

Kelly makes an astute observation (page 9) when he says: "Philosophy....its concepts provided thinkers, Christian and non-Christian alike, with an intellectual framework for expressing their ideas."

In that light, the coming of Christianity is often referred to as the "Christian revolt against classical thinking."

Philosophy:

c. THE OLDER GRECIAN PHILOSOPHIES

Stoicism

(1) Stoicism a developed philosophy after the ideas of Zeno (ca 300 BC) and expressed well in the Christian era by Seneca (d. 65 AD) and Marcus Aurelius (d. 180). Analytically it looks like this:

(a) Only "body" exists. Ethereal or "forms" are purely imaginative. True knowledge is empirical and only what is experienced forms a criteria for knowledge and/or meaningful discussion.

(b) But "matter" exists in two forms:

/1/ static...the things which stand (mountains, etc.)

/2/ dynamic...the things which live (trees, people, etc.)

(c) The universe is bound by a sense of determinism...a "benevolent" fatalism which is blended with a concept we call morality. Stoics tended to be moral since to be otherwise was to resist the dynamic quality of matter.

(d) The ruling element is reason. No need for Plato's world of Ideas (the cave). Reason tended to move it towards asceticism and the honoring of the dynamic matter ideal.

Epicureanism

(2) Epicureanism was the hedonistic philosophy of Epicurus (d. 270) (BC) in which the enjoyment of life was postulated as the highest good. It had lost much of its force by the time of the New Testament age. As originally planned it was not a wicked philosophy and, on the other hand, championed morality as only by morality could happiness be enjoyed. To have a good time was very big with the Epicurean movement and you will discover that some of this hedonistic tendency is expressed at times in Christian philosophers who make the Gospel a means of "a good time."

Cosmologists

(3) Some abstract ideas remained from the older Greek cosmology philosophers and these are largely found in the pagan religions of the time. We will not treat them in detail here as the force of life had burned from this sort of thinking rather heavily.