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THE LIFE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THOUGHTS

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

EDITOR'S NOTE

"To the gods I am indebted for having good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good associates, good kinsmen, nearly everything good." In this manner Marcus Aurelius, the best of the Roman Emperors, and the noblest of pagan philosophers, summarises the influences which went to the making of his character. Of patrician birth he responded eagerly to the teaching of his tutors, and at eleven years of age he embraced those doctrines of Stoicism which became the controlling force, and the object of study, for the remainder of his life. When as a child he attracted the attention of the Emperor Hadrian, his character was so definitely formed that the Emperor renamed him Verissimus ("the most true"). His life's story as related in the following pages reveals him as a man of extraordinary calibre.

His *Meditations*, composed as opportunity presented in the whirl of his strenuous life, contain thoughts which represent the finest fruits of paganism. His philosophy was sternly practised by himself. He not merely wrote precepts—his life suggested them.

The translation here presented is that of the eminent classical scholar Professor George Long, who was born Nov. 4, 1800, and died Aug. 10, 1879.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, the greatest orator and writer of ancient Rome, was born 106 B.C. and died 43 B.C. In him centred the full glory of classic culture, and through the long centuries the light of his genius has burned with undiminished brilliance.

THE THOUGHTS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

Translated by GEORGE LONG
With his Life, and an Essay on his Philosophy by the Translator

Also the Essay on Marcus Aurelius by
MATTHEW ARNOLD

Together with CICERO'S
ESSAY ON FRIENDSHIP
Translated by W. MELMOTH

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD.
LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK,
TORONTO & MELBOURNE
MCMVIII

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M. ANTONINUS was born at Rome A.D. 121, on April 26. His father Annius Verus died while he was praetor. His mother was Domitia Calvilla also named Lucilla. The Emperor T. Antoninus Pius married Annia Galeria Faustina, the sister of Annius Verus, and was consequently M. Antoninus' uncle. When Hadrian adopted Antoninus Pius and declared him his successor in the empire, Antoninus Pius adopted both L. Ceionius Commodus, the son of Aelius Caesar, and M. Antoninus, whose original name was M. Annius Verus. Antoninus took the name of M. Aelius Aurelius Verus, to which was added the title of Caesar in A.D. 139: the name Aelius belonged to Hadrian's family, and Aurelius was the name of Antoninus Pius. When M. Antoninus became Augustus, he dropped the name of Verus and took the name of Antoninus. Accordingly he is generally named M. Aurelius Antoninus or simply M. Antoninus.

The youth was most carefully brought up. He thanks the gods (I, 17) that he had good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good associates, good kinsmen and friends, nearly everything good. He had the happy fortune to witness the example of his uncle and adoptive father Antoninus Pius, and he has recorded in his work (I, 16; VI, 30) the virtues of this excellent man and prudent ruler. Like many young Romans he tried his hand at poetry and studied rhetoric. Herodes Atticus and M. Cornelius Fronto were his teachers in eloquence. There are extant letters between Fronto

and Marcus, which show the great affection of the pupil for the master, and the master's great hopes of his industrious pupil. M. Antoninus mentions Fronto (I, 11) among those to whom he was indebted for his education.

When he was eleven years old, he assumed the dress of philosophers, something plain and coarse, became a hard student, and lived a most laborious abstemious life, even so far as to injure his health. Finally, he abandoned poetry and rhetoric for philosophy, and he attached himself to the sect of the Stoics. But he did not neglect the study of law, which was a useful preparation for the high place which he was designed to fill. His teacher was L. Volusianus Maecianus, a distinguished jurist. We must suppose that he learned the Roman discipline of arms, which was a necessary part of the education of a man who afterwards led his troops to battle against a warlike race.

Antoninus has recorded in his first book the names of his teachers and the obligations which he owed to each of them. The way in which he speaks of what he learned from them might seem to savour of vanity or self-praise, if we look carelessly at the way in which he has expressed himself; but if any one draws this conclusion, he will be mistaken. Antoninus means to commemorate the merits of his several teachers, what they taught and what a pupil might learn from them. Besides, this book, like the eleven other books, was for his own use, and if we may trust the note at the end of the first book, it was written during one of M. Antoninus' campaigns against the Quadi, at a time when the commemoration of the virtues of his illustrious teachers might remind him of their lessons and the practical uses which he might derive from them.

Among his teachers of philosophy was Sextus of Chaeroneia, a grandson of Plutarch. What he learned from this excellent man is told by himself (I, 9). His favourite teacher was Q. Junius Rusticus (I, 7), a philosopher and

also a man of practical good sense in public affairs. Rusticus was the adviser of Antoninus after he became emperor. Young men who are destined for high places are not often fortunate in those who are about them, their companions and teachers; and I do not know any example of a young prince having had an education which can be compared with that of M. Antoninus. Such a body of teachers distinguished by their acquirements and their character will hardly be collected again; and as to the pupil, we have not had one like him since.

Hadrian died in July A.D. 138, and was succeeded by Antoninus Pius. M. Antoninus married Faustina, his cousin, the daughter of Pius, probably about A.D. 146, for he had a daughter born in 147. M. Antoninus received from his adoptive father the title of Caesar and was associated with him in the administration of the state. The father and the adopted son lived together in perfect friendship and confidence. Antoninus was a dutiful son, and the Emperor Pius loved and esteemed him.

Antoninus Pius died in March A.D. 161. The Senate, it is said, urged M. Antoninus to take the sole administration of the empire, but he associated with himself the other adopted son of Pius, L. Ceionius Commodus, who is generally called L. Verus. Thus Rome for the first time had two emperors. Verus was an indolent man of pleasure and unworthy of his station. Antoninus however bore with him, and it is said that Verus had sense enough to pay to his colleague the respect due to his character. A virtuous emperor and a loose partner lived together in peace, and their alliance was strengthened by Antoninus giving to Verus for wife his daughter Lucilla.

The reign of Antoninus was first troubled by a Parthian war, in which Verus was sent to command, but he did nothing, and the success that was obtained by the Romans in Armenia and on the Euphrates and Tigris was due to his generals. This Parthian war ended in 165.

The north of Italy was also threatened by the rude people beyond the Alps from the borders of Gallia to the eastern side of the Hadriatic. These barbarians attempted to break into Italy, as the Germanic nations had attempted near three hundred years before; and the rest of the life of Antoninus with some intervals was employed in driving back the invaders. In 169 Verus suddenly died, and Antoninus administered the state alone.

In A.D. 175 Avidius Cassius, a brave and skilful Roman commander who was at the head of the troops in Asia, revolted and declared himself Augustus. But Cassius was assassinated by some of his officers, and so the rebellion came to an end. Antoninus showed his humanity by his treatment of the family and the partisans of Cassius, and his letter to the Senate in which he recommends mercy is extant. (Vulcatius, Avidius Cassius, c. 12.)

Antoninus set out for the east on hearing of Cassius' revolt. We know that in A.D. 174 he was engaged in a war against the Quadi, Marcomanni and other German tribes, and it is probable that he went direct from the German war without returning to Rome. His wife Faustina who accompanied him into Asia died suddenly at the foot of the Taurus to the great grief of her husband. Capitolinus, who has written the life of Antoninus, and also Dion Cassius accuse the empress of scandalous infidelity to her husband and of abominable lewdness. But Capitolinus says that Antoninus either knew it not or pretended not to know it. Nothing is so common as such malicious reports in all ages, and the history of imperial Rome is full of them. Antoninus loved his wife, and he says that she was 'obedient, affectionate and simple.' The same scandal had been spread about Faustina's mother, the wife of Antoninus Pius, and yet he too was perfectly satisfied with his wife. Antoninus Pius says in a letter to Fronto that he would rather live in exile with his wife than in his palace at Rome without her. There are

not many men who would give their wives a better character than these two emperors. Capitolinus wrote in the time of Diocletian. He may have intended to tell the truth, but he is a poor feeble biographer. Dion Cassius, the most malignant of historians, always reports and perhaps he believed any scandal against anybody.

Antoninus continued his journey to Syria and Egypt, and on his return to Italy through Athens he was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. It was the practice of the emperor to conform to the established rites of the age and to perform religious ceremonies with due solemnity. We cannot conclude from this that he was a superstitious man, though we might perhaps do so, if his book did not show that he was not. But this is only one among many instances that a ruler's public acts do not always prove his real opinions. A prudent governor will not roughly oppose even the superstitions of his people, and though he may wish that they were wiser, he will know that he cannot make them so by offending their prejudices.

Antoninus and his son Commodus entered Rome in triumph on December 23, A.D. 176. In the following year Commodus was associated with his father in the empire and took the name of Augustus. This year A.D. 177 is memorable in ecclesiastical history. Attalus and others were put to death at Lyon for their adherence to the Christian religion. The evidence of this persecution is a letter preserved by Eusebius (*Eccles. Hist.* v, 1; printed in Routh's *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. I, with notes). The letter is from the Christians of Vienna and Lugdunum in Gallia (Vienne and Lyon) to their Christian brethren in Asia and Phrygia; and it is preserved perhaps nearly entire. It contains a very particular description of the tortures inflicted on the Christians in Gallia, and it states that while the persecution was going on, Attalus, a Christian and a Roman citizen, was loudly demanded by the populace and brought into the amphitheatre, but the governor ordered

him to be reserved with the rest who were in prison, until he had received instructions from the emperor. It is not clear who the 'rest' were who are mentioned in the letter. Many had been tortured before the governor thought of applying to the emperor. The imperial rescript, says the letter, was that the Christians should be punished, but if they would deny their faith, they must be released. On this the work began again. The Christians who were Roman citizens were beheaded: the rest were exposed to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. Some modern writers on ecclesiastical history, when they use this letter, say nothing of the wonderful stories of the martyrs' sufferings. Sanctus, as the letter says, was burnt with plates of hot iron till his body was one sore and had lost all human form, but on being put to the rack he recovered his former appearance under the torture, which was thus a cure instead of a punishment. He was afterwards torn by beasts, and placed on an iron chair and roasted. He died at last.

The letter is one piece of evidence. The writer, whoever he was that wrote in the name of the Gallic Christians, is our evidence both for the ordinary and the extraordinary circumstances of the story, and we cannot accept his evidence for one part and reject the other. We often receive small evidence as a proof of a thing which we believe to be within the limits of probability or possibility, and we reject exactly the same evidence when the thing to which it refers appears very improbable or impossible. But this is a false method of inquiry, though it is followed by some modern writers, who select what they like from a story and reject the rest of the evidence; or if they do not reject it, they dishonestly suppress it. A man can only act consistently by accepting all this letter or rejecting it all, and we cannot blame him for either. But he who rejects it may still admit that such a letter may be founded on real facts; and he would make this admission as the

most probable way of accounting for the existence of the letter : but if, as he would suppose, the writer has stated some things falsely, he cannot tell what part of his story is worthy of credit.

The war on the northern frontier appears to have been uninterrupted during the visit of Antoninus to the East, and on his return the emperor again left Rome to oppose the barbarians. The Germanic people were defeated in a great battle A.D. 179. During this campaign the emperor was seized with some contagious malady, of which he died in the camp at Sirmium (Mitrovitz) on the Save in Lower Pannonia, but at Vindebona (Vienna) according to other authorities, on March 17, A.D. 180, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. His son Commodus was with him. His body or the ashes probably were carried to Rome, and he received the honour of deification. Those who could afford it had his statue or bust, and when Capitolinus wrote, many people still had statues of Antoninus among the Dei Penates or household deities. He was in a manner made a saint. His son Commodus erected to his memory the Antonine column which is now in the Piazza Colonna at Rome. The bassi rilievi which are placed in a spiral line round the shaft commemorate his father's victories over the Marcomanni and the Quadi, and the miraculous shower of rain which refreshed the Roman soldiers and discomfited their enemies. The statue of Antoninus was placed on the column, but it was removed at some time unknown, and a bronze statue of St. Paul was put in its place by Pope Sixtus the fifth.

