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CYCLOPÆDIA

OF

BIBLICAL LITERATURE

EDITED BY

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to introduce. The statements of Stephen correspond in more than one particular with what was afterwards taught by St. Paul.

His speech is well deserving of the most diligent study, and the more it is understood the higher idea will it convey of the degree in which he possessed the qualities ascribed to him in the fifth chapter. Very different views have been taken of it by commentators. Upon the whole we are inclined to follow that which is given by Neander in the work referred to. Even as a composition it is curious and interesting from the connection which may be discovered between the various parts, and from the unity given to the whole by the honesty and earnestness of the speaker. Without any formal statement of his object, Stephen obviously gives a confession of his faith, sets forth a true view of the import of his preaching, in opposition to the false gloss that had been put upon it, maintains the justness of his cause, and shows how well founded were his denunciations against the impenitent Jews.

He first enters upon a historical statement, involving a refutation of the charges which had been made against him of hostility to the Old Testament institutions; but at the same time showing that acceptance with God does not depend upon outward relations. Under the same form he illustrates the providential care exercised by the Almighty in regard to the Jewish people, along with the opposition exhibited by the Jews towards those sent to them by God. And he points the application of his whole discourse by charging his carnal-minded hearers with resisting, like their fathers, the Holy Ghost. The effect upon his auditors was terrible. Conscience-smitten, they united in wreaking their vengeance on the faithful denouncer of their guilt. They drowned his voice with their clamorous outcries, they stopped their ears against him, they rushed on him with one accord in a tumultuous manner, they carried him forth, and without waiting for the authority of law, they stoned him to death as a blasphemer [STONING].

The frantic violence of his persecutors did not disturb the tranquillity of the martyr, and he died praying that his murderers might be forgiven (vii. 60). In his prayer he showed that a new spirit had been introduced into the world, and taught the Christians that the example of their Divine Master was to be followed even in circumstances that they might have conceived to be impossible. Nor was this prayer without effect. Saul of Tarsus, who consented to his death (viii. 1), and kept the clothes of them that stoned him (vii. 58), heard his words, mocking, doubtless, like the rest. But the prayer was heard, and to it we owe the ministry of the apostle Paul (Tillemont, *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 8).

The only other particular connected with Stephen, mentioned in Scripture, is, that 'devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him' (viii. 2). No information is given respecting the time of his death, or the place of his burial. In the fifth century (415), however, the relics of the martyr were said to have been miraculously discovered by a Greek priest of the name of Lucian (Luciani Presbyteri *Epistola de Inventionibus S. Stephani*), and they were brought to Europe by Orosius. Evodius, Bishop of Mÿsala, wrote a small treatise concerning the

miracles performed by them; and Severus, a Bishop of the Island of Minorca, wrote a circular letter of the conversion of the Jews in that island, and of the miracles wrought in that place, by the relics which Orosius left there. These writings are contained in the works of Augustine, who gives the sanction of his authority to the incredible follies they record (*De Civit. Dei*, xxii. 8).

Since the fifth century, Stephen's day has been celebrated on the 26th of December. The date is confessed by many Roman Catholic writers to be arbitrary, and is wholly without authority.

STOICS AND EPICUREANS. A concise notice of these celebrated sects is all that is required for the elucidation of the Christian history, and all that the limits of the present work allow.

The Stoics derive their name from *στωά*, 'a porch'; because their founder Zeno was accustomed to teach in a certain porch at Athens. This Zeno, of Citium, in Cyprus, must not be confounded with an earlier Zeno of Elea. The younger and more celebrated philosopher of the name was born from 360 to 350 years B.C., and formed a system of tenets which combined much of the harsh asceticism of the Cynics with the noble moral aspirations and vexatious verbal quibblings of the Platonists. The Greek stoical schools produced the most elaborate speculations on grammar which those ages could boast of, and in moral teaching they showed a strong tendency to a technical and over-systematic nomenclature. Under such a covert a Jesuitical casuistry might easily arise, and it is not to be supposed that the asceticism and high pretensions of this sect uniformly implied virtuous conduct. Their most revolting paradoxes appear to be only exaggerations of truth: exaggerations into which they were probably forced by their intense controversy with the Epicureans, in part through their resolute adherence to the deductions of their own logic, in part from a certain love of eccentricity, with which the Stoics were not unjustly charged.

