

**MEDITATIONS,
THE SPEECHES OF MARCUS,
THE SAYINGS OF MARCUS**



ILLUSTRATED

COMPLETE **MARCUS**
WORKS OF **AURELIUS**

**COMPLETE WORKS OF
MARCUS AURELIUS:**

**Meditations, The Speeches Of
Marcus, The Sayings Of
Marcus**

Illustrated

This comprehensive eBook presents the complete extant works of Marcus Aurelius with beautiful illustrations relating to Marcus' life and works.

Marcus Aurelius was a Roman Emperor from 161 to 180, known as one of the last of the Five Good Emperors, and is also considered one of the most important Stoic philosophers.

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NOTE ON CHRISTIANS

MEDITATIONS

A new rendering based on the fowlis translation of 1742
By George W. Chrystal

Book I

1.

I learned from my grandfather, Verus, to use good manners, and to put restraint on anger.

2.

In the famous memory of my father I had a pattern of modesty and manliness.

3.

Of my mother I learned to be pious and generous; to keep myself not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and to live with a simplicity which is far from customary among the rich.



4.

I owe it to my great-grandfather that I did not attend public lectures and discussions, but had good and able teachers at home; and I owe him also the knowledge that for things of this nature a man should count no expense too great.

5.

My tutor taught me not to favour either green or blue at the chariot races, nor, in the contests of gladiators, to be a supporter either of light or heavy armed. He taught me also to endure labour; not to need many things; to serve myself

without troubling others; not to intermeddle in the affairs of others, and not easily to listen to slanders against them.

6.

Of Diognetus I had the lesson not to busy myself about vain things; not to credit the great professions of such as pretend to work wonders, or of sorcerers about their charms, and their expelling of Demons and the like; not to keep quails (for fighting or divination), nor to run after such things; to suffer freedom of speech in others, and to apply myself heartily to philosophy. Him also I must thank for my hearing first Bacchius, then Tandasis and Marcianus; that I wrote dialogues in my youth, and took a liking to the philosopher's pallet and skins, and to the other things which, by the Grecian discipline, belong to that profession.

7.

To Rusticus I owe my first apprehensions that my nature needed reform and cure; and that I did not fall into the ambition of the common Sophists, either by composing speculative writings or by declaiming harangues of exhortation in public; further, that I never strove to be admired by ostentation of great patience in an ascetic life, or by display of activity and application; that I gave over the study of rhetoric, poetry, and the graces of language; and that I did not pace my house in my senatorial robes, or practise any similar affectation. I observed also the simplicity of style in his letters, particularly in that which he wrote to my mother from Sinuessa. I learned from him to be easily appeased, and to be readily reconciled with those who had displeased me or given cause of offence, so soon as they inclined to make their peace; to read with care; not to rest satisfied with a slight and superficial knowledge; nor quickly to assent to great talkers. I have him to thank that I

met with the discourses of Epictetus, which he furnished me from his own library.

8.

From Apollonius I learned true liberty, and tenacity of purpose; to regard nothing else, even in the smallest degree, but reason always; and always to remain unaltered in the agonies of pain, in the losses of children, or in long diseases. He afforded me a living example of how the same man can, upon occasion, be most yielding and most inflexible. He was patient in exposition; and, as might well be seen, esteemed his fine skill and ability in teaching others the principles of philosophy as the least of his endowments. It was from him that I learned how to receive from friends what are thought favours without seeming humbled by the giver or insensible to the gift.

9.

Sextus was my pattern of a benign temper, and his family the model of a household governed by true paternal affection, and a steadfast purpose of living according to nature. Here I could learn to be grave without affectation, to observe sagaciously the several dispositions and inclinations of my friends, to tolerate the ignorant and those who follow current opinions without examination. His conversation showed how a man may accommodate himself to all men and to all companies; for though companionship with him was sweeter and more pleasing than any sort of flattery, yet he was at the same time highly respected and revered. No man was ever more happy than he in comprehending, finding out, and arranging in exact order the great maxims necessary for the conduct of life. His example taught me to suppress even the least appearance of anger or any other passion; but still, with all this perfect tranquillity, to possess the tenderest and most affectionate

heart; to be apt to approve others yet without noise; to have much learning and little ostentation.

