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"KNOW THYSELF" IN GREEK AND LATIN LITERATURE

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BY
ELIZA GREGORY WILKINS

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PREFACE

The Delphic maxim "Know Thyself" has occurred so frequently in the literature of every age from the fifth century B. C. down to our own day that it may seem at first thought too well-worn a theme for fresh discussion. But modern use of it, whether in the title of a book or a play, or in the incidental pointing of a moral in some literary work, takes little account, as a rule, of its ancient connotation; and no systematic attempt has been made hitherto to discover its meanings for the Greeks themselves. It has been the aim of this study to determine the sense in which the Ancients interpreted the maxim, by collecting the instances of its actual or implied presence in the extant writings of the Greeks and Romans down to about 500 A. D. It is possible that in covering so extensive a field some more or less important passages may have been overlooked, but they would probably not affect the categories indicated.

It is with sincere gratitude that I here acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Paul Shorey of the University of Chicago for the subject of this investigation, and for many an illuminating suggestion during the progress of the work.

ELIZA GREGORY WILKINS.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When Socrates in Plato's *Protagoras*[1] is discussing certain verses of Simonides which refer to an apophthegm of Pittacus—Χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι, he explains that this is one of the numerous examples of the Old-time Wisdom, an instance of Laconian βραχυλογία, and he turns by way of illustration to the inscriptions at Delphi. "Thales the Milesian," he says, "and Pittacus the Mitylenian, and Bias the Prienian, and our Solon, and Cleobulus the Lindian, and Myson the Chenian, and the seventh—Lacedaemonian Chilon . . . met together and dedicated the first-fruits of wisdom to Apollo at the temple at Delphi, writing these sayings which are on everybody's tongue, Γνῶθι σαυτὸν and Μηδὲν ἄγαν." While this passage raises no questions regarding the interpretation of γνῶθι σαυτὸν, it may serve as a fitting introduction to a consideration of the Delphic inscriptions in general—their number, their authorship, and their exact location on the temple. Besides the two given above we know positively of three others—the Ἐγγύη, πάρα δ' ἄτη, mentioned by Plato in the Charmides,[2] by Diogenes Laertius[3] and others; Θεῷ ἦρα, cited by Varro,[4] and perhaps reflected in the "sequi deum" of Cicero's *De Finibus* III:22; and a large *E*, known to us chiefly through Plutarch's treatise entitled *De E apud Delphos*. The scholiasts on Lucian[5] and on Dio Chrysostom[6] give seven inscriptions, attributing one to each of the Seven Sages, and there is a manuscript[7] in the Laurentian Library at Florence containing ninety-two sayings, which bears the title *Maxims of the Seven Sages Which Were Found Carved on the Pillar at Delphi*.[8] The late scholiasts on Lucian and Dio Chrysostom, however, are hardly to be relied upon,[9] and the

[1] 343 A-B.

[2] 165 A.

[3] I, 3, 6 & IX, 11, 8.

[4] *Sat. Menip.* XXIX, 16. Ed. Reise p. 130.

[5] On *Phalar.* I, 7.

[6] Quoted by Schultz in Philologus XXIV, p. 203, n. 62.

[7] Philologus XXIV, p. 215.

[8] τῶν ἑπτὰ σοφῶν παραγγέλματα ἅτινα εὑρέθησαν κεκολαμμένα ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐν Δελφοῖς κίονος. See Philologus XXIV, p. 193 and pp. 215 ff. Mullach. F*rag. Phil. Graec.* Vol. I, p. 212 ff. brings together the apophthegms which ancient writers attributed to the Seven Wise Men severally and collectively.

[9] *Philologus* XXIV, p. 203.

compiler of the Παραγγέλματα of the Wise Men was undoubtedly confused[10] in assigning to Delphi so many sayings which are nowhere else mentioned as belonging there. So, too, according to Photius and Suidas, some people classed another proverb—the *τὴν κατὰ σαυτὸν ἔλα*—as a *Πυθικὸν ἀπόφθεγμα*, and with like error.

Modern discussion of the inscriptions at Delphi is concerned chiefly with the meaning of the *E* and with the arrangement of the sayings, certain scholars holding conservatively to the five known surely to have been there, and others seeking to find trace of enough more to make possible an arrangement in hexameters. The meaning of the letter E was evidently not clear to the men of later antiquity, as Plutarch's treatise shows. He gives in the main five possible explanations, two based on the supposition that the E is a real E, the fifth letter of the alphabet, and three on the supposition that it represents the diphthong EI. If the E is a simple E, he suggests that there were originally five Sages instead of seven and that this fifth letter registered a protest against the claims of the other two;[11] or again, that the E may have the mystical meanings connected with the number five.[12] If the letter represents the diphthong, he fancies that it may be the conjunction *εἰ*[13] used in asking questions of the God—*if* one should marry, *if* one should go on a voyage, and the like; or the argumentative *if*,[14] honored by a God who favored logic; or, further, that it may be the second person singular of the verb *εἰμί*[15] and mean "Thou art"—the worshipper's recognition of the fact that God alone possesses true Being. This treatise of Plutarch's is the only ancient discussion of the E in our extant literature, and almost the only allusion to it,[16] but the letter occurs on the recently discovered omphalos,[17] and also on some coins of the time of Hadrian which represent the temple front.[18]

[10] *Ibid.* p. 217.

[11] c. 3.

[12] c. 7 &8. Cf. Athenaeus 453D—<*ἄλφα*>, *βῆτα, γάμμα, δέλτα, Θεοῦ γὰρ εἶ, ζῆτ', ἦτα.* . . .

[13] c. 5.

[14] c. 6.

[15] c. 17.

[16] Plut. *De def. orac.* 31, and a frag. of a Lexicon (See Bursian *Geog.* I, 175, note 5) refer to the E.

[17] See *Year's Work in Classical Studies* for 1915, pp. 73-74.

[18] Frazer on Pausanias X, 19, 4, Vol. V, p. 340. Also *Hermes* XXXVI, p. 476.

Among the first of modern scholars to concern himself with the inscriptions was Goettling. He accepts Plutarch's last suggestion that the E represents the verb form εἶ, but he thinks it was addressed not to the God but to the worshipper, and renders it: "Du hast als geschaffenes, vernünftiges Wesen ein Selbst bewusstsein, bist Mensch."[19] Schultz interprets it similarly, but Roscher, in an article published in 1900, suggests a different explanation. He thinks that the E is the diphthong εἶ, but he regards it as an imperative form, like the other Delphic inscriptions, and belonging rather to the verb εἶμι—a form found in compounds,[20] and, according to his view, occurring as a simple verb in Homer.[21] This he translates not "go" but "come," and says that it is a word of welcome and assurance to the trembling worshipper. Still another view has been promulgated by Lagercrantz, who thinks that the E represents an ἦ and means "He said." He thus regards it not as one of the Sprüche, but as the verb which introduces them, with Apollo understood as subject.

Goettling and Roscher have both been interested in arranging these inscriptions in verse form, and they have had no difficulty in making an hexameter of

Γνῶθι σαυτὸν, Μηδὲν ἄγαν, Ἐγγύα πάρα δ' ἄτη,

by treating the υ and α in Ἐγγύα as a case of synezesis.[22] Then Goettling, on the supposition that there were seven[23] Sprüche, attempted to fill out the first line by using the word κόμιζε and a phrase which Suidas and the Paroemiograph connect with Γνῶθι σαυτόν as Παραγγέλματα Πυθικὰ, and he produced the following:[24]

εἶ. Θεῷ ἦρα. <κόμιζε> παραὶ τὸ νόμισμα χάραξον.

The κόμιζε Goettling renders "sei hilfreich" and thinks we would naturally consider our relation to men after honoring God.[25] The παραὶ τὸ νόμισμα χάραξον he takes with the Θεῷ ἦρα to mean "der

[19] *Abhandlungen* I, p. 236.

[20] Philologus LIX, pp. 25-26. ἔξει (*Clouds* 633) πρόσει (Epictet. *Enchir.* 32, 2).

[21] In the phrase εἰ δ' ἄγε, which he would write εἶ, δ' ἄγε.

[22] *Abhandlungen* I, p. 228.

[23] Goettling thinks Plato's and Pausanias' statement that the Seven Wise Men met at Delphi and inscribed the sayings indicates that the sayings were seven in number, and that perhaps the number of sayings started the tradition of the *Seven* Wise Men.

[24] *Abhandlungen* I, p. 248.

[25] *Ibid.* 244.

Gottheit sollst du dienen, nicht menschlichen Satzungen."[26] This *τὸ νόμισμα παραχάραξον*, however, was not a Delphic inscription, as Suidas says, but it apparently originated in a statement of Diogenes the Cynic in the *Πόδαλος*, a lost play attributed to him in ancient times,[27] to the effect that God had bidden him *γνῶθι σαυτόν*[28] and *παραχάραξον τὸ νόμισμα*.[29] Diogenes Laertius says that according to a certain story this command was an answer to the Cynic's question as to how he could win distinction among men,[30] and Julian likewise treats *παραχάραξον τὸ νόμισμα* not as a maxim but as an oracle given to Diogenes specifically.[31]

Roscher in his turn, acting on the supposition that there were seven Sprüche because of the prevalence of that number in connection with the Apollo cult,[32] filled out the first line with two other sayings taken from the *Παραγγέλματα Πυθικά*. He makes the verse read:[33]

εἶ. θεῷ ἦρα. νόμοις πείθευ. φείδευ τε χρόνοιο.

He selects the *νόμοις πείθου* on account of a passage in Marcus Antoninus[34]—*ἀκολούθησον θεῷ. ἐκεῖνος μέν φησιν ὅτι πάντα νομιστί . . .*—and another in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*,[35] where Apollo when asked how any one could please the Gods, replies '*νόμῳ πόλεως*.' The *φείδευ χρόνοιο* he thinks is reflected in the statement in Cicero's *De*

[26] P. 239.

[27] Diogenes Laertius VI, 2, 1 (20). Julian says it is a matter of dispute whether Diogenes wrote these plays or his disciple Philiscus. Or. VII, 210 C-D.

[28] We are not told distinctly that *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* was in the *Πόδαλος*, but it seems the natural way to account for its use in this connection later.

[29] For the ambiguous meaning of this phrase see Diog. Laert. VI, II, 1 (20). He tells us in effect that out of the one meaning a story arose charging Diogenes, who was the son of a banker, with adulterating the coinage. Its metaphorical meaning of disdaining custom or convention occurs more frequently, however. Cf. sec. 71: *τοιαῦτα διελέγετο καὶ ποιῶν ἐφαίνετο ὄντως νόμισμα παραχαράττων, μηδὲν οὕτω τοῖς κατὰ νόμον ὡς τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν διδούς*. See also Julian *Or.* VII, 211 B-C: *τὶ δὲ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς, ἆρ' ἴσμεν; ὅτι τῆς τῶν πολλῶν αὐτῷ δόξης, ἐπέταξεν ὑπεροράν καὶ παραχαράττειν οὐ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ τὸ νόμισμα*. Suidas' rendering is almost identical with this. See Gomperz, *Greichische Denker*, vol. II, p. 127.

[30] VI, II, 1. *καὶ πυνθανόμενον . . . τὶ ποιήσας ἐνδοξότατος ἔσται, οὕτω λαβεῖν τὸν χρησμὸν τοῦτον*.

[31] VI, 188 A.

[32] Philologus LX, p. 91, n. 17.

[33] Philologus LX, p. 90.

[34] VI, 31.

[35] IV, 3, 16. Roscher thinks further that the phrase *τῷ δὲ νόμῳ πειστέον* in Plato's *Apol.* 19A has reference to this saying.

Finibus[36]—"Quaeque sunt vetera praecepta sapientium, qui iubent tempori parere, et sequi deum, et se noscere et nihil nimis," . . . though he needs to emend *parere* to *parcere* to make good his point.[37] In their insistence upon the verse form of the inscriptions Goettling and Roscher are influenced, of course, by the fact that the Delphic oracles were given in hexameters, and by the presence of such dedications elsewhere. There was an epigram on the Apollo temple at Delos, according to Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*[38]; and at Ephesus, apparently on the old temple of Artemis, were six words, known as Ἐφέσια γράμματα, which may be arranged in a perfect hexameter verse.[39] The seven sayings at Delphi Roscher thinks played a rôle similar to that of the Mosaic Decalogue, and he renders them:[40]

> "Komm und folge dem Gott und Gesetz und nutze die Zeit wohl!
> Prufe dich selbst, Halt Mass, und meide gefahrliche Burgschaft."

Roscher's work is certainly ingenious, whether we are disposed to accept it, or to give our imagination less rein and affirm with Schultz and Lagercrantz that we have sure evidence for five inscriptions only.

The original authorship of the sayings is an open question now as of old, for we cannot be sure whether they first appeared on the temple or whether they were put there after they had become familiar in current thought. Plato, as we have seen, attributes them to the Seven Wise Men, but he can hardly have been serious in doing so, judging from the general tone of that section of the *Protagoras*. Plato is the first to tell this story of the meeting of the Seven Sages at Delphi, and it has been suggested that he was responsible for the establishment of the canon.[41] But the canon was never firmly fixed. Pausanias[42] and Demetrius Phalereus[43] follow Plato in their lists, except for the substitution of Periander of Corinth for the less known Myson, but Clement of Alexandria mentions several

[36] III, 22.

[37] Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 94, 28. Roscher thinks, too, that a *parcere legibus* may have fallen out between *tempori* and *parere*.

[38] *Eth. Eudem.* 1, 1.

[39] Cl. Alex. *Strom.* V, VIII, 45. See also Philologus LX, p. 89.

[40] Phil. LIX, 38.

[41] See p. 3, n. 23.

[42] X, 24, 1.

[43] Stob. *Flor.* III; 79. It was Demetrius who first distributed the apophthegms among the Sages severally, according to Bohren, *De Septem Sapientibus*, p. 5.

substitutions for Periander,[44] and no less than twenty-two names are accounted among the Seven by different authors.[45] Diogenes Laertius attributes Γνῶθι σαυτόν to Thales,[46] Μηδὲν ἄγαν to Solon,[47] and Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ' ἄτη to Chilon.[48] Diodorus Siculus speaks of Chilon as having written all three.[49] Plutarch says the Amphictyons wrote them on the temple.[50] Some ancient writers held the theory, too, that they were not the words of the Sages, but the utterance of the priestess[51]—the view advocated by Roscher. The uncertainty attached to their authorship is well expressed by Porphyry, who sums up the situation with the words: "Whether Phemonoe, through whom the Pythian God is said to have first distributed favors to men, uttered this (γνῶθι σαυτὸν) . . . or Phanothea, the priestess of Delphi, or whether it was a dedication of Bias or Thales or Chilon, started by some divine inspiration . . or whether it was before Chilon . . , as Aristotle says in his work on Philosophy, whosoever it was . . let the question of its origin lie in dispute."[52]

We are not only in doubt concerning the original authorship of the sayings, but we do not know how early they appeared at Delphi. They must have been on the temple built toward the end of the 6th, or early in the 5th, century to replace the old stone structure destroyed by fire in 548 B. C.,[53] and it is possible, if not probable, that they were on the earlier temple of stone.[54] Plutarch speaks of the existence in his day of an old "wooden *E*," the "bronze *E* of the Athenians," and the "golden *E* of the Empress Livia."[55] If the bronze *E* was dedicated by the Athenians to adorn the new temple which the Alcmaeonidae made splendid with its front of Parian marble,[56] it may be that the wooden *E* was rescued from the fire of 548 B. C. This new temple built by the Alcmaeonidae was de-

[44] *Strom.* I, 14, 59. See also Diog. Laert. *Proem.* IX (13).
[45] Hitzig's *Pausanias*, vol. III, pt. 2, p. 749.
[46] I, 9, 35.
[47] I, 2, 16. Cf. I, 1, 14.
[48] I, 3, 6.
[49] IX, 10.
[50] *De Garrul.* 17.
[51] Cl. Alex. *Strom.* I, 14, 60 & Diog. Laert. I, 1, 13 (40).
[52] Stob. *Flor.* XXI, 26.
[53] Herodotus II, 180 & Paus. X, 5, 13.
[54] Schultz thinks from the statement by Porphyry that γνῶθι σαυτόν at least was on the stone temple.
[55] *De E apud Delphos*, c. 3.
[56] Her. V, 62. Cf. Pindar, Pyth. VII.

stroyed and rebuilt in the 4th century, and the 4th century temple seems to have suffered partial destruction in 84/83 B. C., and again in Nero's time.[57] Presumably the sayings were inscribed anew with each rebuilding, or if they were on tablets, as Goettling and Roscher think,[58] the old ones may have been rescued on some of these occasions. Pliny tells us that the sayings were inscril ed in letters of gold[59]—an addition belonging to the Roman Period, doubtless, as Plutarch says of the golden *E*.

The exact position of the inscriptions on the temple is variously given. The scholiast on Plato's Phaedrus[60] says they were on the Propylaea. Macrobius in one passage[61] places them on the temple front, and in another[62] on the door-post. Pausanias, however, says they were on the pronaos,[63] and Diodorus in speaking of the three best known to us says they were on a certain column.[64] The coin referred to above represents the temple as hexastyle, with the *E* in the central space, which may or may not be indicative of its position. Roscher thinks it may have been suspended between the two columns of the pronaos,[65] while the other inscriptions were written three each on two tablets in boustrophedon fashion and attached to either column. He also conceives the idea of the sayings being written on six tablets attached to the six columns of the temple front, with the *E* on the left central and *γνῶθι σαυτόν* on the right central column; but the theory that they were on one or both of the pillars of the pronaos seems to us more plausible, especially in view of its support by the earlier of the ancient authorities.

As regards the original meaning of these sayings, we have spoken of Roscher's suggestion that they may have corresponded in a sense to the Mosaic Decalogue. In a later article[66] he developes the idea that, originating at Delphi, they all had to do with the temple service. The E would be the welcome and assurance of the God to the worshipper, and the *Θεῷ ἥρα* would enjoin upon him to give the God

[57] Frazer on *Paus.* X, 19, 4. vol. V, p. 328 ff.
[58] *Abhandlungen*, p. 225.
[59] *N. H.* VII, 32.
[60] 229E.
[61] *Somn. Scip.* I, 9, 2.
[62] *Sat.* I, 6, 6.
[63] X, 24, 1.
[64] IX, 10. Cf. Varro, *Sat. Menip.* p. 169, ed. Reise.
[65] *Phil.* LX, 96.
[66] *Phil.* LX, 98-100.

sacrifice and honor. *Γνῶθι σαυτόν*, he says, was an exhortation to the worshipper to be clear about himself and what he wanted; the *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* an exhortation to limit the excessive number of requests with which many seekers assailed the God; and *Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ' ἄτη*, which taken independently later came to mean "Give a pledge (whether of bonds or in betrothal) without great caution, and trouble awaits you,"[67] meant originally "Bringe nur dem Gott dein Gelübde dar, aber bedenke dabei auch, dass du es erfüllen musst, wenn du nicht der Göttlichen Strafe oder Rache verfallen willst." This theory of Roscher's that the sayings originated at Delphi and had at first only a local application implies that the attributing of them to the Wise Men was a later tradition arising through their similarity in form to the general "Wisdom Literature" or Proverbs of the Greeks. But the ancient theory that they appeared at Delphi only after they had become current proverbs is at least equally plausible. We have observed that Plato is the first to refer them to the Seven Sages,[68] but in his time likewise do we find first mention of their presence on the Delphic temple. Yet they were current long before Plato, for *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* is quoted by Theognis[69] and Pindar,[68] and *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* by the tragic poet Ion,[70] and (with a different form of the verb) by Heracleitus[71] and Aeschylus.[72]

[67] See Plutarch, *Sept. Sap. Convivium* c. 21 (164B) *καὶ τοῦτο δὴ τὸ πολλοὺς μὲν ἀγάμους, πολλοὺς δ' ἀπίστους, ἐνίους δὲ καὶ ἀφώνους πεποιηκὸς ἐγγύα πάρα δ' ἄτη.*

[68] A fragment of Pindar (216 ed. Christ) reads:

Σοφοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν ἔπος αἴνησαν περισσῶς.

It is possible, of course, that in its context *Σοφοί* referred to the Sages, but the absence of any qualifying word in the fragment and the fact that Pindar sometimes used *Σοφοί* of poets leaves the matter in doubt.

[69] 335 & 657.

[70] Frag. 55. ed. Nauek.

[71] Frag. 116. Diels.

[72] *Prom.* 309. Two scholiasts on Homer see an allusion to *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in *Iliad* III:53. (*Homeri Ilias Scholia* vol. III ed. Dindorf & V ed. Maass):

γνοίης χ' οἷου φωτὸς ἔχεις θαλερὴν παράκοιτιν.

In fact, one of them goes so far as to say: *οὐκ ἄρα Χίλωνος, ὡς ὑποφαίνεται, δόγμα τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν, ἀλλ' Ὁμήρου.* Any such interpretation of the Iliad passage, however, is wide of the mark. The *γνοίης* has rather the idiomatic use of *γιγνώσκω* found not infrequently in Homer and elsewhere (cf. Plato *Rep.* 362A, 466C, 569A) in expressing a sort of challenge or threat, 'Then you'd find out.' The scholiast misses this, and reads into Homer an idea which did not become current until a later day. This tendency on the part of late writers to refer the Delphic maxims to Homer appears also in Plutarch's *Sept. Sap. Convivium*, c. 21 (164 B-C).

Whatever their origin, these two sayings came to have an immense importance in Greek thought. "Behold how many questions these inscriptions *Γνῶθι σαυτὸν* and *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* have set afoot amongst the philosophers," says Plutarch, "and what a multitude of discussions has sprung from each of them as from a seed."[73] And in another passage he compares them to streams confined in a narrow channel.[74] "One cannot see through their meaning," he adds, "but if you consider what has been written or said about them by those who wish to understand what each means, not easily will you find longer discussions than these." Of such long and multitudinous discussions comparatively few have been left to us, although *μηδὲν ἄγαν* and particularly *γνῶθι σαυτόν* are scattered all through our extant literature, and their mention is often accompanied by some reflections upon their meaning. The longest surviving work which bears directly upon the *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* is the Alcibiades I, ascribed to Plato, though conceded by many scholars to be of doubtful authenticity.[75] The Neo-Platonist commentators upon the dialogue have much to say about the maxim itself, and there are discussions of shorter length to be found elsewhere in Plato, in Xenophon, Dio Chrysostom, Epictetus, Cicero, Plutarch, Julian, and a great many other writers. But Aristotle's fullest treatment of the apophthegm was apparently

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καὶ ὁ Αἴσωπος ὅταν γε παίζῃ πρὸς ἐμὲ Χερσίας, εἶπε, σπουδάζων δὲ τούτων Ὅμηρον εὑρετὴν ἀποδείκνυσι καί φησι τὸν μὲν Ἕκτορα γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτὸν (See p. 26) . . . *τὸν δ' Ὀδυσσέα τοῦ μηδὲν ἄγαν ἐπαινέτην.* . . .

[73] *E apud* Del*phos* c. 2.

[74] *De Pythiae Oraculis* 29. *τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν καὶ τὸ Μηδὲν ἄγαν ἀποδέχεσθε* . . . *καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα μὲν ἀποφθέγματα τῶν σοφῶν ταὐτὸ τοῖς εἰς στενὸν συμβλιβεῖσι πέπονθε ῥεύμασιν*· . . . Cf. Seneca *Ep. Mor.*94,28: "Praeterea ipsa quae praecipiuntur, per se multum habeant ponderis, utique si aut carmini intexta sunt aut prosa oratione in sententia coartata. . . . Qualia sunt illa aut reddita oraculo aut similia: Tempori parce, Te nosce." The Ancients greatly admired the conciseness of expression—the Laconic brevity—of these maxims. See Plato's *Protagoras* 343B and Plutarch *De Garrulitate* 17— *θαυμάζονται δὲ καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν οἱ βραχυλόγοι, καὶ τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Πυθίου Ἀπόλλωνος οὐ τὴν* Ιλιάδα *καὶ τὴν* Οδύσσειαν, *οὐδὲ τοὺς Πινδάρου παίανας, ἐπέγραψαν οἱ Ἀμφικτύονες, ἀλλὰ τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν, καὶ τὸ Μηδὲν ἄγαν, καὶ τὸ Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ' ἄτα.* The Rhetorical writers used them as an illustration of a *κόμμα*. See Demetrius (?) *On Style* 9: *ὁρίζονται δ' αὐτὸ ὧδε, κόμμα ἐστὶ τὸ κώλου ἔλαττον οἷον* . . . *τὸ γνῶθι σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸ ἐποῦ θεῷ τὰ τῶν σοφῶν.* Also Aristides *Art of Rhetoric* A′ 483 vol. II, p. 763, ed. Dindorf: *κόμμα δ' ἐστὶ κώλου μέρος καθ' αὐτὸ μὲν τιθέμενον, ὡς τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν, καὶ μηδὲν ἄγαν.*

[75] See Heidel, *Pseudo-platonica* pp. 61-72.

in his lost work on Philosophy;[76] of Porphyry's book entitled Γνῶθι Σαυτόν we have only extracts;[77] and we likewise have extracts only from Varro's satire under the same title.[78] The Stoics wrote many treatises upon this apophthegm, in which they made it the sum and substance of philosophy,[79] but none of these are extant, and the only complete ancient work which bears the title ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ directly is Stobaeus' collection of statements from various writers upon the subject.[80]

But while most of the longer discussions of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* have been lost, enough remains to show us how thoroughly the maxim permeated ancient literature and thought. Plato said it was on everybody's tongue[81] and writers of almost every class use it in one connection or another. Men failed to heed it in practice,[82] but they looked upon it as a divine command and held it in due reverence. Dio Chrysostom calls the sayings at Delphi "almost more divine than the oracles delivered by the inspired priestess";[83] and Cicero says that so great is the force of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* that it is attributed not to some man but to the Delphic god.[84] The "E caelo descendit *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*" of Juvenal[85] may be regarded as a succinct expression of ancient feeling regarding the maxim.

An expression which seemed sent of Heaven, through whosever lips it first came, and which was so frequently upon the tongue and pen of the Greeks and their Roman admirers, must have been fraught

[76] Stob. *Flor.* 21; 26; cf. Plutarch *Ad. Colot.* 20. *'Αριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς Πλατωνικοῖς* . . ., and Clem. of Alex. Strom. I, 14, 60.

[77] Stob. *Flor.* 21:26-28.

[78] *Sat. Menip.* pp. 144-147, ed. Reise.

[79] Julian *Or.* VI, 185D.

[80] Flor. 21.

[81] Supra p. 1. cf. *Hipparchus* 228E, where it is said that Hipparchus set up Herms in every deme bearing epigrams of his own composing that the people might not marvel at the wise inscriptions at Delphi.

[82] See Epictetus III, 1. 18. *διὰ τί δὲ προγέγραπται τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν μηδενὸς αὐτὸ νοοῦντος*; Plautus' *Pseudolus*, 972-3:

"Pauci istuc faciunt homines quod tu praedicas;
Nam in foro vix decumus quisque est qui ipsus sese noverit."

Ausonius *De Herediolo* 19-20:

"Quamquam difficile est se noscere; *γνῶθι σεαυτὸν*
quam prope legimus, tam cito neclegimus."