Epicurus is said to have been born at Athens B.C. 344, and to have opened a school (or rather a garden) where he propagated his tenets, at a time when the doctrines of Zeno had already obtained credit and currency. In *physics*, in *religion*, in *politics*, and in *morals*, the two systems espoused directly opposite views. The Stoics, like the Platonists, were practically disinclined to what we distinctively name *PHYSICAL* philosophy, and acquiesced in numerous vague dogmas concerning it, which had no ground in experiment or cautious observation, preferring mystical or moral views, and such as well combined with popular superstition. Thus they held the sun and stars to be real gods, because composed of fire, which was asserted to be a divine quality. The Epicureans, on the contrary, pursued *physics*, in too hasty a spirit, no doubt, but nevertheless, on the whole, with much of the genius of the moderns, and, we might add, with surprising success, if the followers of Epicurus had followed in his steps by inquiring as freely as he. With creditable discernment, he adopted the Atomic theory of Democritus, a philosopher of first-rate genius, though born before his time; who, when not a single sound principle had been laid down in chemistry, or in terrestrial mechanics, seized on the grand idea of Newton, that the heavenly bodies are regulated by the same

laws as the minutest objects on the surface of the earth, and taught, concerning the constituent particles of matter, a doctrine which Dalton and Berzelius have developed and established. Accordingly, in the physics of Epicurus was found an intense antagonism to existing prejudices and popular superstitions. With him the sun was only a large fire, and not a god; the lightning was guided by physical laws, and was not the bolt of Jupiter to strike down the impious. Many of the Epicurean explanations of physical phenomena (as may be seen in Lucretius) show the school to have been much in advance of the age; but as unfortunately they were not satisfied to learn gradually, they spoiled their best ideas by mingling them with the crudest absurdities.

It is in striking contradiction to what might have been expected from each school, that while Epicurus endowed his atoms with certain *chance-movements* (an idea which he had superadded to the theory of Democritus), the Stoics maintained that the whole universe, including the gods, were subject to an unalterable *fate*, which they also called *providence*. That they subjected the gods to this exterior force, is perhaps explained by their material conception of godhead.

Since they studied to keep as close as possible to the popular RELIGION, the Stoics almost necessarily applied a system of mystical allegorizing to all that was offensive in the current legends. In no part of their tenets is their sincerity more doubtful: nevertheless, if we may accept as any fair representation of their devotional feeling the hymn to Jupiter by the Stoic Cleanthes, which is by far the noblest religious address in all antiquity, we shall set them on a much higher eminence than any other sect. Cleanthes, while elevating Jupiter to a position which may satisfy a strict Monotheist, ascribes to him the purest moral character, as being 'the cause of every thing, except of Siu;' and concludes by fervent prayers for the divine teaching to scatter all darkness from the soul, and enable it to attain divine wisdom. The Epicureans (in spite of the chance-movements ascribed to atoms) pushed out to a great extent the supremacy of general laws in the universe; and as they were strict Materialists, could make no exception in favour of the moral world. Hence they would admit of no interferences of the deities in the concerns of man, whether by external visitation or by secret spiritual influence on the heart. The gods were represented as serene, majestic beings, too distant, and too quietly comfortable, to care about human concerns; so that while it was proper to think of them with reverence and admiration, to pray to them or worship them with ceremonies was absurd. They undoubtedly are such a nullity in the practical creed of Epicurus, and the muscular weakness, which, in consequence of the light and airy texture of their spiritual form, he ascribes to them, wears so ridiculous an aspect, as to give colour to the imputation that his Theism was assumed to avoid the popular odium which an undisguised Atheism would have incurred.