The historical evidence for the times of Antoninus is very defective, and some of that which remains is not credible. The most curious is the story about the miracle which happened in A.D. 174 during the war with the Quadi. The Roman army was in danger of perishing by thirst, but a sudden storm drenched them with rain, while it discharged fire and hail on their enemies, and the Romans gained a

great victory. All the authorities which speak of the battle speak also of the miracle. The Gentile writers assign it to their gods, and the Christians to the intercession of the Christian legion in the emperor's army. To confirm the Christian statement it is added that the emperor gave the title of Thundering to this legion; but Dacier and others who maintain the Christian report of the miracle, admit that this title of Thundering or Lightning was not given to this legion because the Quadi were struck with lightning, but because there was a figure of lightning on their shields, and that this title of the legion existed in the time of Augustus.

Scaliger also had observed that the legion was called Thundering (*κεραυνοβόλος*, or *κεραυνοφόρος*) before the reign of Antoninus. We learn this from Dion Cassius (lib. 55, c. 23, and the note of Reimarus) who enumerates all the legions of Augustus' time. The name Thundering or Lightning also occurs on an inscription of the reign of Trajan, which was found at Trieste. Eusebius (v, 5), when he relates the miracle, quotes Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, as authority for this name being given to the legion Melitene by the emperor in consequence of the success which he obtained through their prayers; from which we may estimate the value of Apolinarius' testimony. Eusebius does not say in what book of Apolinarius the statement occurs. Dion says that the Thundering legion was stationed in Cappadocia in the time of Augustus. Valesius also observes that in the Notitia of the Imperium Romanum there is mentioned under the commander of Armenia the Praefectura of the twelfth legion named 'Thundering Melitene'; and this position in Armenia will agree with what Dion says of its position in Cappadocia. Accordingly Valesius concludes that Melitene was not the name of the legion, but of the town in which it was stationed. The legions did not, he says, take their name from the place where they were on duty,

but from the country in which they were raised, and therefore what Eusebius says about the Melitene does not seem probable to him. Yet Valesius on the authority of Apolinarius and Tertullian believed that the miracle was worked through the prayers of the Christian soldiers in the emperor's army. Rufinus does not give the name of Melitene to this legion, says Valesius, and probably he purposely omitted it, because he knew that Militene was the name of a town in Armenia Minor, where the legion was stationed in his time.

The emperor, it is said, made a report of his victory to the Senate, which we may believe, for such was the practice; but we do not know what he said in his letter, for it is not extant. Dacier assumes that the emperor's letter was purposely destroyed by the Senate or the enemies of Christianity, that so honourable a testimony to the Christians and their religion might not be perpetuated. The critic has however not seen that he contradicts himself when he tells us the purport of the letter, for he says that it was destroyed, and even Eusebius could not find it. But there does exist a letter in Greek addressed by Antoninus to the Roman Senate after this memorable victory. It is sometimes printed after Justin's second *Apology*, though it is totally unconnected with the apologies. This letter is one of the most stupid forgeries of the many which exist, and it cannot be possibly founded even on the genuine report of Antoninus to the Senate. If it were genuine, it would free the emperor from the charge of persecuting men because they were Christians, for he says in this false letter that if a man accuse another only of being a Christian and the accused confess and there is nothing else against him, he must be set free; with this monstrous addition, made by a man inconceivably ignorant, that the informer must be burnt alive.[1]

[1] Eusebius (v, 5) quotes Tertullian's *Apology to the Roman Senate* in confirmation of the story. Tertullian, he says, writes that letters

During the time of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Antoninus there appeared the first *Apology* of Justinus, and under M. Antoninus the *Oration* of Tatian *against the Greeks*, which was a fierce attack on the established religions; the address of Athenagoras to M. Antoninus *On behalf of the Christians*, and the *Apology* of Melito, bishop of Sardes, also addressed to the emperor, and that of Apolinarius. The first *Apology* of Justinus is addressed to Antoninus Pius and his two adopted sons M. Antoninus and L. Verus; but we do not know whether they read it. The second *Apology* of Justinus is addressed 'to the Roman Senate,' but there is nothing in it which shows its date. In one passage, where he is speaking of the persecution of the Christians, Justinus says that even men who followed the Stoic doctrines, when they ordered their lives according to ethical reason, were hated and murdered, such as Heraclitus, Musonius in his own times and others; for all those who in any way laboured to live according to reason and avoided wickedness were always hated; and this was the effect of the work of daemons.

Justinus himself is said to have been put to death at Rome, because he refused to sacrifice to the gods; but the circumstances of his death are doubtful, and the time is uncertain. It cannot have been in the reign of Hadrian, as one authority states; nor in the time of Antoninus Pius, if the second *Apology* was written in the time of M. Antoninus.

The persecution in which Polycarp suffered at Smyrna belongs to the time of M. Antoninus. The evidence for it is the letter of the church of Smyrna to the churches of the emperor were extant, in which he declares that his army was saved by the prayers of the Christians; and that he 'threatened to punish with death those who ventured to accuse us.' It is possible that the forged letter which is now extant may be one of those which Tertullian had seen, for he uses the plural number 'letters.' A great deal has been written about this miracle of the Thundering Legion, and more than is worth reading.

of Philomelium and the other Christian churches, and it is preserved by Eusebius (*E. H.* IV, 15). But the critics do not agree about the time of Polycarp's death, differing in the two extremes to the amount of twelve years. The circumstances of Polycarp's martyrdom were accompanied by miracles, one of which Eusebius (IV, 15) has omitted, but it appears in the oldest Latin version of the letter, which Usher published, and it is supposed that this version was made not long after the time of Eusebius. The notice at the end of the letter states that it was transcribed by Caius from the copy of Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, then transcribed by Socrates at Corinth; 'after which I Pionius again wrote it out from the copy above mentioned, having searched it out by the revelation of Polycarp, who directed me to it.' The story of Polycarp's martyrdom is embellished with miraculous circumstances which some modern writers on ecclesiastical history take the liberty of omitting.[1]

In order to form a proper notion of the condition of the Christians under M. Antoninus we must go back to Trajan's time. When the younger Pliny was governor of Bithynia, the Christians were numerous in those parts, and the worshippers of the old religion were falling off. The temples were deserted, the festivals neglected, and there were no purchasers of victims for sacrifice. Those who were interested in the maintenance of the old religion thus found that their profits were in danger. Christians of both sexes and of all ages were brought before the governor, who did not know what to do with them. He could come to no

[1] Conyers Middleton, *An Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers*, etc. p. 126. Middleton says that Eusebius omitted to mention the dove, which flew out of Polycarp's body, and Dodwell and Archbishop Wake have done the same. Wake says, 'I am so little a friend to such miracles that I thought it better with Eusebius to omit that circumstance than to mention it from Bp. Usher's Manuscript,' which manuscript however, says Middleton, he afterwards declares to be so well attested that we need not any further assurance of the truth of it.

other conclusion than this, that those who confessed to be Christians and persevered in their religion ought to be punished; if for nothing else, for their invincible obstinacy. He found no crimes proved against the Christians, and he could only characterize their religion as a depraved and extravagant superstition, which might be stopped, if the people were allowed the opportunity of recanting. Pliny wrote this in a letter to Trajan (Plinius, *Ep.* x, 97). He asked for the emperor's directions, because he did not know what to do: He remarks that he had never been engaged in judicial inquiries about the Christians, and that accordingly he did not know what or how far to inquire and punish. This proves that it was not a new thing to inquire into a man's profession of Christianity and to punish him for it. Trajan's Rescript is extant. He approved of the governor's judgment in the matter; but he said that no search must be made after the Christians; if a man was charged with the new religion and convicted, he must not be punished, if he affirmed that he was not a Christian and confirmed his denial by showing his reverence to the heathen gods. He added that no notice must be taken of anonymous informations, for such things were of bad example. Trajan was a mild and sensible man, and both motives of mercy and policy probably also induced him to take as little notice of the Christians as he could; to let them live in quiet, if it were possible. Trajan's Rescript is the first legislative act of the head of the Roman state with reference to Christianity which is known to us. It does not appear that the Christians were further disturbed under his reign. The martyrdom of Ignatius by the order of Trajan himself is not universally admitted to be an historical fact.

In the time of Hadrian it was no longer possible for the Roman Government to overlook the great increase of the Christians and the hostility of the common sort to them. If the governors in the provinces wished to let them alone,

they could not resist the fanaticism of the heathen community, who looked on the Christians as atheists. The Jews too who were settled all over the Roman Empire were as hostile to the Christians as the Gentiles were. With the time of Hadrian begin the Christian Apologies, which show plainly what the popular feeling towards the Christians then was. A rescript of Hadrian to the Proconsul of Asia, which stands at the end of Justin's first *Apology*, instructs the governor that innocent people must not be troubled and false accusers must not be allowed to extort money from them; the charges against the Christians must be made in due form and no attention must be paid to popular clamours; when Christians were regularly prosecuted and convicted of any illegal act they must be punished according to their deserts; and false accusers also must be punished. Antoninus Pius is said to have published Rescripts to the same effect. The terms of Hadrian's Rescript seem very favourable to the Christians; but if we understand it in this sense, that they were only to be punished like other people for illegal acts, it would have had no meaning, for that could have been done without asking the emperor's advice. The real purpose of the Rescript is that Christians must be punished if they persisted in their belief, and would not prove their renunciation of it by acknowledging the heathen religion. This was Trajan's rule, and we have no reason for supposing that Hadrian granted more to the Christians than Trajan did. There is also printed at the end of Justin's *Apology* a Rescript of Antoninus Pius to the Commune of Asia (τὸ κοινὸν τῆς Ἀσίας), and it is also in Eusebius[1] (*E. H.* IV, 13). The Rescript declares that the Christians, for

[1] In Eusebius the name at the beginning of the Rescript is that of M. Antoninus; and so we cannot tell to which of the two emperors the forger assigned the Rescript. There are also a few verbal differences.

The author of the Alexandrine Chronicum says that Marcus being moved by the entreaties of Melito and other heads of the church

they are meant, though the name Christians does not occur in the Rescript, were not to be disturbed, unless they were attempting something against the Roman rule, and no man was to be punished simply for being a Christian. But this Rescript is spurious. Any man moderately acquainted with Roman history will see at once from the style and tenor that it is a clumsy forgery.

In the time of M. Antoninus the opposition between the old and the new belief was still stronger, and the adherents of the heathen religion urged those in authority to a more regular resistance to the invasions of the Christian faith. Melito in his *Apology* to M. Antoninus represents the Christians of Asia as persecuted under new imperial orders. Shameless informers, he says, men who were greedy after the property of others, used these orders as a means of robbing those who were doing no harm. He doubts if a just emperor could have ordered anything so unjust; and if the last order was really not from the emperor, the Christians entreat him not to give them up to their enemies.[1] We conclude from this that there were at

wrote an Epistle to the Commune of Asia in which he forbade the Christians to be troubled on account of their religion. Valesius supposes this to be the letter which is contained in Eusebius (IV, 13), and to be the answer to the *Apology* of Melito, of which I shall soon give the substance. But Marcus certainly did not write this letter which is in Eusebius, and we know not what answer he made to Melito.

