

from the pure fountain of virtue, from prudence, fortitude, justice, and a spirit of forbearance towards our enemies. The happy life imaged by Epicurus resembled neither the rushing of the swollen mountain current, nor the rapidness of the standing pool; it was the smooth gliding river that flows gently onward to the sea. This state could *only* be attained by a wise management of the body and steady government of the mind. Pain is to be shunned unless it led to a greater pleasure, if so, it must be endured; while no pleasure was to be sought that would result in pain. Pleasure in the view of Epicurus was not transitory, but lasting and imperishable. He renounced those pleasures which could not last, while Zeno repudiated all pleasure as an evil. In Stoicism we see the ascendancy of a stern will; in Epicureanism, the duly moderated desires.

The inflexible rigidity of the Stoic philosophy was adapted to disturbed, revolutionary conditions of society, for the clash of arms and din of war, and under such conditions its doctrines would be most effectually exemplified and perpetuated; but as society attained a milder attitude, and a material refinement became more largely disseminated, the gentler system of Epicurus would predominate. Thus we find Stoicism to be the great controlling and regulating power of moral enthusiasm in the Roman Empire, even when the mainsprings of the national life had become poisoned and corrupt, when licentiousness had contaminated all classes, and most men rapidly grasped material gain. Epicureanism, in the meanwhile, was not without some followers of superior excellence; but the system was too tranquil, too utilitarian, for the sturdy, unyielding Roman. The influence of both these systems on Greece as well as Rome, in awakening enquiry, in rousing the moral instincts, and exposing the grossness of popular vices, entitles them to be regarded as a providential preparation and fitting prelude to the introduction and final establishment of the divine system of Christian Ethics. Several causes existed in Rome, especially, that give emphasis to this remark.

The cosmopolitanism of the city had other sources than the influx of Grecian Philosophy. It was a great central focus, which gathered men of all nations, classes, sects, and religions. Here was found the height of refinement and nobility of mind, and the lowest depths of ignorance and vice. Stoicism happily blended with these manifold forces. This system first propagated, though it could not enforce, the great principles of a common fraternity; while, in the mind of many a Greek and Roman philosopher, politician, statesman, and emperor, it gave a loftiness of thought and a longing after some greater good that seemed almost prophetic of the approach of a new and divine revelation.

As a result of this, the life of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, one of Rome's greatest emperors, and himself the most perfect exponent of the Stoic philosophy, is a remarkable illustration. Ruling over a dissolute people, many of whom were abandoned to luxury, licentiousness, and crime, his own life flowed on to its close in a smooth, clear, uninterrupted channel of virtue. In him we seem to find a conscientious seeker after God, a soul continually reaching forth toward the only helper for prostrate humanity, yet baffled and prostrated by a sense of his own helplessness. The *Meditations* of the Emperor, composed sometimes in solitude, sometimes amid the carnage of the battle-field, appear to be the breathings of a devout and earnest heart, which, to use one of his own figures, like "the purity of a star, needs no veil to hide its nakedness." It is indeed the picture of sadness; not that sadness which comes from minor heart-aches and imaginary sorrows, but that of a truly magnanimous and sensitive soul, struggling, though powerlessly, to raise the weak, the down-trodden, and the oppressed; to maintain, through all the vicissitudes of life, the most austere morality; and to combine the moral beauty of unspotted virtue with the material loveliness of the natural world. "Pass," said this moral hero, "through thy little space of time conformably to nature, and end thy journeying in content, just as the olive falls off when it is ripe, blessing