Concerning POLITICS no well-defined dogmas seem to have been propounded by the Stoics; but the genius of their creed led them to patronise the national religion in each country, and thereby to give to their pupils a strong sentiment of special

citizenship. This is the first element of patriotic exertion everywhere; and the early Stoics, however unsuited by many parts of their creed for public life, maintained, in theory at least, that their wise man was the best ruler of a state, and ought upon occasion to devote property and life in his country's service. The Epicureans, from their devotion to physical science, and their contempt for general literature, were cosmopolitan in their tendency, with too little concern for any one particular state to make patriotic sacrifices. Even the trouble of exercising power was generally thought by them too heavy a burden. Whether less or more voluptuous in personal life—a Pomponius Atticus or a Mucianus—they were resolute in refusing, or glad to get rid of, official power, and to slip back into social comfort and quiet speculation, like the gods whom they admired. This political selfishness was in strange contrast with the unaffected and warm friendships of their private life, in which they were capable, if not of great sacrifices, yet of constant, amiable, forbearing, and active affection. But it is probable that a prevalent neglect of historical reading, joined with the distaste for the national ballads which their scepticism necessitated, could not but render political pursuits, in Greece, uncongenial to them.

The MORAL system of each school was in close connection with their other views. Both taught that we must live 'in harmony with Nature,' but they interpreted this differently. The Stoic theory erected a noble fabric of virtue, which the wise man would pursue at all events, and proclaimed, that while virtuous, he was perfectly happy, whatever his external circumstances. This may be forgiven, as only an over-statement of a valuable truth. The same may be said of their dogma, that 'all sins are equal,' that 'the wise cannot fall away,' and that 'he is a king, though in abject poverty.' But they to a great extent spoiled all that was excellent in these ideas, sometimes by sour asceticism and fanatical coxcombry, yet oftener perhaps by the despicable logical cavilling which they had inherited from Socrates and Plato. Grammar and dialectics appear literally to have been the curse of these schools, and utterly incapacitated them from acting on the popular intellect, to which their subtleties were unintelligible, and their verbose reasoning a source of merited disgust. Epicurus, on the contrary, like modern physical philosophers, cared for *things*, not for *words*; and had at least the good sense to know, that since morality belongs to the mass of mankind, it must rest on broad foundations which they can appreciate, and cannot need lengthy and hair-splitting reasonings to adapt it to practice. His contempt of rhetoric and of the art of elegant composition may possibly not have been more than is expected by us in every mathematical work, but has exposed him to frequent invectives from Cicero. The Epicurean theory of morals was undoubtedly wholly *selfish*, and this was its blight. Like the modern advocates of the selfish system, he taught that 'pleasing sensations' constitute all that is good in anything; even benevolence and generosity were resolved into selfish affections, by supposing them to have their spring in the 'pleasure' of him who exercises them. This theory has been innocently held by many Christians, in whom it is a fault of

the head, not of the heart; and the same may have been the case with numbers of the Epicureans. But it is impossible, without practical mischief to the multitude, to confound under the single name of 'pleasure' feelings so different as those of the sailor who risks his life to save a stranger, and those of the prodigate who sacrifices the happiness of others to his sensuality. Epicurus taught that men should be amiable members of a family, enjoying freely all innocent social pleasures, and abstaining from all vice and crime, and his practice was as pure as his precepts; but he also said, that we should be thus virtuous, because this would yield us most pleasure; and by making this his foundation, he gave currency to a great debasing idea, which has always generated rotteness.

Thus far we have spoken of Stoicism and Epicureanism, chiefly as they were among the Greeks; but both systems underwent modification among the Romans; the former for the better, the latter (it would seem) for the worse. Perhaps this must in any case have happened. Stoicism, which had in it some great and true moral ideas, might have been expected to clear itself of its asceticism, its exorcism, its love of paradox, its subtleties, its mythological absurdities, by the wear and tear of practical life, and by the ridicule of men. Epicureanism, which inculcated (at least in appearance) mere self-indulgence, would attract to itself all the more grovelling natures, and the philosophy itself would become deteriorated by the practice and interpretation of its votaries. But beside this, the Epicurean intellect miserably stagnated through the insane idolatry directed towards their founder. This is the more amazing, considering how little was original in his system; for he had taken his morals from Aristippus and Eudoxus, as his physics from Democritus: yet they seem to have made no effort to improve upon his theories, or perfect even his physical speculations, but wasted all their labour in endless commentaries on his work. Even the Roman poet Lucretius, a genius far superior to Epicurus, panegyricizes him in the most fulsome strains:—

'— Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclute Memmi,
Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
Nunc appellatur Sapientia,' &c.