[1] Eusebius, IV, 26; and Routh's *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. I and the notes. The interpretation of this Fragment is not easy. Mosheim misunderstood one passage so far as to affirm that Marcus promised rewards to those who denounced the Christians; an interpretation which is entirely false. Melito calls the Christian religion 'our philosophy,' which began among barbarians (the Jews), and flourished among the Roman subjects in the time of Augustus, to the great advantage of the empire, for from that time the power of the Romans grew great and glorious. He says that the emperor has and will have as the successor to Augustus' power the good wishes of men, if he will protect that philosophy which grew up with the empire and began with Augustus, which philosophy the predecessors of Antoninus honoured in addition to the other religions. He further says that the Christian religion had suffered no harm since the time of Augustus, but on the contrary had enjoyed all honour and respect

least imperial Rescripts or Constitutions of M. Antoninus, which were made the foundation of these persecutions. The fact of being a Christian was now a crime and punished, unless the accused denied their religion. Then come the persecutions at Smyrna, which some modern critics place in A.D. 167, ten years before the persecution of Lyon. The governors of the provinces under M. Antoninus might have found enough even in Trajan's Rescript to warrant them in punishing Christians, and the fanaticism of the people would drive them to persecution, even if they were unwilling. But besides the fact of the Christians rejecting all the heathen ceremonies, we must not forget that they plainly maintained that all the heathen religions were false. The Christians thus declared war against the heathen rites, and it is hardly necessary to observe that this was a declaration of hostility against the Roman Government, which tolerated all the various forms of superstition that existed in the empire, and could not consistently tolerate another religion, which declared that all

that any man could desire. Nero and Domitian, he says, were alone persuaded by some malicious men to calumniate the Christian religion, and this was the origin of the false charges against the Christians. But this was corrected by the emperors who immediately preceded Antoninus, who often by their Rescripts reproved those who attempted to trouble the Christians. Hadrian, Antoninus' grandfather, wrote to many, and among them to the governor of Asia. Antoninus Pius when Marcus was associated with him in the empire wrote to the cities, that they must not trouble the Christians ; among others to the people of Larissa, Thessalonica, the Athenians and all the Greeks. Melito concluded thus : ' We are persuaded that thou who hast about these things the same mind that they had, nay rather one much more humane and philosophical, wilt do all that we ask thee.'—This *Apology* was written after A.D. 169, the year in which Verus died, for it speaks of Marcus only and his son Commodus. According to Melito's testimony, Christians had only been punished for their religion in the time of Nero and Domitian, and the persecutions began again in the time of M. Antoninus and were founded on his orders, which were abused as he seems to mean. He distinctly affirms ' that the race of the godly is now persecuted and harassed by fresh imperial orders in Asia, a thing which had never happened before.' But we know that all this is not true, and that Christians had been punished in Trajan's time.

the rest were false and all the splendid ceremonies of the empire only a worship of devils.

If we had a true ecclesiastical history, we should know how the Roman emperors attempted to check the new religion, how they enforced their principle of finally punishing Christians, simply as Christians, which Justin in his *Apology* affirms that they did, and I have no doubt that he tells the truth ; how far popular clamour and riots went in this matter, and how far many fanatical and ignorant Christians, for there were many such, contributed to excite the fanaticism on the other side and to embitter the quarrel between the Roman Government and the new religion. Our extant ecclesiastical histories are manifestly falsified, and what truth they contain is grossly exaggerated ; but the fact is certain that in the time of M. Antoninus the heathen populations were in open hostility to the Christians, and that under Antoninus' rule men were put to death because they were Christians. Eusebius in the preface to his fifth book remarks that in the seventeenth year of Antoninus' reign, in some parts of the world the persecution of the Christians became more violent, and that it proceeded from the populace in the cities ; and he adds in his usual style of exaggeration, that we may infer from what took place in a single nation that myriads of martyrs were made in the habitable earth. The nation which he alludes to is Gallia ; and he then proceeds to give the letter of the churches of Vienna and Lugdunum. It is probable that he has assigned the true cause of the persecutions, the fanaticism of the populace, and that both governors and emperor had a great deal of trouble with these disturbances. How far Marcus was cognizant of these cruel proceedings we do not know, for the historical records of his reign are very defective. He did not make the rule against the Christians, for Trajan did that ; and if we admit that he would have been willing to let the Christians alone, we cannot affirm that it was in his power, for it would be

a great mistake to suppose that Antoninus had the unlimited authority, which some modern sovereigns have had. His power was limited by certain constitutional forms, by the Senate, and by the precedents of his predecessors. We cannot admit that such a man was an active persecutor, for there is no evidence that he was, though it is certain that he had no good opinion of the Christians, as appears from his own words.[1] But he knew nothing of them except their hostility to the Roman religion, and he probably thought that they were dangerous to the state, notwithstanding the professions false or true of some of the Apologists. So much I have said, because it would be unfair not to state all that can be urged against a man whom his contemporaries and subsequent ages venerated as a model of virtue and benevolence. If I admitted the genuineness of some documents, he would be altogether clear from the charge of even allowing

[1] See XI, 3. The emperor probably speaks of such fanatics as Clemens (quoted by Gataker on this passage) mentions. The rational Christians admitted no fellowship with them. 'Some of these heretics,' says Clemens, 'show their impiety and cowardice by loving their lives, saying that the knowledge of the really existing God is true testimony (martyrdom), but that a man is a self-murderer who bears witness by his death. We also blame those who rush to death, for there are some, not of us, but only bearing the same name who give themselves up. We say of them that they die without being martyrs, even if they are publicly punished; and they give themselves up to a death which avails nothing, as the Indian Gymnosophists give themselves up foolishly to fire.' Cave in his *Primitive Christianity* (II, c. 7) says of the Christians: 'They did flock to the place of torment faster than droves of beasts that are driven to the shambles. They even longed to be in the arms of suffering. Ignatius, though then in his journey to Rome in order to his execution, yet by the way as he went could not but vent his passionate desire of it: O that I might come to those wild beasts, that are prepared for me. I heartily wish that I may presently meet with them; I would invite and encourage them speedily to devour me, and not be afraid to set upon me as they have been to others; nay should they refuse it, I would even force them to it;' and more to the same purpose from Eusebius. Cave, an honest and good man, says all this in praise of the Christians; but I think that he mistook the matter. We admire a man who holds to his principles even to death; but these fanatical Christians are the Gymnosophists whom Clemens treats with disdain.

any persecutions; but as I seek the truth and am sure that they are false, I leave him to bear whatever blame is his due. I add that it is quite certain that Antoninus did not derive any of his Ethical principles from a religion of which he knew nothing.[1]

There is no doubt that the emperor's *Reflections* or his *Meditations*, as they are generally named, is a genuine work. In the first book he speaks of himself, his family, and his teachers; and in other books he mentions himself. Suidas (v. *Μάρκος*) notices a work of Antoninus in twelve books, which he names the 'conduct of his own life,' and he cites the book under several words in his *Dictionary*, giving the emperor's name, but not the title of the work. There are also passages cited by Suidas from Antoninus without mention of the emperor's name. The true title of the work is unknown. Xylander who published the first edition of this book (Zürich, 1558, 8vo, with a Latin version) used a manuscript, which contained the twelve books, but it is not known where the manuscript is now. The only other complete manuscript which is known to exist is in the Vatican library, but it has no title and no inscriptions of the several books: the eleventh only has the inscription *Μάρκου αὐτοκράτορος* marked with an asterisk. The other Vatican manuscripts and the three Florentine contain only excerpts from the emperor's book. All the titles of the excerpts nearly agree with that which Xylander prefixed to his edition, *Μάρκου Ἀντωνίνου Αὐτοκράτορος τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν βιβλία ιβ*. This title has been used by all subsequent editors. We cannot tell whether Antoninus divided his work into books or somebody else did it. If the inscriptions at the end of the first

[1] Dr. F. C. Baur in his work entitled *Das Christenthum, und die Christliche Kirche der drei serten Jahrhunderte*, etc., has examined this question with great good sense and fairness, and I believe he has stated the truth as near as our authorities enable us to reach it.

and second books are genuine, he may have made the division himself.

It is plain that the emperor wrote down his thoughts or reflections as the occasions arose; and since they were intended for his own use, it is no improbable conjecture that he left a complete copy behind him written with his own hand; for it is not likely that so diligent a man would use the labour of a transcriber for such a purpose, and expose his most secret thoughts to any other eye. He may have also intended the book for his son Commodus, who however had no taste for his father's philosophy. Some careful hand preserved the precious volume; and a work by Antoninus is mentioned by other late writers besides Suidas.

Many critics have laboured on the text of Antoninus. The most complete edition is that by Thomas Gataker, 1652, 4to. The second edition of Gataker was superintended by George Stanhope, 1697, 4to. There is also an edition of 1704. Gataker made and suggested many good corrections, and he also made a new Latin version, which is not a very good specimen of Latin, but it generally expresses the sense of the original and often better than some of the more recent translations. He added in the margin opposite to each paragraph references to the other parallel passages; and he wrote a commentary, one of the most complete that has been written on any ancient author. This commentary contains the editor's exposition of the more difficult passages, and quotations from all the Greek and Roman writers for the illustration of the text. It is a wonderful monument of learning and labour, and certainly no Englishman has yet done anything like it. At the end of his preface the editor says that he wrote it at Rotherhithe near London in a severe winter, when he was in the seventy-eighth year of his age, 1651, a time when Milton, Selden and other great men of the Commonwealth time were living; and the great French

scholar Saumaise (Salmasius), with whom Gataker corresponded and received help from him for his edition of Antoninus. The Greek text has also been edited by J. M. Schultz, Leipzig, 1802, 8vo; and by the learned Greek Adamantinus Coraïs, Paris, 1816, 8vo. The text of Schultz was republished by Tauchnitz, 1821.

There are English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish translations of M. Antoninus, and there may be others. I have not seen all the English translations. There is one by Jeremy Collier, 1702, 8vo, a most coarse and vulgar copy of the original. The latest French translation by Alexis Pierron in the collection of Charpentier is better than Dacier's, which has been honoured with an Italian version (Udine, 1772). There is an Italian version (1675) which I have not seen. It is by a cardinal. 'A man illustrious in the church, the Cardinal Francis Barberini the elder, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, occupied the last years of his life in translating into his native language the thoughts of the Roman emperor, in order to diffuse among the faithful the fertilizing and vivifying seeds. He dedicated this translation to his soul, to make it, as he says in his energetic style, redder than his purple at the sight of the virtues of this Gentile' (Pierron, Preface).

I have made this translation at intervals after having used the book for many years. It is made from the Greek, but I have not always followed one text: I have occasionally compared other versions. I made this translation for my own use, because I found that it was worth the labour. It may be useful to others also and at last I have determined to print it, though the original is both very difficult to understand and still more difficult to translate, it is not possible that I have always avoided error. But I believe that I have not often missed the meaning, and those who will take the trouble to compare the translation with the original should not hastily conclude that I am

wrong, if they do not agree with me. Some passages do give the meaning, though at first sight they may not appear to do so; and when I differ from the translators, I think that in some places they are wrong, and in other places I am sure that they are. I have placed in some passages a †, which indicates corruption in the text or great uncertainty in the meaning. I could have made the language more easy and flowing, but I have preferred a somewhat ruder style as being better suited to express the character of the original; and sometimes the obscurity which may appear in the version is a fair copy of the obscurity of the Greek. If I should ever revise this version, I would gladly make use of any corrections which may be suggested. I have added an index of some of the Greek terms with the corresponding English. If I have not given the best words for the Greek, I have done the best that I could; and in the text I have always given the same translation of the same word.

