Who was the Stoic wise man? He was an ideal, attainable only by a few, who never gave assent to a false presentation, and never felt the emotions of appetite, fear, pleasure or pain. He benefited other wise men and himself, and gave kindnesses to base men who were not capable of receiving benefits; he could not harm another man or be harmed himself. He was infallible in his knowledge of all crafts. He was a man who possessed a fixed disposition of the soul, synonymous with virtue and truth.

By conceiving such a man, the Stoics were making a statement about all the rest of mankind who were not wise. Such men could at best give kindnesses to other men, and make progress towards virtue (SVF 3.510). Frequently, if not consistently, they gave assent to false presentations (διδακτά), and they were carried away by emotions. The Stoic description of men who were not wise is perhaps more significant than their description of the wise. We cannot, however, discuss the one group without the other.

Plutarch attributes to a fictitious character the statement that Aristotle and Xenocrates talked nonsense "when they failed to recognize the marvelous benefit with which the wise men are benefited when they are moved according to one another's virtue, even if they do not associate with one another, or recognize one another" (De Communibus Notitiis 1069A = SVF 3.627). He makes the same point a little later: "According to Chrysippus... Zeus does not surpass Dion in virtue, and Zeus and Dion are benefited by one another alike whenever the one encounters the other being moved" (Comm. Not. 1076A). Finally, he writes: "If one wise man anywhere stretches out..."
his finger sensibly, all wise men throughout the inhabited world are
benefited" (Comm. Not. 1068F = SVF 3.627). It is suggested in these
passages that the wise man is moved by the virtue of another man, and
that he is moved not only by the virtue of a man with whom he is in
contact, but also by the virtue of a man with whom he has never asso-
 ciated and whom he would never recognize.

"Benefiting" is defined as "being active or being in a certain dis-
position according to virtue" (κινεῖν ἦτοχεῖν κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν, SVF 3.117,
cf. 3.94). We may assume that the absolutely appropriate act
(κατάρθωμα) was a benefit.¹ The absolutely appropriate act was an
activity of the soul, such as, "thinking wisely," or an action which pro-
ceeds from such an activity, such as, "acting justly" (SVF 3.501).

"Being benefited," on the other hand, is "to be moved according to
virtue" (SVF 3.94). Since a benefit "is recognized as equivalent to the
possession of the good" (SVF 3.89),² "to be benefited" is "to possess
the good," or "to be confirmed in the possession of the good."

How then can we explain the Stoic assertion that a wise man may
be benefited by the virtue of a man of whom he has never heard or
whom he will never meet? This may be explained from two different
points of view. First, an occurrence, such as, "thinking wisely," is
related through cosmic sympathy to every other occurrence,³ and the
virtue, the disposition which produced such an occurrence, with every
virtue that produces a similar occurrence. Secondly, the prescriptive
logos which directs the wise man, ordering what should be done and
forbidding what should not be done (SVF 3.314), is the logos which
directs the world soul. By forming the propositional content of pre-
sentations, such as, "Pleasure is an indifferent," and "Virtue is choice-
worthy," the logos guides the soul of the individual towards that which
ought to be chosen, the possession of virtue.⁴ Similarly, the logos
which directs the world soul, which possesses both sensation (SVF
1.114), and reason (SVF 1.113), is a moral force. As Cleanthes wrote
in his Hymn to Zeus: "Grant that I may find the judgment in which

1. "That which ought to be chosen," a benefit, is specified by "thinking wisely" (τὸ
φρονεῖν, 3.89). Since this is a specification for the absolutely appropriate act (3.501),
we may assume that the absolutely appropriate act was a benefit.
4. The logos forms the propositional content of the rational presentation through its
parts, the concept (ἐννοοῖς) and the anticipation (πρόληψις). The verbs for these are
ἐννοεῖσθαι and προλαμβάνειν.