The Stoics were not so absurd, however great their respect for their founder; and, in consequence, they from time to time received new views and fresh light from several sources.

Moreover, it is probable that the genius of the Roman people, and of all Western Europe, was better fitted to improve Stoicism than Epicureanism. Their more practical mind despised and cast aside very much of the trashy logic which disgraced the acute Greeks, and a mere riddance from this was an immense gain to Stoicism. On the contrary, their coarser natures, in adopting such a theory, as, that 'pleasure was the chief good,' were likely to accept this in the worst sense; nor do they appear in general to have had much taste for the tranquil ease and intellectual retirement which was the paradise of the frugal Epicurus. Men of weak passions and strong mind may live virtuously under the selfish theory, or by arguments of expediency; but ambitious, ardent, or passionate temperaments, as they are capable of higher excellence, so are they in dan-

ger of deeper debasement, unless influenced by some nobler ideal of excellence. The Roman Stoics were the very pride of the nation; many of them characters who must ever be thought of with reverence and admiration. But before their doctrine reached its culminating point, it had received, we may believe, a mollifying influence from Christianity, which had risen by its side. Epicurus, a Greek, who is said to have flourished from Nero to Hadrian, or even later, is one eminent extant source of information concerning the improved Stoicism of the day. Self-denial is his great virtue, but a true and beautiful benevolence animates it. His contemporary, Seneca, and that best of emperors, Marcus Aurelius, are our authentic informants what Roman Stoicism had become. That they could not see Christianity to be a supernatural system may be lamented; but that they (consciously or unawares) drew much instruction from it, ought surely to be praised, not harshly censured, as it has been. Concerning the Epicureans, the poem of Lucretius is our most accessible source of knowledge. Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, Cicero, and Plutarch, are very valuable to us for the doctrines of both sects.—

F. W. N.

STONING. [PUNISHMENTS.]

STORAX (*Στίραξ*) occurs only in Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 15, 'I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aspalathus, and I yielded a pleasant odour like the best myrrh,' &c. Sweet storax is mentioned by various Greek writers, from the time of Hippocrates to that of Dioscorides. Several kinds of it were known, varying chiefly in the form in which it was obtained, or the degree of adulteration to which it had been subjected. Most of the kinds are still known in commerce. It is obtained by incisions made in the bark of the tree called *styrax officinale* by botanists. This tree is a native of Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine, and is about twenty feet high, with leaves like those of the quince, and flowers somewhat resembling those of the orange. Storax was, and is still, much esteemed, both as an incense and for its medical properties. It consists chiefly of resin, a volatile oil, and some Benzoic acid. It has a grateful balsamic odour, which no doubt made it valued in ancient times.

STORK (*חַסִּדָּה* *chasidah*). In Egypt, the two species collectively are called *Anasek*, the white, more particularly, *Belari*; in Arabic *Zakid*, *Zadig* (?), *Abukiah*, *Hekleh*, *Hegleg*, and *Hadij Luglug*, the three last-mentioned expressing the peculiar clatter which storks make with their bills, and *Hadij*, or pilgrim, denoting their migratory habits. This quality several of the Western names likewise indicate, while our word stork, albeit the Greek *στρογγή* implies natural affection, is an appellation which extends to the Icelandic, Danish, Swedish, German, Hungarian, Letto, and Wallachian languages, and is presumed originally to have been *Stor Eger*, i. e. migrating *Heron*, with which the Greek agrees in sound, but has no affinity of meaning, though it corroborates the interpretation of *Chasidah* in the Hebrew, similarly implying affection, piety, mercy, and gratitude. This name results from a belief, general through all ancient Asia, in the attachment of these birds to each other; of the