The last reflection of the Stoic philosophy that I have observed is in Simplicius' *Commentary on the Enchiridion of Epictetus*. Simplicius was not a Christian, and such a man was not likely to be converted at a time when Christianity was grossly corrupted. But he was a really religious man, and he concludes his commentary with a prayer to the Deity which no Christian could improve. From the time of Zeno to Simplicius, a period of about nine hundred years, the Stoic philosophy formed the characters of some of the best and greatest men. Finally it became extinct, and we hear no more of it till the revival of letters in Italy. Angelo Poliziano met with two very inaccurate and incomplete manuscripts of Epictetus' *Enchiridion*, which he translated into Latin and dedicated to his great patron Lorenzo de' Medici, in whose collection he had found the book. Poliziano's version was printed in the first Bâle edition of the *Enchiridion*, A.D. 1531 (apud And. Cratandrum). Poliziano recommends the *Enchiridion* to

Lorenzo as a work well suited to his temper, and useful in the difficulties by which he was surrounded.

Epictetus and Antoninus have had readers ever since they were first printed. The little book of Antoninus has been the companion of some great men. Machiavelli's *Art of War* and Marcus Antoninus were the two books which were used when he was a young man by Captain John Smith, and he could not have found two writers better fitted to form the character of a soldier and a man. Smith is almost unknown and forgotten in England his native country, but not in America where he saved the young colony of Virginia. He was great in his heroic mind and his deeds in arms, but greater still in the nobleness of his character. For a man's greatness lies not in wealth and station, as the vulgar believe, nor yet in his intellectual capacity, which is often associated with the meanest moral character, the most abject servility to those in high places and arrogance to the poor and lowly; but a man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self-examination, and a steady obedience to the rule which he knows to be right, without troubling himself, as the emperor says he should not, about what others may think or say, or whether they do or do not do that which he thinks and says and does.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANTONINUS

It has been said that the Stoic philosophy first showed its real value when it passed from Greece to Rome. The doctrines of Zeno and his successors were well suited to the gravity and practical good sense of the Romans; and even in the Republican period we have an example of a man, M. Cato Uticensis, who lived the life of a Stoic and died consistently with the opinions which he professed. He was a man, says Cicero, who embraced the Stoic philosophy from conviction; not for the purpose of vain discussion, as most did, but in order to make his life conformable to its precepts. In the wretched times from the death of Augustus to the murder of Domitian, there was nothing but the Stoic philosophy which could console and support the followers of the old religion under imperial tyranny and amidst universal corruption. There were even then noble minds that could dare and endure, sustained by a good conscience and an elevated idea of the purposes of man's existence. Such were Paetus Thrasea, Helvidius Priscus, Cornutus, C. Musonius Rufus,[1] and the poets Persius and Juvenal, whose energetic language and manly thoughts may be as instructive to us now as they might have been to their contemporaries. Persius died under Nero's bloody reign, but Juvenal had the good fortune to survive the tyrant Domitian and to see the better times of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian. His best

[1] I have omitted Seneca, Nero's preceptor. He was in a sense a Stoic and he has said many good things in a very fine way. There is a judgment of Gellius (XII, 2) on Seneca, or rather a statement of what some people thought of his philosophy, and it is not favourable. His writings and his life must be taken together, and I have nothing more to say of him here.

precepts are derived from the Stoic school, and they are enforced in his finest verses by the unrivalled vigour of the Latin language.

The two best expounders of the later Stoical philosophy were a Greek slave and a Roman emperor. Epictetus, a Phrygian Greek, was brought to Rome, we know not how, but he was there the slave and afterwards the freedman of an unworthy master, Epaphroditus by name, himself a freedman and a favourite of Nero. Epictetus may have been a hearer of C. Musonius Rufus, while he was still a slave, but he could hardly have been a teacher before he was made free. He was one of the philosophers whom Domitian's order banished from Rome. He retired to Nicopolis in Epirus, and he may have died there. Like other great teachers he wrote nothing, but we are indebted to his grateful pupil Arrian for what we have of Epictetus' discourses. Arrian wrote eight books of the discourses of Epictetus, of which only four remain and some fragments. We have also from Arrian's hand the small Enchiridion or Manual of the chief precepts of Epictetus. There is a valuable commentary on the Enchiridion by Simplicius, who lived in the time of the Emperor Justinian.[1]

Antoninus in his first book (I, 7), in which he gratefully commemorates his obligations to his teachers, says that he was made acquainted by Junius Rusticus with the discourses of Epictetus, whom he mentions also in other passages (IV, 41; XI, 33, 36). Indeed the doctrines of Epictetus and Antoninus are the same, and Epictetus is the best authority for the explanation of the philosophical language of Antoninus and the exposition of his opinions. But the method of the two philosophers is entirely different. Epictetus addressed himself to his hearers in a continuous discourse and in a familiar and simple manner. Antoninus

[1] There is a complete edition of Arrian's Epictetus with the commentary of Simplicius by J. Schweighaeuser, 6 vols. 8vo. 1799, 1800. There is also an English translation of Epictetus by Mrs. Carter.

wrote down his reflections for his own use only, in short unconnected paragraphs, which are often obscure.

The Stoics made three divisions of philosophy, Physic (*φυσικόν*), Ethic (*ἠθικόν*), and Logic (*λογικόν*) (VIII, 13). This division, we are told by Diogenes, was made by Zeno of Citium, the founder of the Stoic sect, and by Chrysippus; but these philosophers placed the three divisions in the following order, Logic, Physic, Ethic. It appears however that this division was made before Zeno's time and acknowledged by Plato, as Cicero remarks (*Acad. Post.* I, 5). Logic is not synonymous with our term Logic in the narrower sense of that word.

Cleanthes, a Stoic, subdivided the three divisions, and made six: Dialectic and Rhetoric, comprised in Logic; Ethic and Politic; Physic and Theology. This division was merely for practical use, for all Philosophy is one. Even among the earliest Stoics Logic or Dialectic does not occupy the same place as in Plato: it is considered only as an instrument which is to be used for the other divisions of Philosophy. An exposition of the earlier Stoic doctrines and of their modifications would require a volume. My object is to explain only the opinions of Antoninus, so far as they can be collected from his book.

According to the subdivision of Cleanthes Physic and Theology go together, or the study of the nature of Things, and the study of the nature of the Deity, so far as man can understand the Deity, and of his government of the universe. This division or subdivision is not formally adopted by Antoninus, for, as already observed, there is no method in his book; but it is virtually contained in it.

Cleanthes also connects Ethic and Politic, or the study of the principles of morals and the study of the constitution of civil society; and undoubtedly he did well in subdividing Ethic into two parts, Ethic in the narrower sense and Politic, for though the two are intimately connected, they are also very distinct, and many questions can only

be properly discussed by carefully observing the distinction. Antoninus does not treat of Politic. His subject is Ethic, and Ethic in its practical application to his own conduct in life as a man and as a governor. His Ethic is founded on his doctrines about man's nature, the Universal Nature, and the relation of every man to everything else. It is therefore intimately and inseparably connected with Physic or the nature of Things and with Theology or the Nature of the Deity. He advises us to examine well all the impressions on our minds (*φαντασίαι*) and to form a right judgment of them, to make just conclusions, and to inquire into the meanings of words, and so far to apply Dialectic, but he has no attempt at any exposition of Dialectic, and his philosophy is in substance purely moral and practical. He says (VIII, 13), 'Constantly and, if it be possible, on the occasion of every impression on the soul,[1] apply to it the principles of Physic, of Moral and of Dialectic :' which is only another way of telling us to examine the impression in every possible way. In another passage (III, 11) he says, 'To the aids which have been mentioned let this one still be added : make for thyself a definition or description of the object (*τὸ φαντᾶστόν*) which is presented to thee, so as to see distinctly what kind of a thing it is in its substance, in its nudity, in its complete entirety, and tell thyself its proper name, and the names of the things of which it has been compounded, and into which it will be resolved.' Such an examination implies a use of Dialectic, which Antoninus accordingly employed as a means towards

[1] The original is *ἐπὶ πάσης φαντασίας*. We have no word which expresses *φαντασία*, for it is not only the sensuous appearance which comes from an external object, which object is called *τὸ φανταστόν*, but it is also the thought or feeling or opinion which is produced even when there is no corresponding external object before us. Accordingly everything which moves the soul is *φανταστόν* and produces a *φαντασία*.

In this extract Antoninus says *φυσιολογεῖν*, *παθολογεῖν*, *διαλεκτικεύεσθαι*. I have translated *παθολογεῖν* by using the word Moral (Ethic), and that is the meaning here.

establishing his Physical, Theological and Ethical principles.

There are several expositions of the Physical, Theological, and Ethical principles, which are contained in the work of Antoninus; and more expositions than I have read. Ritter (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, IV, 241), after explaining the doctrines of Epictetus, treats very briefly and insufficiently those of Antoninus. But he refers to a short essay, in which the work is done better.[1] There is also an essay on the Philosophical Principles of M. Aurelius Antoninus by J. M. Schultz, placed at the end of his German translation of Antoninus (Schleswig, 1799). With the assistance of these two useful essays and his own diligent study a man may form a sufficient notion of the principles of Antoninus; but he will find it more difficult to expound them to others. Besides the want of arrangement in the original and of connexion among the numerous paragraphs, the corruption of the text, the obscurity of the language and the style, and sometimes perhaps the confusion in the writer's own ideas,—besides all this there is occasionally an apparent contradiction in the emperor's thoughts, as if his principles were sometimes unsettled, as if doubt sometimes clouded his mind. A man who leads a life of tranquillity and reflection, who is not disturbed at home and meddles not with the affairs of the world, may keep his mind at ease and his thoughts in one even course. But such a man has not been tried. All his Ethical philosophy and his passive virtue might turn out to be idle words, if he were once exposed to the rude realities of human existence. Fine thoughts and moral dissertations from men who have not worked and suffered may be read, but they will be forgotten. No religion, no Ethical philosophy is worth anything, if the teacher has not lived the 'life of an apostle,' and been ready to die 'the death of a

[1] *De Marco Aurelio Antonino . . . ex ipsius Commentariis.* Scriptio Philologica. Instituit Nicolaus Bachius, Lipsiae, 1826.

martyr.' 'Not in passivity (the passive affects) but in activity lie the evil and the good of the rational social animal, just as his virtue and his vice lie not in passivity, but in activity' (IX, 16). The Emperor Antoninus was a practical moralist. From his youth he followed a laborious discipline, and though his high station placed him above all want or the fear of it, he lived as frugally and temperately as the poorest philosopher. Epictetus wanted little, and it seems that he always had the little that he wanted and he was content with it, as he had been with his servile station. But Antoninus after his accession to the empire sat on an uneasy seat. He had the administration of an empire which extended from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from the cold mountains of Scotland to the hot sands of Africa ; and we may imagine, though we cannot know it by experience, what must be the trials, the troubles, the anxiety and the sorrows of him who has the world's business on his hands with the wish to do the best that he can, and the certain knowledge that he can do very little of the good which he wishes.

