

[1949. In *Collier's Encyclopedia*. New York: P.F. Collier and Son.]

EPICTETUS (c. A.D. 50-130), Greek philosopher, probably from Phrygia. His real name is not known, "Epictetus" being a Greek word meaning "acquired." In his youth Epictetus was a slave in Rome; he attended the lectures of the Stoic Musonius Rufus, and later became a freedman. In A.D. 90 he and certain other philosophers were expelled from Rome by Domitian because of Stoic resistance to tyranny. He lived for the remainder of his life at Nicopolis in Epirus. Epictetus wrote nothing, but his lectures were preserved by his pupil, Arrian, under the titles, *Discourses* and *Enchiridion*.

While Epictetus did not altogether ignore logic and physics, the greater part of his teaching as with all the later Stoics, is ethical. Morality is to be sought, he maintains, not in external goods or even in action but in the disposition of the will, for only this is in our power. Epictetus teaches that all men are sons of God, having a spark of divinity within them, and that therefore humanity forms a universal brotherhood. This idea does not absolve a man from local civic duty, but it establishes the city and state, as well as the man, in their larger and more profound relationships.

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