10.

I learned from Alexander the Grammarian to avoid censuring others, to refrain from flouting them for a barbarism, solecism, or any false pronunciation. Rather was I dexterously to pronounce the words rightly in my answer, confining approval or objection to the matter itself, and avoiding discussion of the expression, or to use some other form of courteous suggestion.

11.

Fronto made me sensible how much of envy, deceit and hypocrisy surrounds princes; and that generally those whom we account nobly born have somehow less natural affection.

12.

I learned from Alexander the Platonist not often nor without great necessity to say, or write to any man in a letter, that I am not at leisure; nor thus, under pretext of urgent affairs, to make a practice of excusing myself from the duties which, according to our various ties, we owe to those with whom we live.

13.

Of Catulus I learned not to condemn any friend's expostulation even though it were unjust, but to try to recall him to his former disposition; to stint no praise in speaking of my masters, as is recounted of Domitius and Athenodorus; and to love my children with true affection.

14.

Of Severus, my brother, I learned to love my kinsmen, to love truth, to love justice. Through him I came to know Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, and Brutus. He gave me my first conception of a Commonwealth founded upon equitable laws and administered with equality of right; and of a Monarchy whose chief concern is the freedom of its subjects. Of him I learned likewise a constant and harmonious devotion to Philosophy; to be ready to do good, to be generous with all my heart. He taught me to be of good hope and trustful of the affection of my friends. I observed in him candour in declaring what he condemned in the conduct of others; and so frank and open was his behaviour, that his friends might easily see without the trouble of conjecture what he liked or disliked.

15.

The counsels of Maximus taught me to command myself, to judge clearly, to be of good courage in sickness and other misfortunes, to be moderate, gentle, yet serious in disposition, and to accomplish my appointed task without repining. All men believed that he spoke as he thought; and whatever he did, they knew it was done with good intent. I never found him surprised or astonished at anything. He was never in a hurry, never shrank from his purpose, was never at a loss or dejected. He was no facile smiler, but neither was he passionate or suspicious. He was ready to do good, to forgive, and to speak the truth, and gave the impression of unperverted rectitude rather than of a reformed character. No man could ever think himself despised by Maximus, and no one ever ventured to think himself his superior. He had also a good gift of humour.

16.

I learned from my father gentleness and undeviating constancy in judgments formed after due reflection; not to

be puffed up with glory as men understand it; to be laborious and assiduous. He taught me to give ready hearing to any man who offered anything tending to the common good; to mete out impartial justice to every one; to apprehend rightly when severity and when clemency should be used; to abstain from all impure lusts; and to use humanity towards all men. Thus he left his friends at liberty to sup with him or not, to go abroad with him or not, exactly as they inclined; and they found him still the same if some urgent business had prevented them from obeying his commands. I learned of him accuracy and patience in council, for he never quitted an enquiry satisfied with first impressions. I observed his zeal to retain his friends without being fickle or over fond; his contentment in every condition; his cheerfulness; his forethought about very distant events; his unostentatious attention to the smallest details; his restraint of all popular applause and flattery. Ever watchful of the needs of the Empire, a careful steward of the public revenue, he was tolerant of the censure of others in affairs of that kind. He was neither a superstitious worshipper of the Gods, nor an ambitious pleaser of men, nor studious of popularity, but in all things sober and steadfast, well skilled in what was honourable, never affecting novelties. As to the things which make the ease of life, and which fortune can supply in such abundance, he used them without pride, and yet with all freedom: enjoyed them without affectation when they were present, and when absent he found no want of them. No man could call him sophist, buffoon, or pedant. He was a man of ripe experience, a full man, one who could not be flattered, and who could govern himself as well as others. I further observed that he honoured all who were true philosophers, without upbraiding the rest, and without being led astray by any. His manners were easy, his conversation delightful, but not cloying. He took regular but moderate care of his body, neither as one over fond of life or of the adornment of his