In the midst of war, pestilence, conspiracy, general corruption and with the weight of so unwieldy an empire upon him, we may easily comprehend that Antoninus often had need of all his fortitude to support him. The best and the bravest men have moments of doubt and of weakness, but if they are the best and the bravest, they rise again from their depression by recurring to first principles, as Antoninus does. The emperor says that life is smoke, a vapour, and St. James in his Epistle is of the same mind ; that the world is full of envious, jealous, malignant people, and a man might be well content to get out of it. He has doubts perhaps sometimes even about that to which he holds most firmly. There are only a few passages of this kind, but they are evidence of the struggles which even the noblest of the sons of men had to maintain against the hard realities of his daily life. A poor remark it is

which I have seen somewhere, and made in a disparaging way, that the emperor's reflections show that he had need of consolation and comfort in life, and even to prepare him to meet his death. True that he did need comfort and support, and we see how he found it. He constantly recurs to his fundamental principle that the universe is wisely ordered, that every man is a part of it and must conform to that order which he cannot change, that whatever the Deity has done is good, that all mankind are a man's brethren, that he must love and cherish them and try to make them better, even those who would do him harm. This is his conclusion (II, 17): 'What then is that which is able to conduct a man? One thing and only one, Philosophy. But this consists in keeping the divinity within a man free from violence and unharmed, superior to pains and pleasures, doing nothing without a purpose, nor yet falsely and with hypocrisy, not feeling the need of another man's doing or not doing anything; and besides, accepting all that happens and all that is allotted, as coming from thence, wherever it is, from whence he himself came; and finally waiting for death with a cheerful mind as being nothing else than a dissolution of the elements, of which every living being is compounded. But if there is no harm to the elements themselves in each continually changing into another, why should a man have any apprehension about the change and dissolution of all the elements [himself]? for it is according to nature; and nothing is evil that is according to nature.'

The Physic of Antoninus is the knowledge of the Nature of the Universe, of its government, and of the relation of man's nature to both. He names the universe (ἡ τῶν ὅλων οὐσία, VI, 1),[1] 'the universal substance,' and he adds

[1] As to the word οὐσία, the reader may see the Index. I add here a few examples of the use of the word; Antoninus has (V, 24) ἡ συμπᾶσα οὐσία, 'the universal substance.' He says (XII, 30),

that 'reason' (λόγος) governs the universe. He also (VI, 9) uses the terms 'universal nature' or 'nature of the universe.' He (VI, 25) calls the universe 'the one and all, which we name Cosmus or Order' (κόσμος). If he ever seems to use these general terms as significant of the All, of all that man can in any way conceive to exist, he still on other occasions plainly distinguishes between Matter, Material things (ὕλη, ὑλικόν), and Cause, Origin, Reason (αἰτία, αἰτιῶδες, λόγος).[1] This is conformable to Zeno's doctrine that there are two original principles (ἀρχαί) of all things, that which acts (τὸ ποιοῦν) and that which is acted upon (τό πάσχον). That which is acted on is the

'there is one common substance' (οὐσία), distributed among countless bodies, and (IV, 40). In Stobaeus (tom. I, lib. I, tit. 14) there is this definition, οὐσίαν δέ φασιν τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων τὴν πρώτην ὕλην. In VIII, 11, Antoninus speaks of τὸ οὐσιῶδες καὶ ὑλικόν, 'the substantial and the material;' and (VII, 10) he says that 'everything material' (ἔνυλον) disappears in the substance of the whole (τῇ τῶν ὅλων οὐσίᾳ). The οὐσία is the generic name of that existence, which we assume as the highest or ultimate, because we conceive no existence which can be co-ordinated with it and none above it. It is the philosopher's 'substance:' it is the ultimate expression for that which we conceive or suppose to be the basis, the being of a thing. 'From the Divine, which is substance in itself, or the only and sole substance, all and everything that is created exists.' (Swedenborg.)

[1] I remark, in order to anticipate any misapprehension, that all these general terms involve a contradiction. The 'one and all,' and the like, and 'the whole,' imply limitation. 'One' is limited; 'all' is limited; the 'whole' is limited. We cannot help it. We cannot find words to express that which we cannot fully conceive. The addition of 'absolute' or any other such word does not mend the matter. Even the word God is used by most people, often unconsciously, in such a way that limitation is implied, and yet at the same time words are added which are intended to deny limitation. A Christian martyr, when he was asked what God was, is said to have answered that God has no name like a man; and Justin says the same (*Apol.* II, 6). We can conceive the existence of a thing, or rather we may have the idea of an existence, without an adequate notion of it, 'adequate' meaning coextensive and coequal with the thing. We have a notion of limited space derived from the dimensions of what we call a material thing, though of space absolute, if I may use the term, we have no notion at all; and of infinite space the notion is the same, no notion at all; and yet we conceive it in a sense, though I know not how, and we believe that space is infinite, and we cannot conceive it to be finite.

formless matter (ὕλη) : that which acts is the reason in its (λόγος) God, for he is eternal and operates through all matter, and produces all things. So Antoninus (v, 32) speaks of the reason (λόγος) which pervades all substance (οὐσία), and through all time by fixed periods (revolutions) administers the universe (τὸ πᾶν). God is eternal, and Matter is eternal. It is God who gives to matter its form, but he is not said to have created matter. According to this view, which is as old as Anaxagoras, God and matter exist independently, but God governs matter. This doctrine is simply the expression of the fact of the existence both of matter and of God. The Stoics did not perplex themselves with the insoluble question of the origin and nature of matter.[1] Antoninus also assumes a beginning of things, as we now know them ; but his language is sometimes very obscure. I have endeavoured to explain the meaning of one difficult passage (VII, 75, and the note).

Matter consists of elemental parts (στοιχεῖα), of which all material objects are made. But nothing is permanent in form. The nature of the universe, according to Antoninus' expression (IV, 36), 'loves nothing so much as to change the things which are, and to make new things like them. For everything that exists is in a manner the seed of that which will be. But thou art thinking only of seeds which are cast into the earth or into a womb : but this is a very vulgar notion.' All things then are in a constant flux and change : some things are dissolved into the elements,

[1] The notions of matter and of space are inseparable. We derive the notion of space from matter and form. But we have no adequate conception either of matter or of space. Matter in its ultimate resolution is as unintelligible as what men call mind, spirit, or by whatever other name they may express the power which makes itself known by acts. Anaxagoras laid down the distinction between intelligence (νοῦς) and matter, and he said that intelligence impressed motion on matter, and so separated the elements of matter and gave them order ; but he probably only assumed a beginning, as Simplicius says, as a foundation of his philosophical teaching.

The common Greek word which we translate 'matter' is ὕλη. It is the stuff that things are made of.

others come in their places; and so the 'whole universe continues ever young and perfect' (XII, 23).

Antoninus has some obscure expressions about what he calls 'seminal principles' (*σπερματικοὶ λόγοι*). He opposes them to the Epicurean atoms (VI, 24), and consequently his 'seminal principles' are not material atoms which wander about at hazard, and combine nobody knows how. In one passage (IV, 21) he speaks of living principles, souls (*ψυχαὶ*) after the dissolution of their bodies being received into the 'seminal principle of the universe.' Schultz thinks that by 'seminal principles Antoninus means the relations of the various elemental principles, which relations are determined by the deity and by which alone the production of organized beings is possible.' This may be the meaning, but if it is, nothing of any value can be derived from it.[1] Antoninus often uses the word 'Nature' (*φύσις*), and we must attempt to fix its meaning. The simple etymological sense of *φύσις* is 'production,' the birth of what we call Things. The Romans used Natura, which also means 'birth' originally. But neither the Greeks nor the Romans stuck to this simple meaning, nor do we. Antoninus says (X, 6): 'Whether the universe is [a concourse of] atoms or Nature [is a system], let this first be established that I am a part of the whole which is governed by nature.' Here it might seem as if nature were personified and viewed as an active, efficient power, as something which, if not independent of the Deity, acts by a power which is given to it by the Deity. Such, if I understand the expression right, is the way in which the word Nature is often used now, though it is plain that many writers use the word without fixing any

[1] Justin (*Apol.* II, 8) has the expression *κατὰ σπερματικοῦ λόγου μέρος*, where he is speaking of the Stoics. The early Christian writers were familiar with the Stoic terms, and their writings show that the contest was begun between the Christian expositors and the Greek philosophy. Even in the second Epistle of St. Peter (II. 1, v. 4) we find a Stoic expression, *ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως*.

exact meaning to it. It is the same with the expression Laws of Nature, which some writers may use in an intelligible sense, but others as clearly use in no definite sense at all. There is no meaning in this word Nature, except that which Bishop Butler assigns to it, when he says, 'The only distinct meaning of that word Natural is Stated, Fixed or Settled; since what is natural as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, i.e. to effect it continually or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it at once.' This is Plato's meaning (*De Leg.* IV, 715), when he says, that God holds the beginning and end and middle of all that exists, and proceeds straight on his course, making his circuit according to nature (that is, by a fixed order); and he is continually accompanied by justice who punishes those who deviate from the divine law, that is, from the order or course which God observes.

When we look at the motions of the planets, the action of what we call gravitation, the elemental combination of unorganized bodies and their resolution, the production of plants and of living bodies, their generation, growth, and their dissolution, which we call their death, we observe a regular sequence of phaenomena, which within the limits of experience present and past, so far as we know the past, is fixed and invariable. But if this is not so, if the order and sequence of phaenomena, as known to us, are subject to change in the course of an infinite progression,—and such change is conceivable,—we have not discovered, nor shall we ever discover, the whole of the order and sequence of phaenomena, in which sequence there may be involved according to its very nature, that is, according to its fixed order, some variation of what we now call the Order or Nature of Things. It is also conceivable that such changes have taken place, changes in the order of things, as we are compelled by the imperfection of language to call them, but which are no changes; and further it is

certain, that our knowledge of the true sequence of all actual phaenomena, as, for instance, the phaenomena of generation, growth, and dissolution, is and ever must be imperfect.

We do not fare much better when we speak of Causes and Effects than when we speak of Nature. For the practical purposes of life we may use the terms cause and effect conveniently, and we may fix a distinct meaning to them, distinct enough at least to prevent all misunderstanding. But the case is different when we speak of causes and effects as of Things. All that we know is phaenomena, as the Greeks called them, or appearances which follow one another in a regular order, as we conceive it, so that if some one phaenomenon should fail in the series, we conceive that there must either be an interruption of the series, or that something else will appear after the phaenomenon which has failed to appear, and will occupy the vacant place ; and so the series in its progression may be modified or totally changed. Cause and effect then mean nothing in the sequence of natural phaenomena beyond what I have said ; and the real cause, or the transcendent cause, as some would call it, of each successive phaenomenon is in that which is the cause of all things which are, which have been, and which will be for ever. Thus the word Creation may have a real sense if we consider it as the first, if we can conceive a first, in the present order of natural phaenomena ; but in the vulgar sense a creation of all things at a certain time, followed by a quiescence of the first cause and an abandonment of all sequences of Phaenomena to the laws of Nature, or to any other words that people may use, is absolutely absurd.[1]

[1] Time and space are the conditions of our thought ; but time infinite and space infinite cannot be objects of thought, except in a very imperfect way. Time and space must not in any way be thought of, when we think of the Deity. Swedenborg says, 'The natural man may believe that he would have no thought, if the ideas of time, of space, and of things material were taken away ; for upon

Now, though there is great difficulty in understanding all the passages of Antoninus, in which he speaks of Nature, of the changes of things and of the economy of the universe, I am convinced that his sense of Nature and Natural is the same as that which I have stated; and as he was a man who knew how to use words in a clear way and with strict consistency, we ought to assume, even if his meaning in some passages is doubtful, that his view of Nature was in harmony with his fixed belief in the all-pervading, ever present, and ever active energy of God (I, 4; IV, 40; X, 1; VI, 40; and other passages. Compare Seneca, *De Benef.* IV, 7. Swedenborg, *Angelic Wisdom*, 349-357).

