. From what has been said, the position of Socrates will be seen, in his relation to Him who could style himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, who could invite all the weary and heavily laden to come to him that they might, in him, find rest.

Socrates stands at the head of those world-historical men, who, in

---

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Phaedo* pag. 85 d.

the times when faith in anything Divine and in objective truth has been shaken by the sophistry of an all-destroying intellect and the might of an all-grasping spirit of denial, have led men back into the depths of their own soul (which is akin to God), and caused them to find, in the immediate consciousness of the true and the divine, a certainty that is raised above all doubts. From the speculative questions, in answering which the soul ever anew fatigues itself, he turned their eye back to their own moral nature. From nature, he called the soul to its own inner being, that it might discover the cardinal points of its position [sich orientiren] and learn to be at home. It is the important *γνῶθι σεαὐτόν*, which the oracle of Delphi commended, as the distinguishing trait of Socrates. So it is the great impulse that emanated from him, which continued to work upon the ages, and in later times again and again appeared, by the instrumentality of the men who have brought his spirit over to later centuries; the direction of the mind to that in man which is immediately related to God, to the moral element, and from this, to the religious. It is the ethico-practical element that is especially prominent in Socrates, and by which the scientific spirit of Greece was turned aside from physical philosophy to ethics. It may seem to contradict this view, that from Socrates the tendency proceeded which caused virtue to be treated as a form of knowledge, whence he appears as the founder of the intellectualistic tendency which we afterwards see, working itself out in Plato, as we have before observed it in Stoicism. If we regard this in connection with the practical tendency of Socrates, of which we have already spoken, we might be led to conjecture that this conception was not a characteristic feature of Socrates, but is far more truly to be ascribed to the speculative mind of Plato; rather to the Socrates of Plato than to the real Socrates. That this is not the fact, however, but that it is a characteristic of Socrates and is a part of what passed over from him to all the scientific ethics of the times, immediately subsequent, is clear from the circumstance that Aristotle, who was capable of distinguishing so exactly what actually belonged to Socrates from the new features which sprung from the peculiar spirit of Plato, names this principle plainly, as a characteristic of Socrates.<sup>1</sup> But we must regard Socrates in his historical positions and relations, if we would perceive how this man, of a predominantly practical tendency, could arrive at such a principle and in order to perceive also the portion of truth that is in the principle itself. Socrates was obliged to give to morals a firm, strong

<sup>1</sup> Aristot. Magn. Moral. 1, 1 ed. Becker, tom. II. pag. 1182 et 1182.

foundation in science, in his conflict with the sophists who transformed everything into an arbitrary dictum. He must necessarily endeavor to show that truly moral action cannot spring from vacillating opinions, but only from a moral consciousness that is sure of itself [*in sich selbst gewissen*] — the consciousness of the idea of the morally good, by which everything should be determined. He must give prominence to the truth, that no conduct is truly moral but that which has its origin and support in the idea of the good, and is consciously moral. And he does not here mean a mere theoretical knowledge, but a consciousness which is rooted in the life, the consciousness of that higher moral nature of man, which has become a subject of reflection. On the position of antiquity, there was but one means of bringing the higher self-consciousness to distinctness and clearness, and this was the mediation of science. The element was wanting by means of which this higher self-consciousness has been made something independent of science, so that it can, in like manner, be brought home to all men; and this element is the development of the higher life, emanating from faith. Thus we see Socrates, in his exact polemics, confined by the narrow position of the ancient world, and hence he could not avoid contributing to the still wider extension of this principle of Intellectualism which could only be overthrown by the agency of Christianity. This is important on account of the consequences which result. If morality is conceived of as an affair of knowledge, it follows that, as the good arises from knowledge, the evil also rests merely upon a want of knowledge, is something involuntary, and hence the real ground of evil in the perverted direction of the will, which, as the original cause, perverts the judgment of the soul, cannot be acknowledged. We must consider this principle, then, as one which passed over from Socrates to Plato.

[To be continued.]