

--the universe is bound by a sense of determinism ...a "benevolent fatalism" that is blended with a concept we call morality. Stoics tend to be moral since to be otherwise was to resist the dynamic quality of matter.

--and the ruling element is reason. No need for Plato's world of ideas (or ideals). Reason tended to move life towards asceticism and the honoring of the dynamic matter level.

Epicureanism

Named for Epicurus (d. 270 BC), this was a hedonistic philosophy in which the enjoyment of life was thought to be the highest good. It had lost much of its force by the time of the New Testament age and as originally planned was not a wicked philosophy but actually championed morality as morality was the only means whereby happiness could be enjoyed. To have a good time was very big with the Epicurean movement and you will discover this hedonistic tendency is expressed at times in Christian philosophers who make the Gospel a means of a "good time."

The older Cosmic philosophies

These had not been dismissed completely but are not of great input in the world to which the church came...so we leave them were we found them.

Gnosticism

Our discussion of Gnosticism will come under our work in theology proper...and when I know what page number that will be I will mark it here ____.

Zoroastrianism

Although monotheistic in tone, Zoroastrianism postulated a metaphysical dualism in which evil and good were coterminous forces. Light and darkness are the rivals and there is no doubt in my mind but what the Zoroastrian ideas show up in the Gnostic problems and in some of those matters that grieved the church and produced the letters of John. Zoroastrianism featured a strong ethical ideal and a worship of light. Its working base was more in the territory of Persia but its ethical influence is felt throughout the world of its day. Its essential forms continue in India to this day while some of its characteristics are seen in movements such as Bahá'ism.