There is much in Antoninus that is hard to understand, and it might be said that he did not fully comprehend all that he wrote; which would however be in no way remarkable, for it happens now that a man may write what neither he nor anybody can understand. Antoninus tells us (XII, 10) to look at things and see what they are, resolving them into the material (ὕλη), the causal (αἴτιον), and the relation (ἀναφορά), or the purpose, by which he seems to mean something in the nature of what we call effect, or end. The word Cause (αἰτία) is the difficulty. There is the same word in the Sanscrit (*hétu*); and the subtle philosophers of India and of Greece, and the less subtle philosophers of modern times have all used this word, or an equivalent word, in a vague way. Yet the confusion sometimes may be in the inevitable ambiguity of language rather than in the mind of the writer, for I cannot think that some of the wisest of men did not know what they intended to say. When Antoninus says (IV, 36), 'that everything that exists is in a manner the seed of that which those is founded all the thought that man has. But let him know that the thoughts are limited and confined in proportion as they partake of time, of space, and of what is material; and that they are not limited and are extended, in proportion as they do not partake of those things; since the mind is so far elevated above the things corporeal and worldly' (*Concerning Heaven and Hell*, 169).

will be,' he might be supposed to say what some of the Indian philosophers have said, and thus a profound truth might be converted into a gross absurdity. But he says, 'in a manner,' and in a manner he said true; and in another manner, if you mistake his meaning, he said false. When Plato said, 'Nothing ever is, but is always becoming' (*ἀεὶ γίγνεται*), he delivered a text, out of which we may derive something; for he destroys by it not all practical, but all speculative notions of cause and effect. The whole series of things, as they appear to us, must be contemplated in time, that is in succession, and we conceive or suppose intervals between one state of things and another state of things, so that there is priority and sequence, and interval, and Being, and a ceasing to Be, and beginning and ending. But there is nothing of the kind in the Nature of Things. It is an everlasting continuity (IV, 45; VII, 75). When Antoninus speaks of generation (X, 26), he speaks of one cause (*αἰτία*) acting, and then another cause taking up the work, which the former left in a certain state and so on; and we might perhaps conceive that he had some notion like what has been called 'the self-evolving power of nature;' a fine phrase indeed, the full import of which I believe that the writer of it did not see, and thus he laid himself open to the imputation of being a follower of one of the Hindu sects, which makes all things come by evolution out of nature or matter, or out of something which takes the place of deity, but is not deity. I would have all men think as they please, or as they can, and I only claim the same freedom which I give. When a man writes anything, we may fairly try to find out all that his words must mean, even if the result is that they mean what he did not mean; and if we find this contradiction, it is not our fault, but his misfortune. Now Antoninus is perhaps somewhat in this condition in what he says (X, 26), though he speaks at the end of the paragraph of the power which acts, unseen by

the eyes, but still no less clearly. But whether in this passage (x, 26) he means that the power is conceived to be in the different successive causes (*αἰτίαι*), or in something else, nobody can tell. From other passages however I do collect that his notion of the phaenomena of the universe is what I have stated. The deity works unseen, if we may use such language, and perhaps I may, as Job did, or he who wrote the book of Job. 'In him we live and move and are,' said St Paul to the Athenians, and to show his hearers that this was no new doctrine, he quoted the Greek poets. One of these poets was the Stoic Cleanthes, whose noble hymn to Zeus or God is an elevated expression of devotion and philosophy. It deprives Nature of her power and puts her under the immediate government of the deity.

> **Thee all this heaven, which whirls around the earth,**
> **Obeys and willing follows where thou leadest.—**
> **Without thee, God, nothing is done on earth,**
> **Nor in the aethereal realms, nor in the sea,**
> **Save what the wicked do through their own folly.**

Antoninus' conviction of the existence of a divine power and government was founded on his perception of the order of the universe. Like Socrates (Xen. *Mem.* IV, 3, 13, etc.), he says that though we cannot see the forms of divine powers, we know that they exist because we see their works.

'To those who ask, Where hast thou seen the gods, or how dost thou comprehend that they exist and so worshippest them? I answer, in the first place, that they may be seen even with the eyes; in the second place, neither have I seen my own soul and yet I honour it. Thus then with respect to the gods, from what I constantly experience of their power, from this I comprehend that they exist and I venerate them' (XII, 28, and the note. Comp. Aristotle *de Mundo*, c. 6; Xen. *Mem.* I, 4, 9; Cicero,

Tuscul. I, 28, 29 ; St Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, I, 19, 20 ; and Montaigne's *Apology for Raimond de Sebonde*, II, c. 12). This is a very old argument which has always had great weight with most people and has appeared sufficient. It does not acquire the least additional strength by being developed in a learned treatise. It is as intelligible in its simple enunciation as it can be made. If it is rejected, there is no arguing with him who rejects it : and if it is worked out into innumerable particulars, the value of the evidence runs the risk of being buried under a mass of words.

Man being conscious that he is a spiritual power or an intellectual power, or that he has such a power, in whatever way he conceives that he has it—for I wish simply to state a fact—from this power which he has in himself, he is led, as Antoninus says, to believe that there is a greater power, which as the old Stoics tell us, pervades the whole universe as the intellect [1] (*νοῦς*) pervades man. (Compare Epictetus' *Discourses*, I, 14 ; and Voltaire *à Mme. Necker*, vol. LXVII, p. 278, ed. Lequien.)

[1] I have always translated the word *νοῦς*, 'intelligence' or 'intellect.' It appears to be the word used by the oldest Greek philosophers to express the notion of 'intelligence' as opposed to the notion of 'matter.' I have always translated the word *λόγος* by 'reason,' and *λογικός* by the word 'rational,' or perhaps sometimes 'reasonable,' as I have translated *νοερός* by the word 'intellectual.' Every man who has thought and has read any philosophical writings knows the difficulty of finding words to express certain notions, how imperfectly words express these notions, and how carelessly the words are often used. The various senses of the word *λόγος* are enough to perplex any man. Our translators of the New Testament (St. John, c. I.) have simply translated *ὁ λόγος* by 'the word,' as the Germans translated it by 'das Wort ;' but in their theological writings they sometimes retain the original term Logos. The Germans have a term Vernunft, which seems to come nearest to our word Reason, or the necessary and absolute truths, which we cannot conceive as being other than what they are. Such are what some people have called the laws of thought, the conceptions of space and of time, and axioms or first principles, which need no proof and cannot be proved or denied. Accordingly the Germans can say 'Gott ist die höchste Vernunft,' the Supreme Reason. The Germans have also a word Verstand, which seems to

God exists, then, but what do we know of his Nature? Antoninus says that the soul of man is an efflux from the divinity. We have bodies like animals, but we have reason, intelligence as the gods. Animals have life (ψυχή), and what we call instincts or natural principles of action: but the rational animal man alone has a rational, intelligent soul (ψυχὴ λογική, νοερά). Antoninus insists on this continually: God is in man,[1] and so we must constantly attend to the divinity within us, for it is only in this way that we can have any knowledge of the nature of God. The human soul is in a sense a portion of the divinity, and the soul alone has any communication with the deity, for as he says (XII, 2): 'With his intellectual part God alone touches the intelligence only which has flowed and been derived from himself into these bodies.' In fact he says that which is hidden within a man is life, that is the man himself. All the rest is vesture, covering, organs, instrument, which the living man, the real [2] man, represent our word 'understanding,' 'intelligence,' 'intellect,' not as a thing absolute which exists by itself, but as a thing connected with an individual being, as a man. Accordingly it is the capacity of receiving impressions (Vorstellungen, φαντασίαι), and forming from them distinct ideas (Begriffe), and perceiving differences. I do not think that these remarks will help the reader to the understanding of Antoninus, or his use of the words νοῦς and λόγος. The emperor's meaning must be got from his own words, and if it does not agree altogether with modern notions, it is not our business to force it into agreement, but simply to find out what his meaning is, if we can.

[1] Comp. *Ep. to the Corinthians*, 1, 3, 17.

[2] This is also Swedenborg's doctrine of the soul. 'As to what concerns the soul, of which it is said that it shall live after death, it is nothing else but the man himself, who lives in the body, that is, the interior man, who by the body acts in the world and from whom the body itself lives' (quoted by Clissold, p. 456 of *The Practical Nature of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, in a Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin*, second edition, 1859; a book which theologians might read with profit). This is an old doctrine of the soul, which has been often proclaimed, but never better expressed than by the *Auctor de Mundo*, c. 6, quoted by Gataker in his *Antoninus*, p. 436. 'The soul by which we live and have cities and houses is invisible, but it is seen by its works; for the whole method of life has been devised by it and ordered, and by it is held together. In like manner we must think also about the Deity, who in power is most mighty, in

uses for the purpose of his present existence. The air is universally diffused for him who is able to respire, and so for him who is willing to partake of it the intelligent power, which holds within it all things, is diffused as wide and free as the air (VIII, 54). It is by living a divine life that man approaches to a knowledge of the divinity.[1] It is by following the divinity within, *δαίμων* or *θεός*, as Antoninus calls it, that man comes nearest to the deity, the supreme good, for man can never attain to perfect agreement with his internal guide (*τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*). 'Live with the gods. And he does live with the gods who constantly shows to them that his own soul is satisfied with that which is assigned to him, and that it does all the daemon (*δαίμων*) wishes, which Zeus hath given to every man for his guardian and guide, a portion of himself. And this daemon is every man's understanding, and reason' (v, 27).

There is in man, that is in the reason, the intelligence, a superior faculty which if it is exercised rules all the rest. This is the ruling faculty (*τὸ ἡγεμονικόν*), which Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*, II, 11) renders by the Latin word

beauty most comely, in life immortal, and in virtue supreme: wherefore though he is invisible to human nature, he is seen by his very works.' Other passages to the same purpose are quoted by Gataker (p. 382). Bishop Butler has the same as to the soul: 'Upon the whole then our organs of sense and our limbs are certainly instruments, which the living persons, ourselves, make use of to perceive and move with.' If this is not plain enough, he also says: 'It follows that our organized bodies are no more ourselves, or part of ourselves than any other matter around us.' (Compare Anton. X, 38.)

[1] The reader may consult Discourse V, 'Of the existence and nature of God,' in John Smith's *Select Discourses*. He has prefixed as a text to this Discourse, the striking passage of Agapetus, *Paraenes*, § 3: 'He who knows himself will know God; and he who knows God, will be made like to God; and he will be made like to God, who has become worthy of God; and he becomes worthy of God, who does nothing unworthy of God, but thinks the things that are his, and speaks what he thinks, and does what he speaks.' I suppose that the old saying, 'Know thyself,' which is attributed to Socrates and others, had a larger meaning than the narrow sense which is generally given to it.

Principatus, 'to which nothing can or ought to be superior.' Antoninus often uses this term, and others which are equivalent. He names it (VII, 64) 'the governing intelligence.' The governing faculty is the master of the soul (v, 26). A man must reverence only his ruling faculty and the divinity within him. As we must reverence that which is supreme in the universe, so we must reverence that which is supreme in ourselves, and this is that which is of like kind with that which is supreme in the universe (v, 21). So, as Plotinus says, the soul of man can only know the divine, so far as it knows itself. In one passage (XI, 19) Antoninus speaks of a man's condemnation of himself, when the diviner part within him has been overpowered and yields to the less honourable and to the perishable part, the body, and its gross pleasures. In a word, the views of Antoninus on this matter, however his expressions may vary, are exactly what Bishop Butler expresses, when he speaks of 'the natural supremacy of reflection or conscience,' of the faculty 'which surveys, approves or disapproves the several affections of our mind and actions of our lives.'

