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[The greco-roman world - suite]

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This also conduces to contempt of vainglory, that it is no longer in your power to have lived your whole life, or at any rate your life from manhood, in the pursuit of philosophy. To yourself, as well as to many others, it is plain that you fall far short of philosophy. And so you are tainted, and it is no longer easy for you to acquire the reputation of a philosopher . . . Consider accordingly what your nature wills, and let nothing besides distract you ; for experience has taught you in how many paths you have strayed and nowhere found the good life : not in logical arguments, not in riches, not in glory, not in self-indulgence, nowhere. Where, then, is it to be found? (VIII, 1).

He gives the old answer : in the possession of moral principles.

In doing what man's nature requires. How then will he do this? If he hold fast to doctrines upon which impulses and actions depend. What doctrines are these? They concern good and evil, how nothing is good for man which does not make him just, sober, grave, and free ; nothing evil which does not produce effects the opposite of these (VIII, 1). . . . What is your art? To be good. But how is this done except by principles of thought, concerned both with Universal Nature and with man's individual constitution? (XI, 5).

But this "reason and art of reason", these "forces satisfied in themselves and their work", descend to the bottom of the soul. It is not yet the infinite that is revealed there—"All that is beautiful, whatever its nature, is beautiful of itself and has its end in itself". But in this self-sufficing beauty there is an inner realm that lies deeper than thought, and this he approaches by means of symbols typical of mysticism. Marcus Aurelius looks at reason, as it exists purely for itself ; "If you separate from yourself, namely from your mind, all that others do or say, all that you yourself did or said, all that troubles you in the future," all the surrounding whirl of the stormy life of physical indulgence and passion, "and make yourself like the sphere of Empedocles . . . then you will have it in your power at least to live out the time that is left until you die, untroubled and with kindness and reconciled with your own good Spirit" (XII, 3, 2).

Thus the symbol of the sphere, the Greek symbol for completed existence, which Empedocles applied to the divine universe, with reference to its primeval state, becomes a symbol for the divine entirety of the human soul. He says it yet more plainly : "The sphere of the soul is true to its own form, when it is never extended in any way nor contracted inwards ; when it is neither scattered nor dies down, but is lighted by the light whereby it sees the truth of all things and the truth within itself."* He

* XI, 12 ; cf. III, 4 ; VIII, 41.

conceives the spiritual depth in man, in accordance with the traditional aspect derived from Plato, as something general and simple : a hidden entity to be extracted, as it were, from the daily husks that entangle it. We meet here again * with the idea of the god in us, which developed in mysticism ; how far removed it remained, in the ancient conception, from an ethical assessment of the individual character will become plain in Augustine. Marcus Aurelius calls it vaguely at times "that which is seated within", as Augustine speaks of the *internum aeternum* ; the pictorial expression which he likes to use for it is irrational, though he often uses it as equivalent to reason : it is "dæmon".

In the enlightened interpretation given to it by Seneca and Epictetus, this conception, with its many associations derived from its traditional origin, of the dæmon of the individual person,⁸⁸ had lost the non-ethical sense that underlay the belief in the dæmon so long as it indicated a unity of the course of life conceived as the substance of destiny or the guidance coming from without through the agency of a protective spirit as intermediary between gods and men. By "dæmon" those Stoics expressed the ever mysterious element in man's moral consciousness, distinguished by Kant from our empirical character as its transcendental cause : ⁸⁹ the self-reliance of the moral personality in the midst of the universal causation of the physical world. We saw that Marcus Aurelius' self-communion started individually from that experience and combined moral idealism with the pantheistic view of the world, this combination being a living reality. In this the dæmon was at work with which he habitually conversed in self-communion.

The relation of an I to a Thou in self-communion should not be exaggerated into a separation ; for the conversation is a method of representing spiritual happenings, and the advantage of that method is that it can dispense with divisions existing only in the abstract. In so addressing himself Marcus Aurelius makes plain the unified content of his inner life and, what amounts to the same thing, finds his dæmon. With him the dæmon came to acquire personal characteristics, because he conceived it not only in talking about it but in daily realizing that it was the most essential element in his moral consciousness. "To preserve one's dæmon pure and upright"—in that he summed up all that philosophy had to offer him : "to live the good life, content both with present action in accord with Nature and with heroic

* See above, p. 432.

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