[83] *Or.* LXXII, 386R *ὡς τῷ ὄντι δὴ θεῖα ταῦτα καὶ σχεδόν τι τῶν χρησμῶν θειότερα, οὓς ἡ Πυθία ἔχρα.* . . .

[84] *De Legibus* I, 22. See p. 69.

[85] XI, 27.

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CHAPTER II

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ As Know Your Measure

The earliest apparent reference to *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is found in a fragment attributed to Heracleitus:[1]

ἀνθρώποισι πᾶσι μέτεστι γινώσκειν ἑωυτοὺς καὶ σωφρονεῖν.

But this is only a fragment, and without the context the meaning which the words are intended to convey cannot be determined directly. The fragment of Ion, to which we have also alluded, tells us merely that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is difficult. Aeschylus, however, who is the only other author to use the phrase directly before Plato's time, brings it into his Prometheus, where its meaning is unmistakable. The self-will of Prometheus—his defiant pride—has brought him to his doom and nailed him to a beetling crag on the desolate edge of the world. Justified in his own eyes for his service to man, he can see in Zeus' treatment of him only ingratitude for his help in gaining the throne and an arbitrary use of power, and his Titan heart knows no flinching. But Oceanus at length comes to beseech him to conciliate Zeus, and says in the course of his pleadings:[2]

γίγνωσκε σαυτὸν καὶ μεθάρμοσαι τρόπους
νεοὺς· νεὸς γὰρ καὶ τύραννος ἐν θεοῖς.

Obviously Oceanus' plea is that Prometheus may humble his pride and adopt manners becoming a subject god. To know himself[3] is to know his place as subject of the new king, to recognize his limitations in his inability to defy Zeus save to his own hurt.[4] And these meanings of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, together with the more general idea

[1] Stob. *Flor.* V, 119. Bywater (*Heracleiti Ephesii Reliquiae*, CVI,) questions the authenticity of this, but Diels (frag. 116) treats it as genuine. Diels substitutes *φρονεῖν* for the MSS. reading *σωφρονεῖν*, though he gives no reason for doing so.

[2] *Prom.* 309-310.

[3] Harry (*Prometheus* p. 184) renders the verb "learn to know thyself (endeavor)" as distinguished from the aorist *γνῶθι* "come to a knowledge of thyself (attainment)," and says that the pres. imp. is not as abrupt and urgent as the aorist. This may be true, but very likely the requirements of the meter would more naturally account for the shift in tense.

[4] Similar to this in spirit are the words of Odysseus in Euripides' Hecuba (vv. 226-228) when he announces Polyxena's doom:

μητ' εἰς χερῶν ἄμιλλαν ἐξέλθῃς ἐμοί
γίγνωσκε δ' ἀλκὴν καὶ παρουσίαν κακῶν
τῶν σῶν, σοφόν τοι κἄν κακοῖς ἃ δεῖ φρονεῖν.

of knowing the measure of one's capacity, were undoubtedly the usual connotations of the maxim, as we shall see from our further study.

If these were the early forces of the apophthegm, we may venture to construe the fragment of Heracleitus quoted above somewhat in this way:[5] "It is the part of all men to know their limitations and be sober." Another of Heracleitus' fragments has been thought to be connected with the well-known saying—the phrase *ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτὸν*.[6] Plutarch in his refutation of Colotes' attack upon Socrates, says with regard to Socrates' seeking to know what man is:[7] *ὁ δ' Ἡρακλεῖτος, ὡς μέγα τι καὶ σεμνὸν διαπεπραγμένος ἐδιζησάμην, φησι, ἐμεωυτὸν, καὶ τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς γραμμάτων θειότατον ἐδόκει τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτόν.* And Julian connects the two in like manner:[8] *οὐκοῦν ὁ μὲν (ἐν) Δελφοῖς θεὸς τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν προαγορεύει, Ἡρακλεῖτος δὲ ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτόν.* Burnet says in his *Greek Philosophy*:[9] "The Delphic precept 'Know Thyself' was a household word in those days and Herakleitus says 'I sought myself.' He also said (fr. 71) 'You cannot find out the boundaries of soul: so deep a measure hath it.'"[10] Whether Heracleitus really used the word *δίζημαι* with the idea of soul-searching attributed to him by men of a later day, we cannot tell surely from such a mere fragment, though we know that he was a great thinker along ethical lines as well as along the lines of natural philosophy[11]—"a thinker of that class to whom nothing thoughtful can be strange."[12] But however much of self-examination the words *ἐδιζησάμην ἐμεωυτὸν* may imply, there is no indication that in using them Heracleitus himself had *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in mind. Rather we would like to believe that he used the maxim as we have indicated above, and expressed the idea of a deeper inner knowledge of self in other ways—with words like *δίζημαι*.

[5] It is possible that *σωφρονεῖν* may be synonymous here with *γινώσκειν ἑωυτούς* in its meaning of 'Know your place.' See pp. 33 ff.

[6] Diels, frag. 101.

[7] *Ad. Colot.* c. 20.

[8] *Or.* VI, 185A.

[9] Pt. I, p. 59.

[10] See p. 82.

[11] See Diogenes Laert. IX, 1. 4. *Γέγονε δὲ θαυμάσιος ἐκ παίδων, ὅτε καὶ νέος ὢν ἔφασκε μηδὲν εἰδέναι· τέλειος μέντοι γενόμενος, πάντα ἐγνωκέναι. ἤκουσέ τε οὐδενὸς, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἔφη διζήσασθαι. . . .* Cf. Stob. *Flor.* 21:7.

[12] Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, p. 19.

If *γνῶθι σαυτόν* ordinarily suggested knowing one's measure or limits, we may agree with the scholiast in seeing an indirect allusion to it in Pindar's *Pythian* II, 34. He is speaking of Ixion's falling into presumptuous sin in attempting to pollute the couch of Hera, and he adds:

χρὴ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν αἰεὶ παντὸς ὁρᾶν μέτρον.

Jebb says: "this passage has been taken to imply the Pythagorean doctrine of a relative ethical mean"[13]; Taylor in his *Ancient Ideals*[14] renders it, "Take measure of Thyself" and connects it with *μηδὲν ἄγαν*; while Gildersleeve[15] calls it, "only another form of the homely advice of Pittacus to one about to wed above his rank—*τὰν κατὰ σαυτὸν ἔλα.*" Gildersleeve translates it, however, "To measure everything by one's self, i.e., to take one's own measure in every plan of life"; and this meaning "to take one's measure" the scholiast of old recognized as the common interpretation of the Delphic *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. "It is fitting," says the scholiast[16] on the passage, "to consider the measure of things according to one's power and to desire these, and not strive for those beyond our power. This is like the inscription by Chilon at Delphi." The word *μέτρον* may suggest the doctrine of the Mean, it is true, and the context of the passage happens to fit well with the Pittacus saying; but if, as seems probable, the idea of taking one's own measure was to the Greek an instant reminder of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, it seems natural to so construe it here.[17]

By way of evidence that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in its ordinary acceptance meant 'know your own measure,' we have an interesting passage in Xenophon's *Hellenica*,[18] where Thrasybulus makes it the text of his address to the City party after the victory of the patriots

[13] *Essays and Addresses*, p. 55, & ft. note.

[14] Vol. I, page 202 & note.

[15] *Olympian and Pythian Odes*, p. 260. He compares with this Pindar passage Aeschylus' *Prom.* 892: *ὡς τὸ κηδεῦσαι καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀριστεύει μακρῷ*—which, as Seymour (*Select Odes of Pindar*, p. 145) reminds us, the Scholiast on Aeschylus says is "a development of the saying of Pittacus."

[16] Vol. II, p. 42. ed. Drachman. *τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν τὸ μέτρον σκοπεῖν καὶ τούτων ἐπιθυμεῖν, καὶ μὴ τῶν ὑπὲρ δύναμιν ὀρέγεσθαι. ὅμοιον δὲ τοῦτο τῷ ὑπὸ Χίλωνος ἐν Δελφοῖς ἐγγραφέντι [γνῶθι σαυτόν].*

[17] The phrase in this same ode v. 72—*γένοι' οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών* taken apart from its context, might seem to refer to *γνῶθι σαυτόν* also, but as Gildersleeve (p. 264) shows, the *μαθών* is not a part of the command, and the sentence means "Show thyself who thou art, for I have taught it thee."

[18] II, IV, 40-41.

over the Thirty at Eleusis. Upon the conclusion of the terms of peace and the disbanding of Pausanias' army, the patriots had marched up to the Acropolis and offered sacrifice to Athena; and when they came down, the generals called a meeting of the Ecclesia. Thrasybulus then made an address beginning with the words: *ὑμῖν, ὦ ἐκ τοῦ ἄστεως ἄνδρες, συμβουλεύω ἐγὼ γνῶναι ὑμᾶς αὐτούς.* "And you might know yourselves best," he goes on to say, "if you would take account of the qualities upon which you ought to pride yourselves in attempting to rule over us. Are you more just? The people, though poorer than you, have never wronged you for the sake of money, while you, who are richer than all, have done many disgraceful deeds for the sake of gain. . . . Consider whether it is for your courage forsooth that you ought to feel pride. What fairer test of this than the way in which we have carried on the war against each other? Could you claim to be superior in intelligence—you who with a fortification, and arms, and money, and Peloponnesian allies have been worsted by men who had none of these things?" This quotation is sufficient, perhaps, to show the sense in which Thrasybulus used the maxim, and it is significant not only because the apophthegm formed the basis of a speech before the Assembly on so momentous an occasion, but also because it demonstrates the interpretation put upon *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* by ordinary men of affairs. Thrasybulus would have the City party measure themselves carefully in comparison with the patriots, and recognize the limits of their own moral qualities and power to achieve.

Xenophon discusses our apophthegm in his *Cyropaedia*[19] in the story of a conversation between Croesus and Cyrus after the capture of Sardis. "Tell me, Croesus," said Cyrus, "how have your responses from Delphi turned out? For it is said that Apollo has received much service from you and you do everything in obedience to him."[20] Croesus gave a brief account of his relations with the Oracle and told of how after one of his sons was born dumb and the other was killed,[21] he sent in his affliction to ask the God in what way he could

[19] VII, II, 20-25. Cf. Herodotus I, 28-91. The similarity between many features of this story of Xenophon's and the account in Herodotus is striking, but the connection with *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is Xenophon's addition.

[20] Cf. Her. I, 46-51, esp. 51, where he tells us that Croesus sent rich gifts to Delphi.

[21] Cf. Her. I, 34 ff.

spend the rest of his life most happily.[22] Σαυτὸν γιγνώσκων εὐδαίμων, Κροῖσε, περάσεις, the god replied. Croesus thought that the easiest thing in the world, he said, for while in the case of other people it is possible to know some and others not, he thought every one knew with regard to himself both who and what he is. But after several years of peace, spoiled by his wealth and by flatterers, and by those who begged him to become their leader, he accepted the command of the army, supposing he was capable of becoming very great[23]—"not knowing himself, forsooth." For he thought he was able to carry on war against Cyrus, a man descended from the gods, of kingly race, and practised in courage from a child,[24] while the first of his own ancestors to be king was a freedman. "But now surely, O Cyrus," he says, "γιγνώσκω μὲν, ἐμαυτὸν, and do you think that Apollo spoke the truth in saying that in knowing myself I shall be happy?"[25] Cyrus promised to restore to him his wife and family, bidding him refrain from wars thereafter, and Croesus was content. In this story, which we have necessarily condensed, we see again the γνῶθι σαυτόν interpreted as 'know your own measure,'[26] for Croesus admits that he thought himself more capable than he was until experience in matching himself against Cyrus brought him to a better self-realization.

In Plato's *Philebus*[27] we arrive at this meaning of γνῶθι σαυτὸν through a characterization of the man who does not know himself. Socrates and Protarchus are discussing mixed pleasures—pleasures mixed with pain when both are mental—and Socrates says that we experience these mixed feelings when viewing Comedy. The real nature of the comic is at bottom a kind of evil, he says—specifically that evil which is experiencing the opposite of what is said in the inscription at Delphi. "Do you mean γνῶθι σαυτὸν?" Protarchus asks, and Socrates replies: "I do, and clearly the opposite of that would be not to know oneself at all." Socrates then goes on to define ignorance of self as an over-estimate of one of three things—

[22] Herodotus (I, 30 ff.) tells how Croesus tried to make Solon say he was the happiest of men.

[23] Sec. 24. The Oracle told Croesus that if he should make war on the Persians he would destroy a mighty empire, but that empire proved to be his own. Her. I, 53 and 86.

[24] Cf. *Alc. I*, 121D-122A.

[25] Sec. 25.

[26] See L. Schmidt, *Ethik der alten Griechen* II, p. 395.

[27] 48C ff.

our wealth, our personal appearance, or our character.[28] The man who does not know himself will fancy that he is richer than his actual amount of property warrants, or he will think himself taller and better looking than he is, or will think himself better than he is in point of virtue. And of virtues in general, wisdom is the one that most men have a false conceit about. The man who thus has an exalted opinion of himself, if he be powerful and able to avenge any ridicule, will be an object of fear; but if he is weak and harmless, he becomes an object of laughter and despite. We find pleasure in our laughter, yet in our feeling of despite there is a certain pain. The question as to whether Plato is fair[29] to Comedy here in taking as an instance but one type of comic character need not concern us, for we are interested only in the interpretation of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. By showing what the opposite would be, the passage defines it for us indirectly, for if the man who does not know himself has a false conceit of his possessions, his outward personality, his character and his wisdom, it follows that he who does know himself does not over-estimate his wealth, his appearance, his virtue, or his knowledge. In other words, he knows his own measure both in external goods and in internal qualities.

The above passage from the *Philebus* is only one of many in which the phrase *ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτόν* is suggestive of the maxim, for it is the usual way of expressing a failure to meet the behest. And it is through this negative form that we are reminded indirectly of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in Aristotle's description of the High-minded man. This High-minded man (*μεγαλόψυχος*) he regards as a mean between the Little-minded man (*μικρόψυχος*) on the one hand and the Conceited man (*χαῦνος*) on the other, and he describes the Little-minded man as *ἔοικεν κακὸν ἔχειν τι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ἀξιοῦν ἑαυτὸν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἀγνοεῖν δὲ ἑαυτὸν*,[30]

[28] Isocrates refers to this tripartite division in his *Antidosis* 240. Porphyry (Stob. F*lor*. 21:28) speaks of the tripartite division of ignorance of self in the Philebus, and goes on to say: *ἢ οὐ πᾶν γε τὸ θνητὸν ἄντικρυς. . .*

ὡς ὅτε τις ψάμαθον παῖς ἄγχι θαλάσσης,
ὅστ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ποιήσῃ ἀθύρματα νηπιέῃσιν,
ἄψ αὖθις συνέχευε ποσὶν καὶ χερσὶν ἀθύρων (*Il.* XV, 362-364)

πᾶς οὖν ἀγνοίᾳ ἑαυτοῦ τὰ καθ' αὑτὸν ἐπαίρων ἁλίσκεται ὑπὲρ τῆς δημιουργησάσης αὐτὸν φύσεως πλεῖον ἢ ἐκείνη βεβούληται, τὰ αὑτῆς ὡς σεμνὰ θαυμάζων παίγνια . . . τὸ γνῶθι οὖν σαυτὸν διήκει εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπόληψιν τῆς προσούσης δυνάμεως, παραγγέλλον γιγνώσκειν τὰ μέτρα ἐπὶ πάντων. . . .

[29] Jowett in a footnote to his Introduction to the Philebus, p. 545, maintains that he is not.

[30] *Nic. Ethics* IV. 9. 1125, a.21.

while he characterizes the χαῦνοι as ἠλίθιοι καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοοῦντες.[31] The High-minded man, he tells us, is a man worthy of great things, who with a true estimate of himself lays claim to greatness.[32] The Little-minded man has great qualities likewise, but he does not think he has, and in that he does not appreciate his own worth and act upon it, he knows not himself in that sense. On the other hand, the man who lays claim to honors which belong to greatness without possessing the requisite qualities is a fool and likewise lacking in self-knowledge. The High-minded man, then, in that he is a mean between the man who under-estimates and the man who over-estimates himself, both of whom fail to fulfill the God's command, must be the very embodiment of the maxim, since he has a perfect estimate of his own high worth.

The two historical characters most conspicuous in ancient literature for their failure to know themselves were Alcibiades and Alexander. In the *Alcibiades I*, which is, as we have indicated, a veritable treatise upon Γνῶθι Σαυτόν, Alcibiades is represented as a young man, not yet twenty years old,[33] about to come forward in public life, and Socrates, whose alleged purpose is to bring him to a knowledge of himself, reminds him of his great ambitions and his lack of preparation to carry them out. He shows him that he really knows nothing about politics, for he does not know the nature of justice and injustice, either from investigating them himself or from any teacher; and if he thinks he is no worse than other Athenian statesmen, Socrates suggests that he measure himself with the Spartan and Persian kings, whose superiority in point of descent, early education, and wealth, he sets forth at length. Then he appeals to Alcibiades with the words:[34] Ἀλλ', ὦ μακάριε, πειθόμενος ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ ἐν Δελφοῖς γράμματι, γνῶθι σαυτόν, ὅτι οὗτοι ἡμῖν εἰσιν ἀντίπαλοι, ἀλλ' οὐχ οὕς σὺ οἴει. To the further discussion of the maxim in this Dialogue we shall return later, but it is interesting to observe that in this first occurrence it has its ordinary force—'know your own limits'—'know your measure.'

[31] 1125 a.28.

[32] 1123b. 1-2. In his *Rhetoric* Aristotle uses μεγαλόψυχος in a somewhat narrower sense. He applies it to the young and defines it as τὸ ἀξιοῦν αὑτὸν μεγάλων, irrespective of the justice of the claim. He also speaks of the Old as μικρόψυχοι because they have been humbled (τεταπεινῶσθαι) by life. (II, 13, 5).

[33] 123 D.

[34] 124 A-B.

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might be. "You are your own worst enemy," . . . Diogenes answered,[42] "and this is the man of whom you are ignorant as of none other. For no uncontrolled and wicked man understands himself, else Apollo would not have enjoined this first of all as the hardest thing for each of us, *γνῶναι ἑαυτόν*. Or do you not consider *ἀφροσύνη*[43] the greatest and most deadly of all diseases . . .?" "You will have the truth from me alone," Diogenes says a little farther on, "and from no one else could you learn it." Alexander was evidently making the mistake of estimating himself by his position and military achievements rather than by his real qualities of character, and the Cynic would have him know the measure of his real self.

Diogenes gives the maxim much the same force in Dio Chrysostom's short dialogue on Reputation.[44] The question is raised as to how the philosopher seems to differ from the rest of mankind, and the gist of Diogenes' argument is that the philosopher brings everything to the test of truth, while others are guided by what men say of them. "Would a man be of any account," Diogenes asks, "if he measures himself by this rule and standard?", and his interlocutor replies that he certainly would not. Then the dialogue continues: *Δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι οὐδέποτε γνοίη ἄν ἑαυτὸν οὕτω σκοπῶν—Οὐ γὰρ ἂν γνοίη—Ὥστε οὐκ ἂν ἔτι πείθοιτο τῷ Δελφικῷ προσρήματι κελεύσαντι παντὸς μᾶλλον γιγνώσκειν αὐτόν.* The effect of flattery in making a man "think more highly of himself than he ought to think" is a common theme in ancient literature and is associated with *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* on more sides than one. It was implied in the words of Diogenes to Alexander to the effect that Alexander would learn the truth from him alone, and we remember that Croesus frankly admitted that he grew to overestimate his powers partly because he was spoiled by flatterers.[45] So Seneca, in speaking of the subject, says that men in position who listen to flattery do not know their own strength, but while they believe that they are as great as they hear themselves called, they draw on unnecessary and hazardous wars.[46] Plato saw in this in-

[42] 160 R.

[43] For the significance of the word *ἀφροσύνη* here, compare Chap. IV, page 38. It is evidently the opposite of *σωφροσύνη* in its general sense.

[44] *Or.* LXVII, 361 R.

[45] Cf. Zeno (Stob. F*lor.* 14, 4) *Ἔλεγχε σαυτὸν ὅστις εἶ, μὴ πρὸς χάριν ἄκου', ἀφαιροῦ δὲ κολάκων παρρησίαν.*

[46] *De Beneficiis* VI. 30, 5. See p. 24, n. 8.

sidious evil a chief reason why his dream of an ideal king must ever fall short of fulfillment, and its prevalence is undoubtedly responsible in part for the fact that *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* is hard.

When we come to Latin authors we meet an apparent allusion to the maxim in this sense of "knowing one's measure" in Plautus' *Stichus*, where in answer to the question

"Quae tibi mulier videtur multo sapientissima?"

one of the characters replies:

"Quae tamen, quom res secundae sunt, se poterit gnoscere,
Et illa quae aequo animo patietur sibi esse peius quam fuit."[47]

The maxim occurs again with this force in one of Cicero's Philipics.[48] He is inveighing against the audacity of Antony in occupying Pompey's house, and he says: "An tu, illa in vestibulo rostra (spolia) cum adspexisti, domum tuam te introire putas? Fieri non potest. Quamvis enim sine mente sine sensu sis, ut es, tamen et te et tua et tuos nosti." In saying "you know yourself and your property and your household," Cicero implies that Antony must realize that he is not Pompey's equal, and to that extent, of course, he knows or measures himself aright.

But the best instance in Latin literature of the use of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* with its original force occurs in the satire of Juvenal[49] to which we have already alluded. The satire contains an invitation to a simple dinner, and it begins with a picture of an Epicure who lives beyond his means. In a man like Rutilius a sumptuous table is an extravagance, though in the case of Ventidius it is praiseworthy because of his wealth; and the Poet continues:

"Illum ego iure
Despiciam, qui scit quanto sublimior Atlas
Omnibus in Libya sit montibus, hic tamen idem
Ignoret, quantum ferrata distet ab arca
Sacculus. E caelo descendit *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*,
Figendum et memori tractandum pectore, sive
Conjugium quaeras vel sacri in parte senatus
Esse velis; . . . . . .
. . . . . Seu tu magno discrimine causam
Protegere adfectas, te consule, dic tibi qui sis,
Orator vehemens, an Curtius et Matho buccae.

[47] vv. 124-125.
[48] II, 28.
[49] XI, 23 ff.

Noscenda est mensura sui spectandaque rebus
In summis ~~minimisque~~,[50] ~~etiam cum piscis~~ emetur,
Ne mullum cupias, quem sit tibi gobio tantum
In loculis."

This extract from Juvenal illustrates so clearly the use of γνῶθι σαυτόν which we have been trying to emphasize that further comment upon the passage is superfluous.[51]

Stobaeus' compilation of statements from various authors on the subject of γνῶθι σσυτόν contains much valuable material in itself, but the very position of the chapter in his *Florilegium* is also significant. The book consists of quotations touching various virtues and vices, each chapter on some virtue being followed by one on its corresponding vice. It is accordingly noteworthy that the chapter on the vice corresponding to ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ[52] is entitled ΠΕΡΙ ΥΠΕΡΟΨΙΑΣ.[53] Thus did the earlier and really dominant force of the maxim persist until the sixth century A. D. amid all the added conceptions which the growth of the centuries brought. Side by side with this general meaning of 'knowing one's measure or limits,' there went the more specific ideas of 'knowing what one can and cannot do,' and 'knowing one's place.' They belong very closely to the general thought, however, and we distinguish them only according to the apparent emphasis in given instances and as a matter of convenience for our study.

[50] Cf. Horace, *Ep.* I, 7, 98: "Metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede verum est." Also Lucan's *Pharsalia* VIII, 527: "Metiri sua regna decet viresque fateri."

[51] Henry Parks Wright says in his edition of Juvenal p. 138; "Juvenal extends it (γνῶθι σαυτὸν) beyond the *Nosce animum tuum* of Cicero, *Tusc. Dis.* I. 52 and makes it include the measure of one's abilities and resources." It is evident that the ordinary Greek usage has escaped him.

[52] Stob. F*lor.* 21.

[53] c. 22. Extract no. 4 of this chapter is taken from Philemon and reads:

τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν οὐ μάτην εὖ ἴσθ' ὅτι
τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο δόξαν ἐν Δελφοῖς ἔχει.

CHAPTER III

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ As Know What You Can And Cannot Do

There is a rather long discussion of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in the fourth book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*,[1] and while the passage contains more than one idea connected with the maxim, the dominant force there given it is a knowledge of what one can and cannot do. Socrates is talking with Euthydemus, a representative of the class of people who think they have acquired the best education and pride themselves on their wisdom.[2] Euthydemus admits that he is aspiring to become a statesman,[3] as did the young Alcibiades under somewhat similar circumstances,[4] and Socrates brings him by a series of questions to the point where he is dismayed at his inability to answer. Then Socrates asks him:[5] "Tell me, Euthydemus, have you ever been to Delphi?" "Yes, twice," said he. "Did you notice, then, an inscription somewhere on the temple—the *γνῶθι σαυτόν*?" "Yes." "Did you pay no attention to the inscription, or did you heed it and try to consider what you were?" "No indeed," said he, "for I surely thought I knew that at least, I would scarcely know anything at all, if I actually did not know myself."[6] "Does a man seem to you to know himself who knows his name only?" asks Socrates, and he goes on to bring out the thought that just as in buying a horse men seek to learn its disposition and strength, so we should know our own ability. *οἱ μὲν γὰρ εἰδότες ἑαυτοὺς*, he says, *τά τε ἐπιτήδεια ἑαυτοῖς ἴσασι καὶ διαγιγνώσκουσιν ἃ τε δύνανται καὶ ἃ μή*. "And in doing what they understand," he continues, "they procure what they need and are successful, while by refraining from what they do not understand, they are without fault and avoid faring ill. . . . But those who do not know themselves, and are deceived about their own ability, are in like case with regard to other men and other human affairs; they do not know what they need nor what they are doing nor what they are using, but, mistaken in all these things, they miss

[1] c. II.

[2] Sec. 1.

[3] Sec. 11.

[4] Socrates' method of proceedure in dealing with the youth is quite similar also.

[5] Sec. 24.

[6] See. p. 78.

the good and fall upon evil.[7] . . . You see this, too, in the case of states—that those which go to war with a stronger power, ignorant of their own inability, are laid waste or lose their freedom."[8] Euthydemus at length admits that knowing oneself should be made a matter of great importance, and asks how one ought to begin the self-examination. Socrates does not reply directly, but by a series of further questions about Good and Evil and about Democracy, he leads Euthydemus to recognize still more his own ignorance and sends him away crest-fallen.

This idea of knowing the extent of one's ability seems to be the leading thought in Aristotle's treatment of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in his *Rhetoric*[9] in the course of his discussion of the use of maxims in Oratory. The passage has presented some difficulties in translation, to judge from the obscurity of most English renderings, but the general meaning becomes clear if we interpret "knowing oneself" correctly. "Maxims may be cited too," Aristotle says, "in contradiction of sayings that have become public property, (by public property I mean, for instance, the *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* and the *μηδὲν ἄγαν*) whenever . . . they are uttered under stress of emotion. It would be a case of the emotional use, for example, *εἴ τις ὀργιζόμενος φαίη ψεῦδος εἶναι ὡς δεῖ γιγνώσκειν αὐτόν· οὗτος γοῦν εἰ ἐγίγνωσκεν ἑαυτὸν, οὐκ ἄν ποτε στρατηγεῖν ἠξίωσεν.* Cope is probably right in understanding the *οὗτος* to be "some imaginary person," and in taking the words of the sentence

[7] Sec. 26-27. Cf. Plato's *Charmides* 164 A-C.

[8] Observe in this connection the use of the Greek word *γνωσιμαχεῖν* for knowing the weakness of one's fighting power in comparison with that of the enemy. Her. III, 25: *εἰ μὲν νυν μαθὼν ταῦτα ὁ Καμβύσης ἐγνωσιμάχεε, καὶ ἀπῆγε ὀπίσω τὸν στρατὸν, ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχῆθεν γενομένῃ ἁμαρτάδι, ἦν ἂν ἀνὴρ σοφός.*
Euripides Herael. 706-707:

χρῆν γνωσιμαχεῖν σὴν ἡλικίαν
τὰ δ' ἀμήχαν' ἐᾶν.

See also Her. VII. 130; VIII, 29; Isoc. *ad. Phil.* 83D; Paus. IX, VII, 4. Cf. Seneca, *De Beneficiis* VI, 30, 5: "Ignoravere vires suas et dum se tam magnos quam audiunt, credunt adtraxere supervacua et in discrimen rerum omnium perventura bella. The Auctor *ad Herrenium* IV, 9 (13): "Hi cum se et suas opes et copiam necessario norunt, tum vero nihilo minus propter propinquitatem et omnium rerum societatem quid omnibus rebus populus Romanus posset, scire et existimare poterant." Florus, II, 17, 3-4, pp. 190-191 ed. Lemaire: "Hispaniae numquam animus fuit adversus nos universae consurgere . . . Sed ante a Romanis obsessa est quam se ipsa cognosceret; et sola omnium provinciarum vires suas, postquam victa est, intellexit."

[9] II. 21, 13.

with which it begins as Aristotle's own rather than as a quotation from some orator.[10] And Cope is right, too, in suggesting that the maxim means knowing one's "own incapacity." The imaginary orator in a burst of indignation against some incompetent general thus says in effect: "It's all a lie that one must know himself! At any rate, if that fellow had known how incapable he was, he would never have claimed the office of General,"[11] While we have no instance of a *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in the extant spoken orations of the Ten Orators, this passage, like the address of Thrasybulus in Xenophon's *Hellenica*, indicates the sense in which it was naturally used in public speeches, and its evident meaning for the audience.

This meaning for the maxim is further illustrated in Epictetus' Discourse to a Would-be Cynic.[12] Being a Cynic involves not merely wearing a cloak and going about begging with staff and wallet,[13] he says. It involves the rising superior to Desire,[14] indifference to Death,[15] and the consciousness of having been sent from Zeus[16] to proclaim to people fearlessly that they are seeking for happiness in possessions and in power rather than in indifference to these things. A man who is going to be a Cynic must look himself over to see if he is equal to the exactions of the Cynic life, just as a contestant at the Olympic Games takes notice of his shoulders and thighs.[17] *βούλευσαι ἐπιμελέστερον*, he adds, *γνῶθι σαυτὸν, ἀνάκρινον τὸ δαιμόνιον, δίχα θεοῦ μὴ ἐπιχειρήσῃς.*[18] For the Cynic must be in truth superior to others if he would teach. He must be as a queen among

[10] Sandys, *Aristotle's Rhetoric With a Commentary by M. Cope*, p. 217 n. 13. Victorius thinks the words refer to a certain Iphicrates of lowly origin, who had come to achieve distinction. Buckley in a note to his translation, p. 173, also says: "The words probably of some panegyrist of Iphicrates." Cope's refutation seems well-grounded, although in his own rendering he rather overemphasizes the man's success.

[11] It may have been in some such spirit of challenge that Menander made one of his characters say:

κατὰ πολλ' ἄρ' ἐστὶν οὐ καλῶς εἰρημένον
τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν. χρησιμώτερον γὰρ ἦν
τὸ γνῶθι τοὺς ἄλλους. (Stob. F*lor*. 21.5.)

[12] III, 22.
[13] Sec. 10.
[14] Sec. 13.
[15] Sec. 21.
[16] Sec. 23-26.
[17] Sec. 51-52.
[18] Sec. 53.

the bees, not a drone claiming superiority over them.[19] And so the man who is thinking of becoming a Cynic needs to first consider his preparation,[20] as Hector knew his own preparation for war, while, aware of Andromache's weakness, he bade her go into the house and weave.[21] The general tone of this discourse, and the last part in particular, indicate that Epictetus does not think the youth in question capable of filling the Cynic's rôle, and his use of the maxim is evidently a warning to him to take account of his limited capacity.[22] The allusion to Hector's consciousness of his strength reminds us of the passage in Plutarch's *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*[23] in which Hector is said to know the limits of his ability: *καί φησι τὸν μὲν Ἕκτορα γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτὸν, τοῖς γὰρ ἄλλοις ἐπιτεθέμενος Αἴαντος ἀλεέινε μάχην Τελεμωνιάδαο.*[24]

Plutarch again uses the apophthegm with this force of knowing the limits of one's ability in an ironical passage near the beginning of his *Life of Demosthenes*.[25] He says that in writing the Parallel Lives of Demosthenes and Cicero he is going to compare them from the standpoint of their deeds and political measures, and not attempt to show from their speeches which was the pleasanter or more clever orator. And then he gives a thrust at Caecilius: "For in that case I would have as much strength as a dolphin on dry land," he says, "a saying of Ion's which that marvellous Caecilius did not know when like a hot-headed youth he attempted to bring out a comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes. *Ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως, εἰ παντὸς ἦν τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν ἔχειν πρόχειρον, οὐκ ἂν ἐδόκει πρόσταγμα θεῖον εἶναι!*" Caecilius, as we know,

[19] Sec. 95-99.

[20] Sec. 107-109. Cf. II.6,3. *καλὸν δὲ τὸ εἰδέναι τὴν αὐτοῦ παρασκευὴν καὶ δύναμιν. . . .*

[21] From *Il.* VI, 492.

[22] That *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* was sometimes on the lips of the Cynics themselves may be inferred, perhaps, from a fragment of Menander (Diog. Laert. VII, 3, 2, 83). In describing a wretched cynic for whom he has contempt he calls him a dirty beggar, and says of him:

ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος ῥῆμά τι
ἐφθέγξατ' οὐδὲν ἐμφερὲς μὰ τὸν Δία
τῷ γνῶθι σαυτὸν, οὐδὲ τοῖς βοωμένοις
τούτοις·

[23] c. 21.

[24] From *Il.* XI. 542.

[25] c. 3.

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more than the present pomp that surrounds me, praising, of course, the leisure of the time I spent there and finding fault with my present life on account of its multitudinous duties. But you ought to judge about me better, not with a view to my industry or the lack of it, but rather looking to the *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* and the

Ἔρδοι δ' ἕκαστος ἥντιν' εἰδείη τέχνην.[32]

Being a king appears to me something beyond human powers, and a king seems to need a more divine character, as Plato used to say." And in his concluding paragraph he says: "Since I am conscious of no good in me save this only—that I do not even think I have the greatest abilities when I have none—with reason do I cry out and bear witness that you must not demand great things of me, but entrust everything to God." This letter breathes throughout the spirit of a man who feels himself in a position for which his natural abilities and tastes have not fitted him, and that he cannot fill it as he ought, try as he may. The connotation of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is clear. His success as Emperor is not a question of his industry, he maintains, but should rather be judged on the basis of what he really has it within his capacity to do.

While, as Seneca says, "Necesse est se ipsum aestimare, quia fere plus nobis videmur posse quam possumus,"[33] it is likewise true that some people think too meanly of themselves and so fall short of their possible attainment. Aristotle's Little-minded Man[34] was such a person, and prior to Aristotle, the Charmides of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.[35] Charmides, while a mere youth in Plato, is represented by Xenophon as a mature man—a man of ability and influence

[32] See Aristophanes, *Vesp.* 1431. Cf. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* I, 18: "Bene enim illo Graecorum proverbio praecipitur:

'Quam quisque novit artem, in hac se exerceat.'"

Also Hor. *Ep.* I, 14, 44:

"Quam scit uterque, libens, censebo, exerceat artem."

[33] De *Tranq. An.* 6, 3. The entire chapter is relevant. Note especially also the words in sec. 4: "Aestimanda sunt deinde ipsa, quae adgredimur, et vires nostrae cum rebus, quas temptaturi sumus, conparandae." See also citation on p. 30, n. 41.

[34] Aristotle says that Little-mindedness is a more frequent and a worse defect than self-conceit (Nic. Ethics 1125a, 35.) Moore, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, pp. 234-5, says this is because the Vain-glorious man does not shrink from great tasks which his "unbounded self-confidence may sometimes carry him through," while the Little-minded man is content with low aims and aspirations. Cf. Grant, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, vol. II, p. 78, n.

[35] III, 7, 9.

in private life, but averse to coming before the people in public. Socrates rebukes him for avoiding his duty as a citizen, and meets his natural shrinking from the public gaze, and the possible ridicule of the Assembly, by pointing out the folly of his fearing to face the masses when he copes so readily in conversation with the more intelligent and foremost citizens. "My good fellow," he says, "*μὴ ἀγνοεῖ σεαυτὸν*, and do not commit the fault which most people commit. For they hasten off to investigate the affairs of others, and do not turn to examine themselves. Now do not you be faint-hearted in this, but rather stretch every nerve to give heed to yourself. And do not neglect the interests of the city, if it is in any way possible for it to become better through you." As we have already pointed out, there is an implication of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in *ἀγνοεῖ σαυτόν*, usually, and the maxim thus has its message for the self-depreciating man.[36]

Evidently Cicero's brother Quintus also was a man who shrank from putting himself forward, and in his letter to him *On Standing for the Consulship*, Cicero reminds him of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. He bids him think what the State is, what he seeks, and what he is,[37] and he develops each of these points in turn. Then after emphasizing the need of the greatest tact and wisdom on Quintus' part, he urges him strongly to make the most of his oratorical gifts, since Rome is much influenced by oratory, and he adds: "Quóniam in hoc vel maxime est vitiosa civitas, quod largitione interposita virtutis ac dignitatis oblivisci solet, in hoc fac ut te bene noris, id est ut intellegas eum esse te qui iudicii ac periculi metum maximum competitoribus affere possis."[38] In this instance Cicero is trying to impress his brother with a realization of his powers as an orator. In another letter he tries to rouse him to an appreciation of his literary talent. He says near the close of the letter: "Quattuor tragoedias sedecim diebus absolvisse cum scribas, tu quicquam ab alio mutuaris? et *πάθος* quaeris, cum Electram et Aeropam scripseris? Cessator esse

[36] Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, p. 88, makes too general a statement when he says "There was something of a tendency to pose in every Greek, a tendency which had been rebuked in the old motto 'Know Thyself.' " So Nettleship: *Lectures on Plato's Republic*, p. 106, speaks of "the inherent tendeney of many Greek peoples to be 'imitative men,' always posing instead of being themselves."

[37] *De Petitione* I, 2.

[38] Sec. 55.

noli et illud γνῶθι σεαυτόν noli putare ad adrogantiam minuendam solum esse dictum, verum etiam ut bona nostra norimus."[39]

A specific phase of 'knowing what one can do' is 'knowing one's special bent.' The importance of this knowledge is a leading Platonic idea and it is emphasized by Cicero[40] and Seneca,[41] but it is Plutarch[42] who connects it directly with γνῶθι σαυτόν. He says that some people think the Stoics jesting when they claim that the Wise Man must be not only prudent and just and courageous, but an orator, a poet, a general, a rich man, and addressed as king; yet they claim all these things for themselves. But it is not so among the Gods, for one is the God of War, and another the God of the Oracle, and another the God of Gain. And then he goes on to say: "All prerogatives do not belong to all, but one must in obedience to the Pythian inscription, αὐτὸν καταμαθεῖν. Then he must direct his efforts toward the one pursuit for which he is naturally fitted,[43] and not drag himself toward the imitation of some other type of life and do violence to nature." Ovid likewise refers to the maxim with a slightly extended use of this idea in a characteristic passage of his *Ars Amatoria*. He has been telling of how Venus brings harmony and joy in her mating of various animals, and he says:[44] "While I was singing of this, Apollo appeared of a sudden, and moved with his thumb the strings of his golden lyre. . . . 'Preceptor of wanton love,' he said, 'come, lead to my shrine thy disciples,

Est ubi diversum fama celebrata per orbem
Littera, cognosci quae sibi quemque iubet.
Qui sibi notus erit, solus sapienter amabit
Atque opus ad vires exiget omne suas.
Cui faciem Natura dedit, spectetur ab illa;
Cui color est, umero saepe patente cubet;
Qui sermone placet, taciturna silentia vitet;
Qui canit arte canat, qui bibit arte, bibat.'"

[39] *Letters to Quintus* III, 6, 7. Cf. Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* I, 42. ἡ θάλασσα . . . . διὰ τοῦτο δὴ πάντα δέχεται, γιγνώσκουσα τὸ ἑαυτῆς μέγεθος. . . .

[40] *De Officiis* I, 31 (114). "Suum quisque igitur noscat ingenium. . . ."

[41] *De Tranq. An.* 6, 2. "Et eo inclinandum, quo te vis ingenii ferret."

[42] *De Tranq. An.* c. 12-13.

[43] εἶτα χρῆσθαι πρὸς ἓν ὁ πέφυκε. . . . Menander may have much the same thought in the verses:

τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν ἔστιν ἂν τὰ πράγματα
ἴδῃς τὰ σαυτοῦ καὶ τί σοι ποιητέον. (Stob. Flor. 21, 2.)

[44] II, 493 ff.

Inasmuch as the Stoics made *γνῶθι σαυτόν* the very foundation of their philosophy and ethics, Epictetus very naturally uses it in one instance to mean 'know what you can do in the realm of Will.' The most important thing for each of us, he says, is to have our will such as it ought to be.[45] If we are angry because of what evil-doers deprive us of, we should learn not to put so much value upon Things. We should not be angry with the man who steals our clothes, for we would not lose them if we had not had them.[46] The tyrant may bind our leg, or cut off our neck, but he cannot bind or take away our will. For this reason the Ancients passed on the *γνῶθι σαυτόν*.[47] We ought, then, he goes on to explain, to practice indifference to loss and pain in small things, and pass on from little things to greater until we become invincible like the athlete who after a series of minor victories wins at Olympia. Nothing in the way of enticement or money or weather or mood can keep him from going on to conquer.[48] Knowing the power of one's will, then, and the importance of developing it, is conceived to be enjoined by the Delphic maxim. So Augustine teaches that the man who fails in a given situation because he over-estimates his strength of will, fails through ignorance of himself. He says of Peter's Denial: "Quantum sibi assumpserat Petrus intuendo quid vellet, ignorando quid posset?"[49] And in another passage he says in explaining that we often do not know how far our will can avail: "Nempe beatissimus apostolus Petrus pro Domino animam ponere plane volebat . . . sed quantas vires haberet, voluntas ipsa nesciebat. Proinde vir tantus . . . se latebat."[50]

Γνῶθι σαυτόν in the sense of knowing one's ability is thus seen to have been used by ancient writers as an injunction not to over-estimate or under-estimate what we can do, to determine our natural bent, and to be cognizant of the possible achievements of our Will. These shades of meaning, however, are, as we have said, merely

[45] I, 18, 8.

[46] Sec. 11-16. Cf. III, 24, 20. *τὶς γὰρ ἀγαθός ἐστιν οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅς ἐστι; τίς δ' οἶδεν ταῦτα ἐπιλελησμένος ὅτι φθαρτὰ τὰ γενόμενα. . . .*

[47] Sec. 17. *Ἀλλ' ὁ τύραννος δήσει, τί; τὸ σκέλος, ἀλλ' ἀφελεῖ. τί; τὸν τράχηλον. τὶ οὖν <οὐ> δήσει οὐδ' ἀφελεῖ; τὴν προαίρεσιν. διὰ τοῦτο παρήγγελλον οἱ παλαιοὶ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν.*

[48] Sec. 18-23.

[49] *In John*, LXVI. 1. Cf. XXXII, 5 "Nam infirmitatem suam Petrus nesciebat, quando a Domino quod ter esset negaturus audiebat."

[50] *De Anima et Eius Origine* IV, 11. He also argues that we are ignorant of ourselves as touching the extent of our memory. Sec. 9-10.

specific connotations of the general idea of 'knowing one's measure'; and this is true also of the use of the maxim in its further meaning of 'knowing one's place.'[51]

[51]A part of Ausonius' little poem on C*hilon* is somewhat pertinent in connection with the theme of the present chapter:

"Commendo nostrum γνῶθι σεαυτόν, nosee te,
Quod in columna iam tenetur Delphica.
Labor molestus iste, fructi est optimi,
Quid ferre possis, quidve non, dinoscere;
Noctu diuque, quae geras, quae gesseris,
Ad usque puncti tenuis instar quaerere.
Officia cuncta, pudor, honor, constantia
In hoc et ulla spreta nobis gloria."

(*Ludus Septem Sapientum*, 138-145)

CHAPTER IV

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ As Know Your Place. Its Relation To ΣΩΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ.

When in Aeschylus' play Oceanus advised Prometheus to know himself, he was, as we have said,[1] warning him to know his place as a subject of the new king of the Gods. Now 'knowing one's place' was one of the meanings of that complex Greek virtue *σωφροσύνη*,[2] and because of this phase of similarity it is probable that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was often given as a definition of the virtue in the ethical discussions of Fifth-century Athens. Hence it is that in Plato's *Charmides*,[3] when another current definition of *σωφροσύνη*—namely, *τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν*—was seen to fail, because the man who lacks a knowledge of what he can and cannot do beneficially is not always able to do his own business, Critias seized upon *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. To be sure, Socrates had virtually put the words into his mouth by using the phrases *οὐ γιγνώσκει ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἔπραξεν* and *ἀγνοεῖ δ' ἑαυτὸν* in his preceding refutation, but it is also probably safe to assume that Critias was repeating something which he had heard before. Socrates' interlocutors usually voiced opinions rife in popular thought and discussion,[4] and besides the statement in the *Charmides* that the definition *τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν* was borrowed,[5] we have as evidence for the general currency of the two definitions a passage in the *Timaeus*:[6] *εὖ καὶ πάλαι λέγεται τὸ πράττειν καὶ γνῶναι τά τε αὑτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὸν σώφρονι μόνῳ προσήκειν*. Moreover, the fanciful way in which Critias goes on in an attempt to show the identity of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* and *σωφροσύνη* indicates that he had not given the matter any real thought himself. The God at Delphi, he says, uses this *γνῶθι σαυτόν* as a form of address to his worshippers, which differs from the usual *χαῖρε* because the

[1] See p. 12.

[2] See Aesch. *Ag.* 1425 & 1664; Plato's *Rep.* 389D-E; & *Laws* 696D-E. Also Shorey's review of Jowett's Translation, A. J. P. XIII. p. 361: "It is only from this idea of knowing one's place that it (*σωφροσύνη*) gets the connotation of 'self-knowledge.'"

[3] 164D-165A.

[4] See Shorey, *Unity of Plato's Thought*, p. 15.

[5] 161B-C.

[6] 72A. See Stallbaum's note: also his Introduction to *Charmides*, p. 111.

God speaks not as man speaks but with a nobler salutation.[7] And he says always to every one who enters nothing other than *Σωφρόνει*. For *τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν* and *τὸ Σωφρόνει* are the same. But men, mistaking this salutation for an admonition, added the later sayings *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* and *Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ'ἄτη*. Plutarch evidently has this passage in mind when he says in his *E at Delphi*:[8] "The god, as it were in greeting, addresses each one of us who comes there with the *Γνῶθι σαυτόν*—a salutation in no way inferior to *χαῖρε*." Some scholars have used these passages in trying to determine the position of the inscriptions at Delphi,[9] but it is better, doubtless, to regard Critias' words not as in any sense historical, but as a piece of pretty fancy introduced for literary purposes. As the dialogue proceeds Plato treats the subject on the basis of the psychological principle of self-knowledge,[10] a treatment which formed the starting-point of many later disquisitions upon the theme. The connection between *σωφροσύνη* and *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is shown in other passages also, though not often with what we have asserted to be their original point of contact. Aristotle, however, brings them together in somewhat this sense in the course of his characterization of the High-minded man. We recall that he differed from the Little-minded man and the conceited man, who knew not themselves, in that he had a true and high sense of his own worth.[11] But to be high-minded, his worth must be really high; for the man of little worth who deems himself so is *σώφρων*, not *μεγαλόψυχος*.[12]

[7] For the custom of placing inscriptions at the entrance of Greek dwelling houses see Diog. Laert. VI, II, 50 & Julian *Or*. VI, 200B. Cf. also the *Salve* on the threshold of a Pompeian house. Bekker, *Gallus* 2, 232 (p. 240 Eng. Trans.).

[8] c. 17.

[9] Lagercrantz (Hermes XXXVI, p. 413 ff.) thinks that Plato's phrase "the later sayings" indicates that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was the first in order of all the inscriptions save the E, and he uses this as an argument against Goettling's and Roscher's view that the E was one of the Sprüche and that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* began a hexameter line. Roscher in reply (Hermes XXXVI, 485) argues that Plato means that *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* was first merely in relation to *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* and *Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ' ἄτη* and not in relation to all the inscriptions. Lagercrantz thinks also that if the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was the greeting of the God to the worshipper, the E cannot be so construed (p. 417).

[10] See Shorey, *Unity of Plato's Thought*, p. 15 & n., and p. 17.

[11] See pp. 17 f.

[12] *Nic. Ethics* IV, 7. 1123b, 5. *ὁ γὰρ μικρῶν ἄξιος καὶ τούτων ἀξιῶν ἑαυτὸν σώφρων, μεγαλόψυχος δ' οὔ.*

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his orations besides bringing it into his letters; and it is interesting to observe that while in his orations he gives it the philosophic meanings which it had come to acquire, both in the letter to Themistius[17] and in this one to Iamblichus he uses it with its ordinary force.

In the passage in the Timaeus to which we referred above[18] Plato so plays upon the word *σώφρονι* that he appears to connect the maxim with the etymological force of *σωφροσύνη* also.[19] He is speaking of the Art of Divination and saying that it is something that belongs not to a man's wisdom, but to a dormant or abnormal mental state, and the words *τὸ . . . . γνῶναι . . . ἑαυτὸν σώφρονι μόνῳ προσήκειν* mean that to know oneself is possible only for a person in full possession of his faculties. That Plato is giving this meaning to *γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν* in a spirit of mere word-play becomes the more apparent when we realize that this is almost the only instance in ancient literature in which the maxim may be so construed.[20] The negative phrase *τὸ ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτὸν*, however, was used somewhat frequently to convey the idea of not being in one's senses—a use more or less colloquial,[21] apparently, and quite apart from its other

[17] See pp. 27f.

[18] P. 33.

[19] For *σωφροσύνη* in its etymological sense, see Plato's *Prot.* 323B & 333C.

[20] Plato begins the proemium to his Laws of Inheritance (*Laws* 923A) with the words: *ὦ φίλοι, φήσομεν, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς ἐφήμεροι, χαλεπὸν ὑμιν ἐστιν γιγνώσκειν τὰ ὑμετερ' αὐτῶν χρήματα καὶ πρός γε ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ τῆς Πυθίας γράμμα φράζει τὰ νῦν.* To press the meaning of mental aberration into his allusion to the maxim here, however, would be to mistake entirely the highly poetic tone of the passage.

[21] The one instance of the strictly colloquial use of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in somewhat this sense occurs in a fragment of Epictetus (For a discussion of the fragment as a whole see p. 68, n. 55.) *εἰ χορευτῇ τις παρήγγελλε τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν, οὐκ ἂν ἐν τῇ προστάξει προσεῖχε τῷ ἐπιστραφῆναι.* To recall a heedless *χορευτής* to himself with a *γνῶθι σαυτόν* seems too colloquial, considering the reverence in which the maxim was held, and we are probably safe in assuming that it was not at all general to apply it in such ways. For *οἶδα* with a reflexive used colloquially see Libanius IV, 32, where in accusing a certain Eutropius of slandering him, he says that people may say in applause of his insults *εὖ γε, ὦ οὗτος, τοῦτ' ἄρχων, τοῦτ' ἀνὴρ, τοῦτ' εἰδὼς αὐτόν.* Libanius also expresses the idea of not knowing oneself in the sense of mental unfitness with the verb *οἶδα* rather than *γιγνώσκω* in this same oration (sec. 4). He is refuting a statement about the folly of old age, and he says: *ἢ σὺ τολμήσεις εἰκεῖν, ὡς ἐλήρει μὲν Πλάτων, ἐλήρει δ' Ισοκράτης, ἐλήρει δὲ Σοφοκλῆς, ουκ ἐσωφρόνει δὲ Γοργίας, οὐκ ᾔδει δ' ἑαυτὸν ὁ Τυανεὺς ἐκεῖνος.*

The Latin phrase "si me novi" was a colloquial expression apparently somewhat allied to the *τὸ ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτὸν* of the Greeks. See Horace, *Sat.* I, 9, 22 ff:

connotation as "the opposite of that which the Delphic inscription urges." Thucydides says of those who survived the Plague that as soon as they got up forgetfulness of all things seized them and *ἠγνόησαν σφᾶς τε αὐτοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐπιτηδείους.*[22] Aristotle in discussing voluntary and involuntary crime, enumerates the points about which a man might be ignorant in committing an involuntary act, and says:[23] *ἅπαντα μὲν οὖν ταῦτα οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀγνοήσειεν μὴ μαινόμενος, δῆλον δ' ὡς οὐδὲ τὸν πράττοντα· πῶς γὰρ ἑαυτόν γε;*[24] The author of the Epinomis, erroneously ascribed to Plato, when contending that men need not fear the jealousy of the Gods in concerning themselves with divine matters, says that the Deity knows that He teaches us these things, for He would be the most stupid of all if He were ignorant of this, and he adds:[25] *τὸ λεγόμενον γὰρ ἂν, ὄντως αὐτὸ αὐτὸ ἀγνοεῖ, χαλεπαῖνον τῷ δυναμένῳ μανθάνειν, ἀλλ' οὐ συγχαῖρον ἄνευ φθόνου διὰ θεὸν ἀγαθῷ γενομένῳ.* So, too, Basil writes to one of his friends:[26] *σοῦ τότε ἐπιλησόμεθα, ὅταν καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοήσωμεν.* The two meanings of *τὸ ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτὸν* are brought together in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*[27] where the phrase is used as a definition for *μανία*, but *μανία* in the extended sense of not knowing what one thinks he knows. Socrates,

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"Si bene me novi, non Viscum pluris amicum,
Non Varium facies; . . ."

Also Cicero *In Verrem* II, III, 68: "Tum, cum te ac tuam vitam nosses, in Siciliam tecum grandem praetextatum filium ducebas. . . ." And *Pro Sex. Rosc.* 142: "Quodsi quis est, qui et se et causam laedi putet, cum Chrysogonus vituperetur, is causam ignorat, se ipsum probe novit; . . ." Cf. Hor. *Ep.* I, 18, 1; Ovid. *Met.* XIII, 840-84; XIV, 356; Petronius, *Cena Trim.* 58.

Note further the colloquial use of se—cognoscit in Virgil, *Aeneid* XII, 903 ff.:

"neque currentem se nec cognoscit euntem,
Tollentemve manu saxumve immane moventem:"

Cf. Ambrose, *In. Ps.* CXVIII, 3, 30: "Adam, qui se occultare cupiebat, quia se non agnoscebat."

[22] II, 49, 8. Lucretius evidently had this passage in mind in his description of the Plague at Athens (VI, 1213-14):

"Atque etiam quosdam cepere oblivia rerum
Cunctarum, neque se possent cognoscere ut ipsi".

[23] *Nic. Ethics* III, 2, 1111a, 6.

[24] In discussing the same subject Clement of Alexandria says that a man who commits an involuntary crime *ἤ γὰρ αὐτὸν τις ἠγνόησεν ὡς Κλεομένης καὶ Ἀθάμας οἱ μανέντες.* . . . (Strom. II, 60.)

[25] 988B.

[26] *Ep.* LVI, 74.

[27] III, 9. 6-7.

he says, did not consider *ἀνεπιστημοσύνην* madness, but *τὸ ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτὸν. καὶ ἃ μὴ οἶδε δοξάζειν τε καὶ οἴεσθαι γιγνώσκειν, ἐγγυτάτω μανίας ἐλογίζετο εἶναι.* While most people call a man mad who fancies that he is so tall that he must stoop in going through the city gates, or that he is strong enough to lift houses, they do not call the conceit of knowledge madness, for they do not recognize it as an abnormality. To Socrates, however, thinking one knows what he does not is not only a species of madness but an error which *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was designed to correct.[28] Hence the passage is clearly suggestive of the maxim, and the two ideas adhering to *τὸ ἀγνοεῖν ἑαυτόν* are blended.[29]

The earlier relation of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* and *σωφροσύνη* was, as we have shown, a comparatively simple one. But as time went on, the connection of the two in Plato's *Charmides*, and the Platonic doctrine of the Unity of the Virtues gave rise to a tendency among admirers of Plato to make *γνῶθι σαυτόν* include not only *σωφροσύνη* in the large[30] but other virtues as well. This tendency is seen in the spurious Platonic dialogue known as the *Erastae*, where the author brings forward the maxim as a definition of *σωφροσύνη* and makes it include *δικαιοσύνη* also. Socrates is discussing with two young men the question of philosophy, what it is and what its province.[31] The youths reason that the philosopher should be a well-informed man, able to converse intelligently with physicians and craftsmen though his knowledge would be less expert than theirs; and in order to show that the philosopher should have not a second-rate but a first-class knowledge of the political art, Socrates is made to resort to an argument which seems rather clumsy. The man who knows how to punish dogs and horses aright, he argues, knows also how to make them as good as possible; hence the art which knows how to punish knows the good from the bad. If a person has this knowledge in the case of the many, he should have it in the case of the one—the self. Now horses or dogs in failing to know good from bad horses or dogs, fail to know themselves; and so a man who fails to

[28] See c.V.

[29] So Stobaeus (*Ecl. Eth.* II, 6, 5, 124) says of the Stoics: *ἔτι δὲ λέγουσι πάντα φαῦλον* (in contrast with *τὸν σοφόν*) *μαίνεσθαι, ἄγνοιαν ἔχοντα αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν καθ' αὐτὸν ὅπερ ἐστὶ μανία. τὴν δὲ ἄγνοιαν εἶναι ἐναντίαν κακίαν τῇ σωφροσύνῃ.*

[30] See *Alc. I*, 133C: *τὸ δὲ γιγνώσκειν αὐτὸν ὡμολογοῦμεν σωφροσύνην εἶναι*; See also Wilamowitz's *Apollo*, trans. by Murray, page 41: "Everything implied in that specially Greek way of thinking which is summed up by the untranslatable word *σωφροσύνη* belongs to the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* of the God."

[31] 135A ff.

know good men from bad men would not know whether he himself were good or bad. This *αὐτὸν ἀγνοεῖν* is *μὴ σωφρονεῖν* and conversely *τὸ ἑαυτὸν γιγνώσκειν* is *σωφρονεῖν*. "This, it seems, forsooth," Socrates says, "is what the inscription at Delphi commands—to practice *σωφροσύνη* and *δικαιοσύνη*, for the virtue by which we know how to punish aright is *δικαιοσύνη* and that by which we know ourselves is *σωφροσύνη*, and if to know how to punish involves a knowledge of oneself, *δικαιοσύνη* and *σωφροσύνη* are the same." "Cities are well-governed when the wrong-doers give justice," he goes on to say, and so connects *σωφροσύνη* and *δικαιοσύνη* with the political art, of which the true philosopher must have superior knowledge.[32] The essential connection between justice and *σωφροσύνη* was expressed by Plato in the *Laws*,[33] and the unity of the Virtues in general was a favorite Platonic thought, but in none of the genuine dialogues do we find their unity proved by recourse to the kind of reasoning employed here. The tendency to relate the four cardinal virtues to *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* became distinctly marked in the Neo-Platonists, however, and the *Erastae* may be regarded as in a sense a connecting link between them and the *Charmides*.

Porphyry says in his work on *Γνῶθι Σαυτόν* that we never hear *σωφρόνει* used in the sense of *σῶζε τὴν φρόνησιν*, although *σωφροσύνη* is a certain *σαοφροσύνη*; if we did so regard it, however, we would discuss *τὸ φρονεῖν* and the cause of *τὸ φρονεῖν*, which is *νοῦς*, and it is therefore necessary to know one's essence.[34] Porphyry thus connects *φρόνησις* with *σωφροσύνη* and both with *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. So Gregory Thaumaturgus connects the three somewhat similarly in his *In Origenem Oratio Panegyrica*[35] when he says of Origen: "He taught us to be wise (*φρονεῖν*) and to be with self, and to wish and try to know ourselves. This indeed is the noblest function of philosophy, which is ascribed to the most oracular of the gods, since it is an all-wise command—the *Γνῶθι σαυτόν*. . . . This is well said by the Ancients to be the divine *φρόνησις*. . . . He taught us also *σωφρονεῖν καὶ ἀνδρίζεσθαι*, and by *σωφρονεῖν* he meant keeping this *φρόνησις* of the soul knowing itself." Olympiodorus says that to know oneself

[32] 138A.

[33] 696C.

[34] Stob. F*lor*. 21:27.

[35] C. XI.

is a part of every virtue,[36] and he explains how it is a part of *σωφροσύνη* and *φρόνησις* and *ἀνδρία* and *δικαιοσύνη* in turn.[37] That *γνῶθι σαυτόν* gave courage is the purport of Philostratus' account of a conversation between Apollonius of Tyana and Demetrius regarding the danger that Apollonius was in at the hands of Domitian. Apollonius anticipated that Demetrius would advise him to go into hiding where he was not known, and he said:[38] "I think that the wise man should do nothing privately. . . . And whether the Pythian inscription is the command of Apollo himself, or of some man who knew himself soundly and therefore made it a maxim for all, it seems to me that the wise man in knowing himself and keeping his intelligence at hand should not cower before any of the things which most people fear." If self-knowledge is a part of every virtue,[39] then conversely a lack of virtue implies a lack of self-knowledge, and this is expressed by Apuleius when in reviewing Plato's types of character corresponding to the degenerate forms of states,[40] he says of the worst—the tyrant type—"Hunc talem nunquam in agendis rebus expedire se posse non solum propter inscientiam sed quod ipse etiam sibimet sit ignotus[41] et quod perfecta malitia seditionem mentibus pariat."

[36] *In Alc. I*, Vol. II, p. 214 ed. Creuzer. *ὅλως γὰρ τὸ γινώσκειν ἑαυτὸν πάσης ἀρετῆς ἐστι. . . .*

[37] Hierocles in his *Commentary on the Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans*, pp. 64-65, also discusses the virtues and relates them to *γνῶθι σαυτόν*.

[38] *Apoll. of Ty.* VII, 14, 137. *ἐγὼ ἡγοῦμαι τὸν σοφὸν μηδὲν ἰδίᾳ μηδ' ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν . . . καὶ εἴτε Ἀπόλλωνος αὐτοῦ τὸ Πυθοῖ γράμμα εἴτε ἀνδρὸς ὑγιῶς ἑαυτὸν γιγνώσκων καὶ παραστάτην ἔχων τὸν ἑαυτοῦ νοῦν μήτ' ἂν πτῆξαί τι ὧν οἱ πολλοί. . . .*

[39] Virtue is said to know itself (Cicero *De Amicitia* XXVI) and Wisdom cannot be ignorant of itself (Cic. *Acad. Quaest.* II, 8) and self-knowledge is the only safe criterion of truth (Gregory of Nyssa, *In Cant. Cant.*, Homily III p. 810B vol. 44).

[40] *De Dogmata Plat.* II, 16.

[41] Cf. the famous verses in Seneca's *Thyestes* (401-403):

"Illi mors gravis incubat
Qui notus nimis omnibus
Ignotus moritur sibi."

CHAPTER V

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ As Know The Limits of Your Wisdom

We have said that Alcibiades and Alexander are the stock examples of men who preëminently did not know themselves. Plato would have us believe that the one great character who above all others did know himself was Socrates. The importance which Socrates attached to the maxim is brought out in a passage in Plato's *Phaedrus* to which we shall frequently have occasion to refer. As Socrates and Phaedrus in their walk along the banks of the Ilissus draw near to the spot where Boreas was said to have carried off Oreithuia,[1] Phaedrus reminds Socrates of the story and asks him if he believes it. Socrates replies with the rationalistic interpretation of the myth which the wise skeptics of the day put forth, but declares that of such rationalizing there is no end. He has no time for such things, however, and he gives the reason why—"I am not able yet," he says, "to know myself, according to the Delphic inscription. Indeed it appears ridiculous to me to reflect upon alien matters while I am still ignorant of this. And so bidding Good-bye to these questions and believing what is thought about them, as I just now said, I consider not these matters but myself—whether I happen to be some beast more intricate and full of passion than Typho, or a simpler and more gentle creature, sharing in some divine and less monstrous destiny."[2] If in his life-long search after self-knowledge Socrates did come to know himself better than most men,[3] Plato maintains that it was because he did not think he knew what he did not. He says in the *Apology* that if Apollo is right in declaring him to be the wisest man, it is because he knows that he has no wisdom.[4] Wisdom is the virtue that most people have a false conceit about, he says in effect in the course of that passage in the *Phile-*

[1] 229 B ff.

[2] *Phaedrus* 229E-230A. *οὐ δύναμαί πω κατὰ τὸ Δελφικὸν γράμμα γνῶναι ἐμαυτόν. γελοῖον δή μοι φαίνεται τοῦτο ἔτι ἀγνοοῦντα τὰ ἀλλότρια σκοπεῖν. ὅθεν δὴ χαίρειν ἐάσας ταῦτα, πειθόμενος δὲ τῷ νομιζομένῳ περὶ αὐτῶν, ὅ νυνδὴ ἔλεγον, σκοπῶ οὐ ταῦτα ἀλλ' ἐμαυτόν, εἴτε τι θηρίον ὂν τυγχάνω Τυφῶνος πολυπλοκώτερον καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπιτεθυμμένον, εἴτε ἡμερώτερόν τε καὶ ἁπλούστερον ζῷον, θείας τινὸς καὶ ἀτύφου μοίρας φύσει μετέχον.*

[3] Note Hippolytus, *Adv. Her.* I, 18: *Σωκράτης . . . ὃς τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν προτιμήσας. . . .*

[4] 23A-B. See Zeller, *Socrates and the Socratic Schools*, pp. 122-123, Eng. Trans.

bus[5] in which he declares that ignorance of self is the opposite of what the Delphic inscription bids, and discusses the forms which such ignorance may take. And this false conceit of wisdom, often designated by ἀμαθία, is a conception that runs all through Plato. We meet it sometimes in definition, sometimes in discussion, and again we see it exemplified in the very men whom Socrates is trying to refute. It is defined in the *Sophist*[6] as τὸ μὴ κατειδότα τι δοκεῖν εἰδέναι, and in the *Symposium*[7] as τὸ μὴ ὄντα καλὸν κἀγαθὸν μηδὲ φρόνιμον δοκεῖν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἱκανόν. It is discussed in the *Sophist*,[8] and at greater length in the *Theaetetus*.[9] The bigoted Euthyphro, the rhapsodist Ion, Hippias the Wise, the two sophists in the *Euthydemus*, and other characters in greater or less degree, are all afflicted with this ἀμαθία. It is truly a universal fault, characteristic not only of the youthful skeptics,[10] of the philosopher-politicians,[11] and of the men who spend their time in debate,[12] but of the ordinary artisan as well.[13] This universal fault Plato shows to be a serious one,[14] endangering the state, threatening religion,[15] and leading to crime.[16] Socrates made it the mission[17] of his life to help rid men of it, for cross-examination and refutation, he claimed, purify the soul of its conceit,[18] and those who would submit thereto made wonderful progress.[19] Men knew that if they talked with Socrates, Plato tells us, they must give an account of their lives,[20] and in his presence even Alcibiades became humble.[21] If then this false conceit of wisdom, of which Socrates by his presence and conversation so persistently convicted men, is, as he maintained, a failure to heed the Delphic maxim, Socrates

[5] 49A.
[6] 229C.
[7] 204A.
[8] 229 ff.
[9] 150C ff.
[10] *Laws* 886B.
[11] *Euthydemus* 305C.
[12] *Phaedo* 90B-C.
[13] *Apology* 22C-D.
[14] *Tim.* 86B.
[15] *Laws* 886B-E.
[16] *Laws* 863C-D.
[17] *Apol.* 23B.
[18] *Soph.* 230B-D.
[19] *Thaeet.* 150D.
[20] *Laches* 187E-188A.
[21] *Sym.* 216A-C.

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covered the noblest of pursuits and had taught them to others.[27] Isocrates in turn proceeds to confute this idea by objecting to the ends of Spartan education and her attitude toward her neighbors; and at length his critic, who has dared to interpose but once, goes away "a wiser man with the sails of his opinion furled, having experienced" Isocrates says, "that which is written at Delphi, and knowing himself and the character of the Lacedaemonians better than before."[28] It is evident that the man had been afflicted with that conceit of wisdom which the Platonic Socrates so deplores, and "knowing himself" means that he had come to see the worthlessness of his opinions.

The Socratic theme of man's proneness to think he knows what he does not became something of a tag among later writers,[29] though it is not often again associated so closely with the maxim.[30] There is at least a hint of this conceit of wisdom, however, in the story told of Hipparchus in the spurious Platonic dialogue which bears his name, and it is essentially the purport of a passage in Dio Chrysostom. *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* is introduced in the *Hipparchus*, as in Plato's *Protagoras*, not so much for the sake of its own meaning as by way of humorous illustration in connection with another apophthegm. Socrates and his interlocutor are discussing the love of Gain, and Socrates is accused of deceiving his companion by turning things topsy-turvy in his arguments.[31] He replies that in that case he would not be heeding Hipparchus, who set up Herms in every deme, bearing epigrams of his own composing, that the people might not marvel at the wise inscriptions at Delphi—the *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* and the *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* and the rest—but think the sayings of Hipparchus wiser and flock to him to learn more.[32] One of these epigrams of Hipparchus contained the injunction *μὴ φίλον ἐξαπάτα*,[33] which is the point

[27] Sec. 202.

[28] Sec. 230. *ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀπῇει φρονιμώτερος γεγενημένος καὶ συνεσταλμένην ἔχων τὴν διάνοιαν . . . καὶ πεπονθὼς τὸ γεγραμμένον ἐν Δελφοῖς, αὐτόν τ' ἐγνωκὼς καὶ τὴν Λακεδαιμονίων φύσιν μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον.*

[29] See, for instance, Philo Judaeus, *De Plant.* 81; *De Ebriet.* 162-3. Lactantius, *De Ira Dei*, I.

[30] Hieronymus brings the two together in one of his epistles (LVII, 12): "Atque utinam Socraticum illud haberemus 'Scio quod *nescio*' et alterius sapientis . . . Teipsum intellige."

[31] 228A.

[32] 228E.

[33] 229A.

of Socrates long digression about him and his service to Athenian culture. As we have said, the passage is half-humorous, and we are tempted to imagine a touch of irony in Hipparchus' so estimating his own wisdom as to count his inscriptions superior to the revered *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, although we must not go beyond the text in pressing the inference.

The passage, or rather story, in Dio Chrysostom illustrates man's presumption in trying to know other men and God[34] before knowing himself, and this is a phase of the false conceit of wisdom. As Diogenes was going along the road from Corinth to Athens one day, he fell in with a man who had started out to consult the oracle at Delphi, but as his slave had run away he was going back to Corinth to try to find him.[35] After talking with the man about the unwisdom of trying to recapture a bad slave, the question of the value of consulting the oracle came up.[36] Diogenes said he did not object to the man's making use of the oracle if he was able to do so, but it is hard to make use of either God or man if one does not know how; and then he proceeded to ask questions in true Socratic fashion with illustrations from animals, cithara-playing, and the like, until he brought the man to admit that he who is ignorant of man is incapable of using man, and accordingly he who is ignorant of himself would not be able to use himself. Then Diogenes asks: "Have you already heard, then, of the inscription at Delphi—the *Γνῶθι σαυτόν*?" "Certainly," the man replies; and the conversation proceeds:[37] "Now is it not evident that the God gives this command to all on the ground that they do not know themselves?" "Probably." "And you forsooth would be one of the all?" "Yes." "Then not even you know yourself at all?" "It seems so to me." "And in that you are ignorant of yourself you are ignorant of man, and not knowing man you are unable to make use of man; but while you are incapable of making use of man, you try to make use of God!"

[34] See pp. 94 f.

[35] Or. X, 295R.

[36] 301R.

[37] 303R.

CHAPTER VI

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ As Know Your Own Faults

In the Phaedrus passage to which we have referred[1] Socrates said that he considered himself to see whether he happened to be some beast more intricate and full of passion than Typho, or whether he was a gentler and more simple creature, sharing in some divine and less monstrous destiny. This is giving to *γνῶθι σαυτόν* the sense of knowing one's soul, and includes a knowledge of one's disposition—of one's temper and spirit. From this conception it is not a far cry to the thought that a man should know his own faults; and in time, through the influence of the Stoics probably, this force came to be definitely attached to the apophthegm. Sometimes we find it so used where the individual alone is concerned, but more often the emphasis is upon knowing our own faults rather than those of other people. As an instance of the former L. Schmidt[2] cites the questions of the Pythagoreans:[3] *πῆ παρέβη; τὶ δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη*; but while we have abundant evidence that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was one of the watchwords of the school,[4] and know that the disciples were supposed to pass in retrospect their daily conduct,[5] we do not happen to find the maxim applied in this connection in the little Pythagorean literature extant. There is a possible suggestion of it in a pertinent passage in Seneca, however, and Galen and Plutarch introduce it definitely with this connotation.

Seneca in one of his *Epistles* quotes with approval a statement of Epicurus—"Initium est salutis notitia peccati"—and says himself[6] "Nam qui peccare se nescit, corrigi non vult. . . . Ideo

[1] See p. 41.

[2] *Ethik der alten Griechen*, vol. II, p. 395:—"Vielfach dachte man dabei nur an die Beobachtung der eigenem Fehler. Unter den Mitgliedern der pythagoreischen Schule galt es als Vorschrift sich tagtäglich die Frage vorzulegen, welche in dem gern erwähnten Verse . . . ihren Ausdruck gefunden hatte:

Worin hab' ich gefehlt? Was gethan? Welche Pflichten verabsäumt?"

[3] Diog. Laert. VIII, I, 19 (22). Plut. *De Curiositate* c. 1.

[4] Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans 14-15. Stob. Flor. 108, 81. Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* XVIII: 83.

[5] See Cicero, *De Senectute* 38. Ausonius VII, 3.—*De Vino Bono* Πυθαγορικὴ Ἀπόφασις, esp. vv. 14-15.

[6] *Ep. Mor.* III, 7, 10.

quantum potes, te ipse (co)argue, inquire in te:[7] accusatoris primum partibus fungere, deinde iudicis, novissime deprecatoris." Galen says in his chapter entitled *De Propriorum Animi cuiusque Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione*:[8] "We see all men fancying that they are free from error altogether, or that they make merely a few slight mistakes in judgment, and this is especially true of those whom others think err the most. . . . Those who allow others to reveal their opinion about what sort of people they are, I have seen make the fewest mistakes, but those who take it for granted that they are good, without leaving it to others to judge, stumble most seriously and most frequently. So while as a lad I thought that the Pythian command to know oneself was needlessly praised, and that it was not such a great saying, I later found that men's praise of it was just." Galen hints here at what he says explicitly farther on—that the way to know one's faults is to allow an impartial critic to tell us the truth about them. But our self-love stands in the way, and self-love is fed by flattery.[9] "The flatterer," Plutarch says,[10] "is likely to be an enemy to the Gods and especially to the Pythian; for he always acts counter to the *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, deceiving each of us with reference to himself, and causing self-ignorance. He makes a man ignorant of both his good and bad qualities to the extent of degrading his good points into failures and imperfections, and his bad ones into something irremediable." Farther on in this same essay Plutarch exhorts the reader to do away with his self-love and conceit, for these serve to make him an easier prey to flattery. "If we obey the God," he goes on to say, "and learn that the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is all-important for each of us, and if at the same time we see that there are countless failures to attain the Good in our nature and rearing and education, while much that is reckless and bad is mixed in with our actions and words and experiences, we shall not so easily place ourselves in the Flatterer's path."[11]

[7] Summers, *Select Letters of Seneca*, notes, p. 197 says: "Inquire in te, like (Tranq. 6.2) se ipsum aestimare, a variant for *γνῶθι σαυτόν* (te Nosce 94, 28)."

[8] Vol. V.c. II, p. 3-4, Kuhn.

[9] The effect of flattery in blinding men to their faults is distinguishable from its effect in making them think themselves more powerful than they are. Hence its connection with *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* here differs from that indicated in c. II.

[10] *De Discernendo Adulatore et Amico*, c. 1.

[11] c. 25.

Our proneness to see others' faults rather than our own is indicated by the author of the *Magna Moralia*.[12] He says: "Since then it is very hard, as some of the Wise have declared, to know oneself—we are unable to contemplate ourselves from within ourselves; and because we are unable to know ourselves, we evidently do unwittingly the very things for which we find fault with others."[13]

We next meet this idea in connection with the maxim in a humorous bit of word-play in Horace's Satire on our Intolerant Judgment of Others:

> "Maenius absentem Novium cum carperet, 'Heus tu,'
> Quidam ait, 'ignoras te, an ut ignotum dare nobis
> Verba putas?' 'Egomet mi ignosco,' Maenius inquit."[14]

While all commentators recognize the play on *ignoras*, *ignotum* and *ignosco*, and the general sense of the passage, no one seems to have called attention to the fact that "ignoras te" is the opposite of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. Seneca puts the thought vigorously in his *De Vita Beata*:[15] "Have you time to seek out another's faults," he asks, "and to disclose your opinion of any one? . . . Do you observe another's pimples when you are covered with numerous sores? This is as if some one should ridicule the moles or warts on some very beautiful person, while he is being consumed by the cruel mange himself. . . . Will you not rather look at your own faults?. . . Are human conditions such that even if *statum vestrum parum nostis*, you have sufficient time to wield your tongue to the reproach of your betters?" The phrase "Statum vestrum . . . nostis" is certainly a reminder of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, but again it is Plutarch who uses the exact words of the maxim with this application. He tells us in his *De Inimicorum Utilitate* of how when Plato was in company with men of disorderly character, he was wont to ask himself Μή που ἄρ' ἐγὼ τοιοῦτος; "If he who calls into reproach the life of another," Plutarch goes on to say,

[12] This was probably written as early as the 3rd century B. C. See Burnet, *Ethics of Aristotle*, Intro. p. XI.

[13] II, 15. 1213a, 14 ff.

[14] Hor. *Sat.* I, 3, 22-23.

[15] VII, 27, 4-6. Cf. Terence *Heaut. Tim.* 503-505:

> "Ita comparatam esse hominum naturam omnium
> Aliena ut melius videant et diiudicent
> Quam sua!"

Also vv. 922-23:

> "Nonne id flagitiumst, te aliis consilium dare,
> Foris sapere, tibi non posse te auxiliarier?"

shall "straightway consider his own and correct it . . . he will derive some advantage from the rebuke. . . A man who is going to censure another ought not to be clever, and loud-voiced, and hasty, but he should be above reproach and without offence; for upon no one is the God so likely to have enjoined the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* as upon him who is going to find fault with another."[16]

While the Ancients had many ways of expressing the thought contained in our New Testament figure of the beam and the mote,[17] probably the oldest and most common was Aesop's fable of the two sacks. "Juppiter placed upon us two sacks," the fable reads: "the one laden with others' faults he hung before our heart; the other, filled with our own, he placed behind our back. And so it is that we cannot see our own evil deeds, but condemn others when they fail."[18] This fable is referred to with particular frequency among the Latin poets. Horace alludes to it in his Satire on the Stoic paradox that all save the Wise Man are mad:

"Dixerit insanum qui me, totidem audiet, atque
Respicere ignoto discet pendentia tergo."[19]

[16] *De Inimicorum Utilitate* c. 5. The last clause reads: *οὐδενὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἔοικε προστάττειν ὁ θεὸς, ὡς τῷ μέλλοντι ψέγειν ἕτερον, το γνῶθι σαυτόν.* Cf. *De Audiendo* VI, 40 D-E, where he quotes the same query of Plato's, and says that while it is easy to blame our neighbor, it is useless and idle unless one corrects and guards against like faults in himself. Cf. also *De Cohibenda Ira* c. 16 (463E) & *De Curiositate* c. 2. Cf. also Basil *Hex.* IX, 6: *τῷ ὄντι γάρ ἔοικε πάντων εἶναι χαλεπώτατον ἑαυτὸν ἐπιγνῶναι . . . ἡμῶν ὁ νοῦς ὀξέως τὸ ἀλλότριον ἁμάρτημα καταβλέπων βραδύς ἐστι πρὸς τὴν τῶν οἰκείων ἐλαττωμάτων ἐπίγνωσιν.*

[17] For Greek and Roman expressions, see the two from Seneca cited above. Also Horace, *Sat.* I, 3, 73-74:

"Qui ne tuberibus propriis offendat amicum
Postulat, ignoscet verrucis illius."

And Petronius *Satyricon*, 57: "In alio peduclum vides, in te ricinum non vides."

[18] A translation of Phaedrus IV, 9. Babrius' version (no. 66) reads:

Θεῶν Προμηθεὺς ἦν τις, ἀλλὰ τῶν πρώτων.
τοῦτον πλάσασθαί φασι δεσπότην ζῴων
ἄνθρωπον ἐκ γῆς· ἐκ δὲ τοῦ δύω πήρας
κρεμάσαι φέροντά φασι τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις
κακῶν γεμούσας, τὴν πρόσω μὲν ὀθνείων
ἰδίων δὲ <τὴν> ὄπισθεν, ἥτις ἦν μείζων.
διό μοι δοκοῦσι συμφορὰς μὲν ἀλλήλων
βλέπειν ἀκριβῶς, ἀγνοεῖν δὲ τὰς οἴκοι.

See also Seneca *De Ira* II, 28, 8 & Plut. *Crass.* 32.

[19] Hor. *Sat.* II, 3, 298-99. Kiessling and Dillenberger see here a reference to "caudam trahat," v. 52, and Orelli-Mewes and Rolfe give alternative explanations, but surely the allusion to the fable is perfectly apparent.

And Catullus uses it in writing of the poet Suffenus, who was never so happy and proud of himself as when he was writing verses. "Of course we all make the same mistake," Catullus reflects, "and there is no one whom you cannot see a Suffenus in something."

"Suus cuique attributus est error
Sed non videmus manticae quod in tergo est."[20]

Persius brings the fable into his fourth Satire—a poem of which Gildersleeve says: "The theme of the satire is contained in the closing verses. It is the Apollinic *γνῶθι σαυτόν*."[21] The first part of the poem is very obviously based upon the Alcibiades I, and the thought of the maxim continues as the ideas grow more general.

"Ut nemo in sese temptat descendere, nemo,
Sed praecedenti spectatur mantica tergo!"[22]

the poet exclaims, and then he goes on to say in effect: "You ask about a certain rich man's property and you hear him criticised for his miserliness, but your own luxury and bad habits are criticised also. We slay others, and in turn expose our limbs to the arrows. This is the rule of life: this is its lesson. We try to conceal our defects, and give credence when men speak well of us, but their praise amounts to little if we are guilty of avarice and wrong." And in conclusion he says:

"Tecum habita: noris[23] quam sit tibi curta supellex."

While *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is not expressed here in so many words, the poem as a whole, and the verses we have quoted in particular, seem based upon it, and it is probably not too much to say that the fable of the two sacks and the maxim meet in the above couplet. Connington renders the verses freely: "None of us knows himself. Every one thinks only of his neighbor";[24] and Gildersleeve says: "The thought is simply noscere se ipsum."[25]

The maxim and the fable meet again in Galen also. He says he is going to tell how one can learn of his faults, "encouraging him who is familiar with this inscription and is feeling it incumbent

[20] Catullus 22, 15-21.

[21] *The Satires of Persius* p. 141.

[22] vv. 23-24.

[23] Certain MSS. have "Tecum habita ut noris". . . .

[24] *Persius, with trans. and com. by Connington*, ed. by Nettleship. (3rd ed. revised) p. 79.

[25] Page 147.

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CHAPTER VII

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ As Know You Are Human And Mortal

In Pindar's Third Pythian Ode we find expressed one of the commonplaces of Greek thought in the verses:[1]

χρὴ τὰ ἐοικότα πὰρ δαιμόνων μαστευέμεν, θναταῖς φρασὶν,
γνόντα τὸ πὰρ ποδὸς, οἵας εἰμὲν αἴσας.

The scholiast upon the passage says: "This is similar to the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* of Chilon, meaning that we are by nature mortal."[2] But it is not at all likely that Pindar had the apophthegm in mind here, for it is not until the days of Menander that the two are definitely brought together. The injunction to think mortal thoughts, however,—to recognize our human limitations and know that we must die—is as old as Archilochus, who says:

γίγνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει.[3]

And the tragic and comic poets—yes, and the prose writers too—reiterate the theme. Sometimes they emphasize the thought that we are only human beings, subject to human vicissitudes, and so must not think too highly of our human powers; sometimes they dwell upon the thought that death awaits us; and again, as in the above passage from Pindar, the two ideas are both expressed. They are but two shades of the same conception, really, and they are never far apart. Sophocles has the first shade of meaning chiefly in mind when he says that Ajax brought his sufferings upon himself,

οὐ κατ' ἄνθρωπον φρονῶν.[4]

[1] III, 59-60.

[2] Vol. II, p. 76 ed. Drachmann: *ὅμοιον τῷ Χίλωνος ἀποφθέγματι τῷ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν. τὸ δὲ ὅλον, ὅτι θνητοὶ πεφύκαμεν.*

[3] *Anthologia Lyrica* frag. 62, v. 7, ed. Bergk-Hiller.

[4] *Ajax.* 777. Cf. Eur. Frag. 963 ed. Nauck:

μήδ' εὐτύχημα μηδὲν ὧδ' ἔστω μέγα,
ὅ σ' ἐξεπαρεῖ μεῖζον ἢ χρεὼν φρονεῖν
μηδ' ἤν τι συμβῇ δυσχερὲς, δουλοῦ πάλιν·
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς αἰεὶ μίμνε τὴν σαυτοῦ φύσιν
σῴζων βεβαίως ὥστε χρυσὸς ἐν πυρί.

Cf. also Her. I, 207; Pindar, *Isth.* V, 16, & *Nem.* XI, 15; Aesch. frag. 159, Nauck. Euripides *Bacchae* 199, 395-6, 1002-1004; *Iph. at Aulis* 31; frag. 79, Nauck. Isoc. I, 21; Dem. *Against Leptines* 161. Diphilus frag. 106, ed. Koch vol. II, p. 574. Cato, frag. II, 2. p. 26. ed. Hanthal:

"An di sint caelumque regunt, ne quaere doceri;
Cum sis mortalia quae sint mortalia, cura."

And with similar feeling the Romans sought to remind the victorious general at his triumph that he was only human, for the slave who stood behind him on the triumphal car holding a golden crown over his head kept saying: "Respice post te: hominem te memento."[5] The other meaning—the idea that death is before us—is clearly expressed by Heracles' words in Euripides' *Alcestis*:[6]

τὰ θνητὰ πράγματ' οἶσθας ἥν ἔχει φύσιν;
. . . . . .
βροτοῖς ἅπασι καθανεῖν ὀφείλεται
κοὐκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξεπίσταται
τὴν αὔριον μέλλουσαν εἰ βιώσεται.[7]

A good instance of the juxtaposition of the two ideas occurs in a fragment of Democritus:[8] γινώσκειν χρέων ἀνθρωπίνην βιοτὴν ἀφαυρήν τε ἐοῦσαν καὶ ὀλιγοχρόνιον. . . . And when the word θνητά is used it always gives the added suggestion of death, even if the emphasis of the sentence as a whole is upon our humanity rather than upon our mortality. For example, Sophocles says in one of his fragments:[9]

πῶς δῆτ' ἔγωγ' ἂν θνητὸς ἐκ θνητῆς τε φὺς
Διὸς γενοίμην εὖ φρονεῖν σοφώτερος;

and in another:[10]

καλὸν φρονεῖν τὸν θνητὸν ἀνθρώποις ἴσα.

So Pliny implies the one shade of meaning while expressing the other when he says:—"dum infirmi sumus—tunc deos, tunc hominem esse se meminit."[11] We naturally look for this commonplace not only in the literature, but among the sepulchral inscriptions, and we find it frequently in both the Greek and the Latin collections. The passer-by is repeatedly enjoined to know the end of life,[12] or to

[5] Tertullian, Apol. 33.

[6] vv. 780 ff.

[7] Cf. Philemon frag. 107, Koch II, p. 512.

[8] 285 Diels.

[9] 481, Nauck.

[10] Frag. 321. Bentley ascribes to Epicharmus the quotation in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* II, 21, 6: θνατὰ χρὴ τὸν θνατόν, οὐκ ἀθάνατα τὸν θνατὸν φρονεῖν. Cf. Soph. frag. 531: θνατὰ φρονεῖν χρὴ θνητὴν φύσιν. . . .
Eur. *Alcestis* 799: ὄντας δὲ θνητοὺς θνητὰ καὶ φρονεῖν χρεών.

[11] Ep. VII, 26.

[12] *Epigrammata Graeca ex Lapidibus Conlecta* ed. Kaibel II, 303 & 344; IV, 533.

remember that he is mortal,[13] and a certain Greek says of himself:

μηδὲν ἄγαν φρονέων, θνητὰ δὲ πανθ' ὁρόων ἦλθον . . . .[14]

The inscription on the tomb of Sardanapulus, according to Athenaeus, was in part as follows:[15]

εὐ εἰδὼς ὅτι θνητὸς ἔφυς σόν θυμὸν ἄεξε
τερπόμενος θαλίῃσι· θανόντι σοι οὔτις ὄνησις.
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σποδός εἰμι, Νίνου μεγάλης βασιλεύσας·

To multiply instances further were tedious, but it is interesting to see that γνῶθι σαυτόν at length took on these two additional and interrelated meanings of knowing that we are human and knowing that we must die. That it should do so seems natural, for the idea that we are all subject to human limitations calls for only a slight extension of the idea of knowing our own limits in ability and achievement as compared with other men. But the connection with γνῶθι σαυτόν was probably due rather to the influence of the Stoics in their claim that the maxim was the foundation of philosophy, and to their insistence to an unprecedented degree upon our cultivating an attitude of impassivity toward misfortune and sorrow and death, by reminding ourselves that these things are an inevitable part of the human lot.[16] That this connotation was general and not merely literary is suggested by the mosaic floor of a small tomb found west of the Appian Way at Rome,[17] bearing the figure of a skeleton with the words ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ written in large, bold letters underneath. In studying the specific passages in the literature in which the apophthegm was given this force, we may pass by several extracts given by Stobaeus in his chapter on Γνῶθι Σαυτόν,[18] inasmuch as, like the passages cited above, they do not contain the words of the maxim.

[13] *Carmina Sepulchra Latina* ed. Cholodniak, 435, 790, 1323, 1324. *Anthologia Latina* II, 2, 1492. The word *memini* is regularly used in these inscriptions. However, no. 1319 ed. Cholodniak, reads: "Cogitato te homin(em) esse et scito moriendu(m) 'st."

[14] Kaibel V, 615.

[15] Athenaeus VIII, 14.

[16] Epictetus I, 18; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* III, Praef. 15.

[17] This mosaic is in the Thermae Museum. See Helbig's *Guide* Vol. 2, no. 1044, p. 222 (Eng. trans.). See also Bull. dell. Inst. 1866, p. 164. For the use of skeletons to remind men of the transitoriness of human life see Petronius, *Cena Trim.* 35, and Lowe's note (p. 28). Note also the Boscoreale Cups (Mau's *Pompeii* p. 381-2, Eng. trans.) and the mosaic table top with skull and other symbols found at Pompeii (Mau p. 399).

[18] Flor. 21; 1.3.4.

The words are contained, however, in a pertinent fragment of Menander's:[19] "When thou dost wish to know thyself—what thou art," he says, "look at the tombs as thou dost pass along the street. In them lie the bones and the light dust of men—of kings, and tyrants, and wise men, and men greatly exalted by reason of their birth, or fame, or personal beauty. And then the time for enjoying these proved all too short. A common grave claimed them all, mortals that they were. Looking to these things, know thyself—what thou art."

Seneca in his *Consolation to Marcia*[20] for the death of her son dwells upon the frail and mortal nature of man in an eloquent passage. He says in part: "Mortal you were born, and you have given birth to mortals.[21]. . . Your son has died—that is, he has come down to that end toward which all whom you think happier than your offspring are hastening.[22] Hither comes with uneven step all that throng which contends in the forum, takes seat in the theatre, and prays in the temples; and those whom you cherish and those whom you despise are made equal in one common dust. In view of this, manifestly, was that *Nosce Te* ascribed to the Pythian oracle. What is man?[22] A kind of fragile vessel, broken at the slightest toss. . . . What is man? A weak and delicate frame, unprotected, defenseless in himself, in need of help from without, subject to all the buffets of fortune. . . ." And so he goes on. Plutarch writes

[19] Frag. 538, Koch III, p. 161:

ὅταν εἰδέναι θέλῃς σεαυτὸν ὅστις εἶ,
ἔμβλεψον εἰς τὰ μνήμαθ' ὡς ὁδοιπορεῖς,
ἐνταῦθ' ἔνεστ' ὀστᾶ τε καὶ κούφη κόνις
ἀνδρῶν βασιλέων καὶ τυράννων καὶ σοφῶν
καὶ μέγα φρονούντων ἐπὶ γένει καὶ χρήμασιν
αὐτῶν τε δόξῃ κἀπὶ κάλλει σωμάτων.
κἆτ' οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς τῶν δ' ἐπήρκεσεν χρόνος.
κοινὸν τὸν ᾅδην ἔσχον οἱ πάντες βροτοί.
πρὸς ταῦθ' ὁρῶν γίνωσκε σαυτὸν ὅστις εἶ.

Cf. Ambrose *Hex.* VI, 8, 51. Respice in sepulchra hominum et vide quid ex te nisi cinis et ossa remanebunt, hoc est, ex corpore tuo. . . . .

[20] VI, XI, 1-3.

[21] Cf. the oft-quoted remark of Anaxagoras upon hearing of the death of his son: ᾔδειν θνητὸν γεννήσας. Plut. *De Tranq. An.* c. 16 (474D).

[22] Cf. Euripides, frag. 418 Nauck:

γίγνωσκε τἀνθρώπεια μηδ' ὑπερμέτρως
ἄλγει· κακοῖς γὰρ οὐ σὺ πρόσκεισαι μόνη.

in somewhat similar strain in his *Consolation to Apollonius*[23] that he who resents his own death or the death of his children has evidently forgotten that man is mortal, and that his children are likewise mortal, lent him for a time. And he continues: "It is not possible for any one in his senses to be ignorant of the fact that man is a mortal creature and that he is born to die. . . . These two of the Delphic inscriptions are exceedingly necessary for life—the *Γνῶθι σαυτὸν* and the *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*, for on these all else depends. And they are in accord and harmony with each other, and through the one the force of the other seems to be revealed. For in knowing oneself there is included the *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*, and in the *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* the *γινώσκειν ἑαυτόν*. . . He who has these in mind as precepts of the Pythian oracle will be able to harmonize the experiences of life readily and to bear them successfully, while he looks to his own nature, and is neither exalted with undue arrogance in prosperity, nor dejected and given to wailing and lament through weakness of soul and the fear of death implanted in us."

Aelian tells the story[24] of how after Philip had conquered the Athenians at Chaeronea, he commanded a slave to remind him early in the morning that he was human, and he would not leave the house nor let any one in to see him until the slave had shouted this to him three times. Alexander, moreover, despite his assumed divinity, is said to have remarked upon regaining his strength after a long illness that he was none the worse for it; "for *ὑπέμνησε . . . ἡμᾶς ἡ νόσος μὴ μέγα φρονεῖν ὡς θνητοὺς ὄντας.*[25] He is represented by Lucian,[26] however, as carrying much of his undue pride with him into the Lower World. When he first arrived there Philip greeted him with the words: "This time, Alexander, you cannot deny that you are my son; for you would not have died if you had been Am-

[23] c.28, 116B-c. 29. The Greek reads in part:
οὐ γὰρ ἔστι φρένας ἔχοντας ἀνθρώπου ἀγνοεῖν, ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷόν ἐστι θνητόν, οὐδ' ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν. . . . Δύ' ἐστὶ τῶν Δελφικῶν γραμμάτων τὰ μάλιστ' ἀναγ-καιότατα πρὸς τὸν βίον, τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν καὶ τὸ Μηδὲν ἄγαν· ἐκ τούτων γὰρ ἤρτηται καὶ τἄλλα πάντα, ταῦτα γὰρ ἐστιν ἀλλήλοις συνῳδὰ καὶ σύμφωνα, καὶ διὰ θατέρου ἔοικε δηλοῦ-σθαι κατὰ δύναμιν. Ἔν τε γὰρ τῷ γινώσκειν ἑαυτὸν περιέχεται τὸ Μηδὲν ἄγαν, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸ γινώσκειν ἑαυτόν. . . .

[24] VIII, 15. Quoted in part by Stobaeus on *Γνῶθι Σαυτὸν* (F*lor.* 21, 6.)

[25] Stob. F*lor.* 21:15.

[26] D*ialogues of the* Dead *XIV*. Lucian speaks of how prone men are to forget that they are mortal in C*haron*, 8 & 17; *Menippus* 12, and elsewhere, but he uses *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in this connection only here.

mon's." "Now that you have died," he says farther on,[27] "do you not suppose that there are many who will mock at your pretended divinity, when they see the corpse of the God lying before them? . . . Moreover, everything you did seems to fall short of being the work of a God." "Men do not think that about me," Alexander replied, "but they make me out a rival of Heracles and Dionysus. And what's more I alone seized that Aonos,[28] which neither of them succeeded in taking." And then Philip concludes the Dialogue: "Do you see that you say that as if you really were the son of Ammon, comparing yourself with Heracles and Dionysus? Are you not ashamed of yourself, Alexander, and will you not learn to drop that bombast[29] and *γνώσῃ σεαυτὸν καὶ συνήσῃ ἤδη νεκρὸς ὤν*;"[30] It is obvious that Lucian is using the phrase *γνώσῃ σεαυτὸν* here to mean 'Know that you could not perform the feats of a God since you are a mere mortal, as the fact of your dying shows.' This satire reminds us somewhat of the inscription that the Athenians placed on the inside of the Gate which Pompey was to pass through as he left their city after a short visit on his way to the East. His sacrificing to their Gods and his address to the people had evidently made a favorable impression upon them, and they wrote:

Ἐφ' ὅσον ὢν ἄνθρωπος οἶδας, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον εἶ θεός.[31]

[27] Sec. 5.

[28] A lofty rock in India.

[29] Cf. Stobaeus' quotation from Bias: *τὸ δὲ γνῶθι σαυτὸν χρήσιμον εἰς νουθεσίαν τῶν ἁλαζόνων, οἱ ὑπὲρ τὴν ἑαυτῶν δύναμιν φλυαροῦσιν* (Flor. 21.14.)

[30] There is a suggestion of the maxim in this sense of 'know that you are mortal' in a frag. of Philemon (213, Koch). Some one is carrying on a conversation with a certain Kleon, who is apparently making excuses for his lack of effort to acquire a trade. If the youth says he has property, this may fail. . . If he says that his friends will take up a contribution for him, the speaker bids him:

εὔχου μὴ λαβεῖν πεῖραν φίλων
εἰ δὲ μή, γνῶσει σεαυτὸν ἄλλο μηδὲν πλὴν σκίαν.

Koch removes a certain harshness of expression by reading *οὐδὲν ὄντ' ἀλλ' ἢ* instead of *ἄλλο μηδὲν πλὴν*; but Heimsoeth's change of *γνώσει σεαυτὸν* to *γνοίης αὐτοὺς* (See Herwerden *Collectanea Critica* p. 148) misses a point which would not be lost upon a Greek audience. That his friends will not help Kleon is, of course, the main implication, but the effect of their failure will make him not only to become a mere shadow but to realize that that is all that he is. Cf. Soph. *Ajax* 125-6.

ὁρῶ, γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
εἴδωλ', ὅσοιπερ ζῶμεν, ἢ κούφην σκιάν.

[31] Plutarch, *Vit. Pomp.* c. 27. On the outside of the gate they placed the verse:

προσεδοκῶμεν, προσεκυνοῦμεν, εἴδομεν, προπέμπομεν.

The maxim with this force seems to be implied in a couplet of *The Golden Sayings of the Pythagoreans*:[32]

μηδ' ἀλογίστως σαυτὸν ἔχειν περὶ μηδὲν ἔθιζε·
ἀλλὰ γνῶθι μὲν ὡς θανέειν πέπρωται ἅπασι.

That this was one of the teachings of the sect is made evident by a fragment from the Pythagorean Hipparchus' treatise on *Tranquility*, which reads in part: ταύταν δὲ ἔξοντι μάλιστα πάντων ἀκριβῶς ἐπιστάμενοι καὶ ἐπεγνωκότες ἑωυτοὺς, ὅτι ἐντὶ θνατοὶ καὶ σάρκινοι. . . .[33] Jewish and Christian writers also made much of the thought that man is human in his limitations, as certain passages from Philo Judaeus and Clement of Alexandria attest. Clement says[34] that γνῶθι σαυτόν shows many things, and he puts first in his enumeration καὶ ὅτι θνητὸς εἶ καὶ ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ἐγένου. Philo concludes a discussion of the reasons for the rite of Circumcision by saying that it is a symbol τοῦ γνῶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν, and of discarding that terrible disease of the soul, οἴησιν, for some men boast that they are able to produce the fairest being of all Creation—man—concealing the fact that God is in truth the Creator.[35] And again in connection with the passage in Exodus 33; 18 ff., where Moses asks God to show him Himself, Philo interprets God's answer to Moses as follows: "Neither the nature of man, nor even the entire Heavens and the Universe can adequately apprehend me. Γνῶθι δὴ σαυτὸν, and be not carried away with impulses and desires beyond thy power of realization, nor let the desire for the unattainable seize thee and carry thee aloft."[36] Such are the words of Philo's God—a Being who, unlike the more intimate Gods of Greece, sits in wondrous majesty in a far-off world beyond all the conception and reach of men.

For the general idea cf. The Auctor *Ad Herennium* IV, 52 (65). In illustrating a "sermocinatio" he pictures an incident in which after some military success, a few men break into a certain house and demand the master of the household. His wife throws herself at the feet of the leader and begs him to have mercy. " 'Parce,' inquit, 'et per quae tibi dulcissima sunt in vita, miserere nostri. Noli exstinguere exstinctos; fer mansuete fortunam; nos quoque fuimus beati: nosce te esse hominem.' "

[32] Hierocles, The Golden Sayings of the Pythagoreans, p. 1, ed. Mullach. vv. 14-15.

[33] Stob. F*lor*. 108, 81.

[34] *Strom*. V, IV, 23.

[35] *De Sp. Leg*. I (*De Circumcis*.) 10.

[36] *De Sp. Leg*. I (*De Monarchia*) 44.

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CHAPTER VIII

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ As Know Your Soul

It is to Plato that we owe the first application of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in the sense of knowing one's own soul, for it is the purport of the words of Socrates to Phaedrus when he explains that he has no time for speculative theology, inasmuch as he has not yet succeeded in knowing himself, whether he is a beast more passionate and intricate than Typho, or a simpler and gentler creature.[1] This meaning was taken up by the author of the *Alcibiades I*, and forms the central theme of the Dialogue. We recall[2] that in the early part of the discussion Socrates seeks to bring Alcibiades to a recognition of how far his attainments fall short of his ambition, and that he uses the Delphic maxim in emphasizing the need of his taking his own measure. Alcibiades then asks how he may secure this requisite knowledge of himself, and the conversation continues until he is brought to a contradiction and humbly admits his ignorance. Socrates tells him that there is hope for him since he is young, and bids him go on answering questions if he wishes to improve, which leads to a distinction between improving, or caring for, our belongings and improving ourselves. To improve ourselves we must know ourselves, and Socrates goes on to ask: *πότερον οὖν δὴ ῥᾳδίον τυγχάνει τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν, καὶ τις ἦν φαῦλος ὁ τοῦτο ἀναθεὶς εἰς τὸν ἐν Πυθοῖ νεών, ἢ χαλεπόν τι καὶ οὐχὶ παντός;*[3] Alcibiades replies that it often seems to him to be in every one's power and again it seems very hard.[4] "Easy or not," says Socrates, "we must have it," and he proceeds to distinguish between the soul and the body, as he has before distinguished between the person and his possessions. The soul is shown to be the real self, and he affirms: *ψυχὴν ἄρα ἡμᾶς κελεύει γνωρίσαι ὁ ἐπιτάττων γνῶναι ἑαυτόν.*[5] Then follows a little further consideration of the tripartite division, which we met in the *Philebus*[6]—the self, and the things of the self, and the things of the things of the self[7]—leading

[1] See p. 41.

[2] See p. 18.

[3] 129A.

[4] See p. 78.

[5] 130E.

[6] See pp. 16f.

[7] Phrasing in 133D-E.

again to the placing of the emphasis upon the real self, or the soul.[8] "How then can we know it (the art of caring for the soul) most clearly?" Socrates asks. "For if we know this, it seems we shall also know ourselves. And in the name of the Gods, if we are right in what we say, do we not get the meaning of the Delphic inscription of which we were just now reminded?" Alcibiades is puzzled, but Socrates tells him what he surmises the inscription to mean—that as the eye can see itself by looking into another eye, so the soul to know itself "must look at soul, and especially at the part of it in which the virtue of soul exists, namely wisdom"[9] . . . "This part of the soul is like to God, and any one looking to this and knowing all that is divine, God and φρόνησις, would in this way especially know himself. . . . Looking to God we would use Him as the fairest mirror, and looking also into the virtue of the human soul—in this way would we see and know ourselves best."[10] This gives enough of the Dialogue for our purposes, perhaps, but the argument is carried further to show that only as a man knows his real self, will he know aright the things of the self, and the things of the things of the self. And if he does not know all this regarding himself, he cannot know it for others or be a competent leader of men.

It is the soul, or the real self, then, which the maxim here bids us know. The antithesis between soul and body thus set up resulted in a tendency to use γνῶθι σαυτόν in emphasizing a knowledge of the soul irrespective of the body, though we sometimes find it applied to a knowledge of the relation between the two, and in a few instances it is treated as a very definite injunction to know one's physical nature and its powers as an important preliminary to the fullest self-knowledge. This last is especially true of the use of the apophthegm by Philo Judaeus. He would have man remember the insignificant elements of which he is made,[11] but he would also have him know his physical frame and sensibilities before going on to the more important knowledge of the mind and soul and the apprehension of

[8] 132C.

[9] 133B.

[10] 133C: *εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἄρα βλέποντες ἐκείνῳ καλλίστῳ ἐνόπτρῳ χρῴμεθ' ἂν καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων εἰς τὴν ψυχῆς ἀρετήν, καὶ οὕτως ἂν μάλιστα ὁρῷμεν καὶ γιγνώσκομεν ἡμᾶς αὐτούς.*

[11] *Sp. Leg.* I, 263-4; *De Somn.* I, 211-2. Cf. Tertullian, *De Anima* XVII—"ipsius dei providentiam . . qui cunctis operibus suis intellegendis, incolendis, dispensandis, fruendisque fallaces et mendaces dominos praefecerit sensus . . Sed enim Plato, ne quod testimonium sensibus signet, propterea et in Phaedro ex Socratis persona negat se cognoscere posse semetipsum. . . ."

true Being. He introduces *γνῶθι σαυτόν* with this purport in his symbolic interpretation of Charran and the life of Jacob in particular. Charran—the land into which Terah came when he left Chaldea,[12] and into which Jacob went to live with his Uncle Laban, is the land of the external senses. The word means "holes,"[13] he says, and he bids the man who would examine himself go into the holes and caverns of the body, and investigate his eyes, ears, nostrils, and other organs of sense.[14] "He who is still active in mortal life has need of these organs,"[15] and so Rebekkah says to Jacob:[16] *γνῶθι σαυτὸν καὶ τὰ σαυτοῦ μέρη τί τε ἕκαστον καὶ πρὸς τὶ γέγονε καὶ πῶς ἐνεργεῖν πέφυκε καὶ τὶς ὁ τὰ θαύματα κινῶν καὶ νευροσπαστῶν ἀόρατος ἀοράτως εἴτε ὁ ἐν σοὶ νοῦς εἴτε τῶν συμπάντων.* But Rebekkah would not have Jacob stay long in the country of the external senses. He was not to remain there all his life but "certain days," while a long lifetime is stored up for him in the city of the Mind.[17] The command to Abraham likewise was to depart from his country and his kindred, the outward senses, which means to be alienated from them in one's thought—to treat them as subjects, to learn to rule and not be ruled by them.[18] *Πάντα τὸν αἰῶνα γίνωσκε σεαυτὸν*, Philo says, . . . *οὕτως γὰρ ὢν τε ὑπακούειν καὶ οἷς ἐπιτάττειν προσῆκεν αἰσθήσῃ.*[19] This control of the outward senses is followed by the mind's beginning to know itself[20] and associating with the reflections of the intellect, and when the mind has come to understand itself accurately, it will probably somehow know God.[21]

[12] Mixed in with this exposition of the meaning of self-knowledge are exhortations to abandon the study of the physical sciences and to know oneself, even as Terah in going from Chaldea abandoned the investigation of the universe for which the Chaldeans were famous to study himself at Charran. The disposition which the Hebrews called Terah, he says, found concrete embodiment in Socrates, who grew old in the most careful consideration of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. *De Somn.* I, 58. cf. *Mig. Abraham* 185.

[13] *De Fuga* et *Inventione* 45.

[14] *De Somn.* I, 55.

[15] *De Fug.* et *In.* 45.

[16] Sec. 46.

[17] *De Somn.* I, 46.

[18] Cf. Tertullian, *De Anima* XVII: "Plato, ne quod testimonium sensibus signet, propterea et in Phaedro ex Socratis persona negat se cognoscere posse semetipsum. . . ."

[19] *De Mig. Abraham* 7-8.

[20] *Ibid.* 13.

[21] *Ibid.* 195. *μαθὼν ἀκριβῶς ἑαυτὸν εἴσεται τάχα που καὶ θεόν.* . . .

Porphyry in an extract from his work on *Γνῶθι Σαυτόν* refers to Plato's Philebus and says, among other things, that to know oneself altogether probably includes *ἡμᾶς καὶ τὰ ἡμέτερα καὶ τὰ τῶν ἡμετέρων.* "Plato," he says, "was zealous to know himself in every way, that the immortal man within might be known and the outer portrait might not be unknown, and that the difference between them might be distinguishable. For the perfect *νοῦς* of which each of us is a likeness distinguishes the inner self, where the real man dwells, and the outer image is distinguishable by the things of the body and one's possessions. The powers of these also we ought to know and consider how far they extend. . . ."[22] The Emperor Julian likewise says[23] that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* means a knowledge of the body, for "Socrates and many others," he says, "thought *τὸ ἑαυτὸν γνῶναι* to be this—*τὸ μαθεῖν ἀκριβῶς τὶ μὲν ἀποδοτέον ψυχῇ, τὶ δὲ σώματι.*" and earlier in the same chapter he says:[24] "He who knows himself will know about the soul and he will know about the body also. . . . And coming back to the first beginning of the body, he will consider whether it is simple or composite; and then as he goes forward he will reflect about its harmony, and how it is affected, and about its powers and, in a word, about everything which it needs for its continuance."

The above passages from Porphyry and Julian are patently mere enlargements of the *τὰ ἑαυτοῦ* theme of Plato's tripartite division, and Philo very likely had it in mind also. There is a further instance of self-knowledge as applied to the body in Nemesius' work on *The Nature of Man*,[25] where he says that the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden gave a knowledge of one's nature, and makes it clear that the self-knowledge which it gave was a consciousness of one's bodily needs.[26] He refers to the Hebrews the statement that man in the beginning was neither mortal nor immortal; for if he had been mortal, God would not have pronounced death as the penalty of his disobedience, while if he had been immortal, he would not have needed food; and he gives as his own view that man in that state was equipped as a mortal, but was able to attain immortality

[22] Stob. F*lor*. 21:28.

[23] VI, 190B.

[24] 183B-C.

[25] I, 16.

[26] Cf. John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* II, 11. *τὸ μὲν ξῦλον τῆς γνώσεως, ἀπόπειράν τινα, καὶ δοκιμὴν, καὶ γυμνάσιον τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπακοῆς καὶ παρακοῆς. Διὸ καὶ ξῦλον τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν κέκληται, ἢ ὅτι δύναμιν ἐδίδου γνωστικὴν τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσι τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως.*

through progress. At length, after explaining that plants in those days before they had been touched had a very strong power, and that there was a fruit which gave knowledge of one's own nature, he goes on to say: "God did not want man to know his own nature before he attained perfection, that he might not know that he was in want of many things, and come to care for his bodily needs, abandoning all forethought for the soul. For this reason God sought to prevent his taking of the Fruit of Knowledge. But giving no heed and *γνοὺς ἑαυτὸν* man fell away from perfection, and became the prey of his physical need; at any rate he straightway sought a covering, for Moses says he knew that he was naked."

Γνῶθι σαυτὸν was sometimes used, moreover, as an injunction to know the relation between body and soul, and of this use we have a very good instance in Plutarch's refutation of *Colotes*, an Epicurean who had published a book entitled "According to the Opinions of the Other Philosophers it is not Possible even to Live."[27] He had evidently scoffed at Socrates for seeking to know what man is, and Plutarch says that Socrates was not a fool for searching into himself, but those who undertake to investigate other knowledge first are foolish, since the knowledge of self is so necessary and so hard to find.[28] But let us ask Colotes, he says, how it is that a man cannot continue living when he happens to reason with himself in this way: "Come, what is this that I happen to be? Am I made up of soul and body mixed, or does the soul use the body as a horseman uses a horse, without the two being a mixture of horse and man? Or are we each most authoritative in that part of the soul with which we think and reason and act, and are all the other parts of the soul and body instruments of this power? Or is there no essence of the soul at all, but is the body itself a mixture, with the power of knowing and living? . . . These are those dreadful and perplexing questions in the Phaedrus where Socrates thinks he ought to consider whether he is a monster more intricate and passionate than Typho, or whether he shares in a certain divine and less monstrous destiny."[29]

Cicero echoes the main point of the Alcibiades I in his *Tusculan Disputations*[30] in saying that "Nosce te" means "Nosce animum`

[27] *Ad. Colotem* c.1. *περὶ τοῦ ὅτι κατὰ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων φιλοσόφων δόγματα οὐδὲ ζῆν ἔστιν.*

[28] c. 20, 1118F.

[29] c. 21.

[30] I, 52.

tuum," but he indicates the relation of the soul to the body when he adds: "Nam corpus quidem quasi vas est aut aliquod animi receptaculum." Porphyry in his *Letter to Marcella* expresses this same conception under a different figure.[31] "The divine cries aloud in the pure region of thy mind," he writes, " 'unless thou dost keep thy body joined to thee only as the outer membrane is joined to the child in the womb, and as the sheath is joined to the sprouting grain, thou wilt not know thyself.' Nor does any one know himself who does not so think." So in an extract on the different classes of virtues, Porphyry says that the very foundation and under-pinning, as it were, of Κάθαρσις is for the soul to know itself existent in another substance and bound together with a different essence.[32]

One of the ways by which Socrates in the *Alcibiades I* led up to the thought that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* means 'Know your soul' was by showing first that man and the soul are one—*ἡ ψυχή ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος*[33]—and this was probably the starting-point of the idea that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* means to know man. So the title which came to be attached to the dialogue read: *Αλκιβιάδης Μείζων, ἢ Περὶ Ανθρώπου Φύσεως*;[34] and Plutarch says regarding Socrates' attempt to know what man is[35] that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* gave to Socrates the beginning of his perplexity and investigation, according to Aristotle, and that if man is that which is made up of both soul and body, as the Epicureans claim, he who seeks the nature of soul seeks the nature of man. The next step in the process of extending *γνῶθι σαυτόν* along this line is shown clearly in a statement of Porphyry's to the effect that some people assert that the inscription urges us to know man, and since man is a small universe,[36] the command means nothing other than to

[31] *Letter to Marcella*, 32: *εἰ μὴ το σῶμα οὕτω σοι συνηρτῆσθαι φυλάξεις ὡς τοῖς ἐμβρύοις κυοφορουμένοις τὸ χόριον καὶ τῷ σίτῳ βλαστάνοντι τὴν καλάμην, οὐ γνώσῃ σεαυτήν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλος ὅστις μὴ οὕτω δοξάζει ἔγνω ἑαυτόν.*

[32] Stob. *Flor.* I, 88. See page 74.

[33] 130C.

[34] Proclus *In Alc. I*, vol. II, p. 3 ed. Creuzer.

[35] *Ad. Colotem* 20: *τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν· ὁ δὴ καὶ Σωκράτει ἀπορίας καὶ ζητήσεως ταύτης ἀρχὴν ἐνέδωκεν, ὡς Αριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς Πλατωνικοῖς εἴρηκε . . . εἰ γὰρ τὸ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, ὡς ἀξιοῦσιν αὐτοί, σώματος τοιοῦδε καὶ ψυχῆς, ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν, ὁ ζητῶν ψυχῆς φύσιν, ἀνθρώπου ζητεῖ φύσιν ἐκ τῆς κυριωτέρας ἀρχῆς.*

[36] Cf. Manilius *Astronomica* IV, 893-5:

"Quid mirum, noscere mundum
Si possunt homines, quibus est et mundus in ipsis,
Exemplumque dei quisque est in imagine parva?"

be a philosopher.[37] Proclus says in his Commentary on *Alcibiades I* *αὕτη τοίνυν ἔστω καὶ φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ καὶ τῆς* Πλάτωνος *διδασκαλίας, ἡ ἑαυτῶν γνῶσις*[38] and he says further that Iamblichus gave the *Alcibiades I* the first place in the ten dialogues in which he thought the entire philosophy of Plato was contained.[39] This extension of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, so explicitly stated by the Neo-Platonists, goes back to the Stoics, who made it not only the beginning of philosophy, but to use Julian's phrase, the very sum and substance thereof—*τὸ Γνῶθι σαυτὸν κεφάλαιον τίθενται φιλοσοφίας.*[40] To Stoic and and Neo-Platonist alike the end of self-knowledge, like the end of philosophy was happiness,[41] though that happiness was attained in somewhat different ways by the two schools.

It is in the writings of Cicero that we find the fullest expression of the tendency of the Stoics to centre all their philosophy around *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, though it is made evident here and there among other writers. Philostratus, for instance, tells the story[42] of how Apollonius of Tyana went to visit some Indian Sages who told him to ask them whatever he wished since they knew all things. Accordingly Apollonius asked them if they knew themselves, thinking that like the Greeks, they would consider knowing oneself hard; but Iarchus, their leader, contrary to his expectation, said, "We know all things, *ἐπειδὴ πρώτους ἑαυτοὺς γιγνώσκομεν.* For no one of us approaches this philosophy without first knowing himself."[43] Apollonius agreed with this reasoning, because he had been convinced of its truth in his own case also, and he asked them further what

[37] Stob. F*lor*. 21:27.

[38] Vol. I, p. 5 Creuzer.

[39] P. 11.

[40] *Or*. VI, 185D.

[41] Stob. F*lor*. 21:27: *ἡ δὲ σπουδὴ τῆς πρὸς τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν παρακελεύσεως εἰς τεῦξιν τῆς ἀληθινῆς εὐδαιμονίας ἀποτείνεται.*

[42] *Apoll. Ty*. III, 18.

[43] Apropos of this idea a late epigram in the Palatine Anthology is of interest (XI, 349):

εἰπὲ πόθεν σὺ μετρεῖς κόσμον καὶ πείρατα γαίης
ἐξ ὀλίγης γαίης σῶμα φέρων ὀλίγον.
Σαυτὸν ἀρίθμησον πρότερον καὶ γνῶθι σεαυτὸν
καὶ τότ' ἀριθμήσεις γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην.
εἰ δ' ὀλίγον πηλὸν τοῦ σώματος οὐ καταριθμεῖς
πῶς δύνασαι γνῶναι τῶν ἀμέτρων τὰ μέτρα;

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enim nosmet ipsos nosse non possumus. . . Iubet igitur nos Pythius Apollo noscere nosmet ipsos. Cognitio autem haec est una nostri, ut vim corporis animique norimus sequamurque eam vitam quae rebus iis perfruatur."[52] He says also in the same work that without a knowledge of natural philosophy no one can see the force of those old precepts of the Wise Men, which bid us "tempori parere et sequi deum et se noscere et nihil nimis."[53] In his *Tusculan Disputations*[54] he repeats again the idea that the philosopher is concerned with investigating Nature,[55] and says: "Haec tractanti

[52] Cf. Choricius of Gaza, *Epitaphius for Procopius* pp. 15-16, Boissonade. He tells the story of Apollo's reply to Croesus' question as to how he could pass his life happily, and then adds: *εἰ τοίνυν ὁ μὲν γνοὺς ἑαυτὸν εὐδαίμων, κατὰ τὴν Ἀπόλλωνος ψῆφον, γινώσκει δέ τις ἑαυτὸν, ὅτι ἂν ὁ θεὸς πράξειε στέργων, εὐδαίμονες ἄρα γενήσεσθε μὴ δυσχεραίνοντες τὸ παρόν.*

[53] III, 73.

[54] V, 70.

[55] Cf. Ambrose *Hex.* VI, II, 3: "Nunc age, naturas bestiarum dicamus, et homimis generationem. Audio enim iamdudum aliquos insusurrare dicentes 'Quam diu aliena discimus et nostra nescimus? Quamdiu de reliquis animantibus docemur scientiam, et nosmetipsos ignoramus? Illud dicat quod mihi prosit, unde me ipsam noverim'. . . . Sed ordo servandus est quem Scriptura contexuit; simul quia non possumus plenius nos cognoscere, nisi prius quae sit omnium natura animantium cognoverimus."

One of Epictetus' fragments, however, (Stob. *Flor.* 80:14 ed. Gaisford) presents something of a puzzle in this connection. In apparent contradiction of the usual Stoic emphasis upon the importance of a knowledge of the Universe, he protests against absorption in these speculative problems, and asks if it is not enough to learn the essence of good and evil and the measure of the desires and aversions, and so forth, and let the things above us go. And he asks: *μὴ τί οὖν καὶ τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς παράγγελμα παρέλκον ἐστὶ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν . . . τίς οὖν ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ; εἰ χορευτῇ τις παρήγγελλε τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν οὐκ ἂν ἐν τῇ προστάξει προσεῖχε τῷ ἐπιστραφῆναι.* The fragment ends at this point in certain MSS., but in others the idea that a *χορευτής* must work in harmony with the rest of the chorus is followed up and the thought that man is a social being is emphasized. Whereupon the question is raised as to whether one ought not to know what Nature is and how she manages the Universe.

The contradictions involved in this fragment as it stands are not easily explicable. It is probable, however, that the last sentence is not by Epictetus, but rather crept into certain of the MSS. from the pen of some one who took exception to his denouncement of the study of physical phenomena. Therein lies a difficulty for us as well. It may be that if we had the entire discourse instead of an extract, we should find either that Epictetus is quoting from some dissenter to Stoic tenets, or that he himself is not so much protesting against all knowledge of physical philosophy as insisting, like Socrates of old, upon the paramount value of ethical studies. *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* here obviously means 'Give

animo et noctes et dies cogitanti existit illa a deo Delphis praecepta cognitio, ut ipsa se mens agnoscat coniunctamque cum divina mente se sentiat, e quo insatiabili gaudio compleatur." But it is in his *De Legibus* that Cicero gives his fullest exposition of Stoic tenets in their relation to γνῶθι σαυτόν. "For Philosophy alone teaches us," he says, "not only other things, but also that which is most difficult—*ut nosmet ipsos nosceremus*—; and so great is the force and thought of this precept that it is attributed not to some man but to the Delphic God. For he who knows himself will perceive first of all that he possesses something divine, and he will think of his spirit within him as something consecrated like à sacred image, and he will always do and think something worthy of so great a gift from the gods. And when he has perceived himself and tested himself fully, he will know with what natural equipment he came into life, and what means he has for obtaining and acquiring Philosophy, inasmuch as he will conceive first of the knowledge of all things shadowed as it were in his mind and soul; and with this made clear, he will see that under the leadership of Philosophy he will be a good man, and for that very reason, happy. . . . And when he has observed the sky, and the earth, and the seas, and the nature of all things, and whence these were generated, whither they return, when and in what way they meet their end, what in them is mortal and perishable, what divine and eternal; and when he shall see himself regulating and almost ruling them, and shall comprehend that he is not surrounded by the walls of some one place, but shall recognize himself as a citizen of the whole universe as if it were one city—in this splendid conception of things and in this grasp of a knowledge of Nature, ye Immortal Gods, how he will know himself! In view of the precept which the Pythian gave, how he will condemn, how he will despise, how he will count as naught those things which are commonly called most important! And all these (interests of philosophy) he will intrench by a hedge as it were, through his method of discussion, his ability to judge of true and false, and a

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attention to yourself, your desires and aversions, inclinations, &c, and its extension to include 'Know your place in society' is interesting, if only a comment by some unknown critic.

Various emendations have been suggested for the text of the last sentence of the above. We have followed Gaisford, who keeps to the MSS. save for the change of τὸ ἐπιστραφῆναι to τῷ ἐπιστραφῆναι.

certain skill in knowing what follows each thing and what is opposite to each. And when he perceives that he has been born for civil society, he will not only think that he ought to use that careful reasoning for himself, but also that he ought to diffuse more widely the power of speech by which he rules peoples, establishes laws, chastises the wicked, gives recognition to the Good, praises illustrious men, gives forth precepts of safety and praise suited for the persuading of his fellow-citizens, exhorts to glory, recalls from disgrace, consoles the afflicted, and records the deeds and counsels of the brave and wise, along with the ignominy of the wicked, in eternal monuments. These are the powers, many and great as they are, which those who wish to know themselves see to be in man; and the parent and nurse of these is Philosophy."[56]

We have seen, then, how from the idea that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* bids us know our soul, the command came to be applied not only to the relation of the soul to the body in the case of the individual, but to the knowledge of man in general and the pursuit of philosophy, including the main tenets of the Stoics. The Neo-Platonists construed the God's command to mean a knowledge of the psychological analysis of the soul into its various faculties and functions, while they brought its phraseology into connection with the idea of self-consciousness, and applied it to certain of the soul's activities. Plotinus says in his first chapter on the *Difficulties about the Soul* that in investigating these difficulties we would obey the command of the God which bids us know ourselves;[57] and again in speaking of the One or the Good and of how it transcends all predications of knowledge, he says:[58] *ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν λέγεται τούτοις οἳ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ἑαυτῶν ἔργον ἔχουσι διαριθμεῖν ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μαθεῖν, ὅσα καὶ ποῖα ὄντες οὐ πάντα ἴσασιν ἢ οὐδέν, οὐδ' ὅτι ἄρχει οὐδὲ κατὰ τὶ αὐτοί.* Porphyry says in his work on *Γνῶθι Σαυτόν* that knowing oneself is likely to have reference to the necessity of knowing the soul and the *νοῦς*.[59] And when

[56] *De Legibus* I, 58-62. Ed. Orellius.

[57] *En.* IV, III, 1: *πειθόμεθα δὲ ἂν καὶ τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ παρακελεύσματι αὐτοὺς γινώσκειν παρακελευομένῳ περὶ τούτου τὴν ἐξέτασιν ποιούμενοι.* Iamblichus says in his Letter to Sopater on Dialectic (Stob. F*lor.* 81, 18): *καὶ τὴν συμμεμιγμένην διάσκεψιν τοῦ λόγου πρὸς τὰ ὅλα πράγματα ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνῶσιν τοῦ λόγου, καθ' ἣν ἀφέμενος τῶν ἄλλων τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπιστήμην κατεστήσατο σεμνοτάτην οὖσαν καὶ τιμιωτάτην, ὡς μαρτυρεῖ καὶ τὸ ἐν Πυθοῖ γράμμα, ἀποδοκιμάσομεν ὡς ἀπόβλητον.*

[58] *En.* VI, VIII, 41 (cf. *En.* V, III, 10 & 13).

[59] Stob. F*lor.* 21:28. See p. 76.

Julian says in speaking of the apophthegm that he who knows himself will know about his soul, and he will know about his body, he adds: "And this alone is not enough—to understand that man is soul using a body, but he will go on to the essence of the soul itself, and then he will trace out its faculties."[60] This psychological analysis of the soul found its beginning and inspiration in Plato, and was carried on in greater detail by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* and *De Anima*,[61] but it received a new impetus through the work of Plotinus and thereby became the very basis of Neo-Platonism.

Plotinus regarded the soul as a mean[62] between the world of sense and the higher intelligence, Noûs, and in the particular chapter[63] in which he discusses self-knowledge he speaks of the soul as containing broadly the faculty of sense perception, the faculty by which judgments are formed in relation to sense impressions, designated as dianoetic, and pure reason or intelligence, which he calls the νοῦς in the soul, because of its likeness to the higher Noûs.[64] The faculty of sense perception aside, Plotinus attributes self-knowledge to these faculties of the soul proper and to the Noûs, though he conceives of an ultimate Reality beyond the Noûs—the Good or the One—of which neither self-knowledge nor anything else can be predicated.[65] The self-knowledge of the dianoetic part of the soul consists in knowing that it is dianoetic—that it receives the knowledge of external things and judges with the standards in itself which it has from Noûs, knowing that it is second after Noûs and an image of Noûs, with all things written in itself.[66] The self-knowledge of the νοῦς in the soul and of the Higher Noûs is an intellectual self-knowledge—the self-consciousness of the individual and of the

[60] VI, 183 B. Cf. Proclus, *In Alc. I*, vol. I, p. 278 Creuzer.

[61] III, 9, 432 a.29 ff.

[62] *En.* V, III, 3. Cf. Julian VI, 184A: *τά τε γὰρ θεῖα διὰ τῆς ἐνούσης ἡμῖν θείας μερίδος τὰ τεθνητὰ διὰ τῆς θνητοειδοῦς μοίρας πρὸς τούτοις ἔφη τὰ μεταξὺ τοῦ ζῷον εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. τῷ μὲν καθ' ἕκαστον θνητὸν, τῷ παντὶ δὲ ἀθάνατον. . . .*

[63] *En.* V, III.

[64] *En.* V, III, 2.

[65] *En.* VI, VII, 41. See also *En.* VI, IX, 6: *οὐδὲ νόησις . . . πρὸ γὰρ κινήσεως καὶ πρὸ νοήσεως· τὶ γὰρ καὶ νοήσει; [ἢ] ἑαυτὸν. πρὸ νοήσεως, τοίνυν ἀγνοῶν ἔσται, καὶ νοήσεως δεήσεται, ἵνα γνῷ ἑαυτὸν ὁ αὐρτάρκης ἑαυτῷ.*

[66] *En.* V, III, 4.

General Mind—the turning of the mind in upon itself[67] until thinker and thought are one.[68]

For the history of the connection of this idea of self-consciousness with the maxim we need to go back to Plato's *Charmides*. When Critias had given out *γνῶθι σαυτόν* as a definition of *σωφροσύνη* and had made a fanciful attempt to show the connection between the two,[69] Socrates took up the theme of self-knowledge not from a personal but from an epistemological point of view. He argued that the knowledge of self must be unlike other sciences, for its object is within itself, while the object of any other science is without. Critias replied that self-knowledge differs from other sciences in that it includes a knowledge of itself and other knowledge as well; and this, Socrates adds, would involve a knowledge of the absence of knowledge also.[70] But this science which is not a science of any one subject, but a science of itself and of other sciences and the absence of sciences, is shown not to exist in the realm of sense, or of wish, or desire, and so forth, and Socrates says that they have need of some great man to determine whether it exists at all.[71] Granted that it does exist, the argument runs, he who has it will know himself;[72] but the argument closes without proving the existence or practical advantage of such a science.

This puzzle as to whether if a thing knows itself it does not combine in itself the incompatible qualities of subject and object, of knower and known, of thinker and thought, is raised in the *Par-*

[67] The close connection between *ἐπιστρέφειν* and *γνῶθι σαυτόν* appears in many passages. For instance, Proclus *In Alc. I*, p. 277, Creuzer: *ἤδη οὖν ἑαυτὸν ἄρχεται γινώσκειν ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης πρότερον ἑαυτὸν προβάλλοντα τοὺς λόγους, νῦν αὖ καὶ τοῦτο γινώσκοντα, ὅτι εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπιστρέφει καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνῶσιν γιγνώσκων ἓν γίνεται πρὸς τὸ γνωστὸν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς ἐν ἑαυτῷ περιάγει τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς τὴν τῆς οὐσίας θεωρίαν.* Olympiodorus *In Alc. I*, vol. II, p. 10 Creuzer: *εἰ γὰρ τούτῳ περὶ τοῦ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν διαλαμβάνει, διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς γινώσκομεν ἑαυτούς.* Proclus, *Inst. Theol.* LXXXIII: *πᾶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ γνωστικόν, πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πάντῃ ἐπιστρεπτικόν ἐστιν. ὅτι μὲν γὰρ τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐπιστρέφει, γινῶσκον ἑαυτό, δῆλον· ἓν γάρ ἐστι τὸ γινῶσκον, καὶ τὸ γινωσκόμενον.* And CLXXXVI: *ψυχὴ . . . εἰ γὰρ γινώσκει ἑαυτήν, πᾶν δὲ τὸ ἑαυτὸ γινῶσκον πρὸς ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιστρέφεται. . . .*

[68] Cf. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, p. 54: "The highest mode of subjective life, next to the complete unification in which even thought disappears, is intellectual self-knowledge. Here the knower is identical with the known."

[69] 164D-165B. See pp. 33-34.

[70] 166E.

[71] 169A.

[72] 169E.

menides in connection with the suggestion that the Ideas may be thoughts,[73] and it is discussed more at length in Aristotle's *De Anima*.[74] When we come to Plotinus, we find an insistence upon the identity of *νοῦς* with *νοητά* in his chapter on *Gnostic Hypostases*. "Does the *νοῦς*," he asks, "behold one part of itself with another part?" and he proceeds to argue that this division of *νοῦς* is absurd, by raising questions as to how and by whom the division is to be made; then he continues: *εἶτα πῶς ἑαυτὸν γνώσεται ὁ θεωρῶν ἐν τῷ θεωρουμένῳ τάξας ἑαυτὸν κατὰ τὸ θεωρεῖν; οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῷ θεωρουμένῳ τὸ θεωρεῖν; ἢ γνοὺς ἑαυτὸν οὕτω θεωρούμενον, ἀλλ' οὐ θεωροῦντα, νοήσει ὥστε οὐ πάντα οὐδὲ ὅλον γνώσεται ἑαυτόν . . . ἢ προσθήσει παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τεθεωρηκότα, ἵνα τέλειον αὐτὸν ᾖ νενοηκώς.*[75] If the perceiver possesses the things perceived, he goes on to say, he does not see them through dividing himself, but he has beheld and possessed them prior to the division of himself; and if this be the case, *δεῖ τὴν θεωρίαν ταὐτὸν εἶναι τῷ θεωρητῷ, καὶ τὸν νοῦν ταὐτὸν εἶναι τῷ νοητῷ . . ἓν ἄρα οὕτω νοῦς καὶ τὸ νοητὸν καὶ τὸ ὄν. . . .* Farther on he argues that *νόησις* and *νοητὸν* are the same, since *νοητὸν*, like *νόησις*, is an *ἐνεργεία*, and so all will be one—*νοῦς*, *νόησις* and *τὸ νοητόν*. This oneness of *νοῦς* with *νοητόν*, and of both with *νόησις*, is reiterated elsewhere in Plotinus[76] and in other Neo-Platonist writings, particularly in Proclus' *Instituo Theologia*.[77] In this sense of the identity of thinker with thought, or knower with known, the *νοῦς* in the soul may be said to know itself, and self-knowledge becomes synonymous with self-consciousness. "It represents with Plotinus," as Brett has said in his *History of Psychology*, "an intermediary stage between consciousness of objects and the final unity which has no distinction of subject and object."[78] Or as Plotinus himself puts it, "the self-knowledge of the *νοῦς* of the soul consists in knowing itself no

[73] 132C.

[74] For Aristotle's discussion of the problem see article by Shorey on the *De Anima* in A. J. P. XXII, pp. 154 ff.

[75] *En.* V, III, 5.

[76] See *En.* III, IX, 1 *εἴπερ μόνον οὕτως ὂν τὸ μὲν νοητὸν, τὸ δε νοοῦν.* & *En.* VI, VII, 41 *εἰ δὲ ταὐτὸν νοῦς, νοησις, νοητόν, πάντη ἓν γενόμενα ἀφανιεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς.*

[77] CLXVII-CLXIX. Note esp. the following: *πάντως ἄρα τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ γινώσκων γνώσεται καὶ ἑαυτὸν, εἰ οὖν τις ἔστι νοῦς νοητὸς, ἐκεῖνος ἑαυτὸν εἰδὼς, καὶ τὸν νοητὸν οἶδε, νοητὸς ὢν, ὅ ἐστιν οὗτος* (CLXVII); and *εἰ γὰρ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ, καὶ ταὐτὸ νοῦς καὶ νοητὸν. καὶ νόησις τῷ νῷ ταὐτὸ καὶ τῷ νοητῷ* (CLXIX). Cf. Proclus *In Tim.* 75 A-B, & 267D.

[78] P. 312.

longer as man, but as having become altogether different in hastening to unite itself with the higher alone, and drawing on the better part of the soul, which alone is able to be winged toward intelligence, that it may deposit there in the better part of the soul what it has seen."[79] The perfect self-consciousness of the Higher Noûs, that is, of the General Mind of which the individual mind is but a part, naturally follows, and of this too Plotinus uses phraseology suggestive of the maxim when he speaks of it as *ὁ νοῦς . . . ὁ τέλειος καὶ πᾶς, ὁ γιγνώσκων πρώτως ἑαυτὸν. . . .*[80]

The Neo-Platonist Commentators on the *Alcibiades I*, Proclus and Olympiodorus, brought *γνῶθι σαυτόν* into relation with the activities by which the soul abstracts itself from the realm of sense, and gives itself to pure speculative thought and contemplation—activities designated as *καθαρτικὸν* and *θεωρητικὸν* respectively.[81] With regard to the Cathartic activity, Proclus asks:[82] "From what point should we properly begin the purification and perfection of ourselves other than with the command which the God at Delphi gave us? For as an inscription presents itself to those who are about to enter the precinct at Eleusis, forbidding the uninitiated to go within, so surely the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* on the temple front at Delphi showed, I fancy, the way of approach to the divine, and the most effectual road to purification. It says virtually in plain terms to those who can understand, that he who knows himself beginning at the hearth[83] is able to be united with God, the revealer and guide of universal truth and of the purified life." The actual way in which *γνῶθι σαυτόν* aids in purification is indicated by Porphyry when he says that the very foundation of *κάθαρσις* is *τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν ψυχὴν ὄντα ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ τῷ πράγματι καὶ ἑτερουσίῳ συνδεδεμένον.*[84] Knowing oneself *θεωρητικῶς* is the phrase the Neo-Platonists used to characterize

[79] *En.* V, III, 4.

[80] *En.* V, III, 8.

[81] Vol. II, pp. 4-5, Creuzer. They also brought *γνῶθι σαυτόν* into relation with the ethical faculty, designated as *πολιτικόν.* Olympiodorus tells us that Damascius said that Socrates wanted Alcibiades to know himself *πολιτικῶς,* reasoning from the definition of man in the dialogue as a *ψυχὴν λογιχὴν ὀργάνῳ κεχρημένην τῷ σώματι* (*Alc. I,* 130A). "The political soul alone," he reasoned, *ὀργάνῳ κέχρηται τῷ σώματι δεόμενος ἔστι ὅτι θυμοῦ, ὡς ὑπὲρ πατρίδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ εὐποιῆσαι τοὺς πολίτας* (vol. II, p. 4, Creuzer. See note 9 of same.).

[82] Vol. I, p. 5.

[83] *μυηθεὶς ἀφ' ἑστίας* was a phrase used in a solemn initiation at Eleusis.

[84] Stob. F*lor.* I:88. See p. 65

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The extent to which the higher part of the soul can exercise its theoretic activity in yielding itself up to the contemplation of Noûs and God will determine the extent to which we may become like that which we contemplate, and the greater our likeness to the Higher Noûs which knows itself perfectly, the more perfectly may we know ourselves in the psychic sense.[90] For there is truth in the words of Critias in the *Charmides*:[91] "If any one possesses that science of knowledge which knows itself, such a man would be like what he possesses, just as he who possesses swiftness is swift, and he who possesses beauty is beautiful, and he who possesses knowledge knows"; "and," he adds defiantly, "*ὅταν δὲ δὴ γνῶσιν αὐτὴν αὐτῆς τις ἔχῃ, γιγνώσκων που αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν τότε ἔσται.*" "I don't dispute that," said Socrates, "that when any one possesses that which knows itself, he will know himself indeed." The contemplation of pure knowledge which inherently knows itself until the soul becomes like it is, according to the Neo-Platonist Commentators, the thought of the passage in the *Alcibiades I*, in which Socrates says that if the soul is going to know itself, it must look at the region where *σοφία*, the virtue of soul, resides, and further that he who looks to this and knows all that is divine—God and *φρόνησις*—would most of all know himself.[92] Olympiodorus renders this in the Neo-Platonist terms, *νοῦς* and God,[93] and it is this which Porphyry means when he says of *γνῶθι σαυτὸν*: "*τὸ μὲν οὖν γιγνώσκειν ἑαυτὸν τὴν ἀναφορὰν ἔοικεν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τὸ γιγνώσκειν δεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸν νοῦν, ὡς ἐν τούτῳ ἡμῶν οὐσιωμένων.*[94] According to Porphyry, too, the attainment of true happiness is furthered by the application of the maxim in this psychic sense—by the contemplation of the Good and the knowledge of true Being.

To follow the abstract use of the phrase for self-knowledge through all the literature of the Neo-Platonists would carry us too far afield

[90] Cf. Plotinus *En.* V, III, 8, where he says that the soul is able to see Noûs, which primarily knows itself, through being, as it were, an image—through being made like to it more accurately as far as a part of the soul can come into likeness with Noûs.

[91] 169E.

[92] 133B-C. See Proclus *In Alc. I*, vol. I, p. 85, Creuzer: *μέση γάρ ἐστι ἡ γνῶσις ἑαυτῶν τῆς τε τῶν θείων, γνώσεως καὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ ἔξω ῥεπούσης ζωῆς, διὸ καὶ ἡ ἄνοδος ἐπὶ τὴν θειοτέραν ἐνέργειαν διὰ ταύτης γίνεται μέσης τῆς ἑαυτῶν γνώσεως. . . .*

[93] Vol. II, p. 8, Creuzer. Cf. Plotinus, *En.* V, III, 7, where he says that pure intellect perceives God.

[94] Stob. F*lor.* 21, 28. See p. 70.

in the realm of metaphysics for the purposes of this study. Yet that it had primarily a connection with the γνῶθι σαυτόν of the Delphic temple is made evident by the passages which we have cited, and by some others as well.[95] The connection is not always as near and definite as in the instances before us, but it is perhaps not too much to assume that whenever a Greek scholar after Plato wrestled with the problems of the psychic life, he felt more or less vaguely with Plotinus that he was obeying the God's command.

[95] For instance, Damascius, *Dubitationes* et *Solutiones* F, 96, V, p. 156, ed. Ruelle: πολλοστὴ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ γνωστοῦ ἡ γνῶσις· ἀπὸ μὲν οὖν τούτου τρίτη τις ἔοικεν εἶναι . . . κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐσχάτην τὸ γιγνῶσκον ἑαυτὸ καὶ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν. And Hermes Trismegistus, *Poemandres* XIII, 22: νοερῶς ἔγνως σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον.

CHAPTER IX

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ Is Difficult. How Attained?

We recall that at one stage in the discussion in the *Alcibiades I* Socrates asks Alcibiades whether *τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτόν* happens to be easy and to have been inscribed on the temple by some ordinary man, or something difficult and not within the power of everyone and Alcibiades replies: *Ἐμοὶ μέν, ὦ Σώκρατες, πολλάκις μὲν ἔδοξε παντὸς εἶναι, πολλάκις δὲ παγχάλεπον.*[1] The youthful Euthydemus in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* apparently had no thought of its being anything but easy, for when Socrates asked him if he paid any attention to the inscription when he saw it at Delphi, he answered promptly: *Μὰ Δί' οὐ δῆτα . . . καὶ γὰρ δὴ πάνυ τοῦτό γε ὤμην εἰδέναι· σχολῇ γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο τι ἤδη, εἴ γε μηδ' ἐμαυτὸν ἐγίγνωσκον.*[2] So Croesus, we remember, said that when Apollo told him that if he knew himself he would be happy, he thought that the easiest thing in the world.[3] And Galen even says of himself that when he was a lad he thought people praised the Pythian command to know oneself overmuch, for it did not seem to him a great injunction.[4] It is evident that to unthinking youth and the Lydian Croesus the words *γνῶθι σαυτόν* might, for literary purposes at least, mean merely 'know who you are,'[5] but greater maturity of thought and experience brought men to a better realization of their profundity. That *γνῶθι σαυτόν* was difficult, however, was a new idea to the individual only as it became his own through experience or reflection, for it was an old saying, attributed, like the maxim itself, to Thales,[6] or Chilon,[7] or the Wise

[1] 129A. See p. 60.

[2] IV, II, 24. See p. 23.

[3] Xen. Cyr. VII, 2, 21. See pp. 15-16.

[4] Vol. V, p. 4. Kuhn. See p. 47.

[5] Observe that Socrates asks Euthydemus if a man seems to know himself who knows his name only (sec. 25). Macrobius (*Sat.* I, 6, 6) tells the story of how Vettius Praetextatus was asked by one of a group of scholars assembled at his house why among the various terms applied to a man's dress Praetextatus only was used as a proper name. Vettius prefaced his explanation by saying in part: ". . . cum posti inscriptum sit Delphici templi et unius e numero septem sapientum eadem sit ista sententia *γνῶθι σαυτὸν*, quid in me nescire aestimandus sum, si nomen ignoro?"

[6] Stob. F*lor*. Vol. IV, p. 297; Meineke; Diog. Laert, I, 9, 35.

[7] Stob. F*lor*. 21, 13.

Men generally.[8] The Pythagorean "hearers," Iamblichus tells us,[9] included it in the second class of questions in their catechism:[10] *οὐδὲ τὶ τὸ χαλεπὸν, ἀλλὰ τὶ τὸ χαλεπώτατον· ὅτι τὸ αὐτὸν γνῶναί ἐστιν.*[11] How early this became a part of the Pythagorean *ἀκούσματα* we do not know, but we meet the thought in a fragment of Ion's:[12]

τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν τοῦτ' ἔπος μὲν οὐ μέγα
ἔργον δ' ὅσον Ζεὺς μόνος ἐπίσταται θεῶν.

Leopold Schmidt in his *Ethik der Alten Griechen* says this is the only place in Greek literature, as far as he knows, where self-knowledge is called impossible;[13] but it is probable, especially in view of the period in which Ion wrote, that he was exclaiming over the difficulty of the task rather than its impossibility. "This *γνῶθι σαυτόν*," he says, "is a little word, but the deed—how great it is Zeus only knows!" This sentiment that *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* is difficult occurs frequently in discussions of the maxim, and the question of wherein the difficulty lies is answerable only in terms of its application in each given instance. When Diogenes cited it to Alexander,[14] he meant that it was hard for men to estimate aright their own ability and importance; but when Socrates asked Alcibiades whether or not it seemed hard to him, he was thinking of knowing one's soul.[15]

Sometimes we read that it is harder for us to know ourselves than to know others, and then again that knowing others is more difficult, but the statements involve no contradiction, for it all depends upon the meaning of the maxim in a given context. So Crassus in Cicero's *De Oratore*,[16] after enumerating Antonius' characteristics

[8] Aristotle, *Magn. Mor.* II, 1213a, 14; Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras* 83.

[9] *Life of Pythagoras* 83.

[10] The first class asked what a thing is, the second what it is especially, and the third what one must or must not do.

[11] The next question was *οὐδὲ τὶ τὸ ῥᾳδιον, ἀλλὰ τὶ τὸ ῥᾷστον· ὅτι τὸ ἔθει χρῆσθαι.*

[12] Frag. 55, Nauck. From Plut. *Cons. ad Apoll.* 28. A similar distich is to be found among the Comic fragments (no. 389, Koch vol. III, p. 481).

τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν ἐν λόγοις οὐδὲν μέγα
ἔργῳ δὲ τοῦτο μόνος ἐπίσταται θεός.

This is taken from the scholiast on *Alc. I*, 390 (Bekker.) with no word as to its authorship. It is more likely to be a corruption of the Ion fragment than a quotation from a different author.

[13] II, 396. Schmidt's quotation from Goethe's *Gespräche mit Eckermann* is excellent, but hardly apropos of Ion's meaning.

[14] See pp. 19-20.

[15] *Alc. I*, 129A-130E.

[16] III, 33.

as an orator, says of his own: "Quale sit non est meum dicere, propterea quod minime sibi quisque notus est et difficillime de se quisque sentit," meaning, of course, that it is difficult to form a right estimate of one's own powers. But when Apollonius of Tyana tells Tigellinus that he uses his wisdom to know the Gods and understand men, *τοῦ γὰρ ἑαυτὸν γνῶναι χαλεπώτερον εἶναι τὸ ἄλλον γνῶναι*,[17] he probably has reference to the idea that knowing oneself is the beginning of philosophy. Augustine says that a man in charge of a monastery may resolve to admit no one who is wicked, and asks how he will avoid doing so. "Those who are about to enter do not know themselves"; he says "how much less dost thou know them? For many have promised themselves to fulfill that holy life: . . . they were sent into the furnace and they cracked";[18] and Augustine's thought apparently is that while we may be deceived about our own strength of will, we can judge of it better than we can that of another. Again it is sometimes assumed that a knowledge of self includes the ability to know others likewise; as, for instance, when Socrates tells Euthydemus that they who know themselves can the better judge of other people,[19] and when he tells Alcibiades[20] that only as a man knows himself in the three-fold way will he know others aright and be a fit leader among them. A story told by Philostratus is also in point in this connection. In his *Life* of *Dionysius* of *Miletus*[21] he says that Dionysius once came to Sardis, where he learned from his host Dorion, that a certain Polemon, of whose eloquence he had heard fabulous tales, was to serve as advocate in a law-suit the next day. In the course of his conversation with Dorion about the coming event and about Polemon's oratory, he suggested that Dorion tell him in what respects Polemon and himself excelled each other, but Dorion replied very discreetly: "You will be the better judge of yourself and him. *σὺ γὰρ ὑπὸ σοφίας οἷος σαυτόν τε γιγνώσκειν, ἕτερόν τε μὴ ἀγνοῆσαι!*"

This story of Philostratus' shows not only that the knowledge of others was regarded as in a sense consequent upon the knowledge

[17] Philostratus, *Apoll. Ty.* IV, 44. Cf. VI, 35 where in speaking of Apollonius' later journeys to places which he had visited previously, he says: *πάλιν οὐδαμοῦ ἐλλείποντι τὸ μὴ οὐχ ὁμοίῳ φαίνεσθαι. χαλεποῦ γὰρ τοῦ γνῶναι ἑαυτὸν δοκοῦντος χαλεπώτερον ἔγωγε ἡγοῦμαι τὸ μεῖναι τὸν σοφὸν ἑαυτῷ ὅμοιον. . . .*

[18] *Enarratio in Psalmum* XCIX, 11.

[19] Xen. *Mem.* IV, II, 26.

[20] *Alc. I*, 133D ff.

[21] Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* I, XXII, 4 p. 38, ed. Kayser.

of self, but it hints at another idea common in later philosophical literature—namely, that the knowledge of self, and so the knowledge of man, was limited to the philosophers. *Γνῶθι σαυτόν* in any sense was hard, but in its simpler ethical forces it was not conceived as being beyond the attainment of each and all. Taken as an injunction to know one's soul, however, it became possible for the Wise Man only, and even for him perfect self-knowledge was unattainable, for it is God alone who fully knows Himself. This is expressed in part by Philo Judaeus, when he speaks of *γνῶθι σαυτόν* in connection with the life of Jacob. Jacob was to tarry in Charran, the country of the external senses, only a few days, we remember,[22] but a longer period was allotted him in the city of the mind. He would never be really able to comprehend his soul and his mind,[23] Philo says, yet those who practice the exercise of wisdom most perfectly proceed to leave Charran after they have learned fully the whole field of the senses, as did Abraham, who attained to great progress in the comprehension of complete knowledge;[24] "for when he knew most then he especially renounced himself in order to come to an accurate knowledge of true Being. For he who apprehends himself well, by clearly grasping the universal nothingness of the creature, heartily renounces himself, and he who renounces himself learns to know Being."[25] Sextus Empiricus, the Skeptic, says[26] in his discussion of the definition of man that man is not altogether to be comprehended, for Socrates was at a loss, although he continued in his investigation, and said that he did not know what he was and how he was related to the universe.[27] "Democritus," Sextus says further, "in saying man is what we all know, merely begged the question; for no one will grant that man can be known off-hand *εἴ γε ὁ Πύθιος ὡς μέγιστον ζήτημα προύθηκεν αὐτῷ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν.* But granted that man can be known at all, he will not turn the investigation over to all men

[22] See p. 62.

[23] *De Somn.* I, 56.

[24] Sec. 59-60. A free rendering.

[25] Sec. 60. In his *Leg. Allegor.* I, 91-92 he says the mind cannot understand itself and asks: *εἶτ' οὐκ εὐήθεις οἱ περὶ θεοῦ σκεπτόμενοι οὐσίας; οἳ γὰρ τῆς ἰδίας ψυχῆς τὴν οὐσίαν οὐκ ἴσασι. πῶς ἂν περὶ τῆς τῶν ὅλων ψυχῆς ἀκριβώσαιεν;* There is no real contradiction here. He means simply that the mind can know itself and God but imperfectly at best, and it can know God only as it knows itself.

[26] *Πρὸς Λογικοὺς* A. 264-6.

[27] Sextus goes on to quote the Phaedrus passage here.

but only[28] to the most careful philosophers." Hierocles shows that this is the thought of certain of the *Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans*:[29]

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ πολλῶν κε κακῶν λύσειας ἅπαντας
> εἰ πᾶσιν δείξας οἵῳ τῷ δαίμονι χρῶνται.
> ἀλλὰ σὺ θάρσει, ἐπεὶ θεῖον γένος ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν
> οἷς ἱερὰ προφέρουσα φύσις δείκνυσιν ἕκαστα.
> ὧν εἴ σοί τι μέτεστι, κρατήσεις ὧν σε κελεύω
> ἐξακέσας ψυχὴν δὲ πόνων, ἀπὸ τῶνδε σαώσεις.

It is necessary for the release from all evils, Hierocles explains,[30] that we see our own essence, and this is what is meant by *οἵῳ τῷ δαίμονι χρῶνται*—namely, *οἵᾳ ψυχῇ*. And he further says in effect that while all have implanted within them the first impulse to a knowledge of their own essence, it is impossible for every one to attain it, for all cannot be philosophers, and they alone have turned to the contemplation of the real Good.[31]

This idea that self-knowledge was possible only for the philosopher is, of course, merely a re-statement from a different angle of the Stoic doctrine, logically derived from Plato, that self-knowledge is the beginning of philosophy. That self-knowledge could be but imperfectly attained even by the philosopher is expressed in the words of Heracleitus:[32] *ψυχῆς πείρατα ἰὼν οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροιο, πᾶσαν ἐπιπορευόμενος ὁδὸν· οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει*—although we assume that Heracleitus did not especially relate the thought to *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. The connection of the maxim with the power of abstract contemplation necessary to an apprehension of true Being or the Good, which we met in the *Alcibiades I*, means perforce that man can know himself but intermittently, for only so can the soul be free from the limitations of the flesh and in unison with the Divine which knows itself perfectly, call it Noῦs, true Being, the Good, or God. "According to one and the same knowledge, God knows both Himself and all things," said Dionysius the Areopagite.[33] It is but the personal

[28] Reading *μόνοις* with Bekker.

[29] vv. 61-66.

[30] Page 156, line 12, ed. Mullach.

[31] Page 157.

[32] Frag. 45, Diels.

[33] *De Div. Nom.* VII, 469C *κατὰ μίαν καὶ αὐτὴν γνῶσιν ὁ Θεὸς οἶδε καὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ πάντα. . . .* Cf. 470A: *χορηγός ἐστι πάσης γνώσεως καθ' ἣν γνώσεταί τις καὶ ἑαυτὸν, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα.*

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recognize them as his own; and a man can contemplate his friend better than himself, and he can see his friend's deeds better also.[42] Moreover, a good man sees himself and his actions in his friend because his friend is likewise good and a friend is a second self.[43] In the corresponding passage of the *Eudemian Ethics*,[44] Eudemus tells us that this full life (*κατ' ἐνεργείαν*) is the being alive to our perceptions and the acquisition of knowledge, and to have perception of oneself and acquire knowledge of oneself is most to be desired. If one could isolate the knowledge of self from living, he says, it would make no difference whether you knew yourself or another instead of yourself;[45] and he adds farther on: *τὸ οὖν τοῦ φίλου αἰσθάνεσθαι τὸ αὐτοῦ πως ἀνάγκη αἰσθάνεσθαι εἶναι, καὶ τὸ <τὸν φίλον γνωρίζειν τὸ> αὐτόν πως γνωρίζειν.*[46] The author of the Magna Moralia cites the maxim definitely.[47] "Since it is very hard" he says, "as some of the Wise have declared, to know oneself (*γνῶναι αὐτόν*) . . we are unable to contemplate ourselves from within ourselves. And because we are not able to know ourselves, obviously we do the very things for which we find fault with others. . . Accordingly, just as when we wish to see our face, we see it by looking into a mirror, likewise when we wish to know ourselves, we would acquire the knowledge by looking at our friend. For our friend, we say, is a second self." A friend, then, by virtue of his similar ideals and their expression in character and conduct may reveal to us our own, and this can afford us not only the happiness arising from an appreciation of our attainment,[48] but the pleasurable sense of having gained self-knowledge. Yet we observe that Aristotle is speaking only of a friendship between those whose ideals are lofty and whose actions are noble, and the kind of self-knowledge which we may reach in this way is limited to a realization of our own worth. The author of the Magna Moralia, on the other hand, makes no qualifications as to the char-

[42] Nic. Eth. IX, 9, 1169b. 33. Cf. Plutarch. *De Cohib. Ira* c.1.

[43] *ἕτερος γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ φίλος ἐστιν* 1170b.6.

[44] VII, 12, 1244b. 21 ff.

[45] The Greek reads: *εἰ οὖν τις ἀποτέμοι καὶ ποιήσειε τὸ γινώσκειν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ . . . οὐθὲν ἂν διαφέροι ἢ τὸ γινώσκειν ἄλλον ἀνθ' αὐτοῦ.* See Fritzsche *Eud. Eth.* p. 331.

[46] 1245a. 36.

[47] II, 15, 1213a, 14 ff. See c. VI p. 3. Cicero evidently has this saying in mind in his *De Amicitia* VII, 23—"Verum enim amicum qui intuetur, tamquam exemplar aliquod intuetur sui."

[48] The meaning of Aristotle is admirably explained by Stewart in his Notes on the *Nic. Eth.* vol. II, p. 385-386.

acter of the friends involved, and with him it is rather the knowledge of our faults than of our virtues which we may derive by looking at a friend. Galen, we remember, thought that he had found a way to know himself by having a friend reveal his faults, but he proposed to use the friend not as a reflection of himself, but as a critic.[49] In fact, such a person could hardly be called a friend in the Aristotelian sense, for he must be absolutely unbiased in his attitude and not necessarily similar in character.[50]

The figure of the mirror to which the author of the Magna Moralia refers goes back to the *Alcibiades I*,[51] and it is used occasionally in connection with *γνῶθι σαυτόν* by later writers. Seneca says that mirrors were invented *ut homo ipse se nosset*, and he elaborates the theme. "Many results come from their use," he says: "first a conception of oneself, then counsel for certain ends; if a man is good-looking, the mirror counsels that he avoid disgrace; if ugly, it makes him know that his physical defects ought to be counterbalanced by moral virtues; if young, it warns him in the flower of his age that it is the time for learning, and for daring brave deeds; if old, it counsels him to lay aside unbecoming conduct and think somewhat of death. To this end the nature of things has given us an opportunity to see ourselves."[52] Olympiodorus compared the *γνῶθι σαυτὸν* on the temple of Apollo to the mirrors placed on Egyptian temples, which he says are able to do the same thing as the Pythian inscription.[53] Stobaeus, moreover, felt the suggestion of

[49] See pp. 50-51.

[50] While recognizing one's own condition by seeing another in like state is quite different from recognizing similarities of character, a passage in Statius' *Thebaid* is of some interest in this connection. Tydeus, mortally wounded by Melanippus, had hurled a weapon at him in return, and as he lay dying, he begged for the head of Melanippus. Capaneus found Melanippus and brought him, still breathing, on his shoulder to Tydeus. The poem continues:

> "Erigitur Tydeus vultuque occurrit et amens
> Laetitiaque iraque, ut singultantia vidit
> Ora trahique oculos seseque agnovit in illo
> Imperat absciscum porgi." . . . . . (VIII, 751-754)

[51] 133A.

[52] *Nat. Quaest.* I, XVII, 4. The chapter begins with the words: "Derideantur nunc philosophi, quod de speculi natura disserant". . . . Cf. *De Ira* II, 36, 1: "Quibusdam ut ait Sextius, iratis profuit adspexisse speculum. Perturbavit illos tanta mutatio sui, velut in rem praesentem adducti non agnoverunt se."

[53] *In Alc. I*, vol. II, p. 9, Creuzer. Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* LVIII, 13: "Commemora fidem tuam, inspice te: sit tamquam speculum tibi Symbolum tuum."

the maxim so strongly in connection with the figure of the mirror that in his chapter on Γνῶθι Σαυτόν he included an extract from Bias which reads: *θεώρει ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ τὰς σαυτοῦ πράξεις, ἵνα τὰς μὲν καλὰς ἐπικοσμῇς, τὰς δὲ αἰσχρὰς καλύπτῃς.*[54] There is, besides, a half-humorous allusion to the figure in Lucian's essay on *Pantomime.*[55] "The applause of the spectators would know no bounds," he says, "when each of them recognizes his own qualities and comes to see himself in the pantomime as in a mirror, and what he is accustomed to experience and what he is accustomed to do. For then men cannot restrain themselves for delight, but they burst into applause with one accord, as they see, each one, the likeness of his own soul, and come to know themselves." *ἀτεχνῶς γὰρ*, he continues, *τὸ Δελφικὸν ἐκεῖνο τὸ Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν ἐκ τῆς θέας ἐκείνης αὐτοῖς περιγίγνεται*, and they go away from the theatre cognizant of what they ought to choose and what to avoid, instructed in what they did not know before." That a man may see himself reflected not only in theatrical representations but in literature is implied in one of Martial's epigrams:[56]

"Hominem pagina nostra sapit.
Sed non vis, Mamurra, tuos cognoscere mores
Nec te scire. Legas Aetia Callimachi."

Philo Judaeus saw in the purification rites of the Hebrews a means of acquiring one kind of self-knowledge.[57] He says that most people use pure water only for purposes of purification, but Moses had some of the prepared ashes from the sacred fire put in a vessel with water, and instituted the sprinkling of the candidates for purification with this mixture. And the reason for this, he says, was that he wished *τοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ ὄντος θεραπείαν ἰόντας γνῶναι πρότερον ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν.*[58] It is our bodily essence—earth and water—of which Moses reminds us through this rite, Philo says further, because he understood that the most beneficial purification is just this—*τὸ γνῶναί τινα ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἐξ οἵων ὡς οὐδεμιᾶς σπουδῆς ἀξίων, τέφρας καὶ ὕδατος, συνεκράθη.*[59] "For in coming to know this," Philo adds, "a man will straightway cast aside his treacherous conceit, and

[54] Stob. F*lor.* 21, 11.
[55] Sec. 81.
[56] X, IV, 10-12.
[57] De *Sac.* (*Sp. Leg.* I) 262-265.
[58] Sec. 263.
[59] Sec. 264.

discard his excessive pride, and be well-pleasing to God." This same idea is expressed in other passages in Philo,[60] and man's humble origin is one of his frequently recurring themes. The sprinkling with ashes and water would bring man to a truer self-estimate, he felt, and hence was a means of aiding him to know himself in the sense of knowing his measure. And this realization of their own nothingness Philo conceived as essential for those who would seek to know the superior greatness of God.

The Stoic doctrine that man is a part of the soul of Nature led the Stoics to emphasize a knowledge of the Universe not only as something to be included in self-knowledge, but as a means to attaining it. This is expressed several times by Cicero and repeatedly by the Church Fathers. We recall that Cicero says in his *De Finibus*[61] that without a knowledge of natural philosophy we cannot see what force certain maxims (including *nosce te*) have, and again that we must enter into the nature of things and see deeply what it demands, or we cannot know ourselves; and he also emphasizes this thought in the passage from the *De Legibus* which we cited at length.[62] Among the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria says of the maxim that "it can be an injunction to the pursuit of knowledge, for it is not possible to know the parts without knowing the essence of the whole; and we must concern ourselves with the origin of the world, as through a knowledge of this it will be possible to understand the nature of man."[63] And Minucius Felix says in his *Octavius*:[64] "I do not deny . . . that man ought to know himself and look around and see what he is, and whence, and why—whether collected from the elements or formed harmoniously from atoms, or rather made, fashioned, and animated by God; and we cannot investigate and draw forth this knowledge without inquiring into the Universe, since all things are so closely connected and bound together that unless you examine diligently the methods of divinity you can not know humanity. . . ."

The Stoics thus said virtually that the way to know oneself is to know God—an idea more frequently expressed than its equally

[60] Cf. *De Sac. Abel et Caini* 55-56: μεμνημένος γὰρ τῆς ἰδίου περὶ πάντα ὑπερβολῆς οὐδενείας μεμνήσῃ καὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ πάντα ὑπερβολῆς. See also *De Somn.* I, 211-212; *De Posteritate Caini* 115.

[61] See pp. 67-68.

[62] See p. 69.

[63] *Strom.* I, 60.

[64] Sec. 17.

true converse that to know God one must know himself.[65] For it all depends upon what we mean by God and Self-knowledge. If man is proud and presumptuous or if his God is a far-off majestic Being, man must measure himself aright before he can comprehend God's greatness. But if man is seeking to realize his union with a God who permeates all Nature, or with a God of abstract Reason, he can come into that realization of his true self only as he apprehends God. This last thought becomes warm with religious feeling, moreover, when we read Augustine's expression of it in the chapter of his *Confessions* entitled *Homo Sese Totum Non Novit*: "Although no 'man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him,'[66] yet there is something in man which the spirit of man which is in him does not know. But thou, Lord, who hast made him knowest him altogether. . . . What I know about myself I know by thine enlightening me, and what I do not know about myself I shall not know until my darkness become as noonday in Thy sight."[67]

[65] See pp. 45 and 94.

[66] From I Cor. II, 11.

[67] Augustine, *Confessions* X, V, 7.

CHAPTER X

ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΤΤΟΝ IN EARLY ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE

We have found occasion now and then in the preceding chapters to quote from the writings of the Fathers of the Christian Church in illustration of certain points touching the use of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. Direct allusions to the apophthegm are not numerous, however, in view of the large body of literature which these men have left to us, although the theme of self-knowledge found a place in their thought in other connections, and received a treatment at their hands somewhat similar to that accorded the maxim in non-Christian writings, besides taking on a few conceptions which were in a sense peculiar to Christianity. The prominence given the maxim or the theme seems to have varied somewhat with different authors. In studying the works of the Fathers of the first five centuries we look largely in vain for either theme or maxim among the scanty remains of the literature of the Apostolic Age,[1] and in some of the later more voluminous works, such as those of Chrysostom and Hieronymus.[2] On the contrary, Clement of Alexandria of the 2nd century is one of our most fruitful sources for ideas connected with the maxim directly, and the theme of self-knowledge is later particularly recurrent in Ambrose. Clement, however, while the most valuable of the 2nd century Fathers for his discussions of *γνῶθι σαυτόν*, does not stand alone among his contemporaries in referring to the apophthegm, for it occurs in the anti-heretical polemics of Irenaeus and Hippolytus of the Eastern church, and in the works of Minucius Felix and Tertullian of the Western.

Clement not only gives interpretations of the maxim, but following the tradition already established by Jewish writers, who tried to account for the best in Greek thought by saying that the Greeks had borrowed from the Hebrews, he maintains that *γνῶθι σαυτόν* and certain other apophthegms really originated in the Old Testament. He says[3] that one of the Greek Sages drew *ἑποῦ θεῷ* from "Abraham proceeded as the Lord spake to him"[4] . . . that *Ἐγγύα, πάρα δ' ἄτη*

[1] This may be due somewhat to the fact that we have but a fraction of the literature of the 1st century extant.

[2] It occurs in one of Hieronymous' *Epistles*, however. See p. 44, n. 30.

[3] *Strom.* II, 15, 70-71.

[4] Gen. XII, 4. Cf. Ambrose *De Abraham* II, II, 5.

is from the words of Solomon, saying, "My son, if thou become surety for thy friend, thou wilt give thine hand to the enemy,"[5] . . . and more mystically the *γνῶθι σαυτόν* is taken from the passage "Thou hast seen thy brother, thou hast seen thy God."[6] A little farther on he adds: *σαφέστερον δὲ τὸ γνῶθι σαυτὸν παρεγγυῶν ὁ Μωυσῆς λέγει πολλάχις προσέχε σεαυτῷ.*[7] Clement's pupil and successor Origen, who became one of the most learned and constructively influential of the Fathers, made use of the maxim in his oral teaching, as we have learned from the panegyric of him by his disciple, Gregory Thaumaturgus,[8] and he treated the theme of self-knowledge with particular fulness in connection with a clause in the *Song of Songs*—"If thou know not (thyself), O thou fairest among women."[9] He begins his exposition of the verse by saying:[10] "Unius Chilonis scilicet ex septem quos apud Graecos singulares fuisse in sapientia fama concelebrat, haec inter caetera mirabilis fertur esse sententia quae ait: *Scito teipsum* vel *cognosce teipsum*. Quod tamen Salomon, quem praecessisse omnes hos tempore et sapientia ac rerum scientia in praefatione nostra docuimus, ad animam quasi mulierem . . . dicit 'Nisi cognoveris temetipsam, O pulchra inter mulieres . . .'" Writers after Clement and Origen gather much of what they have to say about self-knowledge around this text[11] and the "Take heed to thyself" of the Pentateuch. Basil wrote a homily on *Προσέχε Σεαυτῷ*, and expositions of the verse in the *Song of Songs* are numerous. Discussions and allusions pertinent to our subject are not confined

[5] Prov. VI, 1-2.

[6] This is not in the Bible. See note on Trans. by Wilson in Anti-Nicene Christian Library.

[7] Ex. X, 28; XXXIV, 12; Deut. IV, 9. Cf. Philo Judaeus, *De Mig. Abraham* 8: *πάντα τὸν αἰῶνα γίνωσκε σεαυτὸν, ὡς καὶ Μωυσῆς πολλαχοῦ διδάσκει λέγων "προσέχε σεαυτῷ."*

[8] See p. 39.

[9] I, 8.

[10] *In Cant. Cant.* II, 56. Extant in the Latin trans. of Hieronymus. Pat. Graec. Vol. XIII, p. 123.

[11] Ambrose (*Hex.* VI, 6, 39) declares that "Nosce te ipsum" is not a command of the Pythian Apollo, but of Solomon, although Moses wrote long before in Deutoronomy "Attende tibi, O homo, attende tibi." Cf. *In Ps.* CXVIII, II, 13: "Nosce te ipsum quod Apollini Pythio assignant gentiles viri, quasi ipse auctor fuerit huius sententiae; eum de nostro usurpatum ad sua transferant. . . ." Also Cyril of Alex. *Contra Julianum* I, 14-15. He reminds us that Moses was older than the Greek Sages, and says that Pythagoras and Thales gathered much of their lore in Egypt.

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and apropos of this kind of self-knowledge he introduces the questions "What ought to be done? What avoided? Wherein do you lack? Wherein do you abound? What ought to be corrected and what cherished?"[14] Regarding the substance of the soul, which he calls a more difficult problem,[15] he says that the soul ought to know whether it is corporeal or incorporeal, whether both body and soul are simple, or composed of two or three or more substances[16] . . . how the soul was made . . . whether the virtue of the soul can approach and depart, or whether it is unchangeable and if once acquired does not flow back."[17] The most recurrent Stoic theme in this literature was that of man's knowledge of himself in relation to the Universe. Basil says in his *Hexaemeron* that in this city of the Universe was our first native country, and that there we see the origin of man;[18] and in his Homily on Προσέχε Σεαυτῷ, that we may trace out the Creator in ourselves as in a certain small universe.[19] And Ambrose says: "Est . . . prudentis agnoscere se ipsum, et quemadmodum a sapientibus definitum est, secundum naturam vivere."[20] Ambrose brings out still another phase of Stoic teaching in connection with the story of Joseph's being sold into Egypt. God gave through Joseph a means of consolation to those who are in servitude, he says. "He assigned him an overseer that men might learn that even in the worst circumstances character can be superior, and no condition is devoid of virtue, *si animus se uniuscuiusque cognoscat*; the flesh is subject to servitude, not the mind.[21] . . ."

The direct influence of Plato appears in a passage in Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*.[22] "We are one thing," he says, "ours is another, what is around us is another. That is, we are mind and soul, ours

[14] *In Cant. Cant.* 56 ff. See Pat. Graee. XIII, 125B.

[15] 125D.

[16] 126B.

[17] 127A: "Sed et hoc adhuc ad cognoscendam semetipsam anima requirat si virtus animae eius accedere potest et decedere. . . ."

[18] *Hex.* VI, 1.

[19] Sec. 7: *ἐὰν γὰρ προσέχῃς σεαυτῷ, οὐδὲν δεήσῃ ἐκ τῆς τῶν ὅλων κατασκευῆς τὸν Δημιουγὸν ἐξιχνεύειν, ἀλλ' ἐν σεαυτῷ οἱονεὶ μικρῷ τινι διακόσμῳ.*

[20] *De Excessu Fratris Sui Satyri* I, 45.

[21] *De Joseph Patriarcha* I, IV, 20.

[22] VI, 42. Farrar says that Ambrose read the works of Plato with warm admiration (*Lives of the Fathers*, vol. II, p. 123).

are the members of the body and its sensibilities around us are money, servants, and the furnishings of the outer life. Attend to yourself, therefore, and know yourself—that is, not what sort of limbs you have nor how much physical endurance, nor how great possessions, nor how much power, but the character of your soul and mind." We feel also something of the Neo-Platonist spirit of abstraction from the body in one of Ambrose's comments relative to the familiar verse in the *Song of Songs*: "Cognosce igitur te, et naturae tuae decorem, et exi quasi exuta vinculis pedem, et nudo exserta vestigio; ut carnalla integumenta non sentias, vestigium mentis tuae corporalia vincula non implicent."[23] And a little before he says of Paul's being caught up into the third Heaven that "his soul had risen from his body . . . and while he was made a stranger to himself, he held within himself the ineffable words which he heard."[24]

A limited heirarchy of spirits naturally came into Christianity through the old Hebrew faith and the teachings of Philo, though it was limited indeed as compared with the numerous intermediaries between God and man developed by the Gnostics, against whose extreme ideas Christianity inevitably protested.[25] Origen, how-

[23] *De Isaac et Anima* I, IV, 16.

[24] Sec. 11. Cf. VIII, 64 where he says: "In illa ergo amaritudine non cognovit se anima; corruptibile enim corpus aggravat animam, et terrenum habitaculum cito inclinatur. Cognoscere autem semper se debet. Sed tentatus est et Petrus, et non se cognovit et Petrus; nam si cognovisset, non negavisset auctorem." Cf. also Aug. *In John* XXIII, 10: "Sed relinque foris et vestem tuam et carnem tuam, descende in te. . . ."

[25] Irenaeus in his attempt to overthrow the intricate Gnostic theory of Creation, and to show that God alone was the Creator of the world, bases one of his arguments upon the essential self-knowledge of each of the beings concerned. The Gnostic theory held that Achamoth outside the Pleroma, although herself the image of the Propator, suffered among other passions the passion of ignorance, and the Demiurge whom she created in the image of the Noûs (who was the Only-Begotten of the Father) without fully realizing by what means he was doing it, created an order of aeons which was an image of the Aeons within the Pleroma. In his refutation of this theory, Irenaeus asks if the Demiurge, who was an image of Noûs formed by the Savior through Achamoth, was then ignorant of himself, ignorant of Creation, ignorant too of the Mother. . . . If so, the Savior must have made him an imperfect image, or else the very Noûs of the Father was ignorant of himself; and again he says that if the Aeons are from Logos, and Logos from Noûs, and Noûs from Bythus (the Propator), they must be similar, like successive lights from a torch, and either all will have the passion of ignorance or Achamoth cannot have it. And if all have it, then the Propator would be ignorant of Himself! What is more, the Logos cannot be ignorant of the Father,

ever, makes the soul's knowledge of itself include a knowledge of its place in the order of spirits—of whether there are spirits of the same substance with itself, and others not the same but different from it, and whether the substance of angels is the same as its own.[26] Self-knowledge was definitely predicated of the members of the Trinity severally and collectively, particularly after the rise of Neo-Platonism. Augustine raises the question of the self-knowledge of the Trinity,[27] and self-knowledge was asserted separately of the Father[28] and of Christ[29] by others writers, while Dionysius the Areopagite declares that the Angels know themselves.[30]

The God of the Christians, like the God of the Jews,[31] was too great for man's full comprehension,[32] but the Church Fathers emphasized the thought that self-knowledge was a necessary help toward an apprehension of Him.[33] Hence Athanasius interprets the verse in the *Song of Songs* to mean: Γνῶθι σεαυτόν πρῶτον, ἵνα καὶ ἐμὲ γνῶναι δυνήθῃς[34] and Gregory of Pisida says[35] in effect that to see God a

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as they maintain; if he is not ignorant of himself, he must know the Father to know in whom he exists. (Adv. Her. II, 7, 2 & 17, 5 & 8.)

[26] *In Cant. Cant.* 58: "agnitionem sui anima requirat si est aliquis ordo. . . ."

[27] Confessions, XIII, 11. 12.

[28] Dion. Areop., *De Div. Nom.* VII, II, 470; Epiphanius LXXIV, 4, 10 Ἑαυτὸν γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς γινώσκει. Cf. LXXVI, 11.

[29] Prudentius *Apotheosis* 963-969:

" . . . Dignusne videtur
Qui testis sibi sit, seque ac sua carna novit."

[30] *De Eccles.* Hierarch. II, III, 4.

[31] See Bigg, C*hristian Platonists*, pp. 9-10.

[32] See Tertullian, *Apologeticum 17*: "Deus unus est . . incomprehensibilis, etsi per gratiam repraesentetur; . . . Quod vero immensum est soli sibi notum est."Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes II, 74*: "Neque enim promptus est cuiquam Dei mentem videre . . . Homo animal caecum et ipsum se nesciens nullis potest rationibus consequi." Ambrose *De Fide V, 19, 237*: "Paulus raptus usque ad tertium coelum se ipsum nescivit: Arius in stercore volutatus Deum scivit. Paulus dicit de se ipso 'Deus scit,' Arius de Dio dicit, 'Ego novi.' " Augustine, *Sermo LII, 23*: "In te enim quod est, potes nosse: in eo qui te fecit quod est . . . , quando potes nosse?"

[33] Cf. pp. 45 and 88.

[34] Frag. *In Cant. Cant.* Patrologia Graeca, vol. 27, p. 1348. Cf. Basil, *Hex.* IX, 6. (Pat. Graec. vol. XXIX p. 204): καίτοι οὐ μᾶλλον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς τὸν γε συνετῶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξετάσαντα ὡς φησιν ὁ προφήτης Ἐθαυμαστώθη ἡ γνῶσίς σου ἐξ ἐμοῦ. . . .

[35] *Hex.* 602 ff.:

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repentance. These doctrines were essentially Hebraic, but the relating of them to γνῶθι σαυτόν and to self-knowledge generally was in the main peculiar to the Christian Fathers,[41] as was also the occasional connecting of the maxim with the doctrine of immortality. That God created man and created him in his own image is a theme which occurs frequently not only in the Hexaemeral writings, but in other commentaries and anti-heretical literature as well. Clement of Alexandria says of the maxim:[42] "It means 'know whose image thou art,' what is thine essence, and what thy creation"; and Hippolytus says in his *Refutation of All Heresies*:[43] τουτέστι τὸ Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, ἐπιγνοὺς τὸν πεποιηκότα Θεόν. "What is *se noscere*," asks Ambrose,[44] "except for each one to know that he is made after the image and likeness of God?" And elsewhere he says:[45] "*Cognosce te, anima*, that thou art not of earth or clay, since God hath breathed upon thee and made thee to become a living soul."

But while God created man, unlike the rest of the Universe,[46] in his own image, man is human, and by reason of his humanity, prone to sin. We are familiar with the fact that knowing that we are human came to be attached to γνῶθι σαυτόν, but outside of Church literature it usually meant to recognize one's inability to cope with the Gods because of the limitations of the flesh, whereas in the writings of the Fathers it means 'recognize that you are a sinner,' and further,

[41] The Epicurean Philodemus, however, may have the maxim in mind when he asks: πῶς γὰρ μισεῖν τὸν ἁμαρτάνοντα μὴ ἀπόγνω[σ]μα μέλλει, γιγνώσκων αὐτὸν οὐκ ὄντα τελέ (ι) ον καὶ μιμνη<ι>σκων ὅτι πάντες ἁμαρτάνειν εἰώθασιν; (Περὶ Παρρασίας 46. p. 22 (Teubner). And Libanius uses it in the sense of knowing the frailty of man's nature in view of the power of evil, when he makes Timon the Misanthrope say: ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ θεῶν τις ἀφείλετό μου τὴν ἀχλὺν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκάθηρε τὴν ἐμὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸ γράμμα τὸ Δελφικὸν ἔγνων ἐμαυτὸν καὶ τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὅσον κακόν ἐστι συνεῖδον καὶ ὥσπερ φυγῆς σίνθημα λαβὼν πόρρω μὲν τῆς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ὁμιλίας ἐγενόμην. . . . (Or. XII, 11).

[42] *Strom.* V, 4, 23.

[43] X, 34. In Pat. Graec. vol. XVI, p. 3454.

[44] *In Ps.* CXVIII, II, 13.

[45] *In Ps.* XVIII, X, 10. Cf. *In Ps.* CXVIII, XIII, 20: "Bene timet, qui hominem se esse cognoscit; . . . sciamus quia homines sumus, ad imaginem scilicet et similitudinem Dei facti. . . ." Cf. also *Hex.* VI, 8, 50. Augustine (*Sermo* LII, 17) bids us look for traces of the Trinity within ourselves, since we are made in God's image.

[46] See Gregory of Nyssa *In Cant. Cant.* Homily II, P. G. vol. 44, p. 805 C. γνῶθι πόσον ὑπὲρ τὴν λοιπὴν κτίσιν παρὰ τοῦ πεποιηκότος τετίμησαι. οὐκ οὐρανὸς γέγονεν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐ σελήνη, οὐχ ἥλιος. . . .

'come to a better self-knowledge by way of repentance.' Augustine says in one of his Sermons: "Thou darest perchance to judge about the heart of another what thou dost not know: but thou knowest thyself to be sinful"[47]; and in quoting the verse in Romans—"All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God,"[48] he says:" Agnosce te, infirmitas humana."[49] Touching the further point Clement of Alexandria says[50] that he who according to the word of repentance knows his life to be sinful, will loose it from the sin by which it is drawn away, and when he has loosed it, he will find it, according to the obedience which lives again to faith and dies to sin. And he adds: *τοῦτ' οὖν ἐστι τὸ εὑρεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν τὸ γνῶναι ἑαυτόν.* Ambrose, too, says of the words "If thou know not (thyself), thou fairest among women":—"hoc est, nisi cognoscas te mortalem, rationalem, et tua peccata fatearis, cito dicas iniquitates tuas ut justificeris, nisi convertaris . . . nisi scias te, inquit . . . et dicas 'Fusca sum et decora (Cant. 1, 4) fusca sum, quia peccavi' . . . nihil tibi proderit patrum gratia."[51] It is doubtless passages such as these that Bauer has in mind when after speaking of the place of the Delphic maxim in Greek philosophy he says in his *Das Christliche des Platonismus*:[52] "In welcher nahen Beziehung aber diess zum Christenthum steht, zeigt an einfachsten und unmittelbarsten die Zusammenstellung des delphischen—Sokratischen Sprüche mit dem evangelischen Aufruf zur *μετανοία*, jenen *μετανοεῖτε* das ja selbst nichts anderes ist als ein verstarktes den Menschen nicht blos uberhaupt, sondern in Zustande der Sunde in das Auge fassende *γνῶθι σαυτόν*. Sokratische Philosophie und Christenthum verhalten sich dennoch, in diesen ihren Ausgangspunkt betrachtet zu einander wie Selbstserkenntniss und Sunder-erkenntniss." A recognition of our sinful nature, together with a sense of the greatness of God; naturally leads to the Christian

[47] LVI, 3. Cf. Ambrose *In Ps.* CXVIII, 16, 11: "hominem se esse cognovit impar sibi bellum adversum spiritalia nequitiae in coelestibus. . ." Cf. also Basil, *Ep.* CCIV, 4.

[48] III, 23.

[49] *In Ps.* LXV, 14.

[50] *Strom.* IV, 6, 27.

[51] *In Ps.* CXVIII, II, 14. The wicked do not know themselves according to Ambrose, *De Excidio Hierosol.* III, XVII, 28: "Sed hunc exitum sacrilegi ferunt, aut proditores vel percussores parentum, qui verum patrem non agnoverunt, nec sese cognoscunt." Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* XLVI, 18: "Haeretici . . . ipsi non se norunt." See 37 also.

[52] Page 24.

grace of humility. Chrysostom says that the more we advance in virtue, the more we make ourselves contrite, and that he who best knows himself esteems himself to be nothing.[53] So Augustine says: "Tu, homo, cognosce quia es homo: tota humilitas tua ut cognoscas te";[54] and Theodoret says: "We know and measure ourselves in truth, for we have learned from the beginning the humility of the Apostles."[55]

As the idea that man is human was extended by the ecclesiastical writers to mean 'know that you are sinful, and be humble,' so the kindred thought of knowing that man is mortal came to mean 'know that while you have a mortal body, your soul is immortal.' Irenaeus says that God may permit us to be mortal and die that we may never become puffed up as if we had life from ourselves, . . but may learn from experience that we have eternal life from Him. "And was it not on this account," he asks, "that God permitted our resolution into the dust of the earth—that we might be clearly instructed in every way and diligent in all things for the future, ignorant neither of God nor of ourselves?"[56] And Basil says in his Homily on Προσέχε Σεαυτῷ: "Know thine own nature; that thy body is mortal, thy soul immortal, and that thy life is somehow two-fold—thine own life after the flesh which swiftly passeth, and the inborn life of the soul which knoweth no bounds."[57] Eusebius would find a basis for this immortality in the conception that man is made in the image of the immortal God, for he says[58] that Plato and Moses agree about the soul, in that Moses defined the substance of the soul as immortal when he taught that man was made after God's image; "and Plato," he explains, "as if he had been a disciple of Moses, says in the *Alcibiades I:* 'Looking to God . . . . and into the virtue of the human soul, we would see and know

[53] *In Matt.* XXV, 4. Pat. Graec. vol. LVII, p. 332.

[54] *In John* XXV, 16. Cf. *Sermo* LXVII, 9: humiles erant, non superbi . . . se agnoscebant. . . . Also *Sermo* CCXC, 1, where he says of John the Baptist: "quod bonum erat ei, se agnovit, ut ad pedes Domini . . . humiliaretur."

[55] *Ep.* LXXXVI. Cf. *De Prov.* V.

[56] Irenaeus *Adv. Her.* V, 23.

[57] Sec. 3.

[58] *Praep. Evangelica* XI, 34 where he says that man shall know the experiences that belong to God, by having become immortal. Augustine, however, says we do not know the origin of the soul—that it is a gift from God, but not of the same nature as God Himself. *De Anima et Origine* IV, 3.

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Passages in which the Presence of the Maxim is Made Explicit, whether by the Exact Words Γνῶθι Σαυτὸν, or by an Allusion to Delphi, Apollo, or the Wise Men

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Julian: Epistle 41, 420B
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Oration VII, 211B-C
Proclus: In Alcibiades I vol. I, p. 5 ed. Creuzer
Cyril of Alexandria: Contra Julianum VI, 201B
Hierocles: On the Golden Sayings of the Pythagoreans, p. 64 & 65 ed. Mullach.
Damascius' Successor: Dubitationes et Solutiones F 96 V, p. 156 ed. Ruelle
Choricius of Gaza: Epitaphius for Procopius, p. 16 ed. Boiss.
Stobaeus: Flor. III, 79; XXI
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