Much matter might be collected from Antoninus on the notion of the Universe being one animated Being. But all that he says amounts to no more, as Schultz remarks, than this: the soul of man is most intimately united to his body, and together they make one animal, which we call man; so the Deity is most intimately united to the world or the material universe, and together they form one whole. But Antoninus did not view God and the material universe as the same, any more than he viewed the body and soul of man as one. Antoninus has no speculations on the absolute nature of the deity. It was not his fashion to waste his time on what man cannot understand. He was satisfied that God exists, that he governs all things, that man can only have an imperfect knowledge of his nature, and he must attain this imperfect

knowledge by reverencing the divinity which is within him, and keeping it pure.

From all that has been said it follows that the universe is administered by the Providence of God (*πρόνοια*), and that all things are wisely ordered. There are passages in which Antoninus expresses doubts, or states different possible theories of the constitution and government of the Universe, but he always recurs to his fundamental principle, that if we admit the existence of a deity, we must also admit that he orders all things wisely and well (IV, 27 ; VI, 1 ; IX, 28 ; XII, 5, and many other passages). Epictetus says (I, 6) that we can discern the providence which rules the world, if we possess two things, the power of seeing all that happens with respect to each thing, and a grateful disposition.

But if all things are wisely ordered, how is the world so full of what we call evil, physical and moral ? If instead of saying that there is evil in the world, we use the expression which I have used, 'what we call evil,' we have partly anticipated the emperor's answer. We see and feel and know imperfectly very few things in the few years that we live, and all the knowledge and all the experience of all the human race is positive ignorance of the whole, which is infinite. Now as our reason teaches us that everything is in some way related to and connected with every other thing, all notion of evil as being in the universe of things is a contradiction, for if the whole comes from and is governed by an intelligent being, it is impossible to conceive anything in it which tends to the evil or destruction of the whole (VIII, 55 ; X, 6). Everything is in constant mutation, and yet the whole subsists. We might imagine the solar system resolved into its elemental parts, and yet the whole would still subsist 'ever young and perfect.'

All things, all forms, are dissolved and new forms appear. All living things undergo the change which we

call death. If we call death an evil, then all change is an evil. Living beings also suffer pain, and man suffers most of all, for he suffers both in and by his body and by his intelligent part. Men suffer also from one another, and perhaps the largest part of human suffering comes to man from those whom he calls his brothers. Antoninus says (VIII, 55), 'Generally, wickedness does no harm at all to the universe; and particularly, the wickedness [of one man] does no harm to another. It is only harmful to him who has it in his power to be released from it as soon as he shall choose.' The first part of this is perfectly consistent with the doctrine that the whole can sustain no evil or harm. The second part must be explained by the Stoic principle that there is no evil in anything which is not in our power. What wrong we suffer from another is his evil, not ours. But this is an admission that there is evil in a sort, for he who does wrong does evil, and if others can endure the wrong, still there is evil in the wrong-doer. Antoninus (XI, 18) gives many excellent precepts with respect to wrongs and injuries, and his precepts are practical. He teaches us to bear what we cannot avoid, and his lessons may be just as useful to him who denies the being and the government of God as to him who believes in both. There is no direct answer in Antoninus to the objections which may be made to the existence and providence of God because of the moral disorder and suffering which are in the world, except this answer which he makes in reply to the supposition that even the best men may be extinguished by death. He says if it is so, we may be sure that if it ought to have been otherwise, the gods would have ordered it otherwise (XII, 5). His conviction of the wisdom which we may observe in the government of the world is too strong to be disturbed by any apparent irregularities in the order of things. That these disorders exist is a fact, and those who would conclude from them against the being and

government of God conclude too hastily. We all admit that there is an order in the material world, a Nature, in the sense in which that word has been explained, a constitution (*κατασκευή*), what we call a system, a relation of parts to one another and a fitness of the whole for something. So in the constitution of plants and of animals there is an order, a fitness for some end. Sometimes the order, as we conceive it, is interrupted, and the end, as we conceive it, is not attained. The seed, the plant or the animal sometimes perishes before it has passed through all its changes and done all its uses. It is according to Nature, that is a fixed order, for some to perish early and for others to do all their uses and leave successors to take their place. So man has a corporeal and intellectual and moral constitution fit for certain uses, and on the whole man performs these uses, dies and leaves other men in his place. So society exists, and a social state is manifestly the Natural State of man, the state for which his Nature fits him; and society amidst innumerable irregularities and disorders still subsists; and perhaps we may say that the history of the past and our present knowledge give us a reasonable hope that its disorders will diminish, and that order, its governing principle, may be more firmly established. As order then, a fixed order, we may say, subject to deviations real or apparent, must be admitted to exist in the whole Nature of things, that which we call disorder or evil as it seems to us, does not in any way alter the fact of the general constitution of things having a Nature or fixed order. Nobody will conclude from the existence of disorder that order is not the rule, for the existence of order both physical and moral is proved by daily experience and all past experience. We cannot conceive how the order of the universe is maintained: we cannot even conceive how our own life from day to day is continued, nor how we perform the simplest movements of the body, nor

how we grow and think and act, though we know many of the conditions which are necessary for all these functions. Knowing nothing then of the unseen power which acts in ourselves except by what is done, we know nothing of the power which acts through what we call all time and all space; but seeing that there is a Nature or fixed order in all things known to us, it is conformable to the nature of our minds to believe that this universal Nature has a cause which operates continually, and that we are totally unable to speculate on the reason of any of those disorders or evils which we perceive. This I believe is the answer which may be collected from all that Antoninus has said.[1]

The origin of evil is an old question. Achilles tells Priam (*Iliad*, XXIV, 527) that Zeus has two casks, one filled with good things, and the other with bad, and that he gives to men out of each according to his pleasure; and so we must be content, for we cannot alter the will of Zeus. One of the Greek commentators asks how must we reconcile this doctrine with what we find in the first book of the *Odyssey*, where the king of the gods says, Men say that evil comes to them from us, but they bring it on themselves through their own folly. The answer is plain enough even to the Greek commentator. The poets make both Achilles and Zeus speak appropriately to their several characters. Indeed Zeus says plainly that men do attribute their sufferings to the gods, but they do it falsely, for they are the cause of their own sorrows.

Epictetus in his *Enchiridion* (c. 27) makes short work of the question of evil. He says, 'As a mark is not set up for the purpose of missing it, so neither does the nature of evil exist in the Universe.' This will appear obscure enough to those who are not acquainted with Epictetus, but he always knows what he is talking about.

[1] Cleanthes says in his Hymn:

For all things good and bad to One thou formest.
So that One everlasting reason governs all.

We do not set up a mark in order to miss it, though we may miss it. God, whose existence Epictetus assumes, has not ordered all things so that his purpose shall fail. Whatever there may be of what we call evil, the Nature of evil, as he expresses it, does not exist; that is, evil is not a part of the constitution or nature of Things. If there were a principle of evil (ἀρχή) in the constitution of things, evil would no longer be evil, as Simplicius argues, but evil would be good. Simplicius (c. 34, [27]) has a long and curious discourse on this text of Epictetus, and it is amusing and instructive.

One passage more will conclude this matter. It contains all that the emperor could say (II, 11): 'To go from among men, if there are gods, is not a thing to be afraid of, for the gods will not involve thee in evil; but it indeed they do not exist, or if they have no concern about human affairs, what is it to me to live in a universe devoid of gods or devoid of providence? But in truth they do exist, and they do care for human things, and they have put all the means in man's power to enable him not to fall into real evils. And as to the rest, if there was anything evil, they would have provided for this also, that it should be altogether in a man's power not to fall into it. But that which does not make a man worse, how can it make a man's life worse? But neither through ignorance, nor having the knowledge, but not the power to guard against or correct these things, is it possible that the nature of the Universe has overlooked them; nor is it possible that it has made so great a mistake, either through want of power or want of skill, that good and evil should happen indiscriminately to the good and the bad. But death certainly and life, honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, all these things equally happen to good and bad men, being things which make us neither better nor worse. Therefore they are neither good nor evil.'

The Ethical part of Antoninus' Philosophy follows from

his general principles. The end of all his philosophy is to live conformably to Nature, both a man's own nature and the nature of the Universe. Bishop Butler has explained what the Greek philosophers meant when they spoke of living according to Nature, and he says that when it is explained, as he has explained it and as they understood it, it is 'a manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.' To live according to Nature is to live according to a man's whole nature, not according to a part of it, and to reverence the divinity within him as the governor of all his actions. 'To the rational animal the same act is according to nature and according to reason'[1] (VII, 11). That which is done contrary to reason is also an act contrary to nature, to the whole nature, though it is certainly conformable to some part of man's nature, or it could not be done. Man is made for action, not for idleness or pleasure. As plants and animals do the uses of their nature, so man must do his (V, 1).

Man must also live conformably to the universal nature, conformably to the nature of all things of which he is one; and as a citizen of a political community he must direct his life and actions with reference to those among whom, and for whom, among other purposes, he lives. A man must not retire into solitude and cut himself off from his fellow-men. He must be ever active to do his part in the great whole. All men are his kin, not only in blood, but still more by participating in the same intelligence and by being a portion of the same divinity. A man cannot really be injured by his brethren, for no act of theirs can make him bad, and he must not be angry with them nor hate them: 'For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one

[1] This is what Juvenal means when he says (XIV, 321):
Nunquam aliud Natura aliud Sapientia dicit.

another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away' (II, 1).

Further he says: 'Take pleasure in one thing and rest in it, in passing from one social act to another social act, thinking of God' (VI, 7). Again: 'Love mankind. Follow God' (VII, 31). It is the characteristic of the rational soul for a man to love his neighbour (XI, 1). Antoninus teaches in various passages the forgiveness of injuries, and we know that he also practised what he taught. Bishop Butler remarks that 'this divine precept to forgive injuries and to love our enemies, though to be met with in Gentile moralists, yet is in a peculiar sense a precept of Christianity, as our Saviour has insisted more upon it than on any other single virtue.' The practice of this precept is the most difficult of all virtues. Antoninus often enforces it and gives us aid towards following it. When we are injured, we feel anger and resentment, and the feeling is natural, just and useful for the conservation of society. It is useful that wrong-doers should feel the natural consequences of their actions, among which is the disapprobation of society and the resentment of him who is wronged. But revenge, in the proper sense of that word, must not be practised. 'The best way of avenging thyself,' says the emperor, 'is not to become like the wrong-doer.' It is plain by this that he does not mean that we should in any case practise revenge; but he says to those who talk of revenging wrongs, Be not like him who has done the wrong. Socrates in the *Crito* (c. 10) says the same in other words, and St Paul (*Ep. to the Romans*, XII, 17). 'When a man has done thee any wrong, immediately consider with what opinion about good or evil he has done wrong. For when thou hast seen this, thou wilt pity him and wilt neither wonder nor be angry' (VII, 26). Antoninus would not deny that wrong naturally produces the feeling of anger and resent-

ment, for this is implied in the recommendation to reflect on the nature of the man's mind who has done the wrong, and then you will have pity instead of resentment: and so it comes to the same as St Paul's advice to be angry and sin not; which, as Butler well explains it, is not a recommendation to be angry, which nobody needs, for anger is a natural passion, but it is a warning against allowing anger to lead us into sin. In short the emperor's doctrine about wrongful acts is this: wrong-doers do not know what good and bad are: they offend out of ignorance, and in the sense of the Stoics this is true. Though this kind of ignorance will never be admitted as a legal excuse, and ought not to be admitted as a full excuse in any way by society, there may be grievous injuries, such as it is in a man's power to forgive without harm to society; and if he forgives because he sees that his enemies know not what they do, he is acting in the spirit of the sublime prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

The emperor's moral philosophy was not a feeble, narrow system, which teaches a man to look directly to his own happiness, though a man's happiness or tranquillity is indirectly promoted by living as he ought to do. A man must live conformably to the universal nature, which means, as the emperor explains it in many passages, that a man's actions must be conformable to his true relations to all other human beings, both as a citizen of a political community and as a member of the whole human family. This implies, and he often expresses it in the most forcible language, that a man's words and actions, so far as they affect others, must be measured by a fixed rule, which is their consistency with the conservation and the interests of the particular society of which he is a member, and of the whole human race. To live conformably to such a rule, a man must use his rational faculties in order to discern clearly the conse-

quences and full effect of all his actions and of the actions of others: he must not live a life of contemplation and reflection only, though he must often retire within himself to calm and purify his soul by thought, but he must mingle in the work of man and be a fellow-labourer for the general good.