person, nor as one who despised these things. Thus, through his own care, he seldom needed any medicines, whether salves or potions. It was his special merit to yield without envy to any who had acquired any special faculty, as either eloquence, or learning in the Law, in ancient customs, or the like; and he aided such men strenuously, so that every one of them might be regarded and esteemed for his special excellence. He observed carefully the ancient customs of his forefathers, and preserved, without appearance of affectation, the ways of his native land. He was not fickle and capricious, and loved not change of place or employment. After his violent fits of headache he would return fresh and vigorous to his wonted affairs. Of secrets he had few, and these seldom, and such only as concerned public matters. He displayed discretion and moderation in exhibiting shows for the entertainment of the people, in his public works, in largesses and the like; and in all those things he acted like one who regarded only what was right and becoming in the things themselves, and not the reputation that might follow after. He never bathed at unseasonable hours, had no vanity in building, was never solicitous either about his food or about the make or colour of his clothes, or about the beauty of his servants. His dress came from Lorium-his villa on the coast-and was of Lanuvian wool for the most part. It is remembered how he used the tax-collector at Tusculum who asked his pardon, and all his behaviour was of a piece with that. He was far from being inhuman, or implacable, or violent; never doing anything with such keenness that one could say he was sweating about it, in all things he reasoned distinctly, as one at leisure, calmly, regularly, resolutely, and consistently. A man might fairly apply that to him which is recorded of Socrates: that he could both abstain from and enjoy these things, in want whereof many show themselves weak, and, in the possession, intemperate. To be strong in abstinence and temperate in enjoyment, to be sober in both-these are

qualities of a man of perfect and invincible soul, as was shown in the sickness of Maximus.

17.

To the Gods I owe it that I had good grandfathers and parents, a good sister, good teachers, good servants, good kinsmen, and friends, good almost all of them. I have to thank them that I never through haste and rashness offended any of them; though my temper was such as might have led me to it had occasion offered. But by their goodness no such concurrence of circumstances happened as could discover my weakness. I am further thankful that I was not longer brought up with my grandfather's concubine, that I retained my modesty, and refrained even longer than need have been from the pleasures of love. To the Gods it is due that I lived under the government of such a prince and father as could take from me all vain glory, and convince me that it was not impossible for a prince to live in a court without guards, gorgeous robes, torches, statues, or such pieces of state and magnificence; but that he may reduce himself almost to the state of a private man, and yet not become more mean or remiss in those public affairs wherein power and authority are requisite. I thank the Gods that I have had such a brother as by his disposition might stir me to take care of myself, while at the same time he delighted me by his respect and love. I thank them that my children neither wanted good natural dispositions nor were deformed in body. I owe it to their good guidance that I made no greater progress in rhetoric and poetry, and in other studies which might have engrossed my mind had I found myself successful in them. By the Gods' grace I forestalled the wishes of those by whom I was brought up, in promoting them to the dignities they seemed most to desire; and I did not put them off with the hope that, since they were but young, I would do it hereafter. I owe to the Gods that I ever

knew Apollonius, Rusticus and Maximus; that I have had occasion often and effectually to meditate with myself and enquire what is truly the life according to Nature. And, as far as lies within the dispensation of the Gods to give suggestion, help, or inspiration, there is nothing to prevent my having already realized that life. I have fallen short of it by my own fault, and because I gave no heed to the inward monitions and almost direct instructions of the Gods, to whom be thanks that my body hath so long endured the stress of such a life as I have led. By their goodness I never had to do with either Benedicta or Theodotus; and afterwards, when I fell into some foolish passions, I was soon cured. I give thanks that, having often been displeased with Rusticus, I never did anything to him which afterwards I might have had occasion to repent; that, though my mother was destined to die young, she lived with me all her latter years; that, as often as I inclined to succour any who were either poor or had fallen into some distress, I was never answered that there was not ready money enough to do it, and that I myself never had need of the like succour from another. I must be grateful, too, that I have such a wife, so obedient, so loving, so ingenuous; that I had choice of fit and able men to whom I might commit the education of my children. I have received divine aids in dreams; as in particular, how I might stay my spitting of blood and cure my vertigo; which good fortune happily fell to me at Caieta. The Gods watched over me also when I first applied myself to philosophy. For I fell not into the hands of any Sophist, nor sat poring over many volumes, nor devoted myself to solving syllogisms, or star-gazing. That all these things should so happily fall out there was great need both for the help of fortune and for the aid of the Gods.

*in the country of the
quadi, by the granua.*

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

Book II

1.

Say this to yourself in the morning: Today I shall have to do with meddlers, with the ungrateful, with the insolent, with the crafty, with the envious and the selfish. All these vices have beset them, because they know not what is good and what is evil. But I have considered the nature of the good, and found it beautiful: I have beheld the nature of the bad, and found it ugly. I also understand the nature of the evil-doer, and know that he is my brother, not because he shares with me the same blood or the same seed, but because he is a partaker of the same mind and of the same portion of immortality. I therefore cannot be hurt by any of these, since none of them can involve me in any baseness. I cannot be angry with my brother, or sever myself from him, for we are made by nature for mutual assistance, like the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the upper and lower rows of teeth. It is against nature for men to oppose each other; and what else is anger and aversion?

2.

All that I am is either flesh, breath, or the ruling part. Cast your books from you; distract yourself no more; for you have not the right to do so. Like one at the point of death despise this flesh, this corruptible bone and blood, this network texture of nerves, veins, and arteries. Consider, too, what breath is-mere air, and that always changing, expelled and inhaled again every moment. The third is the ruling part. As to this, take heed, now that you are old, that it remain no longer in servitude; that it be no more dragged hither and thither like a puppet by every selfish impulse. Repine no more at what fate now sends, nor dread what may befall you hereafter.

3.

Whatever the Gods ordain is full of wise forethought. The workings of chance are not apart from nature, and not without connexion and intertexture with the designs of Providence. Providence is the source of all things; and, besides, there is necessity, and the utility of the Universe, of which you are a part. For, to every part of a being, that is good which springs from the nature of the whole and tends to its preservation. Now, the order of Nature is preserved in the changes of elements, just as it is in the changes of things that are compound. Let this suffice you, and be your creed unchangeable. Put from you the thirst of books, that you may not die murmuring, but meekly, and with true and heartfelt gratitude to the Gods.

4.

Think of your long procrastination, and of the many opportunities given you by the Gods, but left unused. Surely it is high time to understand the Universe of which you are a part, and the Ruler of that Universe, of whom you are an emanation; that a limit is set to your days, which, if you use them not for your enlightenment, will depart, as you yourself will, and return no more.

5.

Hourly and earnestly strive, as a Roman and a man, to do what falls to your hand with perfect unaffected dignity, with kindness, freedom and justice, and free your soul from every other imagination. This you will accomplish if you perform each action as if it were your last, without wilfulness, or any passionate aversion to what reason approves; without hypocrisy or selfishness, or discontent with the decrees of Providence. You see how few things it is necessary to master in order that a man may live a smooth-

flowing, God-fearing life. For of him that holds to these principles the Gods require no more.

6.

Go on, go on, O my soul, to affront and dishonour thyself! The time that remains to honour thyself will not be long. Short is the life of every man; and thine is almost spent; spent, not honouring thyself, but seeking thy happiness in the souls of other men.

7.

Cares from without distract you: take leisure, then, to add some good thing to your knowledge; have done with vacillation, and avoid the other error. For triflers, too, are they who, by their activities, weary themselves in life, and have no settled aim to which they may direct, once and for all, their every desire and project.

8.

Seldom are any found unhappy from not observing what is in the minds of others. But such as observe not well the stirrings of their own souls must of necessity be unhappy.

9.

Remember always what the nature of the Universe is, what your own nature is, and how these are related-the one to the other. Remember what part your qualities are of the qualities of the whole, and that no man can prevent you from speaking and acting always in accordance with that nature of which you are a part.

10.

In comparing crimes together, as, according to the common idea, they may be compared, Theophrastus makes