A man should have an object or purpose in life, that he may direct all his energies to it; of course a good object (II, 7). He who has not one object or purpose of life, cannot be one and the same all through his life (XI, 21). Bacon has a remark to the same effect, on the best means of 'reducing of the mind unto virtue and good estate; which is, the electing and propounding unto a man's self good and virtuous ends of his life, such as may be in a reasonable sort within his compass to attain.' He is a happy man who has been wise enough to do this when he was young and has had the opportunities; but the emperor seeing well that a man cannot always be so wise in his youth, encourages himself to do it when he can, and not to let life slip away before he has begun. He who can propose to himself good and virtuous ends of life, and be true to them, cannot fail to live conformably to his own interest and the universal interest, for in the nature of things they are one. If a thing is not good for the hive, it is not good for the bee (VI, 54).

One passage may end this matter: 'If the gods have determined about me and about the things which must happen to me, they have determined well, for it is not easy even to imagine a deity without forethought; and as to doing me harm, why should they have any desire towards that? For what advantage would result to them from this or to the whole, which is the special object of their providence? But if they have not determined about me individually, they have certainly determined about the whole at least; and the things which happen by way of sequence in this general arrangement I ought

to accept with pleasure and to be content with them. But if they determine about nothing—which it is wicked to believe, or if we do believe it, let us neither sacrifice nor pray nor swear by them nor do anything else which we do as if the gods were present and lived with us—but if however the gods determine about none of the things which concern us, I am able to determine about myself, and I can inquire about that which is useful; and that is useful to every man which is conformable to his own constitution (κατασκευή) and nature. But my nature is rational and social; and my city and country, so far as I am Antoninus, is Rome; but so far as I am a man, it is the world. The things then which are useful to these cities are alone useful to me' (VI, 44).

It would be tedious, and it is not necessary to state the emperor's opinions on all the ways in which a man may profitably use his understanding towards perfecting himself in practical virtue. The passages to this purpose are in all parts of his book, but as they are in no order or connexion, a man must use the book a long time before he will find out all that is in it. A few words may be added here. If we analyse all other things, we find how insufficient they are for human life, and how truly worthless many of them are. Virtue alone is indivisible, one, and perfectly satisfying. The notion of Virtue cannot be considered vague or unsettled, because a man may find it difficult to explain the notion fully to himself or to expound it to others in such a way as to prevent cavilling. Virtue is a whole, and no more consists of parts than man's intelligence does, and yet we speak of various intellectual faculties as a convenient way of expressing the various powers which man's intellect shows by his works. In the same way we may speak of various virtues or parts of virtue, in a practical sense, for the purpose of showing what particular virtues we ought to practise in order to the exercise of the

whole of virtue, that is, as much as man's nature is capable of.

The prime principle in man's constitution is social. The next in order is not to yield to the persuasions of the body, when they are not conformable to the rational principle, which must govern. The third is freedom from error and from deception. 'Let then the ruling principle holding fast to these things go straight on and it has what is its own' (VII, 55). The emperor selects justice as the virtue which is the basis of all the rest (x, 11), and this had been said long before his time.

It is true that all people have some notion of what is meant by justice as a disposition of the mind, and some notion about acting in conformity to this disposition; but experience shows that men's notions about justice are as confused as their actions are inconsistent with the true notion of justice. The emperor's notion of justice is clear enough, but not practical enough for all mankind. 'Let there be freedom from perturbations with respect to the things which come from the external cause; and let there be justice in the things done by virtue of the internal cause, that is, let there be movement and action terminating in this, in social acts, for this is according to thy nature' (IX, 31). In another place (IX, 1) he says that 'he who acts unjustly acts impiously,' which follows of course from all that he says in various places. He insists on the practice of truth as a virtue and as a means to virtue, which no doubt it is: for lying even in indifferent things weakens the understanding; and lying maliciously is as great a moral offence as a man can be guilty of, viewed both as showing an habitual disposition, and viewed with respect to consequences. He couples the notion of justice with action. A man must not pride himself on having some fine notion of justice in his head, but he must exhibit his justice in act, like St James' notion of faith. But this is enough.

The Stoics and Antoninus among them call some things beautiful (*καλά*) and some ugly (*αἰσχρά*), and as they are beautiful so they are good, and as they are ugly so they are evil or bad (II, 1). All these things good and evil are in our power, absolutely some of the stricter Stoics would say; in a manner only, as those who would not depart altogether from common sense would say; practically they are to a great degree in the power of some persons and in some circumstances, but in a small degree only in other persons and in other circumstances. The Stoics maintain man's free-will as to the things which are in his power; for as to the things which are out of his power, free-will terminating in action is of course excluded by the very terms of the expression. I hardly know if we can discover exactly Antoninus' notion of the free-will of man, nor is the question worth the inquiry. What he does mean and does say is intelligible. All the things which are not in our power (*ἀπροαίρετα*) are indifferent: they are neither good nor bad, morally. Such are life, health, wealth, power, disease, poverty and death. Life and death are all men's portion. Health, wealth, power, disease and poverty happen to men indifferently to the good and to the bad; to those who live according to nature and to those who do not. 'Life,' says the emperor, 'is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and after fame is oblivion' (II, 17). After speaking of those men who have disturbed the world and then died, and of the death of philosophers such as Heraclitus and Democritus who was destroyed by lice, and of Socrates whom other lice (his enemies) destroyed, he says: 'What means all this? Thou hast embarked, thou hast made the voyage, thou art come to shore; get out. If indeed to another life, there is no want of gods, not even there. But if to a state without sensation, thou wilt cease to be held by pains and pleasures, and to be a slave to the vessel which is as much inferior as that which serves it is superior:

for the one is intelligence and deity; the other is earth and corruption' (III, 3). It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live according to nature (XII, 1). Every man should live in such a way as to discharge his duty, and to trouble himself about nothing else. He should live such a life that he shall always be ready for death, and shall depart content when the summons comes. For what is death? 'A cessation of the impressions through the senses, and of the pulling of the strings which move the appetites and of the discursive movements of the thoughts, and of the service to the flesh' (VI, 28). Death is such as generation is, a mystery of nature (IV, 5). In another passage, the exact meaning of which is perhaps doubtful (IX, 3), he speaks of the child which leaves the womb, and so he says the soul at death leaves its envelope. As the child is born or comes into life by leaving the womb, so the soul may on leaving the body pass into another existence which is perfect. I am not sure if this is the emperor's meaning. Butler compares it with a passage in Strabo (p. 713) about the Brahmin's notion of death being the birth into real life and a happy life to those who have philosophized; and he thinks that Antoninus may allude to this opinion.[1]

Antoninus' opinion of a future life is nowhere clearly expressed. His doctrine of the nature of the soul of necessity implies that it does not perish absolutely, for a portion of the divinity cannot perish. The opinion is at least as old as the time of Epicharmus and Euripides; what comes from earth goes back to earth, and what comes from heaven, the divinity, returns to him who gave it. But I find nothing clear in Antoninus as to the

[1] Seneca (*Ep.* 102) has the same, whether an expression of his own opinion, or merely a fine saying of others employed to embellish his writings, I know not. After speaking of the child being prepared in the womb to live this life, he adds, 'Sic per hoc spatium, quod ab infantia patet in sensectutem, in alium naturae sumimur partum. Alia origo nos expectat, alius rerum status.'

notion of the man existing after death so as to be conscious of his sameness with that soul which occupied his vessel of clay. He seems to be perplexed on this matter, and finally to have rested in this, that God or the gods will do whatever is best and consistent with the university of things.

Nor I think does he speak conclusively on another Stoic doctrine, which some Stoics practised, the anticipating the regular course of nature by a man's own act. The reader will find some passages in which this is touched on, and he may make of them what he can. But there are passages in which the emperor encourages himself to wait for the end patiently and with tranquillity; and certainly it is consistent with all his best teaching that a man should bear all that falls to his lot and do useful acts as long as he lives. He should not therefore abridge the time of his usefulness by his own act. Whether he contemplates any possible cases in which a man should die by his own hand, I cannot tell, and the matter is not worth a curious inquiry, for I believe it would not lead to any certain result as to his opinion on this point. I do not think that Antoninus, who never mentions Seneca, though he must have known all about him, would have agreed with Seneca when he gives as a reason for suicide, that the eternal law, whatever he means, has made nothing better for us than this, that it has given us only one way of entering into life and many ways of going out of it. The ways of going out indeed are many, and that is a good reason for a man taking care of himself.

Happiness was not the direct object of a Stoic's life. There is no rule of life contained in the precept that a man should pursue his own happiness. Many men think that they are seeking happiness when they are only seeking the gratification of some particular passion, the strongest that they have. The end of a man is, as already explained, to live conformably to nature, and he will thus

obtain happiness, tranquillity of mind and contentment (III, 12; VIII, 1, and other places). As a means of living conformably to nature he must study the four chief virtues, each of which has its proper sphere: wisdom, or the knowledge of good and evil; justice, or the giving to every man his due; fortitude, or the enduring of labour and pain; and temperance, which is moderation in all things. By thus living conformably to nature the Stoic obtained all that he wished or expected. His reward was in his virtuous life, and he was satisfied with that. Some Greek poet long ago wrote:

> For virtue only of all human things
> Takes her reward not from the hands of others.
> Virtue herself rewards the toils of virtue.

Some of the Stoics indeed expressed themselves in very arrogant, absurd terms, about the wise man's self-sufficiency; they elevated him to the rank of a deity.[1] But these were only talkers and lecturers, such as those in all ages who utter fine words, know little of human affairs, and care only for notoriety. Epictetus and Antoninus both by precept and example laboured to improve themselves and others; and if we discover imperfections in their teaching, we must still honour these great men who attempted to show that there is in man's nature and in the constitution of things sufficient reason for living a virtuous life. It is difficult enough to live as we ought to live, difficult even for any man to live in such a way as to satisfy himself, if he exercises only in a moderate degree the power of reflecting upon and reviewing his own conduct; and if all men cannot be brought to the same opinions in morals and religion, it is at least worth while to give them good reasons for as much as they can be persuaded to accept.

[1] J. Smith in his *Select Discourses* on 'the Excellency and Nobleness of True Religion' (c. VI) has remarked on this Stoical arrogance. He finds in it Seneca and others. In Seneca certainly, and perhaps something of it in Epictetus; but it is not in Antoninus.

THE THOUGHTS OF

MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS