

ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY



Something unusual happened in Greece and in the Greek colonies of the Aegean Sea some twenty-five hundred years ago. Whereas the previous great cultures of the Mediterranean had used mythological stories of the gods to explain the operations of the world and of the self, some of the Greeks began to discover new ways of explaining these phenomena. Instead of reading their ideas into, or out of, ancient scriptures or poems, they began to use reason, contemplation, and sensory observation to make sense of reality.

The story as we know it began with the Greeks living on the coast of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). Colonists there, such as Thales, tried to find the one common element in the diversity of nature. Subsequent thinkers, such as Anaximenes, sought not only to find this one common element, but also to find the process by which one form changes into another. Other thinkers, such as Pythagoras, turned to the nature of form itself rather than the basic stuff that takes on a particular form.

With Socrates, the pursuit of knowledge turned inward as he sought not to understand the world, but himself. His call to “know thyself,” together with his uncompromising search for truth, inspired generations of thinkers. With the writings of Plato and Aristotle, ancient Greek thought reached its zenith. These giants of human thought developed all-embracing systems that explained both the nature of the universe and the humans who inhabit it.

All these lovers of wisdom, or *philosophers*, came to different conclusions and often spoke disrespectfully of one another. Some held the universe to be one single entity, whereas others insisted that it must be made of many parts. Some

believed that human knowledge was capable of understanding virtually everything about the world and the self, whereas others thought that it was not possible to have any knowledge at all. But despite all their differences, there is a thread of continuity, a continuing focus among them: the *human* attempt to understand the world and the self, using *human* reason. This fact distinguishes these philosophers from the great minds that preceded them.

The philosophers of ancient Greece have fascinated thinking persons for centuries, and their writings have been one of the key influences on the development of Western civilization. The works of Plato and Aristotle, especially, have defined the questions and suggested many of the answers for subsequent generations. As the great Greek statesman Pericles sagely predicted, “Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now.”

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For a comprehensive, yet readable, work on Greek philosophy, see W.K.C. Guthrie’s authoritative *The History of Greek Philosophy*, six volumes. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962–1981). W.T. Jones, *The Classical Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969); Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume I, Greece & Rome* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962); Friedo Ricken, *Philosophy of the Ancients*, translated by Eric Watkins (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); J.V. Luce, *An Introduction to Greek Philosophy* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992); C.C.W. Taylor, ed., *Routledge History of Philosophy, Volume 1: From the Beginning to Plato* (London: Routledge, 1997); David Furley, ed., *Routledge History of Philosophy, Volume 2: Aristotle to Augustine* (London: Routledge, 1997); Julia Annas, *Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); James A. Arieti, *Philosophy in the Ancient World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy: A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2004); and Stephanie Lynn Budin, *The Ancient Greeks: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) provide basic introductions. Julie K. Ward, ed., *Feminism and Ancient Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996) provides a feminist critique while Robert S. Brumbaugh, *The Philosophers of Greece* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1981) is an accessible introduction with pictures, charts, and maps.

SOCRATES

470–399 B.C.

PLATO

428/7–348/7 B.C.

Socrates has fascinated and inspired men and women for over two thousand years. All five of the major “schools” of ancient Greece (Academics, Peripatetics, Epicureans, Stoics, and Cynics) were influenced by his thought. Some of the early Christian thinkers, such as Justin Martyr, considered him a “proto-Christian,” while others, such as St. Augustine (who rejected this view) still expressed deep admiration for Socrates’ ethical life. More recently, existentialists have found in Socrates’ admonition “know thyself” an encapsulation of their thought, and opponents of unjust laws have seen in Socrates’ trial a blueprint for civil disobedience. In short, Socrates is one of the most admired men who ever lived.

The Athens into which Socrates was born in 470 B.C. was a city still living in the flush of its epic victory over the Persians, and it was bursting with new ideas. The playwrights Euripides and Sophocles were young boys, and Pericles, the great Athenian democrat, was still a young man. The Parthenon’s foundation was laid when Socrates was twenty-two, and its construction was completed fifteen years later.

Socrates was the son of Sophroniscus, a sculptor, and of Phaenarete, a midwife. As a boy, Socrates received a classical Greek education in music, gymnastics, and grammar (or the study of language), and he decided early on to become a sculptor like his father. Tradition says he was a gifted artist who fashioned impressively simple statues of the Graces. He married a woman named Xanthippe, and together they had three children. He took an early interest in the developing science of the Milesians, and then he served for a time in the army.

When he was a middle-aged man, Socrates’ friend, Chaerephon, asked the oracle at Delphi “if there was anyone who was wiser than Socrates.” For once the mysterious oracle gave an unambiguous answer: “No one.” When Socrates heard

of the incident, he was confused. He knew that he was not a wise man. So he set out to find a wiser man to prove the answer wrong. Socrates later described the method and results of his mission:

So I examined the man—I need not tell you his name, he was a politician—but this was the result. Athenians. When I conversed with him I came to see that, though a great many persons, and most of all he himself, thought that he was wise, yet he was not wise. Then I tried to prove to him that he was not wise, though he fancied that he was. By so doing I made him indignant, and many of the bystanders. So when I went away, I thought to myself, “I am wiser than this man: neither of us knows anything that is really worth knowing, but he thinks that he has knowledge when he has not, while I, having no knowledge, do not think that I have. I seem, at any rate, to be a little wiser than he is on this point: I do not think that I know what I do not know.” Next I went to another man who was reputed to be still wiser than the last, with exactly the same result. And there again I made him, and many other men, indignant. (*Apology* 21c)

As Socrates continued his mission by interviewing the politicians, poets, and artisans of Athens, young men followed along. They enjoyed seeing the authority figures humiliated by Socrates’ intense questioning. Those in authority, however, were not amused. Athens was no longer the powerful, self-confident city of 470 B.C., the year of Socrates’ birth. An exhausting succession of wars with Sparta (the Peloponnesian Wars) and an enervating series of political debacles had left the city narrow in vision and suspicious of new ideas and of dissent. In 399 B.C., Meletus and Anytus brought an indictment of impiety and corrupting the youth against Socrates. As recorded in the *Apology*, the Athenian assembly found him guilty by a vote of 281 to 220 and sentenced him to death. His noble death is described incomparably in the closing pages of the *Phaedo* by Plato.

Socrates wrote nothing, and our knowledge of his thought comes exclusively from the report of others. The playwright Aristophanes (455–375 B.C.) satirized Socrates in his comedy *The Clouds*. His caricature of Socrates as a cheat and charlatan was apparently so damaging that Socrates felt compelled to offer a rebuttal before the Athenian assembly (see the *Apology*, following). The military general Xenophon (ca. 430–350 B.C.) honored his friend Socrates in his *Apology of Socrates*, his *Symposium*, and, later, in his *Memorabilia* (“Recollections of Socrates”). In an effort to defend his dead friend’s memory, Xenophon’s writings illumine Socrates’ life and character. Though born fifteen years after the death of Socrates, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) left many fascinating allusions to Socrates in his philosophic works, as did several later Greek philosophers. But the primary source of our knowledge of Socrates comes from one of those young men who followed him: Plato.

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Plato was probably born in 428/7 B.C. He had two older brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon, who appear in Plato’s *Republic*, and a sister, Potone. Though he may have known Socrates since childhood, Plato was probably nearer twenty when he came under the intellectual spell of Socrates. The death of Socrates made an enormous impression on Plato and contributed to his call to bear witness to posterity of “the best, . . . the wisest and most just” person that he knew (*Phaedo*, 118). Though Plato was from a distinguished family and might have followed his relatives into politics, he chose philosophy.

Following Socrates' execution, the twenty-eight-year-old Plato left Athens and traveled for a time. He is reported to have visited Egypt and Cyrene—though some scholars doubt this. During this time he wrote his early dialogues on Socrates' life and teachings. He also visited Italy and Sicily, where he became the friend of Dion, a relative of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, Sicily.

On returning to Athens from Sicily, Plato founded a school, which came to be called the Academy. One might say it was the world's first university, and it endured as a center of higher learning for nearly one thousand years, until the Roman emperor Justinian closed it in A.D. 529. Except for two later trips to Sicily, where he unsuccessfully sought to institute his political theories, Plato spent the rest of his life at the Athenian Academy. Among his students was Aristotle. Plato died at eighty in 348/7 B.C.

Plato's influence was best described by the twentieth-century philosopher Alfred North Whitehead when he said, "The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

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It is difficult to separate the ideas of Plato from those of his teacher, Socrates. In virtually all of Plato's dialogues, Socrates is the main character, and it is possible that in the early dialogues Plato is recording his teacher's actual words. But in the later dialogues, "Socrates" gives Plato's views—views that, in some cases, in fact, the historical Socrates denied.

The first four dialogues presented in this text describe the trial and death of Socrates and are arranged in narrative order. The first, the *Euthyphro*, takes place as Socrates has just learned of the indictment against him. He strikes up a conversation with a "theologian" so sure of his piety that he is prosecuting his own father for murder. The dialogue moves on, unsuccessfully, to define piety. Along the way, Socrates asks a question that has vexed philosophers and theologians for centuries: Is something good because the gods say it is, or do the gods say it is good because it is?

The next dialogue, the *Apology*, is generally regarded as one of Plato's first, and as eminently faithful to what Socrates said at his trial on charges of impiety and corruption of youth. The speech was delivered in public and heard by a large audience; Plato has Socrates mention that Plato was present; and there is no need to doubt the historical veracity of the speech, at least in essentials. There are two breaks in the narrative: one after Socrates' defense (during which the Athenians vote "guilty") and one after Socrates proposes an alternative to the death penalty (during which the Athenians decide on death). This dialogue includes Socrates' famous characterization of his mission and purpose in life.

In the *Crito*, Plato has Crito visit Socrates in prison to assure him that his escape from Athens has been well prepared and to persuade him to consent to leave. Socrates argues that one has an obligation to obey the state even when it orders one to suffer wrong. That Socrates, in fact, refused to leave is certain; that he used the arguments Plato ascribes to him is less certain. In any case, anyone who has read the *Apology* will agree that after his speech Socrates could not well escape.

The moving account of Socrates' death is given at the end of the *Phaedo*, the last of our group of dialogues. There is common agreement that this dialogue was written much later than the other three and that the earlier part of the dialogue, with its Platonic doctrine of Forms and immortality, uses "Socrates" as a vehicle for Plato's own ideas. These first four dialogues are given in the F.J. Church translation.

There are few books in Western civilization that have had the impact of Plato's *Republic*—aside from the Bible, perhaps none. Like the Bible, there are also few books whose interpretation and evaluation have differed so widely. Apparently it is a description of Plato's ideal society: a utopian vision of the just state, possible only if philosophers were kings. But some (see the following suggested readings) claim that its purpose is not to give a model of the ideal state, but to show the impossibility of such a state and to convince aspiring philosophers to shun politics. Evaluations of the *Republic* have also varied widely: from the criticisms of Karl Popper, who denounced the *Republic* as totalitarian, to the admiration of more traditional interpreters, such as Francis MacDonald Cornford and Gregory Vlastos.

Given the importance of this work and the diversity of opinions concerning its point and value, it was extremely difficult to decide which sections of the *Republic* to include in this series. I chose to include the discussion of justice from Books I and II, the descriptions of the guardians and of the “noble lie” from Book III, the discussions of the virtues and the soul in Book IV, the presentations of the guardians' qualities and lifestyles in Book V, and the key sections on knowledge (including the analogy of the line and the myth of the cave) from the end of Book VI and the beginning of Book VII. I admit that space constraints have forced me to exclude important sections. Ideally, the selections chosen will whet the student's appetite to read the rest of this classic. I am pleased to offer the *Republic* in the outstanding new translation by Joe Sachs.

The marginal page numbers are those of all scholarly editions, Greek, English, German, or French.

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For studies of Socrates, see the classic A.E. Taylor, *Socrates: The Man and His Thought* (London: Methuen, 1933); the second half of Volume III of W.K.C. Guthrie, *The History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Hugh H. Benson, *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Anthony Gottlieb, *Socrates* (London: Routledge, 1999); Christopher Taylor's pair of introductions, *Socrates and Socrates: A Very Short Introduction* (both Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 and 2000); Nalin Ranasingle, *The Soul of Socrates* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000); and James Colaiazzo, *Socrates Against Athens* (London: Routledge, 2001). For collections of essays, see Gregory Vlastos, ed., *The Philosophy of Socrates* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971); Hugh H. Benson, ed., *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Terence Irwin, ed., *Socrates and His Contemporaries* (Hamden, CT: Garland Publishing, 1995); and the multivolume William J. Prior, ed., *Socrates* (Oxford: Routledge, 1996); and Lindsay Judson and Vassilis Karasmanis, eds., *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For discussions of the similarities and differences between the historical Socrates and the “Socrates” of the Platonic dialogues, see Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), especially Chapters 2 and 3.

Books about Plato are legion. Once again the work of W.K.C. Guthrie is sensible, comprehensive, yet readable. See Volumes IV and V of his *The History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975 and 1978). Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1933); and G.M.A. Grube, *Plato's Thought* (London: Methuen, 1935) are classic treatments of Plato, while Robert

Brumbaugh, *Plato for a Modern Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1964); I.M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines*, two volumes (New York: Humanities Press, 1963–1969), R.M. Hare, *Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); David J. Melling, *Understanding Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Bernard Williams, *Plato* (London: Routledge, 1999); Julius Moravcsik, *Plato and Platonism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000); and Gail Fine, *The Oxford Handbook of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) are more recent studies. For collections of essays, see Gregory Vlastos, ed., *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays*, two volumes (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971); Richard Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Nancy Tuana, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Plato* (College Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Terence Irwin, ed., *Plato's Ethics and Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology* (both Hamden, CT: Garland Publishing, 1995); Gregory Vlastos, ed., *Studies in Greek Philosophy, Volume II: Socrates, Plato, and Their Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Nicholas D. Smith, ed., *Plato: Critical Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1998); Gail Fine, ed., *Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Gerald A. Press, ed., *Who Speaks for Plato?* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000). C.D.C. Reeve, *Socrates in the Apology* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1989) provides insights on this key dialogue. For further reading on the *Republic*, see Nicholas P. White, *A Companion to Plato's Republic* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1979); Julia Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Nickolas Pappas, *Routledge Guidebook to Plato and the Republic* (Oxford: Routledge, 1995); Daryl Rice, *A Guide to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Richard Kraut, ed., *Plato's Republic: Critical Essays* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 1997); Sean Sayers, *Plato's Republic: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); Luke Purshouse, *Plato's Republic: A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum, 2006); and C.R.F. Ferrari, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and Gabriela Roxanna Carone, *Plato's Cosmology and Its Ethical Dimensions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) examine several dialogues while thoroughly exploring Plato's ethical thought. Finally, for unusual interpretations of Plato and his work, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Vols. II and III, translated by Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939–1943); Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies; Volume I: The Spell of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962); and Allan Bloom's interpretive essay in Plato, *Republic*, translated by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

EUTHYPHRO

Characters

Socrates

Euthyphro

Scene—The Hall of the King*

2 EUTHYPHRO: What in the world are you doing here in the king's hall, Socrates? Why have you left your haunts in the Lyceum? You surely cannot have a suit before him, as I have.

SOCRATES: The Athenians, Euthyphro, call it an indictment, not a suit.

b EUTHYPHRO: What? Do you mean that someone is prosecuting you? I cannot believe that you are prosecuting anyone yourself.

SOCRATES: Certainly I am not.

EUTHYPHRO: Then is someone prosecuting you?

SOCRATES: Yes.

EUTHYPHRO: Who is he?

SOCRATES: I scarcely know him myself, Euthyphro; I think he must be some unknown young man. His name, however, is Meletus, and his district Pitthis, if you can call to mind any Meletus of that district—a hook-nosed man with lanky hair and rather a scanty beard.

EUTHYPHRO: I don't know him, Socrates. But tell me, what is he prosecuting you for?

c SOCRATES: What for? Not on trivial grounds, I think. It is no small thing for so young a man to have formed an opinion on such an important matter. For he, he says, knows how the young are corrupted, and who are their corrupters. He must be a wise man who, observing my ignorance, is going to accuse me to the state, as his mother, of corrupting his friends. I think that he is the only one who begins at the right point in his political reforms; for his first care is to make the young men as good as possible, just as a good farmer will take care of his young plants first, and, after he has done that, of the others. And so Meletus, I suppose, is first clearing us away who, as he says, corrupt the young men growing up; and then, when he has done that, of course he will turn his attention to the older men, and so become a very great public benefactor. Indeed, that is only what you would expect when he goes to work in this way.

d

EUTHYPHRO: I hope it may be so, Socrates, but I fear the opposite. It seems to me that in trying to injure you, he is really setting to work by striking a blow at the foundation of the state. But how, tell me, does he say that you corrupt the youth?

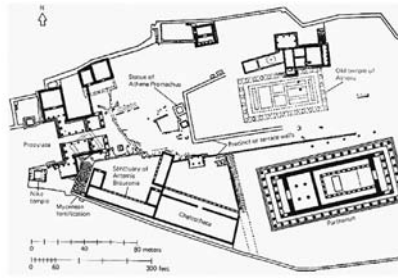
b SOCRATES: In a way which sounds absurd at first, my friend. He says that I am a maker of gods; and so he is prosecuting me, he says, for inventing new gods and for not believing in the old ones.

EUTHYPHRO: I understand, Socrates. It is because you say that you always have a divine guide. So he is prosecuting you for introducing religious reforms; and he is going into court to arouse prejudice against you, knowing that the multitude are easily prejudiced

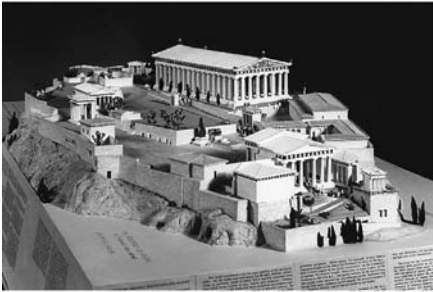
*The anachronistic title "king" was retained by the magistrate who had jurisdiction over crimes affecting the state religion.



a.



b.



c.



d.

The Acropolis and the Parthenon

a. The *Parthenon*, Athens, built 477–438 B.C. The Parthenon, dedicated to Athena, patron deity of Athens, was at one period rededicated to the Christian Virgin Mary and then later became a Turkish mosque. In 1687 a gunpowder explosion created the ruin we see today. The Doric shell remains as a monument to ancient architectural engineering expertise and to a sense of classical beauty and order. (*Stergios Svarnas/D.A. Harissiadis/Benaki Museum*)

b. Restored plan of the Acropolis, 400 B.C. The history of the Acropolis is as varied as the style and size of the temples and buildings constructed atop the ancient site. (*Library of Congress*)

c. This model of the Acropolis of Athens recreates the complexity of fifth century B.C. public space, which included centers for worship, public forum, and entertainment. (With permission of the *Royal Ontario Museum* © ROM)

d. Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns with their characteristic capitals. (*Library of Congress*)

about such matters. Why, they laugh even at me, as if I were out of my mind, when I talk about divine things in the assembly and tell them what is going to happen; and yet I have never foretold anything which has not come true. But they are resentful of all people like us. We must not worry about them; we must meet them boldly. c

SOCRATES: My dear Euthyphro, their ridicule is not a very serious matter. The Athenians, it seems to me, may think a man to be clever without paying him much attention, so long as they do not think that he teaches his wisdom to others. But as soon as they think that he makes other people clever, they get angry, whether it be from resentment, as you say, or for some other reason. d

EUTHYPHRO: I am not very anxious to test their attitude toward me in this matter.

SOCRATES: No, perhaps they think that you are reserved, and that you are not anxious to teach your wisdom to others. But I fear that they may think that I am; for my love of men makes me talk to everyone whom I meet quite freely and unreservedly, and

without payment. Indeed, if I could I would gladly pay people myself to listen to me. If then, as I said just now, they were only going to laugh at me, as you say they do at you, it would not be at all an unpleasant way of spending the day—to spend it in court, joking and laughing. But if they are going to be in earnest, then only prophets like you can tell where the matter will end.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, Socrates, I dare say that nothing will come of it. Very likely you will be successful in your trial, and I think that I shall be in mine.

SOCRATES: And what is this suit of yours, Euthyphro? Are you suing, or being sued?

EUTHYPHRO: I am suing.

SOCRATES: Whom?

4 EUTHYPHRO: A man whom people think I must be mad to prosecute.

SOCRATES: What? Has he wings to fly away with?

EUTHYPHRO: He is far enough from flying; he is a very old man.

SOCRATES: Who is he?

EUTHYPHRO: He is my father.

SOCRATES: Your father, my good man?

EUTHYPHRO: He is indeed.

SOCRATES: What are you prosecuting him for? What is the accusation?

EUTHYPHRO: Murder, Socrates.

b SOCRATES: Good heavens, Euthyphro! Surely the multitude are ignorant of what is right. I take it that it is not everyone who could rightly do what you are doing; only a man who was already well advanced in wisdom.

EUTHYPHRO: That is quite true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Was the man whom your father killed a relative of yours? But, of course, he was. You would never have prosecuted your father for the murder of a stranger?

EUTHYPHRO: You amuse me, Socrates. What difference does it make whether the murdered man were a relative or a stranger? The only question that you have to ask is, did the murderer kill justly or not? If justly, you must let him alone; if unjustly, c you must indict him for murder, even though he share your hearth and sit at your table. The pollution is the same if you associate with such a man, knowing what he has done, without purifying yourself, and him too, by bringing him to justice. In the present case the murdered man was a poor laborer of mine, who worked for us on our farm in Naxos. While drunk he got angry with one of our slaves and killed him. My father therefore bound the man hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, while he sent to Athens to ask the priest what he should do. While the messenger was gone, he entirely neglected the man, thinking that he was a murderer, and that it would be no d great matter, even if he were to die. And that was exactly what happened; hunger and cold and his bonds killed him before the messenger returned. And now my father and the rest of my family are indignant with me because I am prosecuting my father for the murder of this murderer. They assert that he did not kill the man at all; and they say that, even if he had killed him over and over again, the man himself was a murderer, and that I ought not to concern myself about such a person because it is impi- e ous for a son to prosecute his father for murder. So little, Socrates, do they know the divine law of piety and impiety.

SOCRATES: And do you mean to say, Euthyphro, that you think that you understand divine things and piety and impiety so accurately that, in such a case as you have stated, you can bring your father to justice without fear that you yourself may be doing something impious?

EUTHYPHRO: If I did not understand all these matters accurately, Socrates, I should not be worth much—Euthyphro would not be any better than other men. 5

SOCRATES: Then, my dear Euthyphro, I cannot do better than become your pupil and challenge Meletus on this very point before the trial begins. I should say that I had always thought it very important to have knowledge about divine things; and that now, when he says that I offend by speaking carelessly about them, and by introducing reforms, I have become your pupil. And I should say, “Meletus, if you acknowledge Euthyphro to be wise in these matters and to hold the correct belief, then think the same of me and do not put me on trial; but if you do not, then bring a suit, not against me, but against my master, for corrupting his elders—namely, myself whom he corrupts by his teaching, and his own father whom he corrupts by admonishing and punishing him.” And if I did not succeed in persuading him to release me from the suit or to indict you in my place, then I could repeat my challenge in court. b

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, by Zeus! Socrates, I think I should find out his weak points if he were to try to indict me. I should have a good deal to say about him in court long before I spoke about myself. c

SOCRATES: Yes, my dear friend, and knowing this I am anxious to become your pupil. I see that Meletus here, and others too, seem not to notice you at all, but he sees through me without difficulty and at once prosecutes me for impiety. Now, therefore, please explain to me what you were so confident just now that you knew. Tell me what are righteousness and sacrilege with respect to murder and everything else. I suppose that piety is the same in all actions, and that impiety is always the opposite of piety, and retains its identity, and that, as impiety, it always has the same character, which will be found in whatever is impious. d

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly, Socrates, I suppose so.

SOCRATES: Tell me, then, what is piety and what is impiety?

EUTHYPHRO: Well, then, I say that piety means prosecuting the unjust individual who has committed murder or sacrilege, or any other such crime, as I am doing now, whether he is your father or your mother or whoever he is; and I say that impiety means not prosecuting him. And observe, Socrates, I will give you a clear proof, which I have already given to others, that it is so, and that doing right means not letting off unpunished the sacrilegious man, whosoever he may be. Men hold Zeus to be the best and the most just of the gods; and they admit that Zeus bound his own father, Cronos, for wrongfully devouring his children; and that Cronos, in his turn, castrated his father for similar reasons. And yet these same men are incensed with me because I proceed against my father for doing wrong. So, you see, they say one thing in the case of the gods and quite another in mine. e

SOCRATES: Is not that why I am being prosecuted, Euthyphro? I mean, because I find it hard to accept such stories people tell about the gods? I expect that I shall be found at fault because I doubt those stories. Now if you who understand all these matters so well agree in holding all those tales true, then I suppose that I must yield to your authority. What could I say when I admit myself that I know nothing about them? But tell me, in the name of friendship, do you really believe that these things have actually happened? b

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, and more amazing things, too, Socrates, which the multitude do not know of.

SOCRATES: Then you really believe that there is war among the gods, and bitter hatreds, and battles, such as the poets tell of, and which the great painters have depicted in our temples, notably in the pictures which cover the robe that is carried up to the c

Acropolis at the great Panathenaic festival? Are we to say that these things are true, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, Socrates, and more besides. As I was saying, I will report to you many other stories about divine matters, if you like, which I am sure will astonish you when you hear them.

SOCRATES: I dare say. You shall report them to me at your leisure another time. At present please try to give a more definite answer to the question which I asked you just now. What I asked you, my friend, was, What is piety? and you have not explained it to me to my satisfaction. You only tell me that what you are doing now, namely, prosecuting your father for murder, is a pious act.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, that is true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Very likely. But many other actions are pious, are they not, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Remember, then, I did not ask you to tell me one or two of all the many pious actions that there are; I want to know what is characteristic of piety which makes all pious actions pious. You said, I think, that there is one characteristic which makes all pious actions pious, and another characteristic which makes all impious actions impious. Do you not remember?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Well, then, explain to me what is this characteristic, that I may have it to turn to, and to use as a standard whereby to judge your actions and those of other men, and be able to say that whatever action resembles it is pious, and whatever does not, is not pious.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I will tell you that if you wish, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Certainly I do.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, then, what is pleasing to the gods is pious, and what is not pleasing to them is impious.

SOCRATES: Fine, Euthyphro. Now you have given me the answer that I wanted. Whether what you say is true, I do not know yet. But, of course, you will go on to prove that it is true.

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Come, then, let us examine our statement. The things and the men that are pleasing to the gods are pious, and the things and the men that are displeasing to the gods are impious. But piety and impiety are not the same; they are as opposite as possible—was not that what we said?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And it seems the appropriate statement?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, Socrates, certainly.

SOCRATES: Have we not also said, Euthyphro, that there are quarrels and disagreements and hatreds among the gods?

EUTHYPHRO: We have.

SOCRATES: But what kind of disagreement, my friend, causes hatred and anger? Let us look at the matter thus. If you and I were to disagree as to whether one number were more than another, would that make us angry and enemies? Should we not settle such a dispute at once by counting?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And if we were to disagree as to the relative size of two things, we should measure them and put an end to the disagreement at once, should we not?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And should we not settle a question about the relative weight of two things by weighing them?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then what is the question which would make us angry and enemies if we disagreed about it, and could not come to a settlement? Perhaps you have not an answer ready; but listen to mine. Is it not the question of the just and unjust, of the honorable and the dishonorable, of the good and the bad? Is it not questions about these matters which make you and me and everyone else quarrel, when we do quarrel, if we differ about them and can reach no satisfactory agreement?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, Socrates, it is disagreements about these matters.

SOCRATES: Well, Euthyphro, the gods will quarrel over these things if they quarrel at all, will they not?

EUTHYPHRO: Necessarily.

SOCRATES: Then, my good Euthyphro, you say that some of the gods think one thing just, the others another; and that what some of them hold to be honorable or good, others hold to be dishonorable or evil. For there would not have been quarrels among them if they had not disagreed on these points, would there?

EUTHYPHRO: You are right.

SOCRATES: And each of them loves what he thinks honorable, and good, and just; and hates the opposite, does he not?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: But you say that the same action is held by some of them to be just, and by others to be unjust; and that then they dispute about it, and so quarrel and fight among themselves. Is it not so?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then the same thing is hated by the gods and loved by them; and the same thing will be displeasing and pleasing to them.

EUTHYPHRO: Apparently.

SOCRATES: Then, according to your account, the same thing will be pious and impious.

EUTHYPHRO: So it seems.

SOCRATES: Then, my good friend, you have not answered my question. I did not ask you to tell me what action is both pious and impious; but it seems that whatever is pleasing to the gods is also displeasing to them. And so, Euthyphro, I should not be surprised if what you are doing now in punishing your father is an action well pleasing to Zeus, but hateful to Cronos and Uranus, and acceptable to Hephaestus, but hateful to Hera; and if any of the other gods disagree about it, pleasing to some of them and displeasing to others.

EUTHYPHRO: But on this point, Socrates, I think that there is no difference of opinion among the gods: they all hold that if one man kills another unjustly, he must be punished.

SOCRATES: What, Euthyphro? Among mankind, have you never heard disputes whether a man ought to be punished for killing another man unjustly, or for doing some other unjust deed?

EUTHYPHRO: Indeed, they never cease from these disputes, especially in courts of justice. They do all manner of unjust things; and then there is nothing which they will not do and say to avoid punishment.

SOCRATES: Do they admit that they have done something unjust, and at the same time deny that they ought to be punished, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: No, indeed, that they do not.

SOCRATES: Then it is not the case that there is nothing which they will not do and say. I take it, they do not dare to say or argue that they must not be punished if they have done something unjust. What they say is that they have not done anything unjust, is it not so?

EUTHYPHRO: That is true.

SOCRATES: Then they do not disagree over the question that the unjust individual must be punished. They disagree over the question, who is unjust, and what was done and when, do they not?

EUTHYPHRO: That is true.

SOCRATES: Well, is not exactly the same thing true of the gods if they quarrel about justice and injustice, as you say they do? Do not some of them say that the others are doing something unjust, while the others deny it? No one, I suppose, my dear friend, whether god or man, dares to say that a person who has done something unjust must not be punished.

EUTHYPHRO: No, Socrates, that is true, by and large.

SOCRATES: I take it, Euthyphro, that the disputants, whether men or gods, if the gods do disagree, disagree over each separate act. When they quarrel about any act, some of them say that it was just, and others that it was unjust. Is it not so?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Come, then, my dear Euthyphro, please enlighten me on this point. What proof have you that all the gods think that a laborer who has been imprisoned for murder by the master of the man whom he has murdered, and who dies from his imprisonment before the master has had time to learn from the religious authorities what he should do, dies unjustly? How do you know that it is just for a son to indict his father and to prosecute him for the murder of such a man? Come, see if you can make it clear to me that the gods necessarily agree in thinking that this action of yours is just; and if you satisfy me, I will never cease singing your praises for wisdom.

EUTHYPHRO: I could make that clear enough to you, Socrates; but I am afraid that it would be a long business.

SOCRATES: I see you think that I am duller than the judges. To them, of course, you will make it clear that your father has committed an unjust action, and that all the gods agree in hating such actions.

EUTHYPHRO: I will indeed, Socrates, if they will only listen to me.

SOCRATES: They will listen if they think that you are a good speaker. But while you were talking, it occurred to me to ask myself this question: suppose that Euthyphro were to prove to me as clearly as possible that all the gods think such a death unjust, how has he brought me any nearer to understanding what piety and impiety are? This particular act, perhaps, may be displeasing to the gods, but then we have just seen that piety and impiety cannot be defined in that way; for we have seen that what is displeasing to the gods is also pleasing to them. So I will let you off on this point, Euthyphro; and all the gods shall agree in thinking your father's action wrong and in hating it, if you like. But shall we correct our definition and say that whatever all the gods hate is impious, and whatever they all love is pious; while whatever some of them love, and others hate, is either both or neither? Do you wish us now to define piety and impiety in this manner?

EUTHYPHRO: Why not, Socrates?

SOCRATES: There is no reason why I should not, Euthyphro. It is for you to consider whether that definition will help you to teach me what you promised.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, I should say that piety is what all the gods love, and that impiety is what they all hate. e

SOCRATES: Are we to examine this definition, Euthyphro, and see if it is a good one? Or are we to be content to accept the bare statements of other men or of ourselves without asking any questions? Or must we examine the statements?

EUTHYPHRO: We must examine them. But for my part I think that the definition is right this time.

SOCRATES: We shall know that better in a little while, my good friend. Now consider this question. Do the gods love piety because it is pious, or is it pious because they love it? 10

EUTHYPHRO: I do not understand you, Socrates.

SOCRATES: I will try to explain myself: we speak of a thing being carried and carrying, and being led and leading, and being seen and seeing; and you understand that all such expressions mean different things, and what the difference is.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I think I understand.

SOCRATES: And we talk of a thing being loved, of a thing loving, and the two are different?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Now tell me, is a thing which is being carried in a state of being carried because it is carried, or for some other reason? b

EUTHYPHRO: No, because it is carried.

SOCRATES: And a thing is in a state of being led because it is led, and of being seen because it is seen?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then a thing is not seen because it is in a state of being seen: it is in a state of being seen because it is seen; and a thing is not led because it is in a state of being led: it is in a state of being led because it is led; and a thing is not carried because it is in a state of being carried: it is in a state of being carried because it is carried. Is my meaning clear now, Euthyphro? I mean this: if anything becomes or is affected, it does not become because it is in a state of becoming: it is in a state of becoming because it becomes; and it is not affected because it is in a state of being affected: it is in a state of being affected because it is affected. Do you not agree? c

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Is not that which is being loved in a state either of becoming or of being affected in some way by something?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then the same is true here as in the former cases. A thing is not loved by those who love it because it is in a state of being loved; it is in a state of being loved because they love it.

EUTHYPHRO: Necessarily.

SOCRATES: Well, then, Euthyphro, what do we say about piety? Is it not loved by all the gods, according to your definition? d

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Because it is pious, or for some other reason?

EUTHYPHRO: No, because it is pious.

SOCRATES: Then it is loved by the gods because it is pious; it is not pious because it is loved by them?

EUTHYPHRO: It seems so.

SOCRATES: But, then, what is pleasing to the gods is pleasing to them, and is in a state of being loved by them, because they love it?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then piety is not what is pleasing to the gods, and what is pleasing to the gods is not pious, as you say, Euthyphro. They are different things.

e EUTHYPHRO: And why, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Because we are agreed that the gods love piety because it is pious, and that it is not pious because they love it. Is not this so?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And that what is pleasing to the gods because they love it, is pleasing to them by reason of this same love, and that they do not love it because it is pleasing to them.

EUTHYPHRO: True.

11 SOCRATES: Then, my dear Euthyphro, piety and what is pleasing to the gods are different things. If the gods had loved piety because it is pious, they would also have loved what is pleasing to them because it is pleasing to them; but if what is pleasing to them had been pleasing to them because they loved it, then piety, too, would have been piety because they loved it. But now you see that they are opposite things, and wholly different from each other. For the one is of a sort to be loved because it is loved, while the other is loved because it is of a sort to be loved. My question, Euthyphro, was, What is piety? But it turns out that you have not explained to me the essential character of piety; you have been content to mention an effect which belongs to it—namely, that all the gods love it. You have not yet told me what its essential character is. Do not, if you please, keep from me what piety is; begin again and tell me that. Never mind whether the gods love it, or whether it has other effects: we shall not differ on that point. Do your best to make clear to me what is piety and what is impiety.

b

EUTHYPHRO: But, Socrates, I really don't know how to explain to you what is in my mind. Whatever statement we put forward always somehow moves round in a circle, and will not stay where we put it.

c

SOCRATES: I think that your statements, Euthyphro, are worthy of my ancestor Daedalus.* If they had been mine and I had set them down, I dare say you would have made fun of me, and said that it was the consequence of my descent from Daedalus that the statements which I construct run away, as his statues used to, and will not stay where they are put. But, as it is, the statements are yours, and the joke would have no point. You yourself see that they will not stay still.

d

EUTHYPHRO: Nay, Socrates, I think that the joke is very much in point. It is not my fault that the statement moves round in a circle and will not stay still. But you are the Daedalus, I think; as far as I am concerned, my statements would have stayed put.

e

SOCRATES: Then, my friend, I must be a more skillful artist than Daedalus; he only used to make his own works move, while I, you see, can make other people's works move, too. And the beauty of it is that I am wise against my will. I would rather that our statements had remained firm and immovable than have all the wisdom of Daedalus and all the riches of Tantalus to boot. But enough of this. I will do my best to help you to explain to me what piety is, for I think that you are lazy. Don't give in yet. Tell me, do you not think that all piety must be just?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

12

SOCRATES: Well, then, is all justice pious, too? Or, while all piety is just, is a part only of justice pious, and the rest of it something else?

EUTHYPHRO: I do not follow you, Socrates.

*Daedalus' statues were reputed to have been so lifelike that they came alive.

SOCRATES: Yet you have the advantage over me in your youth no less than your wisdom. But, as I say, the wealth of your wisdom makes you complacent. Exert yourself, my good friend: I am not asking you a difficult question. I mean the opposite of what the poet [Stasinus] said, when he wrote:

“You shall not name Zeus the creator, who made all things: for where there is fear there also is reverence.” b

Now I disagree with the poet. Shall I tell you why?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: I do not think it true to say that where there is fear, there also is reverence. Many people who fear sickness and poverty and other such evils seem to me to have fear, but no reverence for what they fear. Do you not think so?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: But I think that where there is reverence there also is fear. Does any man feel reverence and a sense of shame about anything, without at the same time dreading and fearing the reputation of wickedness? c

EUTHYPHRO: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: Then, though there is fear wherever there is reverence, it is not correct to say that where there is fear there also is reverence. Reverence does not always accompany fear; for fear, I take it, is wider than reverence. It is a part of fear, just as the odd is a part of number, so that where you have the odd you must also have number, though where you have number you do not necessarily have the odd. Now I think you follow me?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Well, then, this is what I meant by the question which I asked you. Is there always piety where there is justice? Or, though there is always justice where there is piety, yet there is not always piety where there is justice, because piety is only a part of justice? Shall we say this, or do you differ? d

EUTHYPHRO: No, I agree. I think that you are right.

SOCRATES: Now observe the next point. If piety is a part of justice, we must find out, I suppose, what part of justice it is? Now, if you had asked me just now, for instance, what part of number is the odd, and what number is an odd number, I should have said that whatever number is not even is an odd number. Is it not so?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then see if you can explain to me what part of justice is piety, that I may tell Meletus that now that I have been adequately instructed by you as to what actions are righteous and pious, and what are not, he must give up prosecuting me unjustly for impiety. e

EUTHYPHRO: Well, then, Socrates, I should say that righteousness and piety are that part of justice which has to do with the careful attention which ought to be paid to the gods; and that what has to do with the careful attention which ought to be paid to men is the remaining part of justice.

SOCRATES: And I think that your answer is a good one, Euthyphro. But there is one little point about which I still want to hear more. I do not yet understand what the careful attention is to which you refer. I suppose you do not mean that the attention which we pay to the gods is like the attention which we pay to other things. We say, for instance, do we not, that not everyone knows how to take care of horses, but only the trainer of horses? 13

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: For I suppose that the skill that is concerned with horses is the art of taking care of horses.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And not everyone understands the care of dogs, but only the huntsman.

EUTHYPHRO: True.

b SOCRATES: For I suppose that the huntsman's skill is the art of taking care of dogs.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the herdsman's skill is the art of taking care of cattle.

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And you say that piety and righteousness are taking care of the gods, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Well, then, has not all care the same object? Is it not for the good and benefit of that on which it is bestowed? For instance, you see that horses are benefited and improved when they are cared for by the art which is concerned with them. Is it not so?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I think so.

c SOCRATES: And dogs are benefited and improved by the huntsman's art, and cattle by the herdsman's, are they not? And the same is always true. Or do you think care is ever meant to harm that which is cared for?

EUTHYPHRO: No, indeed; certainly not.

SOCRATES: But to benefit it?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Then is piety, which is our care for the gods, intended to benefit the gods, or to improve them? Should you allow that you make any of the gods better when you do a pious action?

EUTHYPHRO: No indeed; certainly not.

d SOCRATES: No, I am quite sure that that is not your meaning, Euthyphro. It was for that reason that I asked you what you meant by the careful attention which ought to be paid to the gods. I thought that you did not mean that.

EUTHYPHRO: You were right, Socrates. I do not mean that.

SOCRATES: Good. Then what sort of attention to the gods will piety be?

EUTHYPHRO: The sort of attention, Socrates, slaves pay to their masters.

SOCRATES: I understand; then it is a kind of service to the gods?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Can you tell me what result the art which serves a doctor serves to produce? Is it not health?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

e SOCRATES: And what result does the art which serves a ship-wright serve to produce?

EUTHYPHRO: A ship, of course, Socrates.

SOCRATES: The result of the art which serves a builder is a house, is it not?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then tell me, my good friend: What result will the art which serves the gods serve to produce? You must know, seeing that you say that you know more about divine things than any other man.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, that is true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then tell me, I beg you, what is that grand result which the gods use our services to produce?

EUTHYPHRO: There are many notable results, Socrates.

SOCRATES: So are those, my friend, which a general produces. Yet it is easy to see that the crowning result of them all is victory in war, is it not? 14

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And, I take it, the farmer produces many notable results; yet the principal result of them all is that he makes the earth produce food.

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Well, then, what is the principal result of the many notable results which the gods produce?

EUTHYPHRO: I told you just now, Socrates, that accurate knowledge of all these matters is not easily obtained. However, broadly I say this: if any man knows that his words and actions in prayer and sacrifice are acceptable to the gods, that is what is pious; and it preserves the state, as it does private families. But the opposite of what is acceptable to the gods is sacrilegious, and this it is that undermines and destroys everything. b

SOCRATES: Certainly, Euthyphro, if you had wished, you could have answered my main question in far fewer words. But you are evidently not anxious to teach me. Just now, when you were on the very point of telling me what I want to know, you stopped short. If you had gone on then, I should have learned from you clearly enough by this time what piety is. But now I am asking you questions, and must follow wherever you lead me; so tell me, what is it that you mean by piety and impiety? Do you not mean a science of prayer and sacrifice? c

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: To sacrifice is to give to the gods, and to pray is to ask of them, is it not? d

EUTHYPHRO: It is, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then you say that piety is the science of asking of the gods and giving to them? d

EUTHYPHRO: You understand my meaning exactly, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Yes, for I am eager to share your wisdom, Euthyphro, and so I am all attention; nothing that you say will fall to the ground. But tell me, what is this service of the gods? You say it is to ask of them, and to give to them?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Then, to ask rightly will be to ask of them what we stand in need of from them, will it not? e

EUTHYPHRO: Naturally.

SOCRATES: And to give rightly will be to give back to them what they stand in need of from us? It would not be very skillful to make a present to a man of something that he has no need of.

EUTHYPHRO: True, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then piety, Euthyphro, will be the art of carrying on business between gods and men?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, if you like to call it so.

SOCRATES: But I like nothing except what is true. But tell me, how are the gods benefited by the gifts which they receive from us? What they give is plain enough. Every good thing that we have is their gift. But how are they benefited by what we give them? Have we the advantage over them in these business transactions to such an extent that we receive from them all the good things we possess, and give them nothing in return? 15

EUTHYPHRO: But do you suppose, Socrates, that the gods are benefited by the gifts which they receive from us?

SOCRATES: But what *are* these gifts, Euthyphro, that we give the gods?

EUTHYPHRO: What do you think but honor and praise, and, as I have said, what is acceptable to them.

b SOCRATES: Then piety, Euthyphro, is acceptable to the gods, but it is not profitable to them nor loved by them?

EUTHYPHRO: I think that nothing is more loved by them.

SOCRATES: Then I see that piety means that which is loved by the gods.

EUTHYPHRO: Most certainly.

c SOCRATES: After that, shall you be surprised to find that your statements move about instead of staying where you put them? Shall you accuse me of being the Daedalus that makes them move, when you yourself are far more skillful than Daedalus was, and make them go round in a circle? Do you not see that our statement has come round to where it was before? Surely you remember that we have already seen that piety and what is pleasing to the gods are quite different things. Do you not remember?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: And now do you not see that you say that what the gods love is pious? But does not what the gods love come to the same thing as what is pleasing to the gods?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then either our former conclusion was wrong or, if it was right, we are wrong now.

EUTHYPHRO: So it seems.

d SOCRATES: Then we must begin again and inquire what piety is. I do not mean to give in until I have found out. Do not regard me as unworthy; give your whole mind to the question, and this time tell me the truth. For if anyone knows it, it is you; and you are a Proteus whom I must not let go until you have told me. It cannot be that you would ever have undertaken to prosecute your aged father for the murder of a laboring man unless you had known exactly what piety and impiety are. You would have feared to risk the anger of the gods, in case you should be doing wrong, and you would have been afraid of what men would say. But now I am sure that you think that you know exactly what is pious and what is not; so tell me, my good Euthyphro, and do not conceal from me what you think.

e EUTHYPHRO: Another time, then, Socrates. I am in a hurry now, and it is time for me to be off.

SOCRATES: What are you doing, my friend! Will you go away and destroy all my hopes of learning from you what is pious and what is not, and so of escaping Meletus?

16 I meant to explain to him that now Euthyphro has made me wise about divine things, and that I no longer in my ignorance speak carelessly about them or introduce reforms. And then I was going to promise him to live a better life for the future.

APOLOGY

Characters

Socrates

Meletus

Scene—The Court of Justice

SOCRATES: I do not know what impression my accusers have made upon you, Athenians. But I do know that they nearly made me forget who I was, so persuasive were they. And yet they have scarcely spoken one single word of truth. Of all their many falsehoods, the one which astonished me most was their saying that I was a clever speaker, and that you must be careful not to let me deceive you. I thought that it was most shameful of them not to be ashamed to talk in that way. For as soon as I open my mouth they will be refuted, and I shall prove that I am not a clever speaker in any way at all—unless, indeed, by a clever speaker they mean someone who speaks the truth. If that is their meaning, I agree with them that I am an orator not to be compared with them. My accusers, I repeat, have said little or nothing that is true, but from me you shall hear the whole truth. Certainly you will not hear a speech, Athenians, dressed up, like theirs, with fancy words and phrases. I will say to you what I have to say, without artifice, and I shall use the first words which come to mind, for I believe that what I have to say is just; so let none of you expect anything else. Indeed, my friends, it would hardly be right for me, at my age, to come before you like a schoolboy with his concocted phrases. But there is one thing, Athenians, which I do most earnestly beg and entreat of you. Do not be surprised and do not interrupt with shouts if in my defense I speak in the same way that I am accustomed to speak in the market place, at the tables of the money-changers, where many of you have heard me, and elsewhere. The truth is this: I am more than seventy, and this is the first time that I have ever come before a law court; thus your manner of speech here is quite strange to me. If I had really been a stranger, you would have forgiven me for speaking in the language and the manner of my native country. And so now I ask you to grant me what I think I have a right to claim. Never mind the manner of my speech—it may be superior or it may be inferior to the usual manner. Give your whole attention to the question, whether what I say is just or not? That is what is required of a good judge, as speaking the truth is required of a good orator.

I have to defend myself, Athenians, first against the older false accusations of my old accusers, and then against the more recent ones of my present accusers. For many men have been accusing me to you, and for very many years, who have not spoken a word of truth; and I fear them more than I fear Anytus* and his associates, formidable as they are. But, my friends, the others are still more formidable, since they got hold of most of you when you were children and have been more persistent in accusing me untruthfully, persuading you that there is a certain Socrates, a wise man, who speculates about the heavens, who investigates things that are beneath the earth, and who can make the worse argument appear the stronger. These men, Athenians, who spread abroad this report are

*Anytus is singled out as politically the most influential member of the prosecution. He had played a prominent part in the restoration of the democratic regime at Athens.

the accusers whom I fear; for their hearers think that persons who pursue such inquiries never believe in the gods. Besides they are many, their attacks have been going on for a long time, and they spoke to you when you were most ready to believe them, since you were all young, and some of you were children. And there was no one to answer them when they attacked me. The most preposterous thing of all is that I do not even know their names: I cannot tell you who they are except when one happens to be a comic poet. But all the rest who have persuaded you, from motives of resentment and prejudice, and sometimes, it may be, from conviction, are hardest to cope with. For I cannot call any one of them forward in court to cross-examine him. I have, as it were, simply to spar with shadows in my defense, and to put questions which there is no one to answer. I ask you, therefore, to believe that, as I say, I have been attacked by two kinds of accusers—first, by Meletus* and his associates, and, then, by those older ones of whom I have spoken. And, with your leave, I will defend myself first against my old accusers, since you heard their accusations first, and they were much more compelling than my present accusers are.

19 Well, I must make my defense, Athenians, and try in the short time allowed me to remove the prejudice which you have been so long a time acquiring. I hope that I may manage to do this, if it be best for you and for me, and that my defense may be successful; but I am quite aware of the nature of my task, and I know that it is a difficult one. Be the outcome, however, as is pleasing to god, I must obey the law and make my defense.

b Let us begin from the beginning, then, and ask what is the accusation that has given rise to the prejudice against me, on which Meletus relied when he brought his indictment. What is the prejudice which my enemies have been spreading about me? I must assume that they are formally accusing me, and read their indictment. It would run somewhat in this fashion: “Socrates is guilty of engaging in inquiries into things beneath the earth and in the heavens, of making the weaker argument appear the stronger, and of teaching others these same things.” That is what they say. And in the comedy of Aristophanes** you yourselves saw a man called Socrates swinging around in a basket and saying that he walked on air, and sputtering a great deal of nonsense about matters of which I understand nothing at all. I do not mean to disparage that kind of knowledge if there is anyone who is wise about these matters. I trust Meletus may never be able to prosecute me for that. But the truth is, Athenians, I have nothing to do with these matters, and almost all of you are yourselves my witnesses of this. I beg all of you who have ever heard me discussing, and they are many, to inform your neighbors and tell them if any of you have ever heard me discussing such matters at all. That will show you that the other common statements about me are as false as this one.

20 But the fact is that not one of these is true. And if you have heard that I undertake to educate men, and make money by so doing, that is not true either, though I think that it would be a fine thing to be able to educate men, as Gorgias of Leontini, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis do. For each of them, my friends, can go into any city, and persuade the young men to leave the society of their fellow citizens, with any of whom they might associate for nothing, and to be only too glad to be allowed to pay money for the privilege of associating with themselves. And I believe that there is another wise man from Paros residing in Athens at this moment. I happened to meet Callias, the son

*Apparently, in order to obscure the political implications of the trial, the role of chief prosecutor was assigned to Meletus, a minor poet with fervent religious convictions. Anytus was evidently ready to make political use of Meletus' convictions without entirely sharing his fervor, for in the same year as this trial Meletus also prosecuted Andocides for impiety, but Anytus came to Andocides' defense.

***The Clouds*. The basket was satirically assumed to facilitate Socrates' inquiries into things in the heavens.

of Hipponicus, a man who has spent more money on sophists than everyone else put together. So I said to him (he has two sons), “Callias, if your two sons had been foals or calves, we could have hired a trainer for them who would have trained them to excel in doing what they are naturally capable of. He would have been either a groom or a farmer. But whom do you intend to take to train them, seeing that they are men? Who understands the excellence which a man and citizen is capable of attaining? I suppose that you must have thought of this, because you have sons. Is there such a person or not?” “Certainly there is,” he replied. “Who is he,” said I, “and where does he come from, and what is his fee?” “Evenus, Socrates,” he replied, “from Paros, five minae.” Then I thought that Evenus was a fortunate person if he really understood this art and could teach so cleverly. If I had possessed knowledge of that kind, I should have been conceited and disdainful. But, Athenians, the truth is that I do not possess it.

Perhaps some of you may reply: “But, Socrates, what is the trouble with you? What has given rise to these prejudices against you? You must have been doing something out of the ordinary. All these rumors and reports of you would never have arisen if you had not been doing something different from other men. So tell us what it is, that we may not give our verdict arbitrarily.” I think that that is a fair question, and I will try to explain to you what it is that has raised these prejudices against me and given me this reputation. Listen, then. Some of you, perhaps, will think that I am joking, but I assure you that I will tell you the whole truth. I have gained this reputation, Athenians, simply



The *Thólos* at Delphi with the *Sanctuary of Apollo* in the background. Socrates' friend, Chaerophon, went to the famous oracle at Delphi to ask if there was anyone wiser than Socrates. The oracle, who usually gave very cryptic answers, responded with a simple “no.” This led Socrates on a quest to find someone wiser than himself—a quest which resulted in Socrates making a number of influential enemies. (Forrest E. Baird)

by reason of a certain wisdom. But by what kind of wisdom? It is by Just that wisdom which is perhaps human wisdom. In that, it may be, I am really wise. But the men of whom I was speaking just now must be wise in a wisdom which is greater than human wisdom, or else I cannot describe it, for certainly I know nothing of it myself, and if any man says that I do, he lies and speaks to arouse prejudice against me. Do not interrupt me with shouts, Athenians, even if you think that I am boasting. What I am going to say is not my own statement. I will tell you who says it, and he is worthy of your respect. I will bring the god of Delphi to be the witness of my wisdom, if it is wisdom at all, and of its nature. You remember Chaerephon. From youth upwards he was my comrade; and also a partisan of your democracy, sharing your recent exile* and returning with you. You remember, too, Chaerephon's character—how impulsive he was in carrying through whatever he took in hand. Once he went to Delphi and ventured to put this question to the oracle—I entreat you again, my friends, not to interrupt me with your shouts—he asked if there was anyone who was wiser than I. The priestess answered that there was no one. Chaerephon himself is dead, but his brother here will witness to what I say.

Now see why I tell you this. I am going to explain to you how the prejudice against me has arisen. When I heard of the oracle I began to reflect: What can the god mean by this riddle? I know very well that I am not wise, even in the smallest degree. Then what can he mean by saying that I am the wisest of men? It cannot be that he is speaking falsely, for he is a god and cannot lie. For a long time I was at a loss to understand his meaning. Then, very reluctantly, I turned to investigate it in this manner: I went to a man who was reputed to be wise, thinking that there, if anywhere, I should prove the answer wrong, and meaning to point out to the oracle its mistake, and to say, "You said that I was the wisest of men, but this man is wiser than I am." So I examined the man—I need not tell you his name, he was a politician—but this was the result, Athenians. When I conversed with him I came to see that, though a great many persons, and most of all he himself, thought that he was wise, yet he was not wise. Then I tried to prove to him that he was not wise, though he fancied that he was. By so doing I made him indignant, and many of the bystanders. So when I went away, I thought to myself, "I am wiser than this man: neither of us knows anything that is really worth knowing, but he thinks that he has knowledge when he has not, while I, having no knowledge, do not think that I have. I seem, at any rate, to be a little wiser than he is on this point: I do not think that I know what I do not know." Next I went to another man who was reputed to be still wiser than the last, with exactly the same result. And there again I made him, and many other men, indignant.

Then I went on to one man after another, realizing that I was arousing indignation every day, which caused me much pain and anxiety. Still I thought that I must set the god's command above everything. So I had to go to every man who seemed to possess any knowledge, and investigate the meaning of the oracle. Athenians, I must tell you the truth; I swear, this was the result of the investigation which I made at the god's command: I found that the men whose reputation for wisdom stood highest were nearly the most lacking in it, while others who were looked down on as common people were much more intelligent. Now I must describe to you the wanderings which I undertook, like Herculean labors, to prove the oracle irrefutable. After the politicians, I went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and others, thinking that there I should find myself manifestly more ignorant than they. So I took up the poems on which I thought that they had spent most pains, and asked them what they meant, hoping at the same time to learn something from them. I am ashamed to

*During the totalitarian regime of The Thirty, which remained in power for eight months (404 B.C.), five years before the trial.

tell you the truth, my friends, but I must say it. Almost any one of the bystanders could have talked about the works of these poets better than the poets themselves. So I soon found that it is not by wisdom that the poets create their works, but by a certain instinctive inspiration, like soothsayers and prophets, who say many fine things, but understand nothing of what they say. The poets seemed to me to be in a similar situation. And at the same time I perceived that, because of their poetry, they thought that they were the wisest of men in other matters too, which they were not. So I went away again, thinking that I had the same advantage over the poets that I had over the politicians. c

Finally, I went to the artisans, for I knew very well that I possessed no knowledge at all worth speaking of, and I was sure that I should find that they knew many fine things. And in that I was not mistaken. They knew what I did not know, and so far they were wiser than I. But, Athenians, it seemed to me that the skilled artisans had the same failing as the poets. Each of them believed himself to be extremely wise in matters of the greatest importance because he was skillful in his own art: and this presumption of theirs obscured their real wisdom. So I asked myself, on behalf of the oracle, whether I would choose to remain as I was, without either their wisdom or their ignorance, or to possess both, as they did. And I answered to myself and to the oracle that it was better for me to remain as I was. d

From this examination, Athenians, has arisen much fierce and bitter indignation, and as a result a great many prejudices about me. People say that I am “a wise man.” For the bystanders always think that I am wise myself in any matter wherein I refute another. But, gentlemen, I believe that the god is really wise, and that by this oracle he meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing. I do not think that he meant that Socrates was wise. He only made use of my name, and took me as an example, as though he would say to men, “He among you is the wisest who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is really worth nothing at all.” Therefore I still go about testing and examining every man whom I think wise, whether he be a citizen or a stranger, as the god has commanded me. Whenever I find that he is not wise, I point out to him, on the god’s behalf, that he is not wise. I am so busy in this pursuit that I have never had leisure to take any part worth mentioning in public matters or to look after my private affairs. I am in great poverty as the result of my service to the god. e

Besides this, the young men who follow me about, who are the sons of wealthy persons and have the most leisure, take pleasure in hearing men cross-examined. They often imitate me among themselves; then they try their hands at cross-examining other people. And, I imagine, they find plenty of men who think that they know a great deal when in fact they know little or nothing. Then the persons who are cross-examined get angry with me instead of with themselves, and say that Socrates is an abomination and corrupts the young. When they are asked, “Why, what does he do? What does he teach?” they do not know what to say. Not to seem at a loss, they repeat the stock charges against all philosophers, and allege that he investigates things in the air and under the earth, and that he teaches people to disbelieve in the gods, and to make the worse argument appear the stronger. For, I suppose, they would not like to confess the truth, which is that they are shown up as ignorant pretenders to knowledge that they do not possess. So they have been filling your ears with their bitter prejudices for a long time, for they are ambitious, energetic, and numerous; and they speak vigorously and persuasively against me. Relying on this, Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon have attacked me. Meletus is indignant with me on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the artisans and politicians, and Lycon on behalf of the orators. And so, as I said at the beginning, I shall be surprised if I am able, in the short time allowed me for my defense, to remove from your minds this prejudice which has grown so strong. What I have told you, Athenians, is the truth: I neither conceal nor do d

I suppress anything, trivial or important. Yet I know that it is just this outspokenness which rouses indignation. But that is only a proof that my words are true, and that the prejudice against me, and the causes of it, are what I have said. And whether you investigate them now or hereafter, you will find that they are so.

What I have said must suffice as my defense against the charges of my first accusers. I will try next to defend myself against Meletus, that “good patriot,” as he calls himself, and my later accusers. Let us assume that they are a new set of accusers, and read their indictment, as we did in the case of the others. It runs thus: Socrates is guilty of corrupting the youth, and of believing not in the gods whom the state believes in, but in other new divinities. Such is the accusation. Let us examine each point in it separately. Meletus says that I am guilty of corrupting the youth. But I say, Athenians, that he is guilty of playing a solemn joke by casually bringing men to trial, and pretending to have a solemn interest in matters to which he has never given a moment’s thought. Now I will try to prove to you that this is so.

Come here, Meletus. Is it not a fact that you think it very important that the young should be as good as possible?

MELETUS: It is.

SOCRATES: Come, then, tell the judges who improves them. You care so much,* you must know. You are accusing me, and bringing me to trial, because, as you say, you have discovered that I am the corrupter of the youth. Come now, reveal to the gentlemen who improves them. You see, Meletus, you have nothing to say; you are silent. But don’t you think that this is shameful? Is not your silence a conclusive proof of what I say—that you have never cared? Come, tell us, my good man, who makes the young better?

MELETUS: The laws.

That, my friend, is not my question. What man improves the young, who begins by knowing the laws?

MELETUS: The judges here, Socrates.

SOCRATES: What do you mean, Meletus? Can they educate the young and improve them?

MELETUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: All of them? Or only some of them?

MELETUS: All of them.

By Hera, that is good news! Such a large supply of benefactors! And do the members of the audience here improve them, or not?

MELETUS: They do.

SOCRATES: And do the councilors?

MELETUS: Yes.

Well, then, Meletus, do the members of the assembly corrupt the young or do they again all improve them?

MELETUS: They, too, improve them.

Then all the Athenians, apparently, make the young into good men except me, and I alone corrupt them. Is that your meaning?

MELETUS: Certainly, that is my meaning.

You have discovered me to be most unfortunate. Now tell me: do you think that the same holds good in the case of horses? Does one man do them harm and everyone else improve them? On the contrary, is it not one man only, or a

*Throughout the following passage, Socrates plays on the etymology of the name “Meletus” as meaning “the man who cares.”

very few—namely, those who are skilled with horses—who can improve them, while the majority of men harm them if they use them and have anything to do with them? Is it not so, Meletus, both with horses and with every other animal? Of course it is, whether you and Anytus say yes or no. The young would certainly be very fortunate if only one man corrupted them, and everyone else did them good. The truth is, Meletus, you prove conclusively that you have never thought about the young in your life. You exhibit your carelessness in not caring for the very matters about which you are prosecuting me. c

Now be so good as to tell us, Meletus, is it better to live among good citizens or bad ones? Answer, my friend. I am not asking you at all a difficult question. Do not the bad harm their associates and the good do them good?

MELETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Is there anyone who would rather be injured than benefitted by his companions? Answer, my good man; you are obliged by the law to answer. Does anyone like to be injured? d

MELETUS: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: Well, then, are you prosecuting me for corrupting the young and making them worse, voluntarily or involuntarily?

MELETUS: For doing it voluntarily.

SOCRATES: What, Meletus? Do you mean to say that you, who are so much younger than I, are yet so much wiser than I that you know that bad citizens always do evil, and that good citizens do good, to those with whom they come in contact, while I am so extraordinarily ignorant as not to know that, if I make any of my companions evil, he will probably injure me in some way? And you allege that I do this voluntarily? You will not make me believe that, nor anyone else either, I should think. Either I do not corrupt the young at all or, if I do, I do so involuntarily, so that you are lying in either case. And if I corrupt them involuntarily, the law does not call upon you to prosecute me for an error which is involuntary, but to take me aside privately and reprove and educate me. For, of course, I shall cease from doing wrong involuntarily, as soon as I know that I have been doing wrong. But you avoided associating with me and educating me; instead you bring me up before the court, where the law sends persons, not for education, but for punishment. e 26

The truth is, Athenians, as I said, it is quite clear that Meletus has never cared at all about these matters. However, now tell us, Meletus, how do you say that I corrupt the young? Clearly, according to your indictment, by teaching them not to believe in the gods the state believes in, but other new divinities instead. You mean that I corrupt the young by that teaching, do you not? b

MELETUS: Yes, most certainly I mean that.

SOCRATES: Then in the name of these gods of whom we are speaking, explain yourself a little more clearly to me and to these gentlemen here. I cannot understand what you mean. Do you mean that I teach the young to believe in some gods, but not in the gods of the state? Do you accuse me of teaching them to believe in strange gods? If that is your meaning, I myself believe in some gods, and my crime is not that of complete atheism. Or do you mean that I do not believe in the gods at all myself, and that I teach other people not to believe in them either? c

MELETUS: I mean that you do not believe in the gods in any way whatever.

SOCRATES: You amaze me, Meletus! Why do you say that? Do you mean that I believe neither the sun nor the moon to be gods, like other men? d

MELETUS: I swear he does not, judges. He says that the sun is a stone, and the moon earth.

SOCRATES: My dear Meletus, do you think that you are prosecuting Anaxagoras? You must have a very poor opinion of these men, and think them illiterate, if you imagine that they do not know that the works of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of these doctrines. And so young men learn these things from me, when they can often buy them
 e in the theater for a drachma at most, and laugh at Socrates were he to pretend that these doctrines, which are very peculiar doctrines, too, were his own. But please tell me, do you really think that I do not believe in the gods at all?

MELETUS: Most certainly I do. You are a complete atheist.

SOCRATES: No one believes that, Meletus, not even you yourself. It seems to me, Athenians, that Meletus is very insolent and reckless, and that he is prosecuting me simply
 27 out of insolence, recklessness, and youthful bravado. For he seems to be testing me, by asking me a riddle that has no answer. "Will this wise Socrates," he says to himself, "see that I am joking and contradicting myself? Or shall I deceive him and everyone else who hears me?" Meletus seems to me to contradict himself in his indictment: it is as if he were to say, "Socrates is guilty of not believing in the gods, but believes in the gods." This is joking.

Now, my friends, let us see why I think that this is his meaning. You must answer
 b me, Meletus, and you, Athenians, must remember the request which I made to you at the start, and not interrupt me with shouts if I talk in my usual manner.

Is there any man, Meletus, who believes in the existence of things pertaining to men and not in the existence of men? Make him answer the question, gentlemen, without these interruptions. Is there any man who believes in the existence of horsemanship and not in the existence of horses? Or in flute playing, and not in flute players? There is
 c not, my friend. If you will not answer, I will tell both you and the judges. But you must answer my next question. Is there any man who believes in the existence of divine things and not in the existence of divinities?

MELETUS: There is not.

SOCRATES: I am very glad that these gentlemen have managed to extract an answer from you. Well then, you say that I believe in divine things, whether they be old or new, and that I teach others to believe in them. At any rate, according to your statement, I believe in divine things. That you have sworn in your indictment. But if I believe in divine things, I suppose it follows necessarily that I believe in divinities. Is it not so? It is. I assume that you grant that, as you do not answer. But do we not believe that
 d divinities are either gods themselves or the children of the gods? Do you admit that?

MELETUS: I do.

SOCRATES: Then you admit that I believe in divinities. Now, if these divinities are gods, then, as I say, you are joking and asking a riddle, and asserting that I do not believe in the gods, and at the same time that I do, since I believe in divinities. But if these divinities are the illegitimate children of the gods, either by the nymphs or by other mothers, as they are said to be, then, I ask, what man could believe in the existence of the children of the
 e gods, and not in the existence of the gods? That would be as absurd as believing in the existence of the offspring of horses and asses, and not in the existence of horses and asses. You must have indicted me in this manner, Meletus, either to test me or because you could not
 28 find any act of injustice that you could accuse me of with truth. But you will never contrive to persuade any man with any sense at all that a belief in divine things and things of the gods does not necessarily involve a belief in divinities, and in the gods.

But in truth, Athenians, I do not think that I need say very much to prove that I have not committed the act of injustice for which Meletus is prosecuting me. What I have said is enough to prove that. But be assured it is certainly true, as I have already told you, that I have aroused much indignation. That is what will cause my condemnation if I am

condemned; not Meletus nor Anytus either, but that prejudice and resentment of the multitude which have been the destruction of many good men before me, and I think will be so again. There is no prospect that I shall be the last victim. b

Perhaps someone will say: “Are you not ashamed, Socrates, of leading a life which is very likely now to cause your death?” I should answer him with justice, and say: “My friend, if you think that a man of any worth at all ought to reckon the chances of life and death when he acts, or that he ought to think of anything but whether he is acting justly or unjustly, and as a good or a bad man would act, you are mistaken. According to you, the demigods who died at Troy would be foolish, and among them c Achilles, who thought nothing of danger when the alternative was disgrace. For when his mother—and she was a goddess—addressed him, when he was resolved to slay Hector, in this fashion, ‘My son, if you avenge the death of your comrade Patroclus and slay Hector, you will die yourself, for fate awaits you next after Hector.’ When he heard this, he scorned danger and death; he feared much more to live a coward and not to davenge his friend. ‘Let me punish the evildoer and afterwards die,’ he said, ‘that I may not remain here by the beaked ships jeered at, encumbering the earth.’”* Do you suppose that he thought of danger or of death? For this, Athenians, I believe to be the truth. Wherever a man’s station is, whether he has chosen it of his own will, or whether he has been placed at it by his commander, there it is his duty to remain and face the danger without thinking of death or of any other thing except disgrace.

When the generals whom you chose to command me, Athenians, assigned me my station during the battles of Potidaea, Amphipolis, and Delium, I remained where they e stationed me and ran the risk of death, like other men. It would be very strange conduct on my part if I were to desert my station now from fear of death or of any other thing when the god has commanded me—as I am persuaded that he has done—to spend my life in searching for wisdom, and in examining myself and others. That would indeed be a very strange 29 thing. Then certainly I might with justice be brought to trial for not believing in the gods, for I should be disobeying the oracle, and fearing death and thinking myself wise when I was not wise. For to fear death, my friends, is only to think ourselves wise without really being wise, for it is to think that we know what we do not know. For no one knows whether death may not be the greatest good that can happen to man. But men fear it as if they knew quite well that it was the greatest of evils. And what is this but that shameful ignorance of b thinking that we know what we do not know? In this matter, too, my friends, perhaps I am different from the multitude. And if I were to claim to be at all wiser than others, it would be because, not knowing very much about the other world, I do not think I know. But I do know very well that it is evil and disgraceful to do an unjust act, and to disobey my superior, whether man or god. I will never do what I know to be evil, and shrink in fear from what I do not know to be good or evil. Even if you acquit me now, and do not listen to c Anytus’ argument that, if I am to be acquitted, I ought never to have been brought to trial at all, and that, as it is, you are bound to put me to death because, as he said, if I escape, all your sons will be utterly corrupted by practicing what Socrates teaches. If you were therefore to say to me, “Socrates, this time we will not listen to Anytus. We will let you go, but on the condition that you give up this investigation of yours, and philosophy. If you are found following these pursuits again, you shall die.” I say, if you offered to let me go, on these terms, I should reply: “Athenians, I hold you in the highest regard and affection, but d I will be persuaded by the god rather than you. As long as I have breath and strength I will not give up philosophy and exhorting you and declaring the truth to every one of you whom

*Homer, *Iliad*, xviii, 96, 98.

I meet, saying, as I am accustomed, ‘My good friend, you are a citizen of Athens, a city which is very great and very famous for its wisdom and power—are you not ashamed of caring so much for the making of money and for fame and prestige, when you neither think nor care about wisdom and truth and the improvement of your soul?’ ” If he disputes my words and says that he does care about these things, I shall not at once release him and go away: I shall question him and cross-examine him and test him. If I think that he has not attained excellence, though he says that he has, I shall reproach him for undervaluing the most valuable things, and overvaluing those that are less valuable. This I shall do to everyone whom I meet, young or old, citizen or stranger, but especially to citizens, since they are more closely related to me. This, you must recognize, the god has commanded me to do. And I think that no greater good has ever befallen you in the state than my service to the god. For I spend my whole life in going about and persuading you all to give your first and greatest care to the improvement of your souls, and not till you have done that to think of your bodies or your wealth. And I tell you that wealth does not bring excellence, but that wealth, and every other good thing which men have, whether in public or in private, comes from excellence. If then I corrupt the youth by this teaching, these things must be harmful. But if any man says that I teach anything else, there is nothing in what he says. And therefore, Athenians, I say, whether you are persuaded by Anytus or not, whether you acquit me or not, I shall not change my way of life; no, not if I have to die for it many times.

Do not interrupt me, Athenians, with your shouts. Remember the request which I made to you, and do not interrupt my words. I think that it will profit you to hear them. I am going to say something more to you, at which you may be inclined to protest, but do not do that. Be sure that if you put me to death, I who am what I have told you that I am, you will do yourselves more harm than me. Meletus and Anytus can do me no harm: that is impossible, for I am sure it is not allowed that a good man be injured by a worse. He may indeed kill me, or drive me into exile, or deprive me of my civil rights. Perhaps Meletus and others think those things great evils. But I do not think so. I think it is a much greater evil to do what he is doing now, and to try to put a man to death unjustly. And now, Athenians, I am not arguing in my own defense at all, as you might expect me to do, but rather in yours in order you may not make a mistake about the gift of the god to you by condemning me. For if you put me to death, you will not easily find another who, if I may use a ludicrous comparison, clings to the state as a sort of gadfly to a horse that is large and well-bred but rather sluggish because of its size, so that it needs to be aroused. It seems to me that the god has attached me like that to the state, for I am constantly alighting upon you at every point to arouse, persuade, and reproach each of you all day long. You will not easily find anyone else, my friends, to fill my place; and if you are persuaded by me, you will spare my life. You are indignant, as drowsy persons are when they are awakened, and, of course, if you are persuaded by Anytus, you could easily kill me with a single blow, and then sleep on undisturbed for the rest of your lives, unless the god in his care for you sends another to arouse you. And you may easily see that it is the god who has given me to your city; for it is not human, the way in which I have neglected all my own interests and allowed my private affairs to be neglected for so many years, while occupying myself unceasingly in your interests, going to each of you privately, like a father or an elder brother, trying to persuade him to care for human excellence. There would have been a reason for it, if I had gained any advantage by this, or if I had been paid for my exhortations; but you see yourselves that my accusers, though they accuse me of everything else without shame, have not had the shamelessness to say that I ever either exacted or demanded payment. To that they have no witness. And I think that I have sufficient witness to the truth of what I say—my poverty.

Perhaps it may seem strange to you that, though I go about giving this advice privately and meddling in others' affairs, yet I do not venture to come forward in the assembly and advise the state. You have often heard me speak of my reason for this, and in many places: it is that I have a certain divine guide, which is what Meletus has caricatured in his indictment. I have had it from childhood. It is a kind of voice which, whenever I hear it, always turns me back from something which I was going to do, but never urges me to act. It is this which forbids me to take part in politics. And I think it does well to forbid me. For, Athenians, it is quite certain that, if I had attempted to take part in politics, I should have perished at once and long ago without doing any good either to you or to myself. And do not be indignant with me for telling the truth. There is no man who will preserve his life for long, either in Athens or elsewhere, if he firmly opposes the multitude, and tries to prevent the commission of much injustice and illegality in the state. He who would really fight for justice must do so as a private citizen, not as a political figure, if he is to preserve his life, even for a short time.

I will prove to you that this is so by very strong evidence, not by mere words, but by what you value more—actions. Listen, then, to what has happened to me, that you may know that there is no man who could make me consent to commit an unjust act from the fear of death, but that I would perish at once rather than give way. What I am going to tell you may be commonplace in the law court; nevertheless, it is true. The only office that I ever held in the state, Athenians, was that of councilor. When you wished to try the ten admirals who did not rescue their men after the battle of Arginusae as a group, which was illegal, as you all came to think afterwards, the executive committee was composed of members of the tribe Antiochis, to which I belong.* On that occasion I alone of the committee members opposed your illegal action and gave my vote against you. The orators were ready to impeach me and arrest me; and you were clamoring and urging them on with your shouts. But I thought that I ought to face the danger, with law and justice on my side, rather than join with you in your unjust proposal, from fear of imprisonment or death. That was when the state was democratic. When the oligarchy came in, The Thirty sent for me, with four others, to the council-chamber, and ordered us to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, that they might put him to death. They were in the habit of frequently giving similar orders to many others, wishing to implicate as many as possible in their crimes. But then I again proved, not by mere words, but by my actions, that, if I may speak bluntly, I do not care a straw for death; but that I do care very much indeed about not doing anything unjust or impious. That government with all its power did not terrify me into doing anything unjust. When we left the council-chamber, the other four went over to Salamis and brought Leon across to Athens; I went home. And if the rule of The Thirty had not been overthrown soon afterwards, I should very likely have been put to death for what I did then. Many of you will be my witnesses in this matter.**

*The Council was the administrative body in Athens. Actual administrative functions were performed by an executive committee of the Council, and the members of this committee were recruited from each tribe in turn. The case Socrates is alluding to was that of the admirals who were accused of having failed to rescue the crews of ships that sank during the battle of Arginusae. The six admirals who were actually put on trial were condemned as a group and executed.

**There is evidence that Meletus was one of the four who turned in Leon. Socrates' recalling this earlier lapse from legal procedure is probably also a thrust at Anytus. The Thirty successfully implicated so many Athenians in their crimes that an amnesty was declared, which Anytus strongly favored, in order to enlist wider support for the restored democracy. Thus those who were really implicated could now no longer be prosecuted legally, but Socrates is himself being illegally prosecuted (as he now goes on to suggest) because he was guilty of having associated with such "pupils" as Critias, who was a leader of The Thirty.

Now do you think that I could have remained alive all these years if I had taken part in public affairs, and had always maintained the cause of justice like a good man, and had held it a paramount duty, as it is, to do so? Certainly not, Athenians, nor could any other man. But throughout my whole life, both in private and in public, whenever I have had to take part in public affairs, you will find I have always been the same and have never yielded unjustly to anyone; no, not to those whom my enemies falsely assert to have been my pupils. But I was never anyone's teacher. I have never withheld myself from anyone, young or old, who was anxious to hear me converse while I was making my investigation; neither do I converse for payment, and refuse to converse without payment. I am ready to ask questions of rich and poor alike, and if any man wishes to answer me, and then listen to what I have to say, he may. And I cannot justly be charged with causing these men to turn out good or bad, for I never either taught or professed to teach any of them any knowledge whatever. And if any man asserts that he ever learned or heard anything from me in private which everyone else did not hear as well as he, be sure that he does not speak the truth.

Why is it, then, that people delight in spending so much time in my company? You have heard why, Athenians. I told you the whole truth when I said that they delight in hearing me examine persons who think that they are wise when they are not wise. It is certainly very amusing to listen to. And, as I have said, the god has commanded me to examine men, in oracles and in dreams and in every way in which the divine will was ever declared to man. This is the truth, Athenians, and if it were not the truth, it would be easily refuted. For if it were really the case that I have already corrupted some of the young men, and am now corrupting others, surely some of them, finding as they grew older that I had given them bad advice in their youth, would have come forward today to accuse me and take their revenge. Or if they were unwilling to do so themselves, surely their relatives, their fathers or brothers, or others, would, if I had done them any harm, have remembered it and taken their revenge. Certainly I see many of them in court. Here is Crito, of my own district and of my own age, the father of Critobulus; here is Lysanias of Sphettus, the father of Aeschines; here is also Antiphon of Cephisus, the father of Epigenes. Then here are others whose brothers have spent their time in my company—Nicostratus, the son of Theozotides and brother of Theodotus—and Theodotus is dead, so he at least cannot entreat his brother to be silent; here is Paralus, the son of Demodocus and the brother of Theages; here is Adeimantus, the son of Ariston, whose brother is Plato here; and Aeatodorus, whose brother is Aristodorus. And I can name many others to you, some of whom Meletus ought to have called as witnesses in the course of his own speech; but if he forgot to call them then, let him call them now—I will yield the floor to him—and tell us if he has any such evidence. No, on the contrary, my friends, you will find all these men ready to support me, the corrupter who has injured their relatives, as Meletus and Anytus call me. Those of them who have been already corrupted might perhaps have some reason for supporting me, but what reason can their relatives have who are grown up, and who are uncorrupted, except the reason of truth and justice that they know very well that Meletus is lying, and that I am speaking the truth?

Well, my friends, this, and perhaps more like this, is pretty much all I have to offer in my defense. There may be some one among you who will be indignant when he remembers how, even in a less important trial than this, he begged and entreated the judges, with many tears, to acquit him, and brought forward his children and many of his friends and relatives in court in order to appeal to your feelings; and then finds that I shall do none of these things, though I am in what he would think the supreme danger. Perhaps he will harden himself against me when he notices this; it may make him angry, and he may cast his vote in anger. If it is so with any of you—I do not suppose that it is, but in case it should be so—I think that I should answer him reasonably if I said: "My friend,

I have relatives, too, for, in the words of Homer, I am ‘not born of an oak or a rock’* but of flesh and blood.” And so, Athenians, I have relatives, and I have three sons, one of them nearly grown up, and the other two still children. Yet I will not bring any of them forward before you and implore you to acquit me. And why will I do none of these things? It is not from arrogance, Athenians, nor because I lack respect for you—whether e
or not I can face death bravely is another question—but for my own good name, and for your good name, and for the good name of the whole state. I do not think it right, at my age and with my reputation, to do anything of that kind. Rightly or wrongly, men have made up their minds that in some way Socrates is different from the multitude of men. And it will be shameful if those of you who are thought to excel in wisdom, or in bravery, 5
or in any other excellence, are going to act in this fashion. I have often seen men of reputation behaving in an extraordinary way at their trial, as if they thought it a terrible fate to be killed, and as though they expected to live for ever if you did not put them to death. Such men seem to me to bring shame upon the state, for any stranger would suppose that the best and most eminent Athenians, who are selected by their fellow citizens to hold office, and for other honors, are no better than women. Those of you, Athenians, who have any reputation at all ought not to do these things, and you ought not to allow us to do them. You should show that you will be much more ready to condemn men who make the state ridiculous by these pathetic performances than men who remain quiet.

But apart from the question of reputation, my friends, I do not think that it is right to entreat the judge to acquit us, or to escape condemnation in that way. It is our duty to c
teach and persuade him. He does not sit to give away justice as a favor, but to pronounce judgment; and he has sworn, not to favor any man whom he would like to favor, but to judge according to law. And, therefore, we ought not to encourage you in the habit of breaking your oaths; and you ought not to allow yourselves to fall into this habit, for then neither you nor we would be acting piously. Therefore, Athenians, do not require me to do these things, for I believe them to be neither good nor just nor pious; especially, do not ask me to do them today when Meletus is prosecuting me for impiety. For d
were I to be successful and persuade you by my entreaties to break your oaths, I should be clearly teaching you to believe that there are no gods, and I should be simply accusing myself by my defense of not believing in them. But, Athenians, that is very far from the truth. I do believe in the gods as no one of my accusers believes in them; and to you and to the god I commit my cause to be decided as is best for you and for me.

(He is found guilty by 281 votes to 220.)

I am not indignant at the verdict which you have given, Athenians, for many reasons. I expected that you would find me guilty; and I am not so much surprised at that as at the numbers of the votes. I certainly never thought that the majority against me would have been so narrow. But now it seems that if only thirty votes had changed sides, I should have escaped. So I think that I have escaped Meletus, as it is; and not only have I escaped him, for it is perfectly clear that if Anytus and Lycon had not come forward to accuse me, too, he would not have obtained the fifth part of the votes, and would have had to pay a fine of a thousand drachmae. b

So he proposes death as the penalty. Be it so. And what alternative penalty shall I propose to you, Athenians?*** What I deserve, of course, must I not? What then do I deserve to pay or to suffer for having determined not to spend my life in ease? I

*Homer, *Odyssey*, xix, 163.

***For certain crimes no penalty was fixed by Athenian law. Having reached a verdict of guilty, the court had still to decide between the alternative penalties proposed by the prosecution and the defense.

neglected the things which most men value, such as wealth, and family interests, and military commands, and public oratory, and all the civic appointments, and social clubs, and political factions, that there are in Athens; for I thought that I was really too honest a man to preserve my life if I engaged in these affairs. So I did not go where I should have done no good either to you or to myself. I went, instead, to each one of you privately to do him, as I say, the greatest of benefits, and tried to persuade him not to think of his affairs until he had thought of himself and tried to make himself as good and wise as possible, nor to think of the affairs of Athens until he had thought of Athens herself; and to care for other things in the same manner. Then what do I deserve for such a life?

Something good, Athenians, if I am really to propose what I deserve; and something good which it would be suitable for me to receive. Then what is a suitable reward to be given to a poor benefactor who requires leisure to exhort you? There is no reward, Athenians, so suitable for him as receiving free meals in the prytaneum. It is a much more suitable reward for him than for any of you who has won a victory at the Olympic games with his horse or his chariots. Such a man only makes you seem happy, but I make you really happy; he is not in want, and I am. So if I am to propose the penalty which I really deserve, I propose this—free meals in the prytaneum.

Perhaps you think me stubborn and arrogant in what I am saying now, as in what I said about the entreaties and tears. It is not so, Athenians. It is rather that I am convinced that I never wronged any man voluntarily, though I cannot persuade you of that, since we have conversed together only a little time. If there were a law at Athens, as there is elsewhere, not to finish a trial of life and death in a single day, I think that I could have persuaded you; but now it is not easy in so short a time to clear myself of great prejudices. But when I am persuaded that I have never wronged any man, I shall certainly not wrong myself, or admit that I deserve to suffer any evil, or propose any evil for myself as a penalty. Why should I? Lest I should suffer the penalty which Meletus proposes when I say that I do not know whether it is a good or an evil? Shall I choose instead of it something which I know to be an evil, and propose that as a penalty? Shall I propose imprisonment? And why should I pass the rest of my days in prison, the slave of successive officials? Or shall I propose a fine, with imprisonment until it is paid? I have told you why I will not do that. I should have to remain in prison, for I have no money to pay a fine with. Shall I then propose exile? Perhaps you would agree to that. Life would indeed be very dear to me if I were unreasonable enough to expect that strangers would cheerfully tolerate my discussions and arguments when you who are my fellow citizens cannot endure them, and have found them so irksome and odious to you that you are seeking now to be relieved of them. No, indeed, Athenians, that is not likely. A fine life I should lead for an old man if I were to withdraw from Athens and pass the rest of my days in wandering from city to city, and continually being expelled. For I know very well that the young men will listen to me wherever I go, as they do here. If I drive them away, they will persuade their elders to expel me; if I do not drive them away, their fathers and other relatives will expel me for their sakes.

Perhaps someone will say, “Why cannot you withdraw from Athens, Socrates, and hold your peace?” It is the most difficult thing in the world to make you understand why I cannot do that. If I say that I cannot hold my peace because that would be to disobey the god, you will think that I am not in earnest and will not believe me. And if I tell you that no greater good can happen to a man than to discuss human excellence every day and the other matters about which you have heard me arguing and examining myself and others and that an unexamined life is not worth living, then you will believe me still less. But that is so, my friends, though it is not easy to persuade you. And, what is more, I am not



Despite refuting his accusers (as recorded in the *Apology*), Socrates was found guilty of impiety toward the gods and of corrupting the youth. He was sentenced to die by drinking the poison hemlock. (Corbis-Bettmann)

accustomed to think that I deserve anything evil. If I had been rich, I would have proposed as large a fine as I could pay: that would have done me no harm. But I am not rich enough to pay a fine unless you are willing to fix it at a sum within my means. Perhaps I could pay you a mina, so I propose that. Plato here, Athenians, and Crito, and Critobulus, and Apollodorus bid me propose thirty minae, and they guarantee its payment. So I propose thirty minae. Their security will be sufficient to you for the money.

(He is condemned to death.)

You have not gained very much time, Athenians, and at the price of the slurs of those who wish to revile the state. And they will say that you put Socrates, a wise man, to death. For they will certainly call me wise, whether I am wise or not, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited for a little while, your wishes would have been fulfilled in the course of nature; for you see that I am an old man, far advanced in years, and near to death. I am saying this not to all of you, only to those who have voted for my death. And to them I have something else to say. Perhaps, my friends, you think that I have been convicted because I was wanting in the arguments by which I could have persuaded you to acquit me, if I had thought it right to do or to say anything to escape punishment. It is not so. I have been convicted because I was wanting, not in arguments, but in impudence and shamelessness—because I would not plead before you as you would have liked to hear me plead, or appeal to you with weeping and wailing, or say and do

- many other things which I maintain are unworthy of me, but which you have been accustomed to from other men. But when I was defending myself, I thought that I ought not to do anything unworthy of a free man because of the danger which I ran, and I have not changed my mind now. I would very much rather defend myself as I did, and die,
- 39 than as you would have had me do, and live. Both in a lawsuit and in war, there are some things which neither I nor any other man may do in order to escape from death. In battle, a man often sees that he may at least escape from death by throwing down his arms and falling on his knees before the pursuer to beg for his life. And there are many other ways of avoiding death in every danger if a man is willing to say and to do anything.
- b But, my friends, I think that it is a much harder thing to escape from wickedness than from death, for wickedness is swifter than death. And now I, who am old and slow, have been overtaken by the slower pursuer: and my accusers, who are clever and swift, have been overtaken by the swifter pursuer—wickedness. And now I shall go away, sentenced by you to death; they will go away, sentenced by truth to wickedness and injustice. And I abide by this award as well as they. Perhaps it was right for these things to be so. I think that they are fairly balanced.
- c And now I wish to prophesy to you, Athenians, who have condemned me. For I am going to die, and that is the time when men have most prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who have sentenced me to death that a far more severe punishment than you have inflicted on me will surely overtake you as soon as I am dead. You have done this thing, thinking that you will be relieved from having to give an account of
- d your lives. But I say that the result will be very different. There will be more men who will call you to account, whom I have held back, though you did not recognize it. And they will be harsher toward you than I have been, for they will be younger, and you will be more indignant with them. For if you think that you will restrain men from reproaching you for not living as you should, by putting them to death, you are very much mistaken. That way of escape is neither possible nor honorable. It is much more honorable and much easier not to suppress others, but to make yourselves as good as you can.
- e This is my parting prophecy to you who have condemned me.
- With you who have acquitted me I should like to discuss this thing that has happened, while the authorities are busy, and before I go to the place where I have to die. So, remain with me until I go: there is no reason why we should not talk with
- 40 each other while it is possible. I wish to explain to you, as my friends, the meaning of what has happened to me. An amazing thing has happened to me, judges—for I am right in calling you judges.* The prophetic guide has been constantly with me all through my life till now, opposing me even in trivial matters if I were not going to act rightly. And now you yourselves see what has happened to me—a thing which
- b might be thought, and which is sometimes actually reckoned, the supreme evil. But the divine guide did not oppose me when I was leaving my house in the morning, nor when I was coming up here to the court, nor at any point in my speech when I was going to say anything; though at other times it has often stopped me in the very act of speaking. But now, in this matter, it has never once opposed me, either in my words or my actions. I will tell you what I believe to be the reason. This thing that
- c has come upon me must be a good; and those of us who think that death is an evil must needs be mistaken. I have a clear proof that that is so; for my accustomed guide

*The form of address hitherto has always been "Athenians," or "my friends." The "judges" in an Athenian court were simply the members of the jury.

would certainly have opposed me if I had not been going to meet with something good.

And if we reflect in another way, we shall see that we may well hope that death is a good. For the state of death is one of two things: either the dead man wholly ceases to be and loses all consciousness or, as we are told, it is a change and a migration of the soul to another place. And if death is the absence of all consciousness, and like the sleep of one whose slumbers are unbroken by any dreams, it will be a wonderful gain. For if a man had to select that night in which he slept so soundly that he did not even dream, and had to compare with it all the other nights and days of his life, and then had to say how many days and nights in his life he had spent better and more pleasantly than this night, I think that a private person, nay, even the Great King of Persia himself, would find them easy to count, compared with the others. If that is the nature of death, I for one count it a gain. For then it appears that all time is nothing more than a single night. But if death is a journey to another place, and what we are told is true—that all who have died are there—what good could be greater than this, my judges? Would a journey not be worth taking, at the end of which, in the other world, we should be delivered from the pretended judges here and should find the true judges who are said to sit in judgment below, such as Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and the other demigods who were just in their own lives? Or what would you not give to converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? I am willing to die many times if this be true. And for my own part I should find it wonderful to meet there Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and the other men of old who have died through an unjust judgment, and to compare my experiences with theirs. That I think would be no small pleasure. And, above all, I could spend my time in examining those who are there, as I examine men here, and in finding out which of them is wise, and which of them thinks himself wise when he is not wise. What would we not give, my judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great expedition against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or countless other men and women whom we could name? It would be an inexpressible happiness to converse with them and to live with them and to examine them. Assuredly there they do not put men to death for doing that. For besides the other ways in which they are happier than we are, they are immortal, at least if what we are told is true.

And you too, judges, must face death hopefully, and believe this one truth, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. His affairs are not neglected by the gods; and what has happened to me today has not happened by chance. I am persuaded that it was better for me to die now, and to be released from trouble; and that was the reason why the guide never turned me back. And so I am not at all angry with my accusers or with those who have condemned me to die. Yet it was not with this in mind that they accused me and condemned me, but meaning to do me an injury. So far I may blame them.

Yet I have one request to make of them. When my sons grow up, punish them, my friends, and harass them in the same way that I have harassed you, if they seem to you to care for riches or for any other thing more than excellence; and if they think that they are something when they are really nothing, reproach them, as I have reproached you, for not caring for what they should, and for thinking that they are something when really they are nothing. And if you will do this, I myself and my sons will have received justice from you.

But now the time has come, and we must go away—I to die, and you to live. Which is better is known to the god alone.

CRITO

Characters

Socrates

Crito

Scene—The Prison of Socrates

- 43 SOCRATES: Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Is it not still early?
 CRITO: Yes, very early.
 SOCRATES: About what time is it?
 CRITO: It is just daybreak.
 SOCRATES: I wonder that the jailer was willing to let you in.
 CRITO: He knows me now, Socrates; I come here so often, and besides, I have given him a tip.
 SOCRATES: Have you been here long?
 CRITO: Yes, some time.
- b SOCRATES: Then why did you sit down without speaking? Why did you not wake me at once?
 CRITO: Indeed, Socrates, I wish that I myself were not so sleepless and sorrowful. But I have been wondering to see how soundly you sleep. And I purposely did not wake you, for I was anxious not to disturb your repose. Often before, all through your life, I have thought that your temperament was a happy one; and I think so more than ever now when I see how easily and calmly you bear the calamity that has come to you.
- c SOCRATES: Nay, Crito, it would be absurd if at my age I were disturbed at having to die.
 CRITO: Other men as old are overtaken by similar calamities, Socrates; but their age does not save them from being disturbed by their fate.
 SOCRATES: That is so; but tell me why are you here so early? Crito. I am the bearer of sad news, Socrates; not sad, it seems, for you, but for me and for all your friends, both sad and hard to bear; and for none of them, I think, is it as hard to bear as it is for me.
- d SOCRATES: What is it? Has the ship come from Delos, at the arrival of which I am to die?
 CRITO: No, it has not actually arrived, but I think that it will be here today, from the news which certain persons have brought from Sunium, who left it there. It is clear from their report that it will be here today; and so, Socrates, tomorrow your life will have to end.
- 44 SOCRATES: Well, Crito, may it end well. Be it so, if so the gods will. But I do not think that the ship will be here today,
 CRITO: Why do you suppose not?
 SOCRATES: I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the ship arrives, am I not?*
- CRITO: That is what the authorities say.
 SOCRATES: Then I do not think that it will come today, but tomorrow. I am counting on a dream I had a little while ago in the night, so it seems to be fortunate that you did not wake me.

*Criminals could not be put to death while the sacred ship was away on its voyage.

CRITO: And what was this dream?

SOCRATES: A fair and beautiful woman, clad in white, seemed to come to me, and call me and say, “O Socrates—On the third day shall you fertile Phthia reach.”* b

CRITO: What a strange dream, Socrates!

SOCRATES: But its meaning is clear, at least to me, Crito.

CRITO: Yes, too clear, it seems. But, O my good Socrates, I beg you for the last time to listen to me and save yourself. For to me your death will be more than a single disaster; not only shall I lose a friend the like of whom I shall never find again, but many persons who do not know you and me well will think that I might have saved you if I ad been willing to spend money, but that I neglected to do so. And what reputation could be c more disgraceful than the reputation of caring more for money than for one’s friends? The public will never believe that we were anxious to save you, but that you yourself refused to escape.

SOCRATES: But, my dear Crito, why should we care so much about public opinion? Reasonable men, of whose opinion it is worth our while to think, will believe that we acted as we really did.

CRITO: But you see, Socrates, that it is necessary to care about public opinion, too. d This very thing that has happened to you proves that the multitude can do a man not the least, but almost the greatest harm, if he is falsely accused to them.

SOCRATES: I wish that the multitude were able to do a man the greatest harm, Crito, for then they would be able to do him the greatest good, too. That would have been fine. But, as it is, they can do neither. They cannot make a man either wise or foolish: they act wholly at random.

CRITO: Well, as you wish. But tell me this, Socrates. You surely are not anxious e about me and your other friends, and afraid lest, if you escape, the informers would say that we stole you away, and get us into trouble, and involve us in a great deal of expense, or perhaps in the loss of all our property, and, it may be, bring some other punishment upon us besides? If you have any fear of that kind, dismiss it. For of course we are 45 bound to run these risks, and still greater risks than these, if necessary, in saving you. So do not, I beg you, refuse to listen to me.

SOCRATES: I am anxious about that, Crito, and about much besides.

CRITO: Then have no fear on that score. There are men who, for no very large sum, are ready to bring you out of prison into safety. And then, you know, these informers are cheaply bought, and there would be no need to spend much upon them. My fortune is at b your service, and I think that it is adequate; and if you have any feeling about making use of my money, there are strangers in Athens whom you know, ready to use theirs; and one of them, Simmias of Thebes, has actually brought enough for this very purpose. And Cebes and many others are ready, too. And therefore, I repeat, do not shrink from saving yourself on that ground. And do not let what you said in the court—that if you went into exile you would not know what to do with yourself—stand in your way; for there are many places for you to go to, where you will be welcomed. If you choose to go to c Thessaly, I have friends there who will make much of you and protect you from any annoyance from the people of Thessaly.

And besides, Socrates, I think that you will be doing what is unjust if you abandon your life when you might preserve it. You are simply playing into your enemies’ hands; it is exactly what they wanted—to destroy you. And what is more, to me you seem to be abandoning your children, too. You will leave them to take their chance in

*Homer, *Iliad*, ix, 363.

d life, as far as you are concerned, when you might bring them up and educate them. Most likely their fate will be the usual fate of children who are left orphans. But you ought not to bring children into the world unless you mean to take the trouble of bringing them up and educating them. It seems to me that you are choosing the easy way, and not the way of a good and brave man, as you ought, when you have been talking all your life e long of the value that you set upon human excellence. For my part, I feel ashamed both for you and for us who are your friends. Men will think that the whole thing which has happened to you—your appearance in court to face trial, when you need not have appeared at all; the very way in which the trial was conducted; and then last of all this, the crowning absurdity of the whole affair—is due to our cowardice. It will look as if 46 we had shirked the danger out of miserable cowardice; for we did not save you, and you did not save yourself, when it was quite possible to do so if we had been good for anything at all. Take care, Socrates, lest these things be not evil only, but also dishonorable to you and to us. Reflect, then, or rather the time for reflection is past; we must make up our minds. And there is only one plan possible. Everything must be done tonight. If we delay any longer, we are lost. Socrates, I implore you not to refuse to listen to me.

b SOCRATES: My dear Crito, if your anxiety to save me be right, it is most valuable; but if not, the greater it is the harder it will be to cope with. We must reflect, then, whether we are to do as you say or not; for I am still what I always have been—a man who will accept no argument but that which on reflection I find to be truest. I cannot cast aside my former arguments because this misfortune has come to me. They seem to c me to be as true as ever they were, and I respect and honor the same ones as I used to. And if we have no better argument to substitute for them, I certainly shall not agree to your proposal, not even though the power of the multitude should scare us with fresh terrors, as children are scared with hobgoblins, and inflict upon us new fines and imprisonments, and deaths. What is the most appropriate way of examining the question? Shall we go back first to what you say about opinions, and ask if we used to be d right in thinking that we ought to pay attention to some opinions, and not to others? Were we right in saying so before I was condemned to die, and has it now become apparent that we were talking at random and arguing for the sake of argument, and that it was really nothing but playful nonsense? I am anxious, Crito, to examine our former argument with your help, and to see whether my present circumstance will appear to me to have affected its truth in any way or not; and whether we are to set it aside, or to yield assent to it. Those of us who thought at all seriously always used to say, I think, exactly e what I said just now, namely, that we ought to respect some of the opinions which men form, and not others. Tell me, Crito, I beg you, do you not think that they were right? 47 For you in all probability will not have to die tomorrow, and your judgment will not be biased by that circumstance. Reflect, then, do you not think it reasonable to say that we should not respect all the opinions of men but only some, nor the opinions of all men but only of some men? What do you think? Is not this true?

CRITO: It is.

SOCRATES: And we should respect the good opinions, and not the worthless ones?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: But the good opinions are those of the wise, and the worthless ones those of the foolish?

CRITO: Of course.

b SOCRATES: And what did we say about this? Does a man who is in training, and who is serious about it, pay attention to the praise and blame and opinion of all men, or only of the one man who is a doctor or a trainer?

CRITO: He pays attention only to the opinion of the one man.

SOCRATES: Then he ought to fear the blame and welcome the praise of this one man, not of the multitude?

CRITO: Clearly.

SOCRATES: Then he must act and exercise, and eat and drink in whatever way the one man who is his director, and who understands the matter, tells him; not as others tell him?

CRITO: That is so.

SOCRATES: Good. But if he disobeys this one man, and disregards his opinion and his praise, and respects instead what the many say, who understand nothing of the matter, will he not suffer for it? c

CRITO: Of course he will.

SOCRATES: And how will he suffer? In what way and in what part of himself?

CRITO: Of course in his body. That is disabled.

SOCRATES: You are right. And, Crito, to be brief, is it not the same in everything? And, therefore, in questions of justice and injustice, and of the base and the honorable, and of good and evil, which we are now examining, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and fear that, or the opinion of the one man who understands these matters (if we can find him), and feel more shame and fear before him than before all other men? For if we do not follow him, we shall corrupt and maim that part of us which, we used to say, is improved by justice and disabled by injustice. Or is this not so? d

CRITO: No, Socrates, I agree with you.

SOCRATES: Now, if, by listening to the opinions of those who do not understand, we disable that part of us which is improved by health and corrupted by disease, is our life worth living when it is corrupt? It is the body, is it not? e

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Is life worth living with the body corrupted and crippled?

CRITO: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: Then is life worth living when that part of us which is maimed by injustice and benefited by justice is corrupt? Or do we consider that part of us, whatever it is, which has to do with justice and injustice to be of less consequence than our body? 48

CRITO: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: But more valuable?

CRITO: Yes, much more so.

SOCRATES: Then, my good friend, we must not think so much of what the many will say of us; we must think of what the one man who understands justice and injustice, and of what truth herself will say of us. And so you are mistaken, to begin with, when you invite us to regard the opinion of the multitude concerning the just and the honorable and the good, and their opposites. But, it may be said, the multitude can put us to death?

CRITO: Yes, that is evident. That may be said, Socrates. b

SOCRATES: True. But, my good friend, to me it appears that the conclusion which we have just reached is the same as our conclusion of former times. Now consider whether we still hold to the belief that we should set the highest value, not on living, but on living well?

CRITO: Yes, we do.

SOCRATES: And living well and honorably and justly mean the same thing: do we hold to that or not?

CRITO: We do.

SOCRATES: Then, starting from these premises, we have to consider whether it is just or not for me to try to escape from prison, without the consent of the Athenians. If we find c

that it is just, we will try; if not, we will give up the idea. I am afraid that considerations of expense, and of reputation, and of bringing up my children, of which you talk, Crito, are only the opinions of the many, who casually put men to death, and who would, if they could, as casually bring them to life again, without a thought. But reason, which is our guide, shows us that we can have nothing to consider but the question which I asked just now—namely, shall we be acting justly if we give money and thanks to the men who are to aid me in escaping, and if we ourselves take our respective parts in my escape? Or shall we in truth be acting unjustly if we do all this? And if we find that we should be acting unjustly, then we must not take any account either of death, or of any other evil that may be the consequence of remaining here, where we are, but only of acting unjustly.

CRITO: I think that you are right, Socrates. But what are we to do?

SOCRATES: Let us examine this question together, my friend, and if you can contradict anything that I say, do so, and I shall be persuaded. But if you cannot, do not go on repeating to me any longer, my dear friend, that I should escape without the consent of the Athenians. I am very anxious to act with your approval and consent. I do not want you to think me mistaken. But now tell me if you agree with the premise from which I start, and try to answer my questions as you think best.

CRITO: I will try.

SOCRATES: Ought we never to act unjustly voluntarily? Or may we act unjustly in some ways, and not in others? Is it the case, as we have often agreed in former times, that it is never either good or honorable to act unjustly? Or have all our former conclusions been overturned in these few days; and did we at our age fail to recognize all along, when we were seriously conversing with each other, that we were no better than children? Is not what we used to say most certainly the truth, whether the multitude agrees with us or not? Is not acting unjustly evil and shameful in every case, whether we incur a heavier or a lighter punishment as the consequence? Do we believe that?

CRITO: We do.

SOCRATES: Then we ought never to act unjustly?

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: If we ought never to act unjustly at all, ought we to repay injustice with injustice, as the multitude thinks we may?

CRITO: Clearly not.

SOCRATES: Well, then, Crito, ought we to do evil to anyone?

CRITO: Certainly I think not, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And is it just to repay evil with evil, as the multitude thinks, or unjust?

CRITO: Certainly it is unjust.

SOCRATES: For there is no difference, is there, between doing evil to a man and acting unjustly?

CRITO: True.

SOCRATES: Then we ought not to repay injustice with injustice or to do harm to any man, no matter what we may have suffered from him. And in conceding this, Crito, be careful that you do not concede more than you mean. For I know that only a few men hold, or ever will hold, this opinion. And so those who hold it and those who do not have no common ground of argument; they can of necessity only look with contempt on each other's belief. Do you therefore consider very carefully whether or not you agree with me and share my opinion. Are we to start in our inquiry from the premise that it is never right either to act unjustly, or to repay injustice with injustice, or to avenge ourselves on any man who harms us, by harming him in return? Or do you disagree with me and dissent from my premise? I myself have believed in it for a long time, and

I believe in it still. But if you differ in any way, explain to me how. If you still hold to our former opinion, listen to my next point.

CRITO: Yes, I hold to it, and I agree with you. Go on.

SOCRATES: Then, my next point, or rather my next question, is this: Ought a man to carry out his just agreements, or may he shuffle out of them?

CRITO: He ought to carry them out.

SOCRATES: Then consider. If I escape without the state's consent, shall I be injuring those whom I ought least to injure, or not? Shall I be abiding by my just agreements or not? 50

CRITO: I cannot answer your question, Socrates. I do not understand it.

SOCRATES: Consider it in this way. Suppose the laws and the commonwealth were to come and appear to me as I was preparing to run away (if that is the right phrase to describe my escape) and were to ask, "Tell us, Socrates, what have you in your mind to do? What do you mean by trying to escape but to destroy us, the laws and the whole state, so far as you are able? Do you think that a state can exist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law are of no force, and are disregarded and undermined by private individuals?" How shall we answer questions like that, Crito? Much might be said, especially by an orator, in defense of the law which makes judicial decisions supreme. Shall I reply, "But the state has injured me by judging my case unjustly?" Shall we say that? c

CRITO: Certainly we will, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And suppose the laws were to reply, "Was that our agreement? Or was it that you would abide by whatever judgments the state should pronounce?" And if we were surprised by their words, perhaps they would say, "Socrates, don't be surprised by our words, but answer us; you yourself are accustomed to ask questions and to answer them. What complaint have you against us and the state, that you are trying to destroy us? Are we not, first of all, your parents? Through us your father took your mother and brought you into the world. Tell us, have you any fault to find with those of us that are the laws of marriage?" "I have none," I should reply. "Or have you any fault to find with those of us that regulate the raising of the child and the education which you, like others, received? Did we not do well in telling your father to educate you in music and athletics?" "You did," I should say. "Well, then, since you were brought into the world and raised and educated by us, how, in the first place, can you deny that you are our child and our slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this be so, do you think that your rights are on a level with ours? Do you think that you have a right to retaliate if we should try to do anything to you? You had not the same rights that your father had, or that your master would have had if you had been a slave. You had no right to retaliate if they ill-treated you, or to answer them if they scolded you, or to strike them back if they struck you, or to repay them evil with evil in any way. And do you think that you may retaliate in the case of your country and its laws? If we try to destroy you, because we think it just, will you in return do all that you can to destroy us, the laws, and your country, and say that in so doing you are acting justly—you, the man who really thinks so much of excellence? Or are you too wise to see that your country is worthier, more to be revered, more sacred, and held in higher honor both by the gods and by all men of understanding, than your father and your mother and all your other ancestors; and that you ought to reverence it, and to submit to it, and to approach it more humbly when it is angry with you than you would approach your father; and either to do whatever it tells you to do or to persuade it to excuse you; and to obey in silence if it orders you to endure flogging or imprisonment, or if it sends you to battle to be wounded or to die? That is just. You must not give way, nor retreat, nor desert your station. In war, and in the court of justice, and everywhere, you must do whatever your state and your country c

tell you to do, or you must persuade them that their commands are unjust. But it is impious to use violence against your father or your mother; and much more impious to use violence against your country." What answer shall we make, Crito? Shall we say that the laws speak the truth, or not?

CRITO: I think that they do.

SOCRATES: "Then consider, Socrates," perhaps they would say, "if we are right in saying that by attempting to escape you are attempting an injustice. We brought you into the world, we raised you, we educated you, we gave you and every other citizen a share of all the good things we could. Yet we proclaim that if any man of the Athenians is dissatisfied with us, he may take his goods and go away wherever he pleases; we give that privilege to every man who chooses to avail himself of it, so soon as he has reached manhood, and sees us, the laws, and the administration of our state. No one of us stands in his way or forbids him to take his goods and go wherever he likes, whether it be to an Athenian colony or to any foreign country, if he is dissatisfied with us and with the state. But we say that every man of you who remains here, seeing how we administer justice, and how we govern the state in other matters, has agreed, by the very fact of remaining here, to do whatsoever we tell him. And, we say, he who disobeys us acts unjustly on three counts: he disobeys us who are his parents, and he disobeys us who reared him, and he disobeys us after he has agreed to obey us, without persuading us that we are wrong. Yet we did not tell him sternly to do whatever we told him. We offered him an alternative; we gave him his choice either to obey us or to convince us that we were wrong; but he does neither.

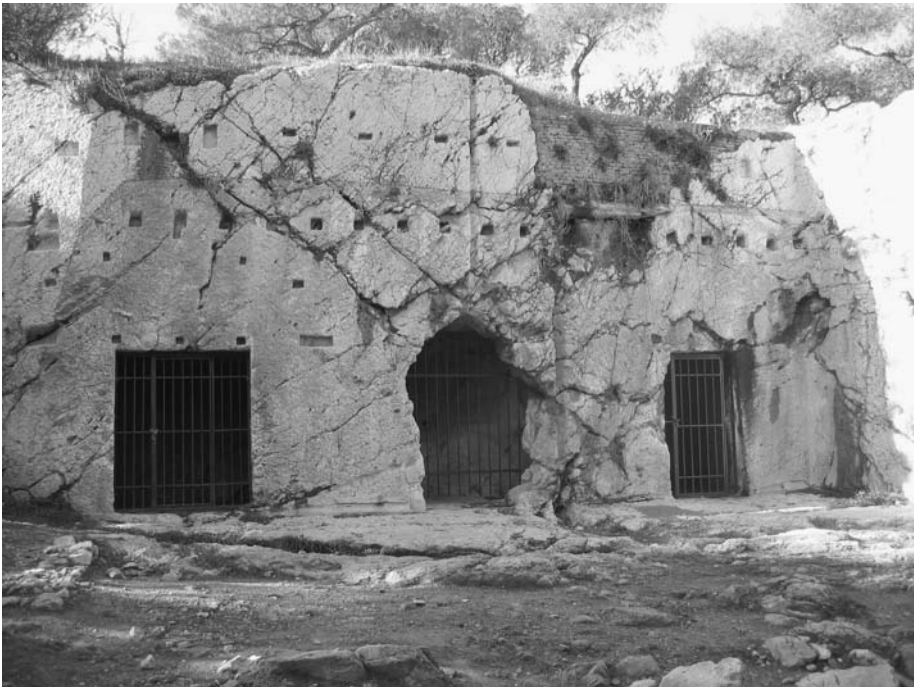
"These are the charges, Socrates, to which we say that you will expose yourself if you do what you intend; and you are more exposed to these charges than other Athenians." And if I were to ask, "Why?" they might retort with justice that I have bound myself by the agreement with them more than other Athenians. They would say, "Socrates, we have very strong evidence that you were satisfied with us and with the state. You would not have been content to stay at home in it more than other Athenians unless you had been satisfied with it more than they. You never went away from Athens to the festivals, nor elsewhere except on military service; you never made other journeys like other men; you had no desire to see other states or other laws; you were contented with us and our state; so strongly did you prefer us, and agree to be governed by us. And what is more, you had children in this city, you found it so satisfactory. Besides, if you had wished, you might at your trial have offered to go into exile. At that time you could have done with the state's consent what you are trying now to do without it. But then you gloried in being willing to die. You said that you preferred death to exile. And now you do not honor those words: you do not respect us, the laws, for you are trying to destroy us; and you are acting just as a miserable slave would act, trying to run away, and breaking the contracts and agreement which you made to live as our citizen. First, therefore, answer this question. Are we right, or are we wrong, in saying that you have agreed not in mere words, but in your actions, to live under our government?" What are we to say, Crito? Must we not admit that it is true?

CRITO: We must, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then they would say, "Are you not breaking your contracts and agreements with us? And you were not led to make them by force or by fraud. You did not have to make up your mind in a hurry. You had seventy years in which you might have gone away if you had been dissatisfied with us, or if the agreement had seemed to you unjust. But you preferred neither Sparta nor Crete, though you are fond of saying that they are well governed, nor any other state, either of the Greeks or the Barbarians. You

went away from Athens less than the lame and the blind and the crippled. Clearly you, 53
 far more than other Athenians, were satisfied with the state, and also with us who are its
 laws; for who would be satisfied with a state which had no laws? And now will you not
 abide by your agreement? If you take our advice, you will, Socrates; then you will not
 make yourself ridiculous by going away from Athens.

“Reflect now. What good will you do yourself or your friends by thus trans-
 gressing and breaking your agreement? It is tolerably certain that they, on their part, b
 will at least run the risk of exile, and of losing their civil rights, or of forfeiting their
 property. You yourself might go to one of the neighboring states, to Thebes or to
 Megara, for instance—for both of them are well governed—but, Socrates, you will
 come as an enemy to these governments, and all who care for their city will look
 askance at you, and think that you are a subverter of law. You will confirm the judges c
 in their opinion, and make it seem that their verdict was a just one. For a man who is
 a subverter of law may well be supposed to be a corrupter of the young and thought-
 less. Then will you avoid well-governed states and civilized men? Will life be worth
 having, if you do? Will you associate with such men, and converse without shame—
 about what, Socrates? About the things which you talk of here? Will you tell them
 that excellence and justice and institutions and law are the most valuable things that d
 men can have? And do you not think that that will be a disgraceful thing for Socrates?
 You ought to think so. But you will leave these places; you will go to the friends of
 Crito in Thessaly. For there is found the greatest disorder and license, and very likely



Socrates' Prison, near the Acropolis, Athens. The traditional site of the prison where Socrates was held while awaiting execution. (Forrest E. Baird)

they will be delighted to hear of the ludicrous way in which you escaped from prison, dressed up in peasant's clothes, or in some other disguise which people put on when they are running away, and with your appearance altered. But will no one say how you, an old man, with probably only a few more years to live, clung so greedily to life that you dared to break the highest laws? Perhaps not, if you do not annoy them. But if you do, Socrates, you will hear much that will make you blush. You will pass your life as the flatterer and the slave of all men; and what will you be doing but feasting in Thessaly?*

54 e where will be all our old arguments about justice and excellence then? But you wish to live for the sake of your children? You want to bring them up and educate them? What? Will you take them with you to Thessaly, and bring them up and educate them there? Will you make them strangers to their own country, that you may bestow this benefit of exile on them too? Or supposing that you leave them in Athens, will they be brought up and educated better if you are alive, though you are not with them? Yes, your friends will take care of them. Will your friends take care of them if you make a journey to Thessaly, and not if you make a journey to Hades? You ought not to think that, at least if those who call themselves your friends are worth anything at all.

"No, Socrates, be persuaded by us who have reared you. Think neither of children nor of life, nor of any other thing before justice, so that when you come to the other world you may be able to make your defense before the rulers who sit in judgment there. It is clear that neither you nor any of your friends will be happier, or more just, or more pious in this life, if you do this thing, nor will you be happier after you are dead.

c Now you will go away a victim of the injustice, not of the laws, but of men. But if you repay evil with evil, and injustice with injustice in this shameful way, and break your agreements and covenants with us, and injure those whom you should least injure, yourself and your friends and your country and us, and so escape, then we shall be angry with you while you live, and when you die our brothers, the laws in Hades, will not receive you kindly; for they will know that on earth you did all that you could to destroy

d us. Listen then to us, and let not Crito persuade you to do as he says."

Be sure, my dear friend Crito, that this is what I seem to hear, as the worshippers of Cybele seem, in their passion, to hear the music of flutes; and the sound of these arguments rings so loudly in my ears, that I cannot hear any other arguments. And I feel sure that if you try to change my mind you will speak in vain. Nevertheless, if you think that you will succeed, speak.

CRITO: I have nothing more to say, Socrates.

e SOCRATES: Then let it be, Crito, and let us do as I say, since the god is our guide.

*The Athenians disdained the Thessalians as heavy eaters and drinkers.

PHAEDO (selections)

Characters

Phaedo (The Narrator)
 Apollodorus
 Cebes
 Echecrates
 Crito
 Socrates
 Simmias
 The Servent of the Eleven
 Scene—The Prison of Socrates

[Socrates is speaking] . . . My dear Cebes, if all things in which there is any life were to die, and when they were dead were to remain in that form and not come to life again, would not the necessary result be that everything at last would be dead, and nothing alive? For if living things were generated from other sources than death, and were to die, the result is inevitable that all things would be consumed by death. Is it not so? 72^d

It is indeed, I think, Socrates, said Cebes; I think that what you say is perfectly true.

Yes, Cebes, he said, I think it is certainly so. We are not misled into this conclusion. The dead do come to life again, and the living are generated from them, and the souls of the dead exist; and with the souls of the good it is well, and with the souls of the evil it is evil. e

And besides, Socrates, rejoined Cebes, if the doctrine which you are fond of stating, that our learning is only a process of recollection, be true, then I suppose we must have learned at some former time what we recollect now. And that would be impossible unless our souls had existed somewhere before they came into this human form. So that is another reason for believing the soul immortal. 73

But, Cebes, interrupted Simmias, what are the proofs of that? Recall them to me; I am not very clear about them at present.

One argument, answered Cebes, and the strongest of all, is that if you question men about anything in the right way, they will answer you correctly of themselves. But they would not have been able to do that unless they had had within themselves knowledge and right reason. Again, show them such things as geometrical diagrams, and the proof of the doctrine is complete. b

And if that does not convince you, Simmias, said Socrates, look at the matter in another way and see if you agree then. You have doubts, I know, how what is called knowledge can be recollection.

Nay, replied Simmias, I do not doubt. But I want to recollect the argument about recollection. What Cebes undertook to explain has nearly brought your theory back to me and convinced me. But I am nonetheless ready to hear you undertake to explain it.

In this way, he returned. We are agreed, I suppose, that if a man remembers anything, he must have known it at some previous time. c

Certainly, he said.

d And are we agreed that when knowledge comes in the following way, it is recollection? When a man has seen or heard anything, or has perceived it by some other sense, and then knows not that thing only, but has also in his mind an impression of some other thing, of which the knowledge is quite different, are we not right in saying that he remembers the thing of which he has an impression in his mind?

What do you mean?

I mean this. The knowledge of a man is different from the knowledge of a lyre, is it not?

Certainly.

And you know that when lovers see a lyre, or a garment, or anything that their favorites are wont to use, they have this feeling. They know the lyre, and in their mind they receive the image of the youth whose the lyre was. That is recollection. For instance, someone seeing Simmias often is reminded of Cebes; and there are endless examples of the same thing.

Indeed there are, said Simmias.

d Is not that a kind of recollection, he said; and more especially when a man has this feeling with reference to things which the lapse of time and inattention have made him forget?

Yes, certainly, he replied.

Well, he went on, is it possible to recollect a man on seeing the picture of a horse, or the picture of a lyre? Or to recall Simmias on seeing a picture of Cebes?

Certainly.

And it is possible to recollect Simmias himself on seeing a picture of Simmias?

74 No doubt, he said.

Then in all these cases there is recollection caused by similar objects, and also by dissimilar objects?

There is.

But when a man has a recollection caused by similar objects, will he not have a further feeling and consider whether the likeness to that which he recollects is defective in any way or not?

He will, he said.

Now see if this is true, he went on. Do we not believe in the existence of equality—not the equality of pieces of wood or of stones, but something beyond that—equality in the abstract? Shall we say that there is such a thing, or not?

b Yes indeed, said Simmias, most emphatically we will.

And do we know what this abstract equality is?

Certainly, he replied.

Where did we get the knowledge of it? Was it not from seeing the equal pieces of wood, and stones, and the like, which we were speaking of just now? Did we not form from them the idea of abstract equality, which is different from them? Or do you think that it is not different? Consider the question in this way. Do not equal pieces of wood and stones appear to us sometimes equal and sometimes unequal, though in fact they remain the same all the time?

Certainly they do.

c But did absolute equals ever seem to you to be unequal, or abstract equality to be inequality?

No, never, Socrates.

Then equal things, he said, are not the same as abstract equality?

No, certainly not, Socrates.

Yet it was from these equal things, he said, which are different from abstract equality, that you have conceived and got your knowledge of abstract equality?

That is quite true, he replied.

And that whether it is like them or unlike them?

Certainly.

But that makes no difference, he said. As long as the sight of one thing brings another thing to your mind, there must be recollection, whether or no the two things are like. d

That is so.

Well then, said he, do the equal pieces of wood, and other similar equal things, of which we have been speaking, affect us at all this way? Do they seem to us to be equal, in the way that abstract equality is equal? Do they come short of being like abstract equality, or not?

Indeed, they come very short of it, he replied.

Are we agreed about this? A man sees something and thinks to himself, "This thing that I see aims at being like some other thing, but it comes short and cannot be like that other thing; it is inferior"; must not the man who thinks that have known at some previous time that other thing, which he says that it resembles, and to which it is inferior? e

He must.

Well, have we ourselves had the same sort of feeling with reference to equal things, and to abstract equality?

Yes, certainly.

Then we must have had knowledge of equality before we first saw equal things, and perceived that they all strive to be like equality, and all come short of it. 73

That is so.

And we are agreed also that we have not, nor could we have, obtained the idea of equality except from sight or touch or some other sense; the same is true of all the senses.

Yes, Socrates, for the purposes of the argument that is so.

At any rate, it is by the senses that we must perceive that all sensible objects strive to resemble absolute equality, and are inferior to it. Is not that so? b

Yes.

Then before we began to see, and to hear, and to use the other senses, we must have received the knowledge of the nature of abstract and real equality; otherwise we could not have compared equal sensible objects with abstract equality, and seen that the former in all cases strive to be like the latter, though they are always inferior to it?

That is the necessary consequence of what we have been saying, Socrates.

Did we not see, and hear, and possess the other senses as soon as we were born?

Yes, certainly.

And we must have received the knowledge of abstract equality before we had these senses? c

Yes.

Then, it seems, we must have received that knowledge before we were born?

It does.

Now if we received this knowledge before our birth, and were born with it, we knew, both before and at the moment of our birth, not only the equal, and the greater, and the less, but also everything of the same kind, did we not? Our present reasoning does not refer only to equality. It refers just as much to absolute good, and absolute d

beauty, and absolute justice, and absolute holiness; in short, I repeat, to everything which we mark with the name of the real, in the questions and answers of our dialectic. So we must have received our knowledge of all realities before we were born.

That is so.

And we must always be born with this knowledge, and must always retain it throughout life, if we have not each time forgotten it, after having received it. For to know means to receive and retain knowledge, and not to have lost it. Do not we mean by forgetting, the loss of knowledge, Simmias?

e Yes, certainly, Socrates, he said.

But, I suppose, if it be the case that we lost at birth the knowledge which we received before we were born, and then afterward, by using our senses on the objects of sense, recovered the knowledge which we had previously possessed, then what we call learning is the recovering of knowledge which is already ours. And are we not right in calling that recollection?

Certainly.

76 For we have found it possible to perceive a thing by sight, or hearing, or any other sense, and thence to form a notion of some other thing, like or unlike, which had been forgotten, but with which this thing was associated. And therefore, I say, one of two things must be true. Either we are all born with this knowledge and retain it all our life; or, after birth, those whom we say are learning are only recollecting, and our knowledge is recollection.

Yes indeed, that is undoubtedly true, Socrates.

b Then which do you choose, Simmias? Are we born with knowledge or do we recollect the things of which we have received knowledge before our birth?

I cannot say at present, Socrates.

Well, have you an opinion about this question? Can a man who knows give an account of what he knows, or not? What do you think about that?

Yes, of course he can, Socrates.

And do you think that everyone can give an account of the ideas of which we have been speaking?

I wish I did, indeed, said Simmias, but I am very much afraid that by this time tomorrow there will no longer be any man living able to do so as it should be done.

c Then, Simmias, he said, you do not think that all men know these things?

Certainly not.

Then they recollect what they once learned?

Necessarily.

And when did our souls gain this knowledge? It cannot have been after we were born men.

No, certainly not.

Then it was before?

Yes.

Then, Simmias, our souls existed formerly, apart from our bodies, and possessed intelligence before they came into man's shape.

Unless we receive this knowledge at the moment of birth, Socrates. That time still remains.

d Well, my friend, and at what other time do we lose it? We agreed just now that we are not born with it; do we lose it at the same moment that we gain it, or can you suggest any other time?

I cannot, Socrates. I did not see that I was talking nonsense.

Then, Simmias, he said, is not this the truth? If, as we are forever repeating, beauty, and good, and the other ideas really exist, and if we refer all the objects of sensible perception to these ideas which were formerly ours, and which we find to be ours still, and compare sensible objects with them, then, just as they exist, our souls must have existed before ever we were born. But if they do not exist, then our reasoning will have been thrown away. Is it so? If these ideas exist, does it not at once follow that our souls must have existed before we were born, and if they do not exist, then neither did our souls? e

Admirably put, Socrates, said Simmias. I think that the necessity is the same for the one as for the other. The reasoning has reached a place of safety in the common proof of the existence of our souls before we were born and of the existence of the ideas of which you spoke. Nothing is so evident to me as that beauty, and good, and the other ideas which you spoke of just now have a very real existence indeed. Your proof is quite sufficient for me. 77

But what of Cebes? said Socrates. I must convince Cebes too.

I think that he is satisfied, said Simmias, though he is the most skeptical of men in argument. But I think that he is perfectly convinced that our souls existed before we were born.

But I do not think myself, Socrates, he continued, that you have proved that the soul will continue to exist when we are dead. The common fear which Cebes spoke of, that she [the soul] may be scattered to the winds at death, and that death may be the end of her existence, still stands in the way. Assuming that the soul is generated and comes together from some other elements, and exists before she ever enters the human body, why should she not come to an end and be destroyed, after she has entered into the body, when she is released from it? b

You are right, Simmias, said Cebes. I think that only half the required proof has been given. It has been shown that our souls existed before we were born; but it must also be shown that our souls will continue to exist after we are dead, no less than that they existed before we were born, if the proof is to be complete. c

That has been shown already, Simmias and Cebes, said Socrates, if you will combine this reasoning with our previous conclusion, that all life is generated from death. For if the soul exists in a previous state and if, when she comes into life and is born, she can only be born from death, and from a state of death, must she not exist after death too, since she has to be born again? So the point which you speak of has been already proved. d

Still I think that you and Simmias would be glad to discuss this question further. Like children, you are afraid that the wind will really blow the soul away and disperse her when she leaves the body, especially if a man happens to die in a storm and not in a calm. e

Cebes laughed and said, Try and convince us as if we were afraid, Socrates; or rather, do not think that we are afraid ourselves. Perhaps there is a child within us who has these fears. Let us try and persuade him not to be afraid of death, as if it were a bugbear.

You must charm him every day, until you have charmed him away, said Socrates.

And where shall we find a good charmer, Socrates, he asked, now that you are leaving us? 78

Hellas is a large country, Cebes, he replied, and good men may doubtless be found in it; and the nations of the Barbarians are many. You must search them all through for such a charmer, sparing neither money nor labor; for there is nothing on which you could spend money more profitably. And you must search for him among yourselves too, for you will hardly find a better charmer than yourselves.

That shall be done, said Cebes. But let us return to the point where we left off, if you will. b

Yes, I will: why not?

Very good, he replied.

Well, said Socrates, must we not ask ourselves this question? What kind of thing is liable to suffer dispersion, and for what kind of thing have we to fear dispersion? And then we must see whether the soul belongs to that kind or not, and be confident or afraid about our own souls accordingly.

That is true, he answered.

- c Now is it not the compound and composite which is naturally liable to be dissolved in the same way in which it was compounded? And is not what is uncompounded alone not liable to dissolution, if anything is not?

I think that that is so, said Cebes.

And what always remains in the same state and unchanging is most likely to be uncompounded, and what is always changing and never the same is most likely to be compounded, I suppose?

Yes, I think so.

Now let us return to what we were speaking of before in the discussion, he said.

- d Does the being, which in our dialectic we define as meaning absolute existence, remain always in exactly the same state, or does it change? Do absolute equality, absolute beauty, and every other absolute existence, admit of any change at all? Or does absolute existence in each case, being essentially uniform, remain the same and unchanging, and never in any case admit of any sort or kind of change whatsoever?

It must remain the same and unchanging, Socrates, said Cebes.

- e And what of the many beautiful things, such as men, and horses, and garments, and the like, and of all which bears the names of the ideas, whether equal, or beautiful, or anything else? Do they remain the same or is it exactly the opposite with them? In short, do they never remain the same at all, either in themselves or in their relations?

These things, said Cebes, never remain the same.

- 79 You can touch them, and see them, and perceive them with the other senses, while you can grasp the unchanging only by the reasoning of the intellect. These latter are invisible and not seen. Is it not so?

That is perfectly true, he said.

Let us assume then, he said, if you will, that there are two kinds of existence, the one visible, the other invisible.

Yes, he said.

And the invisible is unchanging, while the visible is always changing.

Yes, he said again.

- b Are not we men made up of body and soul?

There is nothing else, he replied.

And which of these kinds of existence should we say that the body is most like, and most akin to?

The visible, he replied; that is quite obvious.

And the soul? Is that visible or invisible?

It is invisible to man, Socrates, he said.

But we mean by visible and invisible, visible and invisible to man; do we not?

Yes; that is what we mean.

Then what do we say of the soul? Is it visible or not visible?

It is not visible.

Then is it invisible?

Yes.

Then the soul is more like the invisible than the body; and the body is like the visible.

That is necessarily so, Socrates.

Have we not also said that, when the soul employs the body in any inquiry, and makes use of sight, or hearing, or any other sense—for inquiry with the body means inquiry with the senses—she is dragged away by it to the things which never remain the same, and wanders about blindly, and becomes confused and dizzy, like a drunken man, from dealing with things that are ever changing?

Certainly.

But when she investigates any question by herself, she goes away to the pure, and eternal, and immortal, and unchangeable, to which she is akin, and so she comes to be ever with it, as soon as she is by herself, and can be so; and then she rests from her wanderings and dwells with it unchangingly, for she is dealing with what is unchanging. And is not this state of the soul called wisdom?

Indeed, Socrates, you speak well and truly, he replied.

Which kind of existence do you think from our former and our present arguments that the soul is more like and more akin to?

I think, Socrates, he replied, that after this inquiry the very dullest man would agree that the soul is infinitely more like the unchangeable than the changeable.

And the body?

That is like the changeable.

Consider the matter in yet another way. When the soul and the body are united, nature ordains the one to be a slave and to be ruled, and the other to be master and to rule. Tell me once again, which do you think is like the divine, and which is like the mortal? Do you not think that the divine naturally rules and has authority, and that the mortal naturally is ruled and is a slave?

I do.

Then which is the soul like?

That is quite plain, Socrates. The soul is like the divine, and the body is like the mortal.

Now tell me, Cebes, is the result of all that we have said that the soul is most like the divine, and the immortal, and the intelligible, and the uniform, and the indissoluble, and the unchangeable; while the body is most like the human, and the mortal, and the unintelligible, and the multiform, and the dissoluble, and the changeable? Have we any other argument to show that this is not so, my dear Cebes?

We have not.

Then if this is so, is it not the nature of the body to be dissolved quickly, and of the soul to be wholly or very nearly indissoluble?

Certainly.

You observe, he said, that after a man is dead, the visible part of him, his body, which lies in the visible world and which we call the corpse, which is subject to dissolution and decomposition, is not dissolved and decomposed at once? It remains as it was for a considerable time, and even for a long time, if a man dies with his body in good condition and in the vigor of life. And when the body falls in and is embalmed, like the mummies of Egypt, it remains nearly entire for an immense time. And should it decay, yet some parts of it, such as the bones and muscles, may almost be said to be immortal. Is it not so?

Yes.

And shall we believe that the soul, which is invisible, and which goes hence to a place that is like herself, glorious, and pure, and invisible, to Hades, which is rightly

called the unseen world, to dwell with the good and wise God, whither, if it be the will of God, my soul too must shortly go—shall we believe that the soul, whose nature is so
 e glorious, and pure, and invisible, is blown away by the winds and perishes as soon as she leaves the body, as the world says? Nay, dear Cebes and Simmias, it is not so. I will tell you what happens to a soul which is pure at her departure, and which in her life has had no intercourse that she could avoid with the body, and so draws after her, when she
 81 dies, no taint of the body, but has shunned it, and gathered herself into herself, for such has been her constant study—and that only means that she has loved wisdom rightly, and has truly practiced how to die. Is not this the practice of death?

Yes, certainly.

Does not the soul, then, which is in that state, go away to the invisible that is like herself, and to the divine, and the immortal, and the wise, where she is released from error, and folly, and fear, and fierce passions, and all the other evils that fall to the lot of men, and is happy, and for the rest of time lives in very truth with the gods, as they say that the initiated do? Shall we affirm this, Cebes?

Yes, certainly, said Cebes.

b But if she be defiled and impure when she leaves the body, from being ever with it, and serving it and loving it, and from being besotted by it and by its desires and pleasures, so that she thinks nothing true but what is bodily and can be touched, and seen, and eaten, and drunk, and used for men's lusts; if she has learned to hate, and tremble at,
 c and fly from what is dark and invisible to the eye, and intelligible and apprehended by philosophy—do you think that a soul which is in that state will be pure and without alloy at her departure?

No, indeed, he replied.

She is penetrated, I suppose, by the corporeal, which the unceasing intercourse and company and care of the body has made a part of her nature.

Yes.

d And, my dear friend, the corporeal must be burdensome, and heavy, and earthy, and visible; and it is by this that such a soul is weighed down and dragged back to the visible world, because she is afraid of the invisible world of Hades, and haunts, it is said, the graves and tombs, where shadowy forms of souls have been seen, which are the phantoms of souls which were impure at their release and still cling to the visible; which is the reason why they are seen.

That is likely enough, Socrates.

e That is likely, certainly, Cebes; and these are not the souls of the good, but of the evil, which are compelled to wander in such places as a punishment for the wicked lives that they have lived; and their wanderings continue until, from the desire for the corporeal that clings to them, they are again imprisoned in a body.

And, he continued, they are imprisoned, probably, in the bodies of animals with habits similar to the habits which were theirs in their lifetime.

What do you mean by that, Socrates?

82 I mean that men who have practiced unbridled gluttony, and wantonness, and drunkenness probably enter the bodies of asses and suchlike animals. Do you not think so?

Certainly that is very likely.

And those who have chosen injustice, and tyranny, and robbery enter the bodies of wolves, and hawks, and kites. Where else should we say that such souls go?

No doubt, said Cebes, they go into such animals.

In short, it is quite plain, he said, whither each soul goes; each enters an animal with habits like its own.

Certainly, he replied, that is so.

And of these, he said, the happiest, who go to the best place, are those who have practiced the popular and social virtues which are called temperance and justice, and which come from habit and practice, without philosophy or reason. b

And why are they the happiest?

Because it is probable that they return into a mild and social nature like their own, such as that of bees, or wasps, or ants; or, it may be, into the bodies of men, and that from them are made worthy citizens.

Very likely.

But none but the philosopher or the lover of knowledge, who is wholly pure when he goes hence, is permitted to go to the race of the gods; and therefore, my friends, Simmias and Cebes, the true philosopher is temperate and refrains from all the pleasures of the body, and does not give himself up to them. It is not squandering his substance and poverty that he fears, as the multitude and the lovers of wealth do; nor again does he dread the dishonor and disgrace of wickedness, like the lovers of power and honor. It is not for these reasons that he is temperate. c

No, it would be unseemly in him if he were, Socrates, said Cebes.

Indeed it would, he replied, and therefore all those who have any care for their souls, and who do not spend their lives in forming and molding their bodies, bid farewell to such persons, and do not walk in their ways, thinking that they know not whither they are going. They themselves turn and follow whithersoever philosophy leads them, for they believe that they ought not to resist philosophy, or its deliverance and purification. d

How, Socrates?

I will tell you, he replied. The lovers of knowledge know that when philosophy receives the soul, she is fast bound in the body, and fastened to it; she is unable to contemplate what is, by herself, or except through the bars of her prison house, the body; and she is wallowing in utter ignorance. And philosophy sees that the dreadful thing about the imprisonment is that it is caused by lust, and that the captive herself is an accomplice in her own captivity. The lovers of knowledge, I repeat, know that philosophy takes the soul when she is in this condition, and gently encourages her, and strives to release her from her captivity, showing her that the perceptions of the eye, and the ear, and the other senses are full of deceit, and persuading her to stand aloof from the senses and to use them only when she must, and exhorting her to rally and gather herself together, and to trust only to herself and to the real existence which she of her own self apprehends, and to believe that nothing which is subject to change, and which she perceives by other faculties, has any truth, for such things are visible and sensible, while what she herself sees is apprehended by reason and invisible. The soul of the true philosopher thinks that it would be wrong to resist this deliverance from captivity, and therefore she holds aloof, so far as she can, from pleasure, and desire, and pain, and fear; for she reckons that when a man has vehement pleasure, or fear, or pain, or desire, he suffers from them not merely the evils which might be expected, such as sickness or some loss arising from the indulgence of his desires; he suffers what is the greatest and last of evils, and does not take it into account. e 83

What do you mean, Socrates? asked Cebes.

I mean that when the soul of any man feels vehement pleasure or pain, she is forced at the same time to think that the object, whatever it be, of these sensations is the most distinct and truest, when it is not. b c

114e . . . A man should be of good cheer about his soul if in his life he has renounced the pleasures and adornments of the body, because they were nothing to him, and because he thought that they would do him not good but harm; and if he has instead earnestly
 115 pursued the pleasures of learning, and adorned his soul with the adornment of temperance, and justice, and courage, and freedom, and truth, which belongs to her and is her own, and so awaits his journey to the other world, in readiness to set forth whenever fate calls him. You, Simmias and Cebes, and the rest will set forth at some future day, each at his own time. But me now, as a tragic poet would say, fate calls at once; and it is time for me to betake myself to the bath. I think that I had better bathe before I drink the poison, and not give the women the trouble of washing my dead body.

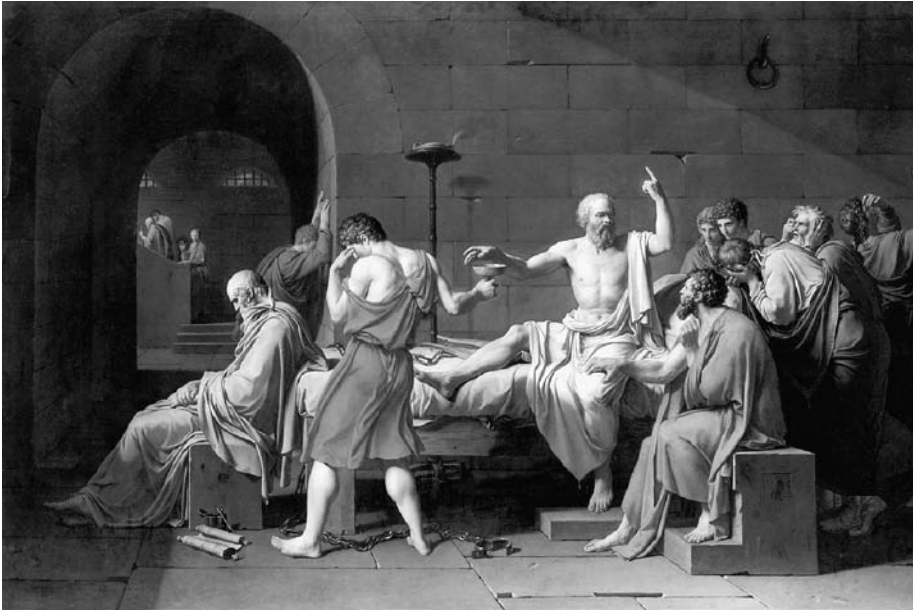
b When he had finished speaking Crito said, Be it so, Socrates. But have you any commands for your friends or for me about your children, or about other things? How shall we serve you best?

c Simply by doing what I always tell you, Crito. Take care of your own selves, and you will serve me and mine and yourselves in all that you do, even though you make no promises now. But if you are careless of your own selves, and will not follow the path of life which we have pointed out in our discussions both today and at other times, all your promises now, however profuse and earnest they are, will be of no avail.

c We will do our best, said Crito. But how shall we bury you?

d As you please, he answered; only you must catch me first and not let me escape you. And then he looked at us with a smile and said, My friends, I cannot convince Crito that I am the Socrates who has been conversing with you and arranging his arguments in order. He thinks that I am the body which he will presently see a corpse, and he asks how he is to bury me. All the arguments which I have used to prove that I shall not remain with you after I have drunk the poison, but that I shall go away to the happiness of the blessed, with which I tried to comfort you and myself, have been thrown away on him. Do you therefore be my sureties to him, as he was my surety at the trial, but in a different way. He was surety for me then that I would remain; but you must be my sureties to him that I shall go away when I am dead, and not remain with you; then he
 e will feel my death less; and when he sees my body being burned or buried, he will not be grieved because he thinks that I am suffering dreadful things; and at my funeral he will not say that it is Socrates whom he is laying out, or bearing to the grave, or burying. For, dear Crito, he continued, you must know that to use words wrongly is not only a fault in itself, it also creates evil in the soul. You must be of good cheer, and say that you
 116 are burying my body; and you may bury it as you please and as you think right.

d With these words he rose and went into another room to bathe. Crito went with him and told us to wait. So we waited, talking of the argument and discussing it, and then again dwelling on the greatness of the calamity which had fallen upon us: it seemed as if
 b we were going to lose a father and to be orphans for the rest of our lives. When he had bathed, and his children had been brought to him—he had two sons quite little, and one grown up—and the women of his family were come, he spoke with them in Crito's presence, and gave them his last instructions; then he sent the women and children away and returned to us. By that time it was near the hour of sunset, for he had been a long while within. When he came back to us from the bath he sat down, but not much was said after
 c that. Presently the servant of the Eleven came and stood before him and said, "I know that I shall not find you unreasonable like other men, Socrates. They are angry with me and curse me when I bid them drink the poison because the authorities make me do it. But I have found you all along the noblest and gentlest and best man that has ever come
 d here; and now I am sure that you will not be angry with me, but with those who you



Jacques-Louis David, "The Death of Socrates." (Oil on canvas, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1931. [31.45]*)

know are to blame. And so farewell, and try to bear what must be as lightly as you can; you know why I have come." With that he turned away weeping, and went out.

Socrates looked up at him and replied, Farewell, I will do as you say. Then he turned to us and said, How courteous the man is! And the whole time that I have been here, he has constantly come in to see me, and sometimes he has talked to me, and has been the best of men; and now, how generously he weeps for me! Come, Crito, let us obey him; let the poison be brought if it is ready, and if it is not ready, let it be prepared.

Crito replied: But, Socrates, I think that the sun is still upon the hills; it has not set. Besides, I know that other men take the poison quite late, and eat and drink heartily, and even enjoy the company of their chosen friends, after the announcement has been made. So do not hurry; there is still time. e

Socrates replied: And those whom you speak of, Crito, naturally do so, for they think that they will be gainers by so doing. And I naturally shall not do so, for I think that I should gain nothing by drinking the poison a little later, but my own contempt for so greedily saving a life which is already spent. So do not refuse to do as I say. 117

Then Crito made a sign to his slave who was standing by; and the slave went out, and after some delay returned with the man who was to give the poison, carrying it prepared in a cup. When Socrates saw him, he asked, You understand these things, my good man, what have I to do?

You have only to drink this, he replied, and to walk about until your legs feel heavy, and then lie down; and it will act of itself. b

With that he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it quite cheerfully, Echecrates, without trembling, and without any change of color or of feature, and looked up at the

man with that fixed glance of his, and asked, What say you to making a libation from this draught? May I, or not?

c We only prepare so much as we think sufficient, Socrates, he answered.

I understand, said Socrates. But I suppose that I may, and must, pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous. That is my prayer; may it be so. With these words he put the cup to his lips and drank the poison quite calmly and cheerfully.

d Till then most of us had been able to control our grief fairly well; but when we saw him drinking and then the poison finished, we could do so no longer: my tears came fast in spite of myself, and I covered my face and wept for myself; it was not for him, but at my own misfortune in losing such a friend. Even before that Crito had been unable to restrain his tears, and had gone away; and Apollodorus, who had never once ceased weeping the whole time, burst into a loud wail and made us one and all break down by his sobbing, except Socrates himself.

e What are you doing, my friends? he exclaimed. I sent away the women chiefly in order that they might not behave in this way; for I have heard that a man should die in silence. So calm yourselves and bear up.

118 When we heard that, we were ashamed, and we ceased from weeping. But he walked about, until he said that his legs were getting heavy, and then he lay down on his back, as he was told. And the man who gave the poison began to examine his feet and legs from time to time. Then he pressed his foot hard and asked if there was any feeling in it, and Socrates said, No; and then his legs, and so higher and higher, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And Socrates felt himself and said that when it came to his heart, he should be gone. He was already growing cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, which had been covered, and spoke for the last time. Crito, he said, I owe a cock to Asclepius; do not forget to pay it.*

It shall be done, replied Crito. Is there anything else that you wish? He made no answer to this question; but after a short interval there was a movement, and the man uncovered him, and his eyes were fixed. Then Crito closed his mouth and his eyes.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest, and the best man I have ever known.

*[Asclepius was the Greek god of healing. When one recovered from an illness it was customary to offer a cock as a sacrifice, so Socrates' last words imply that death is a kind of healing. See, for instance 66b ff., 67c.]

REPUBLIC* (in part)

Characters

Socrates
 Glaucon
 Adeimantus
 Cephalus
 Polemarchus
 Thrasymachus
 Cleitophon
 Scene—Cephalus' home at Pireus

BOOK I

* * *

[SOCRATES:] And when Thrasymachus many times, even while we were in the middle of our conversation, was making motions to take over the argument, he was prevented by those sitting by him, who wanted to hear the argument out. But when we paused as I said this, he could no longer keep still, but having gathered himself to spring like a wild animal, he launched himself at us as if to tear us to pieces. Both I and Polemarchus were quaking in fear, and he, snarling into our midst, said: “What drivels are you people full of now, Socrates? And why do you act like idiots kowtowing to each other? But if you truly want to know what’s just, don’t merely ask and then, as befits someone with a passion for honor, cross-examine whenever anybody answers, knowing that it’s easier to ask than to answer, but also answer yourself and tell what you claim the just thing is. And don’t give me any of that about how it’s the needful or the beneficial or the profitable or the gainful or the advantageous, but tell me clearly and precisely what you mean, since I won’t stand for it if you talk in such empty words.”

*The only speaker in the dialogue is Socrates. He begins recounting a conversation he had on the occasion of a foreign religious festival that took place just outside Athens. Between the day and night portions of the festivities, a group of young men latches on to Socrates, who could be expected to provide entertaining talk. Polemarchus takes the group to his house, where they meet his father Cephalus, a very old man preoccupied with making amends before his death for any injustices in his life. Socrates asks him what he understands justice to be and begins to examine the implications of his answer. [We pick up the conversation as Thrasymachus, a well-known sophist, breaks in to the conversation.]

Plato, *Republic* (Book I, 336b–342e, 347b–e; Book II, 357a–362c, 368a–376e; Book III, 412b–417b; Book IV, 427c–445e; Book V, 449–462e, 473b–e; Book VI–VII, 502c–521b), translated by Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Philosophical Library, 2007). Reprinted by permission of Focus Publishing/R Pullins Company.

And I was flabbergasted when I heard this, and was afraid as I looked at him, and it seemed to me that if I had not seen him before he saw me I would have been struck dumb.* But as it was, just as he was beginning to be driven wild by the argument I looked at him first, and so I was able to answer him, and said, trembling a little, “Don’t be rough on us, Thrasymachus. If we’re mistaken in any point in the examination of the argument, I and this fellow here, you can be assured that we’re going astray unwillingly. For don’t even imagine, when, if we were looking for gold, we wouldn’t be willing to kowtow to each other in the search and ruin our chances of finding it, that when we’re looking for justice, a thing more valuable than much gold, we’d be so senseless as to defer to each other and not be as serious as possible about bringing it to light. Don’t so much as imagine that, friend. But I imagine we don’t have the power to find it. So it’s much more fitting anyway for us to be pitied by you clever people instead of being roughed up.”

And hearing this, he burst out laughing with great scorn and said “Oh Heracles, this is that routine irony of Socrates. I knew about this, and I kept telling these people before that you wouldn’t be willing to answer, but you’d be ironic and do everything else but answer if anyone asked you anything.”

“That’s because you’re wise, Thrasymachus,” I said, “so you know very well that if you asked anyone how much twelve is, and in asking demanded of him in advance, ‘don’t give me any of that, fellow, about how twelve is two times six or three times four or six times two or four times three, since I won’t stand for such drivel from you,’ it was clear to you, I imagine, that no one could answer someone who interrogated him that way. But if he said to you, ‘Thrasymachus, how do you mean it? That I must give none of the answers you prohibited in advance? Not even, you strange fellow, if it happens to be one of these, but instead I have to say something other than the truth? Or how do you mean it?’ What would you say to him about that?”

“Oh sure,” he said, “as if this was like that.”

“Nothing prevents it,” I said. “But then even if it isn’t like it, but appears to be to someone who is asked such a question, do you imagine he’ll any the less answer the question the way it appears to him, whether we forbid it or not?”

“So what else,” he said; “are you going to do the same thing? Are you going to give any of those answers I banned?” “I wouldn’t be surprised,” I said, “if it seemed that way to me when I had examined it.”

“Then what if I show you a different answer about justice,” he said, “beyond all these, better than they are? What penalty would you think you deserve to suffer?”

“What other penalty,” I said, “than the one it’s fitting for someone who doesn’t have knowledge to suffer? And it’s fitting, no doubt, for him to learn from someone who has knowledge. So I think I too deserve to suffer this penalty.”

“You’re amusing,” he said, “but in addition to learning, pay a penalty in money too.”

“Okay, whenever I get any,” I said.

“He’s got it,” said Glaucon. “So as far as money’s concerned, Thrasymachus, speak up, since all of us will chip in for Socrates.”

“I imagine you will,” he said, “so Socrates can go on with his usual routine: he won’t answer but when somebody else answers he’ll grab hold of his statement and cross-examine him.”

“Most skillful one,” I said, “how could anyone give an answer who in the first place doesn’t know and doesn’t claim to know, and then too, even if he supposes something

*[A popular superstition, that if a wolf sees you first, you become dumb.]

about these things, would be banned from saying what he believes by no inconsiderable man? So it's more like it for you to speak, since you do claim to know and to have something to say. So don't do anything else but gratify me by answering, and don't be grudging about teaching Glaucon here as well as the others." 338a

And when I'd said these things, Glaucon and the others kept begging him not to do otherwise. And Thrasymachus was obviously longing to speak in order to be well thought of, believing that he had an answer of overwhelming beauty. But he made a pretense of battling eagerly for me to be the one that answered. But making an end of this, he gave way, and then said, "This is the wisdom of Socrates; he himself is not willing to teach, but he goes around learning from others and doesn't even pay them any gratitude." b

"In saying that I learn from others," I said, "you tell the truth, Thrasymachus, but when you claim that I don't pay for it in full with gratitude, you lie, for I pay all that is in my power. I have the power only to show appreciation, since I don't have money. And how eagerly I do this, if anyone seems to me to speak well, you'll know very well right away when you answer, for I imagine you'll speak well." c

"Then listen," he said. "I assert that what's just is nothing other than what's advantageous to the stronger. So why don't you show appreciation? But you won't be willing to."

"First I need to understand what you mean," I said, "since now I don't yet know. You claim that what's advantageous to the stronger is just. Now whatever do you mean by this, Thrasymachus? For I'm sure you're not saying this sort of thing: that if Polydamas the no-holds-barred wrestler is stronger than we are, and bull's meat is advantageous to him for his body, this food would also be advantageous, and at the same time just, for us who are weaker than he is." d

"You're nauseating, Socrates," he said, "and you grab hold of the statement in the way that you can do it the most damage."

"Not at all, most excellent man," I said, "just say more clearly what you mean."

"So you don't know," he said, "that some cities are run tyrannically, some democratically, and some aristocratically?"

"How could I not?"

"And so this prevails in strength in each city, the ruling part?"

"Certainly."

"And each ruling power sets up laws for the advantage of itself, a democracy setting up democratic ones, a tyranny tyrannical ones, and the others likewise. And having set them up, they declare that this, what's advantageous for them, is just for those who are ruled, and they chastise someone who transgresses it as a lawbreaker and a person doing injustice. So this, you most skillful one, is what I'm saying, that the same thing is just in all cities, what's advantageous to the established ruling power. And this surely prevails in strength, so the conclusion, for someone who reasons correctly, is that the same thing is just everywhere, what's advantageous to the stronger." 339a

"Now," I said, "I understand what you mean. But whether it's true or not, I'll try to learn. So you too answer that the advantageous is just, Thrasymachus, even though you made a prohibition for me that I could not give this answer, though there is added to it 'for the stronger.'" b

"A small addendum, no doubt," he said.

"It's not clear yet whether it's a big one. But it is clear that whether you're speaking the truth needs to be examined. For since you're saying and I'm agreeing that what's

just is something advantageous, but you're making an addition and claiming it to be that of the stronger, while I don't know that, it needs to be examined."

"So examine it," he said.

"That will be done," I said. "Now tell me, do you not claim, though, that it's also just to obey the rulers?"

"I do."

c "And are the rulers in each city infallible, or the sort of people who also make mistakes?"

"By all means," he said, "they're surely the sort of people who also make mistakes."

"So when they try to set up laws, they set up some correctly and certain others incorrectly?"

"I certainly imagine so."

"Then to set them up correctly is to set up laws that are advantageous to themselves, and incorrectly, disadvantageous ones? Or how do you mean it?"

"That's the way."

"But whatever they set up needs to be done by those who are ruled, and this is what is just?"

"How could it be otherwise?"

d "Then according to your statement, not only is it just to do what's advantageous to the stronger, but also to do the opposite, what's disadvantageous."

"What do you mean?" he said.

"What you mean, it seems to me; but let's examine it better. Wasn't it agreed that when the rulers command those who are ruled to do certain things they're sometimes completely mistaken about what's best for themselves, but what the rulers command is just for those who are ruled to do? Wasn't this agreed?"

"I certainly imagine so," he said.

e "Well then," I said, "imagine also that it was agreed by you that doing what's disadvantageous for those who rule and are stronger is just, whenever the rulers unwillingly command things that are bad for themselves, while you claim that for the others to do those things which they commanded is just. So then, most wise Thrasymachus, doesn't it turn out necessarily in exactly this way, that it's just to do the opposite of what you say? For what's disadvantageous to the stronger is without doubt commanded to the weaker to do."

340a "By Zeus, yes, Socrates," said Polemarchus, "most clearly so."

"If you're going to be a witness for him," Cleitophon interjected.

"And what need is there for a witness? Thrasymachus himself agrees that the rulers sometimes command things that are bad for themselves, and that for the others to do these things is just."

"That's because Thrasymachus set it down, Polemarchus, that doing what's ordered by the rulers is just."

b "Because he also set it down, Cleitophon, that what's advantageous to the stronger is just. And having set down both these things, he agreed next that sometimes the stronger order things that are disadvantageous to themselves for those who are weaker and ruled to do. And from these agreements what's advantageous to the stronger would be no more just than what's disadvantageous."

"But," said Cleitophon, "he meant that the advantage of the stronger is what the stronger believes is advantageous to himself; this is what needs to be done by the weaker, and he set this down as what's just."

"But he didn't say it that way," said Polemarchus.

“It makes no difference, Polemarchus,” I said, “but if Thrasymachus says it this way now, let’s accept it this way from him. And tell me, Thrasymachus, was this what you wanted to say the just is, what seems to the stronger to be the advantage of the stronger, whether it might be advantageous or not? Shall we say you mean it that way?” c

“That least of all,” he said. “Do you imagine that I call someone who makes a mistake stronger when he’s making a mistake?”

“I did imagine that you were saying that,” I said, “when you agreed that the rulers are not infallible but are even completely mistaken about some things.” d

“That’s because you’re a liar who misrepresents things in arguments, Socrates. To start with, do you call someone who’s completely mistaken about sick people a doctor on account of that very thing he’s mistaken about? Or call someone skilled at arithmetic who makes a mistake in doing arithmetic, at the time when he’s making it, on account of this mistake? I imagine instead that we talk that way in a manner of speaking, saying that the doctor made a mistake, or the one skilled at arithmetic made a mistake, or the grammarian. But I assume that each of these, to the extent that this is what we address him as, never makes a mistake, so that in precise speech, since you too are precise in speech, no skilled worker makes a mistake. For it’s by being deficient in knowledge that the one who makes a mistake makes it, in respect to which he is not a skilled worker. So no one who’s a skilled worker or wise or a ruler makes a mistake at the time when he is a ruler, though everyone would say that the doctor made a mistake or the ruler made a mistake. Take it then that I too was answering you just now in that sort of way. But the most precise way of speaking is exactly this, that the one who rules, to the extent that he is a ruler, does not make mistakes, and in not making a mistake he sets up what is best for himself, and this needs to be done by the one who is ruled. And so I say the very thing I’ve been saying from the beginning is just, to do what’s advantageous to the stronger.” e 341a

“Okay, Thrasymachus,” I said. “I seem to you to misrepresent things by lying?”

“Very much so,” he said.

“Because you imagine that I asked the question the way I did out of a plot to do you harm in the argument?”

“I know that very well,” he said. “And it’s not going to do you any good, because you couldn’t do me any harm without it being noticed, and without being unnoticed you wouldn’t have the power to do violence with the argument.” b

“I wouldn’t even try, blessed one,” I said. “But in order that this sort of thing doesn’t happen to us again, distinguish the way you mean someone who rules and is stronger, whether it’s the one who is so called or the one in precise speech whom you just now mentioned, for whose advantage, since he’s stronger, it will be just for the weaker to act.”

“The one who’s a ruler in the most precise speech,” he said. “Do harm to that and misrepresent it by lies if you have any power to—I ask for no mercy from you—but you won’t be able to.” c

“Do you imagine,” I said, “that I’m crazy enough to try to shave a lion or misrepresent Thrasymachus by lies?”

“You certainly tried just now,” he said, “but you were a zero even at that.”

“That’s enough of this sort or thing,” I said. “But tell me, the doctor in precise speech that you were just now talking about, is he a moneymaker or a healer of the sick? And speak about the one who is a doctor.”

“A healer of the sick,” he said.

d “And what about a helmsman? Is the one who’s a helmsman in the correct way a ruler of sailors or a sailor?”

“A ruler of sailors.”

“I assume there’s no need to take into account that he does sail in the ship, and no need for him to be called a sailor, since it’s not on account of sailing that he’s called a helmsman, but on account of his art and his ruling position among the sailors.”

“That’s true,” he said.

“Then for each of the latter there’s something advantageous?”

“Certainly.”

“And isn’t art by its nature for this,” I said, “for seeking and providing what’s advantageous in each case?”

“For that,” he said.

“Then is there any advantage for each of the arts other than to be as complete as possible?”

e “In what sense are you asking this?”

“In the same sense,” I said, “as, if you were to ask me whether it’s sufficient for a body to be a body or whether it needs something extra, I’d say ‘Absolutely it needs something extra, and it’s for that reason that the medical art has now been discovered, because a body is inadequate and isn’t sufficient to itself to be the sort of thing it is. So it’s for this reason, in order that it might provide the things that are advantageous for the body, that the art was devised.’ Would I seem to you to be speaking correctly in saying this,” I said, “or not?”

342a “It’s correct,” he said.

“What then? Is the medical art itself—or any other art—inadequate, and is it the case that it has need of some extra virtue? Just as eyes need sight and ears need hearing and for these reasons there is need of some art applied to them that will consider and provide what’s advantageous for these things, is there then in the art itself some inadequacy in it too, and a need for each art to have another art that will consider what’s advantageous for it, and for the one that will consider that to have another art in turn of that kind, and this is unending? Or will it consider what’s advantageous for itself? Or is there no additional need either for it or for any other art to consider what’s advantageous for its inadequacy, because there is no inadequacy or mistake present in any art, nor is it appropriate for an art to look out for the advantage of anything other than that with which the art is concerned, but it itself is without defect and without impurity since it is correct as long as each is the whole precise art that it is. Consider it in that precise speech now: is that the way it is, or is it some other way?”

“That way,” he said, “as it appears.”

c “So then,” I said, “the medical art considers what’s advantageous not for the medical art but for a body.”

“Yes,” he said.

“And horsemanship considers what’s advantageous not for horsemanship but for horses, and neither does any other art consider what’s advantageous for itself, since there’s no extra need for that, but for that with which the art is concerned.”

“So it appears,” he said.

“But surely, Thrasymachus, the arts rule over and have power over that with which they’re concerned.”

He went along with that too, very grudgingly.

“Then no sort of knowledge considers or commands what’s advantageous for the stronger, but what’s advantageous for what’s weaker and ruled by it.” d

He finally agreed with this too, though he tried to make a fight about it, and when he agreed I said, “So does anything else follow except that no doctor, to the extent he is a doctor, considers or commands what’s advantageous for a doctor, but instead for someone who’s sick? For it was agreed that the doctor is precisely a ruler of bodies but not a moneymaker. Or was that not agreed?”

He said so.

“Then the helmsman too was agreed to be precisely a ruler of sailors but not a sailor?” e

“It was agreed.”

“Then this sort of helmsman and ruler at any rate will not consider and command what’s advantageous for a helmsman, but what’s advantageous for the sailor who’s ruled.”

He said so, grudgingly.

“Therefore, Thrasymachus,” I said, “neither will anyone else in any ruling position, to the extent he is a ruler, consider or command what’s advantageous for himself, but what’s advantageous for whatever is ruled, for which he himself is a skilled workman, and looking toward that, and to what’s advantageous and appropriate for that, he both says and does everything that he says and does.”

* * *

“You know that people are said to be passionate for honor and money as a reproach, and it is one?” 347b

“I do,” he said.

“So,” I said, “that’s why good people aren’t willing to rule for the sake of either money or honor. They don’t want to be called mercenary if they openly get wages for the ruling office, or thieves if they secretly take money from the office themselves. And they don’t rule for the sake of honor either, since they aren’t passionate for honor. So there needs to be a necessity attached to it for them, and a penalty, if they’re going to be willing to rule; that’s liable to be where it comes from that it’s considered shameful to go willingly to rule rather than to await necessity. And the greatest sort of penalty is to be ruled by someone less worthy, if one is not oneself willing to rule. It’s on account of fearing this that decent people appear to me to rule, when they do rule, and then they go to rule not as though they were heading for something good or as though they were going to have any enjoyment in it, but as though to something necessary, since they have no one better than or similar to themselves to entrust it to. Because, if a city of good men were to come into being, they’d be liable to have a fight over not ruling just as people do now over ruling, and it would become obvious there that the person who is a true ruler in his being is not of such a nature as to consider what’s advantageous for himself rather than for the one ruled. So everyone with any discernment would choose to be benefited by someone else rather than to have the trouble of benefiting someone else. On this point, then, I by no means go along with Thrasymachus that what’s just is what’s advantageous for the stronger. e

* * *

BOOK II

- 357a Now when I said these things, I imagined I'd be released from discussion, but as it seems, it was just a prologue. For Glaucon is always most courageous in confronting everything, and in particular he wouldn't stand for Thrasymachus's giving up, but said
- b "Socrates, do you want to seem to have persuaded us or truly persuade us that in every way it's better to be just than unjust?"
- "If it would be up to me," I said, "I'd choose truly."
- "Then you're not doing what you want. For tell me, does it seem to you there's a certain kind of good that we'd take hold of not because we desire its consequences, but to embrace it itself for its own sake, such as enjoyment and any of the pleasures that are harmless and from which nothing comes into the succeeding time other than to enjoy having them?"
- c "It seems to me," I said, "that there is such a thing."
- "Then what about the kind that we love both itself for its own sake and for the things that come from it, such as thinking and seeing and being healthy? For presumably we embrace such things for both reasons."
- "Yes," I said.
- "And do you see a third form of good," he said, "in which there's gymnastic exercise, and being given medical treatment when sick, and giving medical treatment, as well as the rest of moneymaking activity? Because we'd say these are burdensome, but
- d for our benefit, and we wouldn't take hold of them for their own sake, but we do for the sake of wages and of all the other things that come from them."
- "There is also this third kind," I said, "but what about it?"
- "In which of these kinds," he said, "do you put justice?"
- 358a "I imagine in the most beautiful kind," I said, "which must be loved both for itself and for the things that come from it by someone who's going to be blessedly happy."
- "Well it doesn't seem that way to most people," he said, "but to belong to the burdensome kind that ought to be pursued for the sake of the wages and reputation that come from opinion, but ought to be avoided itself on its own account as being something difficult."
- "I know it seems that way," I said, "and a while ago it was condemned by Thrasymachus as being that sort of thing, while injustice was praised, but, as it seems, I'm a slow learner."
- b "Come then," he said, "and listen to me, if the same things still seem true to you, because Thrasymachus appears to me to have been charmed by you like a snake, sooner than he needed to be. But to my way of thinking, no demonstration has taken place yet about either one, since I desire to hear what each of them is and what power it has itself by itself when it's present in the soul, and to say goodbye to the wages and the things that come from them.
- "So I'm going to do it this way, if that seems good to you too: I'll revive
- c Thrasymachus's argument, and I'll say first what sort of thing people claim justice is and where they say it comes from, and second that everyone who pursues it pursues it unwillingly as something necessary but not good, and third that they do it fittingly since the life of someone who's unjust is much better than that of someone who's just—as *they* say, since it doesn't seem that way to me at all, Socrates, though I'm stumped as
- d my ears are talked deaf when I listen to Thrasymachus and tens of thousands of other people, while I haven't yet heard the argument on behalf of justice, that it's better than

injustice, from anyone in the way I want it. I want to hear it itself by itself praised, and I assume that I'd hear this most of all from you.

"That's why I'll strain myself to speak in praise of the unjust life, and as I speak I'll point out to you in what way I want to hear you in turn condemn injustice and praise justice. But see if what I'm saying is to your liking."

"Most of all," I said, "for what would anyone who has any sense enjoy more to talk about and hear about repeatedly?"

"You're speaking most beautifully," he said. "Listen then to what I said I'd talk about first, what sort of thing justice is and where it comes from. People claim that doing injustice is by its nature good and suffering injustice is bad, but that suffering injustice crosses over farther into bad than doing injustice does into good, so that when people both do injustice to and suffer it from each other and get a taste of both, it seems profitable to the ones who don't have the power to avoid the latter and choose the former to make a contract with each other neither to do injustice nor suffer it. And from then on they begin to set up laws and agreements among themselves and to name what's commanded by the law both lawful and just, and so this is the origin and being of justice, being in the middle between what is best, if one could do injustice and not pay a penalty, and what is worst, if one were powerless to take revenge when suffering injustice. What's just, being at a mean between these two things, is something to be content with not as something good, but as something honored out of weakness at doing injustice, since someone with the power to do it and who was truly a man would never make a contract with anyone neither to do nor suffer injustice. He'd be insane.

"So, Socrates, it's the nature of justice to be this and of this sort, and these are the sorts of things it comes from by its nature, as the argument goes. The fact that those who pursue it pursue it unwillingly from a lack of power to do injustice, we might perceive most clearly if we were to do something like this in our thinking: by giving to each of them, the just and the unjust, freedom to do whatever he wants, we could then follow along and see where his desire will lead each one. Then we could catch the just person in the act of going the same route as the unjust one because of greed for more, which is what every nature, by its nature, seeks as good, though it's forcibly pulled aside by law to respect for equality.

"The sort of freedom I'm talking about would be most possible if the sort of power ever came to them that people say came to the ancestor of Gyges the Lydian. They say he was a shepherd working as a hired servant to the one who then ruled Lydia, when a big storm came up and an earthquake broke open the earth, and there was a chasm in the place where he was pasturing the sheep. Seeing it and marveling, he went down and saw other marvels people tell legends about as well as a bronze horse, hollowed out, that had windows in it, and when he stooped down to look through them he saw a dead body inside that appeared bigger than a human being. And this body had on it nothing else but a gold ring around its finger, which he took off and went away.

"And when the customary gathering of the shepherds came along, so that they could report each month to the king about his flocks, he too came and had on the ring. Then while he was sitting with the others, he happened to turn the stone setting of the ring around toward himself into the inside of his hand, and when this happened he became invisible to those sitting beside him, and they talked about him as though he'd gone away. He marveled, and running his hand over the ring again he twisted the stone setting outward, and when he had twisted it he became visible. And reflecting on this,

he tried out whether the ring had this power in it, and it turned out that way for him, to become invisible when he twisted the stone setting in and visible when he twisted it out.

- b Perceiving this, he immediately arranged to become one of the messengers attending the king, and went and seduced the king's wife, and with her attacked and killed the king and took possession of his reign.

- c "Now if there were a pair of rings of that sort, and a just person put on one while an unjust person put on the other, it would seem that there could be no one so inflexible that he'd stand firm in his justice and have the fortitude to hold back and not lay a hand on things belonging to others, when he was free to take what he wanted from the marketplace, and to go into houses and have sex with anyone he wanted, and to kill and set loose from chains everyone he wanted, and to do everything he could when he was the equal of a god among human beings. And in acting this way, he would do nothing different from the other, but both would go the same route.

- d "And surely someone could claim this is a great proof that no one is just willingly, but only when forced to be, on the grounds that it is not for his private good, since wherever each one imagines he'll be able to do injustice he does injustice. Because every man assumes that injustice is much more profitable to him privately than justice, and the one saying the things involved in this sort of argument will claim that he's assuming the truth, because if anyone got hold of such freedom and was never willing to do injustice or lay a hand on things belonging to others, he'd seem to be utterly miserable to those who observed it, and utterly senseless as well, though they'd praise him to each other's faces, lying to one another from fear of suffering injustice.

- e "So that's the way that part goes. But as for the choice itself of the life of the people we're talking about, we'll be able to decide it correctly if we set the most just person opposite the most unjust; if we don't, we won't be able to. What then is the way of opposing them? This: we'll take nothing away either from the injustice of the unjust person or from the justice of the just person, but set out each as complete in his own pursuit. First, then, let the unjust one do as clever workmen do; a top helmsman, for instance, or doctor, distinguishes clearly between what's impossible in his art and what's possible, and attempts the latter while letting the former go, and if he still slips up in any way, he's competent to set himself right again. So too, let the unjust person, attempting his injustices in the correct way, go undetected, if he's going to be surpassingly unjust. Someone who gets caught must be considered a sorry specimen, since the ultimate injustice is to seem just when one is not.
- 361a

- b "So one must grant the completely unjust person the most complete injustice, and not take anything away but allow him, while doing the greatest injustices, to secure for himself the greatest reputation for justice; and if thereafter he slips up in anything, one must allow him to have the power to set himself right again, and to be competent both to speak so as to persuade if he's denounced for any of his injustices, and to use force for everything that needs force, by means of courage and strength as well as a provision of friends and wealth. And having set him up as this sort, let's stand the just person beside him in our argument, a man simple and well bred, wishing not to seem but be good, as Aeschylus puts it.

- c "So one must take away the seeming, for if he's going to seem to be just there'll be honors and presents for him as one seeming that way. Then it would be unclear whether he would be that way for the sake of what's just or for the sake of the presents and honors. So he must be stripped bare of everything except justice and

made to be situated in a way opposite to the one before, for while he does nothing unjust, let him have a reputation for the greatest injustice, in order that he might be put to the acid test for justice: its not being softened by bad reputation and the things that come from that. Let him go unchanged until death, seeming to be unjust throughout life while being just, so that when both people have come to the ultimate point, one of justice and the other of injustice, it can be decided which of the pair is happier.” d

“Ayayay, Glaucon my friend,” I said, “how relentlessly you scrub each of them pure, like a statue, for the decision between the two men.”

“As much as is in my power,” he said, “and now that the two are that way, there’s nothing difficult any more, as I imagine, about going on through in telling the sort of life that’s in store for each of them. e

“So it must be said, and if in fact it’s said too crudely, don’t imagine I’m saying it, Socrates, but the people who praise injustice in preference to justice.

“They’ll say this: that situated the way he is, the just person will be beaten with whips, stretched on the rack, bound in chains, have both eyes burned out, and as an end after suffering every evil he’ll be hacked in pieces, and know that one ought to wish not to be but seem just. And therefore the lines of Aeschylus would be much more correct to speak about the unjust person, since they’ll claim that the one who is unjust in his being, inasmuch as he’s pursuing a thing in contact with truth and not living with a view to opinion, wishing not to seem but be unjust 362a

Gathers in the fruit cultivated deep in his heart b
From the place where wise counsels breed.

In the first place, he rules in his city as one who seems to be just; next, he takes a wife from wherever he wants, and gives a daughter to whomever he wants; he contracts to go in partnership with whomever he wishes; and besides benefiting from all these things, he gains by not being squeamish about doing injustice. So when he goes into competition both in private and in public, he overcomes his enemies and comes out with more, and since he has more he is rich and does good to his friends and damages his enemies. And to the gods he makes sacrifices in an adequate way and dedicates offerings in a magnificent way, and does much better service to the gods, and to the human beings it pleases him to, than the just person does, so that in all likelihood it’s more suitable for him, rather than the just person, to be dearer to the gods. c

“In that way, Socrates, they claim that, on the part of both gods and human beings, a better life is provided for the unjust person than for the just.”

* * *

[Socrates responds to Glaucon and Adeimantus]: “You’ve experienced something godlike if you haven’t been persuaded that injustice is better than justice, though you have the power to speak that way on behalf of it. And you seem to me truly not persuaded, but I gather this from other indications of your disposition, since from your arguments I’d distrust you. But to the degree that I trust you more, I’m that much more stumped as to how I can be of use, and I have no way to help out, since I seem to myself to be powerless. A sign of this for me is that I imagined what I said to Thrasymachus demonstrated that justice is better than injustice, but you didn’t let 368a b

c my argument stand. But neither is there any way for me not to help out, since I'm afraid that it would be irreverent to be standing by while justice is being defamed and not help out as long as I'm still breathing and have the power to utter a sound. So what has the most force is for me to come to its defense in whatever way is in my power."

d Then Glaucon and the others begged me in every way to help out and not give up the argument, but to track down what each of them is and what the truth is about the sort of benefit that goes with the two of them. So I said exactly what seemed to me the case: "The inquiry we're setting ourselves to is no inconsiderable thing, but for someone sharp-sighted, as it appears to me. So since we aren't clever," I said, "the sort of inquiry for us to make about it seems to me exactly like this: if someone had ordered people who were not very sharp-sighted to read small print from a distance, and then it occurred to someone that maybe the same letters are also somewhere else, both bigger and on something bigger, it would plainly be a godsend, I assume, to read those first and examine the smaller ones by that means, if they were exactly the same."

e "Certainly," Adeimantus said, "but Socrates, what have you spotted in the inquiry about justice that's of that sort?"

"I'll tell you," I said. "There's justice, we claim, of one man, and there's presumably also justice of a whole city?"

"Certainly," he said.

"Isn't a city a bigger thing than one man?"

"It's bigger," he said.

369a "Then maybe more justice would be present in the bigger thing, and it would be easier to understand it clearly. So if you people want to, we'll inquire first what sort of thing it is in cities, and then we'll examine it by that means also in each one of the people, examining the likeness of the bigger in the look of the smaller."

"You seem to me to be saying something beautiful," he said.

"Then if we were to look at a city as it comes into being in speech," I said, "would we see the justice and injustice that belong to it coming into being as well?"

"Probably so," he said.

b "And then, once it has come into being, is there a hope of seeing what we're looking for more readily?"

"Very much so."

"Does it seem good, then, that we should try to accomplish this? Because I imagine it's not a small task, so you people consider it."

"It's been considered," Adeimantus said. "Don't do anything else."

"Okay," I said. "A city, as I imagine, comes into being because it happens that each of us is not self-sufficient, but needs many things. Or do you imagine a city is founded from any other origin?"

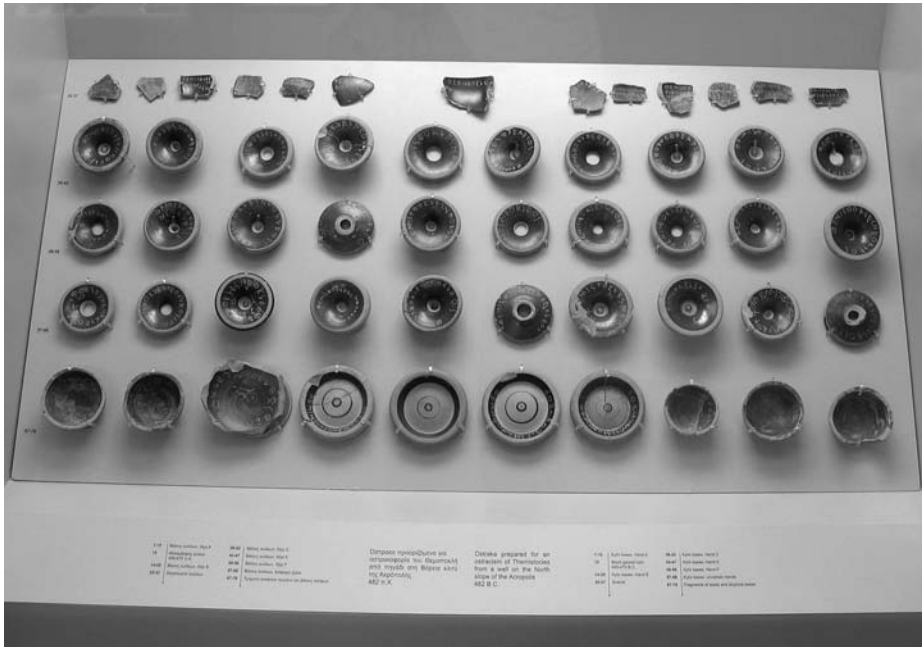
"None at all," he said.

c "So then when one person associates with another for one use, and with another for another use, since they need many things, and many people assemble in one dwelling place as partners and helpers, to this community we give the name city, don't we?"

"Certainly."

"And they share things one with another, if they give or take shares of anything, because each supposes it to be better for himself?"

"Certainly."



Ostraka from 428 B.C., found on the north side of the Acropolis. These clay disks were used in ostracism voting. Each eligible male Athenian citizen scratched the name of the man he thought most undesirable. The “candidate” with the most votes was obliged to leave Athens for ten years. Given that “each of us is not self-sufficient” (*Republic* 369b) and all are dependent on the community, this was a severe punishment. (Forrest E. Baird/*Hellenic Ministry of Culture*)

“Come then,” I said, “and let’s make a city from the beginning in our speech. And it seems like what will make it will be our need.”

“What else could it be?”

“But surely the first and greatest of needs is the provision of food for the sake of being and living.”

“Absolutely.”

“And second is the need for a dwelling place, and third for clothes and such things.”

“That’s so.”

“Well then,” I said, “how big a city will be sufficient to provide this much? Is it anything else than one person as a farmer, another a housebuilder, and some other a weaver? Or shall we add to it a leatherworker or someone who attends to something else for the body?”

“Certainly.”

“And the city that’s most necessary anyway would consist of four or five men.”

“So it appears.”

“And then what? Should each one of these put in his own work for them all in common, with the farmer, say, who is one, providing food for four and spending four times the time and effort in the provision of food for the others too to share, or paying no attention to that, make a fourth part of this food for himself alone in a fourth part of the time and devote one of the other three to providing for a house, another to a cloak,

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and the other to shoes, and not have the trouble of sharing things with others but do himself, by himself, the things that are for himself?"

And Adeimantus said, "Probably, Socrates, the first way would be easier than that one."

b "And by Zeus, there's nothing strange about that," I said. "For I'm thinking too myself, now that you mention it, that in the first place, each of us doesn't grow up to be entirely like each, but differing in nature, with a different person in practice growing toward a different sort of work. Or doesn't it seem that way to you?"

"It does to me."

"Then what? Would someone do a more beautiful job who, being one, worked at many arts, or when one person works at one art?"

"When one person works at one art," he said.

"And I assume this too is clear, that if anyone lets the critical moment in any work go by, it's ruined."

"That's clear."

c "Because I don't imagine the thing that's being done is willing to wait for the leisure of the person who's doing it, but it's necessary for the one doing it to keep on the track of the thing he's doing, not when the turn comes for a sideline."

"That's necessary."

"So as a result of these things, everything comes about in more quantity, as more beautiful, and with more ease when one person does one thing in accord with his nature and at the right moment, being free from responsibility for everything else."

"Absolutely so."

d "So there's need for more than four citizens, Adeimantus, for the provisions we were talking about, since the farmer himself, as seems likely, won't make his own plow, if it's going to be beautifully made, or his pickax, or any of the other tools for farming. And neither will the housebuilder, and there's need of many things for that, and likewise with the weaver and the leatherworker."

"That's true."

"So with carpenters and metalworkers and many such particular kinds of craftsmen coming in as partners in our little city, they'll make it a big one."

"Very much so."

e "But it still wouldn't be a very big one if we add cattlemen and shepherds to them, and other herdsmen, so that the farmers would have oxen for plowing, and the housebuilders along with the farmers could use teams of animals for hauling, and the weavers and leatherworkers could use hides and wool."

"It wouldn't be a small city either," he said, "when it had all these."

"But still," I said, "even to situate the city itself in the sort of place in which it won't need imported goods is just about impossible."

"It's impossible."

"Therefore there's still a further need for other people too who'll bring it what it needs from another city."

"There'll be a need."

371a "And if the courier goes empty-handed, carrying nothing those people need from whom ours will get the things for their own use, he'll leave empty-handed, won't he?"

"It seems that way to me."

"Then they'll need to make not only enough things to be suitable for themselves, but also the kinds and quantity of things suitable for those people they need things from."

"They'll need to."

“So our city will need more of the farmers and other craftsmen.”

“More indeed.”

“And in particular other couriers no doubt, who’ll bring in and carry away each kind of thing, and these are commercial traders aren’t they?”

“Yes.”

“So we’ll also need commercial traders.”

“Certainly.”

“And if the commerce is carried on by sea, there’ll be an additional need for many other people gathered together who know the work connected with the sea.” b

“Very many.”

“And how about in the city itself? How are they going to share out with each other the things each sort makes by their work? It was for the sake of this that we even went into partnership and founded the city.”

“It’s obvious,” he said: “by selling and buying.”

“So a marketplace will arise out of this for us, and a currency as a conventional medium of exchange?”

“Certainly.”

“But if, when the farmer or any other workman has brought any of the things he produces into the marketplace, he doesn’t arrive at the same time as those who need to exchange things with him, is he going to stay unemployed at his craft sitting in the marketplace?” c

“Not at all,” he said, “but there are people who, seeing this, take this duty on themselves; in rightly managed cities it’s pretty much for the people who are weakest in body and useless for any other work to do. Because there’s a need for it, so they stay around the marketplace to give money in exchange to those who need to sell something and to exchange in turn for money with all those who need to buy something.” d

“Therefore,” I said, “this useful service makes for the origin of retail tradesmen in the city. Don’t we call people retail tradesmen who are set up in the marketplace providing the service of buying and selling, but call those who travel around to cities commercial traders?”

“Certainly.”

“And as I imagine, there are still certain other serviceable people, who don’t entirely merit sharing in the partnership for things that involve thinking but have sufficient strength of body for labors, so since they sell the use of their strength and call this payment wages, they are called, as I imagine, wage laborers, aren’t they?” e

“Yes.”

“And the wage laborers, as seems likely, are the component that fills up the city?”

“It seems that way to me.”

“Well then Adeimantus, has our city already grown to be complete?”

“Maybe.”

“Then where in it would the justice and the injustice be? And together with which of the things we examined did they come to be present?”

“I have no idea, Socrates,” he said, “unless it’s somewhere in some usefulness of these people themselves to each other.” 372a

“And maybe you’re putting it beautifully,” I said. “We need to examine it though and not be shy about it. So first, let’s consider what style of life people will lead who’ve been provided for in this way. Will they do otherwise than produce grain and wine and cloaks and shoes? And when they’ve built houses, by summer they’ll work at most things lightly clad and barefoot, but in winter adequately clothed and in shoes. And they’ll nourish themselves b

by preparing cereal from barley and flour from wheat, baking the latter and shaping the former by hand, and when they've set out fine cakes of barley meal and loaves of wheat bread on some sort of straw or clean leaves, reclining on leafy beds spread smooth with yew and myrtle, they and their children will feast themselves, drinking wine to top it off, while crowned with wreaths and singing hymns to the gods, joining with each other pleasurably, and not producing children beyond their means, being cautious about poverty or war."

c And Glaucon broke in, saying "It looks like you're making your men have a feast without any delicacies."

"That's true," I said. "As you say, I forgot that they'll have delicacies too, salt obviously, as well as olives and cheese, and they'll boil up the sorts of roots and greens that are d cooked in country places. And as sweets we'll doubtless set out for them some figs and chickpeas and beans, and at the fire they'll roast myrtle berries and acorns, while sipping wine in moderation. And in this way it's likely that, going through life in peace combined with health and dying in old age, they'll pass on another life of this sort to their offspring."

And he said, "And if you were making provisions for a city of pigs, Socrates, what would you fatten them on besides this?"

"But how should they be provided for, Glaucon?" I said.

e "With the very things that are customary," he said. "I assume they'll lie back on couches so they won't get uncomfortable, and take their meals from tables, and have exactly those delicacies and sweets that people do now."

"Okay, I understand," I said. "We're examining, it seems, not just how a city comes into being, but a city that lives in luxury. And maybe that's not a bad way to do it, since by examining that kind of city we might quickly spot the way that justice and injustice take root in cities. Now it seems to me though that the true city is the one we've gone over, just as it's a healthy one. But if you want us also to look in turn at an infected city, nothing prevents it. For these things, it seems, aren't sufficient for some people, and neither is this way of life, but couches and tables and the other furnishings will be added, and especially delicacies as well as perfumed ointments and incense and harem girls and pastries, and each of these in every variety. And so it's no longer the necessities we were speaking of at first—houses, cloaks, and shoes—that have to be put in place, but painting and multicolored embroidery have to be set in motion, and gold and ivory and all that sort of thing have to be acquired, don't they?"

"Yes," he said.

b "Isn't there a need then to make the city bigger again? Because that healthy one isn't sufficient any longer, but is already filled with a mass of things and a throng of people, things that are no longer in the cities for the sake of necessity, such as all the hunters as well as the imitators [i.e., artists], many of whom are concerned with shapes and colors, many others with music, and also the poets and their assistants, the reciters, c actors, dancers, theatrical producers, and craftsmen for all sorts of gear, including makeup for women and everything else. And we'll especially need more providers of services, or doesn't it seem there'll be a need for tutors, wet nurses, nannies, beauticians, barbers, and also delicacy-makers and chefs? Furthermore, there'll be an extra need for pig farmers; this job wasn't present in our earlier city because there was no need for it, but in this one there's the extra need for this too. And there'll be a need for a great multitude of other fattened livestock too, if one is going to eat them. Isn't that so?"

"How could it be otherwise?"

d "Then won't we be much more in need of doctors when people live this way instead of the earlier way?"

"Very much so."

“And doubtless the land that was sufficient then to feed the people will now have gone from sufficient to small. Or how do we put it?”

“That way,” he said.

“Then does something have to be cut off by us from our neighbors’ land if we’re going to have enough to graze on and plow, and by them in turn from ours if they too give themselves over to the unlimited acquisition of money, exceeding the limit of necessities?” e

“That’s a great necessity, Socrates,” he said.

“So what comes after this, Glaucon, is that we go to war? Or how will it be?”

“That way,” he said.

“And let’s say nothing yet, at any rate,” I said, “about whether war accomplishes anything bad or good, but only this much, that we have discovered in its turn the origin of war, in those things out of which most of all cities incur evils both in private and in public, when they do incur them.”

“Very much so.”

“So, my friend, there’s a need for the city to be still bigger, not by a small amount but by a whole army, which will go out in defense of all their wealth and in defense of the things we were just now talking about, and do battle with those who come against them.” 374a

“Why’s that?” he said. “Aren’t they themselves sufficient?”

“Not if it was beautifully done,” I said, “for you and all of us to be in agreement when we were shaping the city; surely we agreed, if you recall, that one person has no power to do a beautiful job at many arts.”

“What you say is true,” he said.

“Then what?” I said. “Does the contest involved in war not seem to you to require art?” b

“Much of it,” he said.

“So is there any need to go to more trouble over leatherworking than over warfare?”

“By no means.”

“But that’s the very reason we prevented the leatherworker from attempting at the same time to be a farmer or a weaver or a housebuilder, but just be a leatherworker, so that the work of leathercraft would be done beautifully for us, and in the same way we gave out one job to one person for each of the others, the job into which each had grown naturally and for which he was going to stay at leisure from the other jobs, working at it throughout life and not letting the critical moments slip by to accomplish it beautifully. But isn’t it of the greatest consequence that the things involved in war be accomplished well? Or are they so easy that even some farmer is going to be skilled at warfare at the same time, or a leatherworker or anyone working at any other art whatever, while no one could become sufficiently skillful at playing checkers or dice who didn’t practice that very thing from his youth but treated it as a sideline? And someone who picks up a shield or any other weapon or implement of war, on that very day is going to be an adequate combatant in heavy-armor fighting or any other sort of battle that’s needed in war, when no other implement that’s picked up is going to make anyone a craftsman or fighter or even be usable to someone who hasn’t gotten any knowledge about it or been supplied with adequate training?” c

“Those implements would be worth a lot,” he said.

“So then,” I said, “to the extent that the work of the guardians is the most important, would it also be in need of the most leisure compared to other pursuits, as well as of the greatest art and care?” e

“I certainly imagine so,” he said.

“So wouldn’t it also need a nature adapted to that very pursuit?”

“How could it not?”

“So it would be our task, likely, if we’re going to be capable of it, to pick out which and which sort of natures are adapted to the guarding of the city.”

“Ours indeed.”

“By Zeus,” I said, “it’s no light matter we’ve called down as a curse on ourselves. Still, it’s not something to run away from in fear, at least to the extent our power permits.”

375a “Certainly not,” he said.

“So do you imagine that for guarding” I said, “there’s any difference in nature between a pure bred puppy and a well bred young man?”

“What sort of nature are you talking about?”

“For instance, each of the pair, I suppose, needs to be sharp at perceiving things, nimble at pursuing what it perceives, and also strong, if it needs to fight when it catches something.”

“There is certainly a need for all these things,” he said.

“And to be courageous too, if it’s going to fight well.”

“How could it be otherwise?”

b “But will a horse or a dog or any other animal whatever that’s not spirited be likely to be courageous? Or haven’t you noticed how indomitable and invincible spiritedness is, and how, when it’s present, every soul is both fearless and unyielding against everything?”

“I’ve noticed.”

“And surely it’s obvious what the guardian needs to be like in the things that belong to his body.”

“Yes.”

“And particularly in what belongs to the soul, that he has to be spirited.”

“That too.”

“Then how, Glaucon,” I said, “when they’re that way in their natures, will they not be fierce toward each other and toward the other citizens?”

“By Zeus,” he said, “not easily.”

c “But surely they need to be gentle toward their own people but rough on their enemies, and if they aren’t, they won’t wait for others to destroy them but do it first themselves.”

“True,” he said.

“So what will we do?” I said. “Where are we going to find a character that’s gentle and high-spirited at the same time? For presumably a gentle nature is opposite to a spirited one.”

“So it appears.”

d “But surely if someone lacks either one of these things, he won’t become a good guardian. But these things seem like impossibilities, and so it follows that a good guardian becomes an impossibility.”

“It’s liable to be that way,” he said.

I too was stumped and was thinking over what had been said before, and I said, “Justly are we stumped, my friend, because we’ve gotten away from the image we were setting up.”

“How do you mean that?”

“We didn’t notice that there are natures, after all, of the sort we were imagining there aren’t, that have these opposites in them.”

“But where?”

e “One might see it in other animals too, though not least in the one we set beside the guardian for comparison. Because you know, no doubt, about pure bred dogs, that this is their character by nature, to be as gentle as possible with those they’re accustomed to and know, but the opposite with those they don’t know.”

“Certainly I know it.”

“Therefore,” I said, “this is possible, and it’s not against nature for the guardian to be of the sort we’re looking for.”

“It doesn’t seem like it.”

“Well then, does it seem to you that there’s still a further need for this in the one who’ll be fit for guarding, that in addition to being spirited he also needs to be a philosopher by nature?”

“How’s that?” he said. “I don’t get it.”

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“You’ll notice this too in dogs,” I said, “which is also worth wondering at in the beast.”

“What sort of thing?”

“That when it sees someone it doesn’t know, it gets angry, even when it hasn’t been treated badly by that person before, while anyone familiar it welcomes eagerly, even when nothing good has ever been done to it by that one. Or haven’t you ever wondered at this?”

“Till this moment,” he said, “I haven’t paid it any mind at all. That they do this, though, is certainly obvious.”

“But surely it shows an appealing attribute of its nature and one that’s philosophic in a true sense.”

b

“In what way?”

“In that it distinguishes a face as friend or enemy,” I said, “by nothing other than the fact that it has learned the one and is ignorant of the other. And indeed, how could it not be a lover of learning when it determines what’s its own and what’s alien to it by means of understanding and ignorance?”

“There’s no way it couldn’t,” he said.

“But surely,” I said, “the love of learning and the love of wisdom are the same thing?”

“They’re the same,” he said.

“Then shall we have the confidence to posit for a human being too, that if he’s going to be at all gentle to his own people and those known to him, he needs to be by nature a lover of wisdom and of learning?”

c

“Let’s posit it.”

“So someone who’s going to be a beautiful and good guardian of our city will be philosophic, spirited, quick, and strong by nature.”

“Absolutely so,” he said.

“So he’d start out that way. But now in what manner will they be brought up and educated by us? And if we examine it, is there anything that gets us forward toward catching sight of the thing for the sake of which we’re examining all this, the manner in which justice and injustice come into being in a city? The point is that we might not allow enough discussion, or we might go through a long one.”

d

And Glaucon’s brother said, “For my part, I expect this examination to be one that gets us very far along into that.”

“By Zeus, Adeimantus my friend,” I said, “it’s not to be given up then, even if it happens to be overlong.”

“Not at all.”

“Come then, and just as if they were in a story and we were telling the story and remaining at leisure, let’s educate the men in our speech.”

“We should do just that.”

BOOK III

* * *

- 412b “Okay,” I said, “what would be the next thing after that for us to distinguish?
 c Wouldn’t it be which of these same people will rule and which will be ruled?”
 “Sure.”
 “And it’s clear that the older ones should be the rulers and the younger should be ruled?”
 “That’s clear.”
 “And that it should be the best among them?”
 “That too.”
 “And aren’t the best farmers the ones most adept at farming?”
 “Yes.”
 “But since in this case they need to be the best among the guardians, don’t they need to be the most adept at safeguarding the city?”
 “Yes.”
 “So don’t they need, to start with, to be intelligent at that as well as capable, and also protective of the city?”
 d “That’s so.”
 “But someone would be most protective of that which he happened to love.”
 “Necessarily.”
 “And surely someone would love that thing most which he regarded as having the same things advantageous to it as to himself, and believed that when it fared well it followed that he himself fared well, and the other way around when it didn’t.”
 “That’s the way it is,” he said.
 “Therefore the men who need to be selected from among the rest of the guardians
 e are those who appear to us, when we examine the whole course of their lives, as if they most of all would do wholeheartedly whatever they’d regard as advantageous to the city, and who wouldn’t be willing in any way to do what was not.”
 “They’d be suited to it,” he said.
 “It seems to me, then, that they need to be observed in all stages of life to see if they’re adept guardians of this way of thinking, and don’t drop it when they’re bewitched or subjected to force, forgetting their opinion that they ought to do what’s best for the city.”
 “What do you mean by dropping?” he said.
 “I’ll tell you,” I said. “It appears to me that an opinion goes away from one’s
 413a thinking either willingly or unwillingly. A false one goes away willingly from someone who learns differently, but every true one unwillingly.”
 “The case of the willing dropping I understand,” he said, “but I need to learn about the unwilling case.”
 “What?” I said. “Don’t you too believe human beings are deprived of good things unwillingly but of bad ones willingly? Isn’t it a bad thing to think falsely about the truth and a good thing to think truly? Or doesn’t believing things that are seem to you to be thinking truly?”
 “You’re certainly speaking rightly,” he said, “and it does seem to me that people are unwilling to be deprived of the truth.”
 b “And don’t they suffer this by being robbed, bewitched, or overpowered?”

“Now I’m not understanding again,” he said.

“I guess I’m speaking like a tragedy,” I said. “By those who are robbed, I mean people who are persuaded to change their minds and people who forget, because from the latter, time, and from the former, speech takes opinions away without their noticing it. Now presumably you understand?”

“Yes.”

“And by those who are overpowered I mean people that some grief or pain causes to change their opinions.”

“I understand that too,” he said, “and you’re speaking rightly.”

“And I imagine that you too would claim that people are bewitched who change their opinions when they’re either entranced by pleasure or in dread of something frightening.” c

“Yes,” he said, “it’s likely that everything that fools people is bewitching.”

“Then as I was just saying, one needs to find out which of them are the best guardians of the way of thinking they have at their sides, that the thing they always need to do is to do what seems to them to be best for the city. So they need to be observed right from childhood by people who set tasks for them in which someone would be most likely to forget such a thing or be fooled out of it; anyone who remembers it and is hard to fool is to be chosen and anyone who doesn’t is to be rejected. Isn’t that so?” d

“Yes.”

“And laborious jobs, painful sufferings, and competitions also need to be set up for them in which these same things are to be observed.”

“That’s right,” he said.

“Thus a contest needs to be made,” I said, “for the third form as well, that of bewitchment, and it needs to be watched. The same way people check out whether colts are frightened when they lead them into noisy commotions, the guardians, when young, need to be taken into some terrifying situations and then quickly shifted into pleasant ones, so as to test them much more than gold is tested in a fire. If someone shows himself hard to bewitch and composed in everything, a good guardian of himself and of the musical style that he learned, keeping himself to a rhythm and harmony well-suited to all these situations, then he’s just the sort of person who’d be most valuable both to himself and to a city. And that one among the children and the youths and the men who is tested and always comes through unscathed is to be appointed as ruler of the city as well as guardian, and honors are to be given to him while he’s living and upon his death, when he’s allotted the most prized of tombs and other memorials. Anyone not of that sort is to be rejected. It seems to me, Glaucon,” I said, “that the selection and appointment of rulers and guardians is something like that, described in outline, not with precision.” 414a

“It looks to me too like it would be done some such way,” he said.

“Isn’t it most correct, then, to call these the guardians in the true sense, complete guardians for outside enemies and also for friends inside, so that the latter won’t want to do any harm and the former won’t have the power to? The young ones that we’ve been calling guardians up to now, isn’t it most correct to call auxiliaries and reinforcements for the decrees of the rulers?” b

“It seems that way to me,” he said.

“Then could we come up with some contrivance,” I said, “from among the lies that come along in case of need, the ones we were talking about just now, some one noble lie told to persuade at best even the rulers themselves, but if not, the rest of the city?” c

“What sort of thing?” he said.

“Nothing new,” I said, “but something Phoenician* that has come into currency in many places before now, since the poets assert it and have made people believe; but it hasn’t come into currency in our time and I don’t know if it could—it would take a lot of persuading.”

“You seem a lot like someone who’s reluctant to speak,” he said.

“And I’ll seem to you very appropriately reluctant,” I said, “when I do speak.”

“Speak,” he said. “Don’t be shy.”

d “I’ll speak, then. And yet I don’t know how I’ll get up the nerve or find the words to tell it. First I’ll try my hand at persuading the rulers themselves and the soldiers, and then also the rest of the city, that, after all, the things we nurtured and educated them on were like dreams; they seemed to be experiencing all those things that seemed to be happening around them, but in truth they themselves were at the time under the soil
e inside the earth being molded and cultivated, and their weapons and other gear were being crafted, and when they were completely formed, the earth, that was their mother, made them spring up. So now, as if the land they dwell in were a mother and nurse, it’s up to them to deliberate over it, to defend it if anyone were to attack, and to take thought on behalf of the rest of the citizens as their earthborn siblings.”

“It’s not without reason,” he said, “that you were ashamed for so long to tell the lie.”

415a “It was entirely reasonable,” I said. “But all the same, listen to the rest of the story as well. What we’ll say in telling them the story is: ‘All of you in the city are brothers, but the god, when he molded those of you who are competent to be rulers, mixed gold into them at their formation—that’s why they’re the most honorable—but all the auxiliaries have silver in them, and there’s iron and bronze in the farmers and other skilled
b workers. So since you’re all kin, for the most part you’ll produce children like yourselves, but it’s possible for a silver offspring sometimes to be born from a gold parent, and a gold from a silver, and all the others likewise from one another. So the god exhorts the rulers first and foremost to be good guardians of their children, of nothing more diligently than that, and to keep watch for nothing so diligently as for what they have inter-
c mixed in their souls. And if a child of theirs is born with bronze or iron mixed in it, they’ll by no means give way to pity, but paying it the honor appropriate to its nature, they’ll drive it out among the craftsmen or farmers, and if in turn any children are born from those parents with gold or silver mixed in them, they’ll honor them and take them up, some to the guardian group, the others to the auxiliary, because there’s an oracle foretelling that the city will be destroyed when an iron or bronze guardian has guardianship over it.’ So do you have any contrivance to get them to believe this story?”

d “There’s no way,” he said, “at least for these people themselves. There might be one, though, for their sons and the next generation and the rest of humanity after that.”

“But even that,” I said, “would get things going well toward their being more protective of the city and of one another, because I understand pretty well what you mean. And that’s that it will carry on the way an oral tradition leads it. But once we’ve armed these offspring of the earth, let’s bring them forth with their rulers in the lead. And when they’ve come, let them look for the most beautifully situated spot in the city to set up a
e military camp, from which they could most effectively restrain the people in the city if

*Cadmus, the legendary founder of the Greek city Thebes, came from Phoenicia (the region roughly the same as modern Lebanon). To found the city he had to kill a dragon. A god told him to plant the dragon’s teeth, and the first inhabitants of the city sprang up from those seeds. When Socrates says the story was current in many places, he means there were other local legends of races sprung from the ground they now live on, all originally brothers and sisters whose first mother is the land that feeds them and that they defend and love.

any of them were unwilling to obey the laws, and defend against those outside it if any enemy, like a wolf, were to attack the flock. And when they've set up the camp and offered sacrifices to those whom they ought, let them make places to sleep. Or how should it be?"

"That way," he said.

"The sort of places that would be adequate to give shelter in both winter and summer?"

"Of course," he said, "because you seem to be talking about dwellings."

"Yes," I said, "dwellings for soldiers anyway, but not for moneymakers."

"How do you mean the one differs from the other?" he said.

416a

"I'll try to tell you," I said. "Because it's surely the most dreadful and shameful of all things for a shepherd to raise dogs as auxiliaries for the flock that are of the sort and brought up in such a way that, from intemperance or hunger or some bad habit of another kind, the dogs themselves try to do harm to the sheep, acting like wolves instead of dogs."

"It is dreadful," he said; "how could it be anything else?"

"Then isn't there a need to be on guard in every way so that our auxiliaries won't do that sort of thing to the citizens, since they're the stronger, becoming like savage masters instead of benevolent allies?"

b

"There's a need to be on guard," he said.

"And wouldn't they have been provided with the most effective safeguard if they've been beautifully educated in their very being?"

"But surely they have been," he said.

And I said, "That's not something that deserves to be asserted with certainty, Glaucon my friend. What we were saying just now does deserve to be, though, that they need to get the right education, whatever it is, if they're going to what's most important for being tame, both toward themselves and toward those who are guarded by them."

c

"That's certainly right," he said.

"Now in addition to this education, any sensible person would claim that they need to be provided with dwellings and other property of that sort, whatever it takes for them not to be stopped from being the best possible guardians and not to be tempted to do harm to the citizens."

d

"And he'll be claiming something true."

"Then see whether they need to live and be housed in some such way as this," I said, "if they're going to be that sort of people. First, no private property that's not completely necessary is to be possessed by any of them. Next, there's to be no house or treasure room belonging to any of them except one that everyone who wants to will enter. Provisions, of all things men need who are moderate and courageous fighters in war, they're to receive at fixed times from the other citizens as recompense for guarding them, of such an amount that they have nothing over and nothing lacking each year. Going regularly to public dining halls, they're to live in common like soldiers in a camp. About gold and silver, it's to be said to them that they have the divine sort from gods always in their souls, and have no further need of the human sort, and that it's not pious to defile their possession of the former by mixing with it the possession of mortal gold, because many impious deeds have occurred over the currency most people use, while the sort they have with them is uncorrupted. And for them alone of those in the city, it's not lawful to handle or touch gold and silver, or even to go under the same roof with them, or wear them as ornaments, or drink out of silver or gold cups."

e

417a

b “And in this way they’d keep themselves and the city safe. But whenever they possess private land and houses and currency, they’ll be heads of households and farm owners instead of guardians, and they’ll become hostile masters instead of allies of the other citizens, and spend their whole lives hating and being hated, and plotting and being plotted against, fearing those inside the city instead of and much more than the enemies outside it, as they and the rest of the city race onward, already very close to destruction.

“For all these reasons, then,” I said, “we’ll declare that’s the way the guardians need to be provided for in the matter of housing and the rest, and we’ll set these things down as laws, won’t we?”

“Very much so,” said Glaucon.

BOOK IV

* * *

427c “Your city, son of Ariston,” I said, “[has] now be founded. So after that, take a
d look around in it yourself, once you’ve provided a light from somewhere, and call in your brother and Polemarchus and the others, if in any way we might see wherever its justice might be, and its injustice, and what differentiates the pair from each other, and which of the two someone who’s going to be happy ought to get hold of, whether he goes unnoticed or not by all gods and human beings.”

e “You’re talking nonsense,” said Glaucon. “You took it on yourself to search for it because it’s irreverent for you not to come to the aid of justice in every way to the limit of your power.”

“It’s true,” I said, “as you remind me, and so it must be done, but you folks need to do your part too.”

“Well that’s what we’ll do,” he said.

“Then I hope to find it this way,” I said. “I imagine our city, if in fact it’s been correctly founded, is completely good.”

“Necessarily,” he said.

“So it’s clear that it’s wise and courageous and moderate and just.”

“That’s clear.”

428a “Then whatever we find in it from among them, the leftover part will be what hasn’t been found?”

“Of course.”

“Then just as with any other four things, if we were looking for a particular one of them in whatever it was, whenever we recognized that one first that would be good enough for us, but if we recognized the three first, by that very means we would have recognized the thing we’re looking for, because it’s obvious that it couldn’t any longer be anything else than the thing left over.”

“You’re saying it correctly,” he said.

“So for these things too, since they happen to be four, they need to be looked for in the same way?”

“Obviously.”

“Well then, the first thing that seems to me to be clearly visible in it is wisdom. b
And there seems to be something strange about it.”

“What?” he said.

“The city that we went over seems to me to be wise in its very being. Because it is well-counseled, isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“And surely it’s clear that this very thing, good counsel, is a certain kind of knowledge, since it’s presumably not by ignorance but by knowledge that people counsel well.”

“That’s clear.”

“But many kinds of knowledge of all varieties are surely present in the city.”

“How could there not be?”

“Then is it on account of the carpenters’ knowledge that the city is called wise and well-counseled?”

“Not at all,” he said, “on account of that it’s called skilled in carpentry.” c

“Then it’s not on account of the knowledge that counsels about how wooden equipment would be best that a city is called wise.”

“No indeed.”

“Well then, is it the knowledge about things made of bronze or anything else of that sort?”

“None whatever of those,” he said.

“And it’s not the knowledge about growing the fruits of the earth; that makes it skilled in farming.”

“It seems that way to me.”

“What about it, then?” I said. “Is there any knowledge in the city just now founded by us, on the part of any of its citizens, by which it counsels not about things in the city pertaining to someone in particular, but about itself as a whole, and in what way it would interact best within itself and with other cities?” d

“There certainly is.”

“What is it,” I said, “and in which of them?”

“It’s guardianship,” he said, “and it’s in those rulers whom we were just now naming complete guardians.”

“So on account of this sort of knowledge, what do you call the city?”

“Well-counseled,” he said, “and wise in its very being.”

“Now do you imagine,” I said, “that there will be more metalworkers present in our city than these true guardians?” e

“A lot more metalworkers,” he said.

“And compared also to all the rest who are given names for having any particular kinds of knowledge, wouldn’t these guardians be the fewest of them all?”

“By a lot.”

“Therefore it’s by means of the smallest group and part of itself, the part that directs and rules, and by the knowledge in it, that a whole city founded in accord with nature would be wise. And it seems likely that this turns out by nature to be the smallest class, the one that’s appropriately allotted a share of that knowledge which, alone among the other kinds of knowledge, ought to be called wisdom.” 429a

“Very true, just as you say,” he said.

“So we’ve discovered this one of the four—how we did it I don’t know—both it and where in the city it’s lodged.”

“It seems to me at any rate,” he said, “to have been discovered well enough.”

“But as for courage, it and the part of the city it lies in, and through which the city is called courageous, are surely not very hard to see.”

“How so?”

b “Who,” I said, “would say a city was cowardly or courageous by looking to anything other than that part of it which defends it and takes the field on its behalf?”

“No one,” he said, “would look to anything else.”

“Because I don’t imagine,” I said, “that whether the other people in it are cowards or courageous would be what determines it to be the one sort or the other.”

“No.”

c “Then a city is also courageous by means of a certain part of itself, by its having in it a power such that it will safeguard through everything its opinion about what’s to be feared, that it’s the same things or the sorts of things that the lawgiver passed on to them in their education. Or isn’t that what you call courage?”

“I haven’t quite understood what you’re saying,” he said; “just say it again.”

“I mean,” I said, “that courage is a certain kind of preservation.”

“What kind of preservation exactly?”

d “Of the opinion instilled by law through education about what things and what sorts of things are to be feared. By preserving it through everything I meant keeping it intact when one is in the midst of pains and pleasures and desires and terrors and not dropping it. I’m willing to make an image of what it seems to me to be like if you want me to.”

“I want you to.”

e “You know, don’t you,” I said, “that dyers, when they want to dye wool so it will be purple, first select, from among the many colors, wool of the single nature belonging to white things, and then prepare it in advance, taking care with no little preparation that it will accept the pigment as much as possible, and only so dip it in the dye? And what is dyed in this way becomes impervious to fading, and washing it, whether without soaps or with them, has no power to remove the color from it, but what is not done that way—well, you know what it comes out like, whether one dyes it with other colors or this one without having taken care in advance.”

“I know,” he said, “that it’s washed out and laughable.”

430a “Then understand,” I said, “that we too were doing something like that to the extent of our power when we were selecting the soldiers and educating them with music and gymnastic training. Don’t imagine that we devised that for any reason other than so they, persuaded by us, would take the laws into themselves like a dye in the most beautiful way possible, so that their opinion about what’s to be feared, and about everything else, would become impervious to fading, because they’d had the appropriate nature and upbringing, and the dye couldn’t be washed out of them by those soaps that are so formidable at scouring, either pleasure, which is more powerful at doing that than every sort of lye and alkaline ash, or pain, terror, and desire, more powerful than any other soaps. This sort of power and preservation through everything of a right and lawful opinion about what is and isn’t to be feared, I for my part call courage, and I set it down as such unless you say otherwise.”

b “No,” he said, “I don’t say anything different, because it seems to me that you’re considering the right opinion about these same things that comes about without education, as animal-like or slavish, and not entirely reliable, and that you’d call it something other than courage.”

c “Entirely true,” I said, “as you say.”

“Then I accept this as being courage,” he said.

“Yes, do accept it,” I said, “but as a citizen’s courage, and you’ll be accepting it the right way. We’ll go over something still more beautiful in connection with it later

if you want, because what we've been looking for now is not that but justice. For the inquiry about that, I imagine this is sufficient."

"Yes," he said, "beautifully said."

"So two things are still left," I said, "that it's necessary to catch sight of in the city, moderation, and the one for the sake of which we're looking for them all, justice." d

"Quite so."

"How, then, might we discover justice so that we won't have to bother any more about moderation?"

"Well," he said, "I don't know and I wouldn't want it to come to light first anyway if we're no longer going to examine moderation. So if you want to gratify me, consider this before that."

"I certainly do want to," I said; "unless I'd be doing an injustice."

"Consider it, then," he said. e

"It's got to be considered," I said, "and as seen from where we are, it looks more like a sort of consonance and harmony than the ones before."

"How?"

"Presumably," I said, "moderation is a certain well-orderedness, and a mastery over certain pleasures and desires, as people say—being stronger than oneself—though in what way they mean that I don't know. And some other things of that sort are said that are like clues to it, aren't they?"

"They most of all," he said.

"But then isn't being stronger than oneself absurd? Because the one who's stronger than himself would presumably also be weaker than himself, and the weaker stronger, since the same person is referred to in all these terms." 431a

"How could it not be the same one?"

"But it appears to me," I said, "that this phrase intends to say that there's something to do with the soul within a human being himself that has something better and something worse in it, and whenever what's better by nature is master over what's worse, calling this 'being stronger than oneself' at least praises it. But whenever, from a bad upbringing or some sort of bad company, the better part that's smaller is mastered by the larger multitude of the worse part, this as a reproach is blamed and called 'being weaker than oneself,' and the person so disposed is called intemperate." b

"That's likely it," he said.

"Then look over toward our new city," I said, "and you'll find one of these things present in it. Because you'll claim that it's justly referred to as stronger than itself, if in fact something in which the better rules over the worse ought to be called moderate and stronger than itself."

"I am looking over at it," he said, "and you're telling the truth."

"And surely one would find a multitude and variety of desires as well as pleasures and pains, in children especially, and in women and menial servants, and also in most of the lower sorts of people among those who are called free." c

"Very much so."

"But you'll meet with simple and measured desires and pleasures, which are guided by reasoning with intelligence and right opinion, in few people, who are both best in nature and best educated."

"True," he said.

"Then don't you see that these too are present in your city, and that the desires in most people and those of the lower sorts are mastered there by the desires and intelligence of the lesser number of more decent people?" d

"I do," he said.

"So if one ought to refer to any city as stronger than pleasures and desires, and than itself, that needs to be applied to this one."

"Absolutely so," he said.

"So then isn't it moderate too in all these respects?"

"Very much so," he said.

e "And also, if in any city the same opinion is present in both the rulers and the ruled about who ought to rule, it would be present in this one. Doesn't that seem so?"

"Emphatically so," he said.

"Then as for being moderate, in which group of citizens will you say it's present when they're in this condition, in the rulers or in the ruled?"

"In both, presumably," he said.

"So do you see," I said, "that we had an appropriate premonition just now that moderation is like a certain harmony?"

"Why's that?"

432a "Because it's not like courage and wisdom, each of which by its presence in a certain part showed the city to be either wise or courageous. It doesn't act that way, but is in fact stretched through the whole across the scale, showing the weakest, the strongest, and those in between to be singing the same song together, whether you want to rank them in intelligence, or, if you want, in strength, or even by their number or their money or by anything whatever of that sort. So we'd be most correct in claiming that this like-mindedness is moderation, a concord of the naturally worse and better about
b which ought to rule, both in the city and in each one."

"The way it seems to me is completely in accord with that," he said.

"Well then," I said, "three of them have been spotted in our city—at least it seems that way. So what would be the remaining form by which the city would further partake in virtue? For it's clear that this is justice."

"That's clear."

c "So now, Glaucon, don't we need to take up positions like hunters in a circle around a patch of woods and concentrate our attention, so that justice doesn't escape anywhere, disappear from our sight, and become obscure? Because it's evident that it's in there somewhere. So look and make a spirited effort to catch sight of it, in case you spot it in any way before I do, and you'll show it to me."

"If only I were able to," he said. "Instead, if you treat me as a follower who's capable of seeing what's pointed out to him, you'll be handling me in an entirely sensible way."

"Follow then," I said, "after offering up prayers along with me."

"I'll do that," he said; "just you lead."

"The place sure does look like an inaccessible and shadowy one," I said; "at any rate it's dark and hard to scout through. But still, one needs to go on."

d "Yes, one does need to go on," he said.

And spotting something, I called, "Got it! Got it, Glaucon! We've probably got its trail, and I don't think it's going to get away from us at all."

"You bring good tidings," he said.

"But oh what a slug-like condition we were in," I said.

"In what sort of way?"

e "All this time, you blessed fellow, and it seems it's been rolling around in front of our feet from the beginning, and we didn't see it for all that, but were utterly ridiculous; the way people holding something in their hands sometimes look for the things they're

holding, we too weren't looking at the thing itself but were gazing off into the distance somewhere, which is probably the very reason it escaped our notice."

"How do you mean?" he said.

"Like this," I said: "it seems to me that although we've been saying it and hearing it all along, we haven't learned from our own selves that we were in a certain way saying it."

"That's a long prologue for someone who's eager to hear," he said.

"Well then, hear whether I mean anything after all," I said.

433a

"Because from the beginning the thing we've set down as what we needed to do all through everything when we were founding the city, this, it seems to me, or else some form of this, is justice. Surely we set down, and said often, if you remember, that each one person needed to pursue one of the tasks that are involved in the city, the one to which his nature would be naturally best adapted."

"We did say that."

"And surely we've heard it said by many others that doing what's properly one's own and not meddling in other people's business is justice, and we've said it often ourselves."

b

"We have said that."

"This, then, my friend," I said, "when it comes about in a certain way, is liable to be justice, this doing what's properly one's own. Do you know where I find an indication of this?"

"No, tell me," he said.

"It seems to me," I said, "that the thing that's left over in the city from the ones we've considered—moderation, courage, and wisdom—is what provided all of them with the power to come into being in it and provides their preservation once they've come into being, for as long as it's in it. And in fact we were claiming that justice would be what was left over from them if we were to find the three."

c

"And that is necessary," he said.

"And certainly," I said, "if one had to judge which of these would do our city the most good by coming to be present in it, it would be hard to decide whether it's the agreement of opinion of the rulers and ruled, or the preservation of a lawful opinion that arises in the soldiers about what things are and aren't to be feared, or the judgment and guardianship present in the rulers, or whether it's this that does it the most good by being in it, in a child and a woman and a slave and a free person and a craftsman and a ruler and one who's ruled, the fact that each of them, being one person, did what was properly his own and didn't meddle in other people's business."

d

"It's hard to decide," he said; "how could it not be?"

"Therefore, it seems that, with a view to a city's virtue, the power that comes from each person's doing what's properly his own in it is a match for its wisdom and moderation and courage."

"Very much so," he said.

"And wouldn't you place justice as a match for these as to a city's virtue?"

"Absolutely so."

"Then consider whether it will seem that way in this respect too: will you assign the judging of lawsuits in the city to the rulers?"

e

"Certainly."

"And will they judge them with their sights on anything else besides this, that each party not have another's property or be deprived of his own?"

"No, only on that."

“Because it’s the just thing?”

“Yes.”

434a “Then in this respect too, having and doing what’s properly one’s own would be agreed to be justice.”

“That’s so.”

“Now see if the same thing seems so to you that does to me. If a carpenter tries to work at the job of a leatherworker, or a leatherworker at that of a carpenter, or if they trade their tools and honors with each other, or even if the same person tries to do both jobs, and everything else gets traded around, would it seem to you to do the city any great harm?”

“Not very great,” he said.

b “But I imagine when someone who’s a craftsman by nature, or some other sort of moneymaker, but proud of his wealth or the multitude of his household or his strength or anything else of the sort, tries to get in among the warrior kind, or one of the warriors into the deliberative and guardian kind when he doesn’t merit it, and they trade their tools and honors with each other, or when the same person tries to do all these jobs at the same time, then I imagine it would seem to you too that this change and meddling among them would be the ruin of the city.”

“Absolutely so.”

c “Therefore among the three classes there are, any meddling or changing into one another is of the greatest harm to the city, and would most correctly be referred to as the greatest wrongdoing.”

“Precisely so.”

“And wouldn’t you say the greatest wrongdoing toward one’s own city is injustice?”

“How could it not be?”

“So this is injustice. And let’s say this the other way around; the minding of their own business by the moneymaking, auxiliary, and guardian classes, when each of them does what properly belongs to it in a city, is the opposite of that and would be justice and would show the city to be just?”

“It doesn’t seem to be any other way than that to me,” he said.

d “Let’s not say it in quite so rigid a way yet, but if this form is agreed by us to be present in each one of the people as well and to be justice there, then we’ll join in going along with it. What more would there be to say? And if not, then we’ll consider something else. But for now let’s complete the examination by which we imagined it would be easier to catch sight of what sort of thing justice is in one human being if we tried to see
e it first in some bigger thing that has justice in it. And it seemed to us that a city is just that, and so we founded the best one in our power, knowing well that it would be present in a good one at least. So let’s carry over what came to light for us there to one person,
435a and if they’re in accord, it will turn out beautifully; but if something different shows up in the single person, we’ll go back to the city again and test it. And maybe, by examining them side by side and rubbing them together like sticks, we could make justice flame forth from them, and once it’s become evident we could substantiate it for ourselves.”

“Then it’s down the road you indicate,” he said, “and it behooves us to go there too.”

“Well then,” I said, “does the bigger or smaller thing that someone refers to by the same name happen to be unlike the other one in the respect in which it’s called the same, or like it?”

“Like it,” he said.

b “Therefore a just man will not differ at all from a just city with respect to the form of justice, but he’ll be like it.”

“He’ll be like it,” he said.

“But the city seemed to be just because each of the three classes of natures present in it did what properly belonged to it, while it seemed also to be moderate, courageous, and wise on account of certain other attributes and characteristic activities of these same classes.”

“True,” he said.

“Therefore, my friend, we’ll regard a single person in this way too, as having these same forms in his soul, and as rightly deserving to have the same names applied to them as in the city as a result of the same attributes.” c

“There’s every need to,” he said.

“It’s certainly a light question about the soul we’ve landed ourselves into now, you strange fellow,” I said, “whether it has these three forms in it or not.”

“It’s not quite such a light one we seem to me to be in,” he said. “It’s probably because the saying is true, Socrates, that beautiful things are difficult.”

“So it appears,” I said. “And know for sure, Glaucon, that it’s my opinion we’ll never get hold of this in a precise way along the sorts of paths we’re now taking in our arguments, because there’s another, longer and more rigorous road that leads to it. Maybe, though, we can get hold of it in a way worthy, at least, of the things that have already been said and considered.” d

“Isn’t that something to be content with?” he said. “For me, at present anyway, it would be good enough.”

“Yes, certainly,” I said, “that will be quite sufficient for me too.”

“Don’t get tired, then,” he said; “just examine it.”

“Well then,” I said, “isn’t there a great necessity for us to agree that the same forms and states of character are present in each of us as are in the city? Because presumably they didn’t get there from anywhere else. It would be ridiculous if anyone imagined the spirited character didn’t come to be in the cities from particular people who also have this attribute, like those in Thrace and Scythia, and pretty generally in the northern region, or similarly with the love of learning, which one might attribute especially to the region round about us, or the love of money that one might claim to be not least round about the Phoenicians and those in Egypt.” e 436a

“Very much so,” he said.

“That’s just the way it is,” I said, “and it’s not difficult to recognize.”

“Certainly not.”

“But this now is difficult: whether we act each way by means of the same thing, or in the different ways by means of different things, of which there are three—whether we learn by means of one of the things in us, become spirited by means of another, and feel desires in turn by means of a third for the pleasures having to do with nourishment and procreation and as many things as are closely related to these, or whether we act by means of the whole soul in each of them, once we’re aroused. These are the things that will be difficult to determine in a manner worthy of the discussion.” b

“It seems that way to me too,” he said.

“Then let’s try to mark out whether they’re the same as one another or different, in this way.”

“How?”

“It’s obvious that the same thing isn’t going to put up with doing or undergoing opposite things in the same respect and in relation to the same thing at the same time, so presumably if we find that happening in the things in question, we’ll know that they’re not the same but more than one thing.” c

“Okay.”

“Then consider what I say.”

“Say it,” he said.

“Does the same thing have the power to stand still and move,” I said, “at the same time in the same respect?”

“Not at all.”

d “Then let’s agree about it in a still more precise way, so that we won’t be quibbling as we go on. Because if anyone were to say of a person who was standing still but moving his hands and his head, that the same person was standing still and moving at the same time, I imagine we wouldn’t consider that he ought to say it that way, but that some one thing about the person stands still while another moves. Isn’t that so?”

“It’s so.”

e “So if the one who said that were to get still more cute, making the subtle point that tops stand still as a whole and move at the same time, when they spin around with the point fixed in the same place, or that anything else going around in a circle on the same spot does that, we wouldn’t accept it, since it’s not with respect to the same things about themselves that such things are in that case staying in place and being carried around, but we’d claim that they have in them something straight and something surrounding it, and stand still with respect to the straight part, since they don’t tilt in any direction, but move in a circle with respect to the surrounding part; and when the straight axis is leaning to the right or the left, or forward or back, at the same time it’s spinning around, then it’s not standing still in any way.”

“You’ve got that right,” he said.

437a “Therefore, when such things are said they won’t knock us off course at all, any more than they’ll persuade us that in any way, the same thing, at the same time, in the same respect, in relation to the same thing, could ever undergo, be, or do opposite things.”

“Not me at any rate,” he said.

“Be that as it may,” I said, “in order that we won’t be forced to waste time going through all the objections of that sort and establishing that they aren’t true, let’s go forward on the assumption that this is how it is, having agreed that, if these things should ever appear otherwise than that, all our conclusions from it will have been refuted.”

“That’s what one ought to do,” he said.

b “Well then, would you place nodding ‘yes’ as compared to shaking one’s head ‘no’ among things that are opposite to each other, and having a craving to get something as compared to rejecting it, and drawing something to oneself as compared to pushing it away, and everything of that sort? Whether they’re things one does actively or experiences passively, there won’t be any difference on that account.”

“Sure,” he said, “they’re opposites.”

c “And what about thirst and hunger and the desires in general,” I said, “as well as wishing and wanting? Wouldn’t you place all these things somewhere in those forms just mentioned? For example, wouldn’t you claim that the soul of someone who desires either has a craving for what it desires, or draws to itself what it wants to become its own, or, in turn, to the extent it wishes something to be provided to it, nods its assent to this to itself as though it had asked some question, stretching out toward its source?”

“I would indeed.”

“And what about this? Won’t we place not wanting and not wishing and not desiring in with pushing away and banishing from itself and in with all the opposites of the former things?”

“How could we not?”

d “Now these things being so, are we going to claim that there’s a form consisting of desires, and that among these themselves, the most conspicuous ones are what we call thirst and what we call hunger?”

“We’re going to claim that,” he said.

“And the one is for drink, the other for food?”

“Yes.”

“Now to the extent that it’s thirst, would it be a desire in the soul for anything beyond that of which we say it’s a desire? For instance, is thirst a thirst for a hot drink or a cold one, or a big or a little one, or in a word, for any particular sort of drink? Or, if there’s any heat present in addition to the thirst, wouldn’t that produce an additional desire for cold, or if cold is present, a desire for heat? And if by the presence of magnitude the thirst is a big one, that will add a desire for a big drink, or of smallness, for a little one? But being thirsty itself will never turn into a desire for anything other than the very thing it’s naturally for, for drink, or being hungry in turn for food?” e

“It’s like that,” he said; “each desire itself is only for the very thing it’s naturally for, while the things attached to it are for this or that sort.”

“Then let’s not be unprepared, and let someone get us confused, on the grounds that no one desires drink, but decent quality drink, and not food but decent quality food, since everyone, after all, desires good things. So if thirst is a desire, it would be for a decent quality of drink, or of whatever else it’s a desire for, and the same way with the other desires.” 438a

“Well, maybe there could seem to be something in what he’s saying,” he said, “when he says that.”

“But surely,” I said, “with all such things that are related to something, the ones that are of particular kinds are related to something of a particular kind, as it seems to me, while the sorts that are just themselves are related only to something that’s just itself.” b

“I don’t understand,” he said.

“Don’t you understand,” I said, “that what’s greater is of such a sort as to be greater than something?”

“Certainly.”

“Than a lesser thing?”

“Yes.”

“And a much greater thing than one that’s much less, right?”

“Yes.”

“And also a thing that was greater than one that was less, and a thing that’s going to be greater than one that’s going to be less?”

“Yes, of course,” he said.

“And something more numerous is related to something that’s fewer, and something twice as many to something that’s half as many, and all that sort of thing, and also something heavier to something lighter and faster to slower, and in addition, hot things are related to cold things, and isn’t everything like that the same way?” c

“Very much so.”

“And what about the kinds of knowledge? Aren’t they the same way? Knowledge just by itself is knowledge of what’s learnable just by itself, or of whatever one ought to set down knowledge as being of, while a particular knowledge or a particular sort is of a particular thing or a particular sort of thing. I mean this sort of thing: when a knowledge of constructing houses came into being, didn’t it differ from the other kinds of knowledge so that it got called housebuilding?” d

“Certainly.”

“And wasn’t that because it’s a particular kind of knowledge, and any of the others is a different sort?”

“Yes.”

“And wasn’t it because it was about a particular sort of thing that it too came to be of a particular sort, and the same way for the other arts and kinds of knowledge?”

“That’s the way it is.”

e “Well then,” I said, “if you’ve understood it now, call that what I meant to say then, that with all the things that are such as to be about something, the ones that are only themselves are about things that are only themselves, while the ones that are of particular kinds are about things of particular kinds. And I’m not saying at all that the sorts of things they’re about are the same sorts they themselves are, as a result of which the knowledge of what’s healthy and sick would be healthy and sickly, and the knowledge of bad and good things would be bad and good; instead, I’m saying that when a knowledge came into being that was not just about the very thing knowledge is about, but about a particular thing, and that was what’s healthy and sick, it too as a result came to be of a particular sort. And this made it no longer be called simply knowledge, but, with the particular sort included, medicine.”

“I’ve understood it,” he said, “and it does seem that way to me.”

439a “So wouldn’t you place thirst,” I said, “among those things in which to be for something is exactly what they are? Thirst is, of course, for something.”

“I would, yes,” he said; “it’s for drink anyway.”

“And isn’t a particular sort of thirst for a particular sort of drink, while thirst itself is not for a lot or a little, or for a good or a bad one, or, in a word, for any particular sort, but thirst itself is naturally just for drink itself?”

“Absolutely so.”

b “Therefore the soul of someone who’s thirsty, to the extent he’s thirsty, wants nothing other than to drink, and stretches out to this, and sets itself in motion toward it.”

“Clearly so.”

“So if anything ever pulls it back when it’s thirsty, it would be some different thing in it from the very thing that’s thirsty, and that tows it like an animal toward drinking? Because we claim that the same thing couldn’t be doing opposite things in the same part of itself in relation to the same thing at the same time.”

“No, it couldn’t.”

c “In the same way, I imagine, one doesn’t do well to say about an archer that his hands push and pull the bow at the same time, but rather that one hand is the one pushing it and the other the one pulling it.”

“Absolutely so,” he said.

“Now do we claim that there are some people who sometimes, while they’re thirsty, aren’t willing to drink?”

“Very much so,” he said, “many people and often.”

“Well what should one say about them?” I said. “Isn’t there something in their soul telling them to drink and something preventing them from it that’s different from and mastering what’s telling them to?”

“It seems that way to me,” he said.

d “And doesn’t the thing that prevents such things come about in it, when it does come about, from reasoning? But the things that tug and pull come to it from passions and disorders?”

“It looks that way.”

“So not unreasonably will we regard them as being two things and different from each other, referring to that in the soul by which it reasons as its reasoning part, and that by which it feels erotic love, hunger, and thirst, and is stirred with the other desires, as its irrational and desiring part, associated with certain satisfactions and pleasures.”

“No, we’d regard them that way quite reasonably,” he said.

“So let these two forms be marked off in the soul,” I said. “But is the part that has to do with spiritedness, and by which we’re spirited, a third thing, or would it be of the same nature as one of these two?” e

“Maybe the same as one of them,” he said, “the desiring part.”

“But I once heard something that I believe,” I said, “about how Leontius, Aglaion’s son, was going up from Piraeus along the outside of the north wall, and noticed dead bodies lying beside the executioner. He desired to see them, but at the same time felt disgust and turned himself away; for a while he struggled and covered his eyes, but then he was overcome by his desire, and running toward the bodies holding his eyes wide open, he said, ‘See for yourselves, since you’re possessed! Take your fill of the lovely sight.’” 440a

“I’ve heard that myself,” he said.

“This story certainly indicates,” I said, “that anger sometimes makes war against the desires as though it were one thing acting against another.”

“It does indicate that,” he said.

“And don’t we often observe it in many other ways as well,” I said, “when desires overpower someone contrary to his reasoning part, that he scolds himself and is aroused against the part in him that’s overpowering him, and just as if there were a pair of warring factions, the spiritedness of such a person becomes allied with his reason? But as for its making a partnership with the desires to act in defiance when reason has decided what ought not to be done, I don’t suppose you’d claim you’d ever noticed such a thing happening in yourself, or, I imagine, in anyone else.” b

“No, by Zeus!” he said.

“Then what about when someone thinks he’s being unjust?” I said. “The more noble he is, won’t he be that much less capable of getting angry at being hungry or cold or suffering anything else at all of the sort from the person he thinks is doing those things to him justly, and won’t he be unwilling, as I’m saying, for his spirit to be aroused against that person?” c

“That’s true,” he said.

“But what about when he regards himself as being treated unjustly? Doesn’t the spirit in him seethe and harden and ally itself with what seems just, and submitting to suffering through hunger and cold and all such things, it prevails and doesn’t stint its noble struggles until it gains its end or meets its death, or else, called back, like a dog by a herdsman, by the reason that stands by it, it becomes calm?” d

“It is very much like what you describe,” he said. “And certainly in our city we set up the auxiliaries like dogs obedient to the rulers, who were like shepherds of the city.”

“You conceive what I want to say beautifully,” I said, “especially if you’ve taken it to heart in this respect in addition to that one.”

“In what sort of respect?”

“That it’s looking the opposite of the way it did to us just now with the spirited part, because then we imagined it was something having to do with desire, but now we’re claiming that far from that, it’s much more inclined in the faction within the soul to take arms on the side of the reasoning part.” e

“Absolutely,” he said.

“Then is it different from that too, or some form of the reasoning part, so that there aren’t three but two forms in the soul, a reasoning one and a desiring one? Or just as, in the city, there were three classes that held it together, moneymaking, auxiliary, and deliberative, so too in the soul is there this third, spirited part, which is by nature an auxiliary to the reasoning part, unless it’s corrupted by a bad upbringing?” 441a

“It’s necessarily a third part,” he said.

“Yes,” I said, “as long as it comes to light as something differing from the reasoning part, the same way it manifested itself as different from the desiring part.”

“But it’s not hard to make that evident,” he said, “since one could see this even in small children, that they’re full of spiritedness right from birth, while some of them seem to me never to get any share of reasoning, and most get one at a late time of life.”

“Yes, by Zeus,” I said, “you put it beautifully. And also in animals one could see that what you’re describing is that way. And in addition to these things, what we cited from Homer in some earlier place in the conversation will bear witness to it:

Striking his chest, he scolded his heart with words.

Here Homer has clearly depicted that which reflects on the better and the worse as one thing rebuking another, that which is irrationally spirited.”

“You’ve said it exactly right,” he said.

“Well, with a lot of effort we’ve managed to swim through these waters, and we’re tolerably well agreed that the same classes in the city are present in the soul of each one person, and are equal in number.”

“They are.”

“Isn’t it already a necessary consequence, then, that a private person is wise in the same manner and by the same means that a city was wise?”

“How else?”

“And the means by which and manner in which a private person is courageous is that by which and in which a city was courageous, and everything else related to virtue is the same way for both?”

“Necessarily.”

“So, Glaucon, I imagine we’ll claim also that a man is just in the very same manner in which a city too was just.”

“This too is entirely necessary.”

“But surely we haven’t forgotten somewhere along the way that the city was just because each of the three classes that are in it do what properly belongs to them.”

“We don’t seem to me to have forgotten that,” he said.

“Therefore we need to remember also that for each of us, that whoever has each of the things within him doing what properly belongs to it will be just himself and be someone who does what properly belongs to him.”

“It needs to be remembered very well indeed,” he said.

“Then isn’t it appropriate for the reasoning part to rule, since it’s wise and has forethought on behalf of the whole soul, and for the spirited part to be obedient to it and allied with it?”

“Very much so.”

“Then as we were saying, won’t a blending of music with gymnastic exercise make them concordant, tightening up the one part and nourishing it with beautiful speeches and things to learn while relaxing the other with soothing stories, taming it with harmony and rhythm?”

“Exactly so,” he said.

“So once this pair have been nurtured in this way, and have learned and been educated in the things that truly belong to them, they need to be put in charge of the desiring part, which is certainly the largest part of the soul in each person and by nature the most insatiable for money. This part needs to be watched over so that it doesn’t get filled with the so-called pleasures of the body and, when it becomes big and strong, not do the things that properly belong to it, but try to enslave and rule over

things that are not of a kind suited to it, so that it turns the whole life of all the parts upside-down.”

“Very much so,” he said.

“And wouldn’t this pair also stand guard on behalf of the whole soul and body against their external enemies in the most beautiful way,” I said, “one part deliberating while the other goes to war, following its ruler and accomplishing with its courage the things that have been decided?”

“That’s the way it is.”

“And I imagine we call each one person courageous on account of this part, when the spirited part of him preserves through pains and pleasures what’s been passed on to it by speeches as something to be feared or not.” c

“Rightly so,” he said.

“And wise by that little part, the one that ruled in him and passed those things on, and it in turn has knowledge in it of what’s advantageous for each part and for the whole consisting of the three of them in common.”

“Very much so.”

“And what next? Isn’t each person moderate by the friendship and concord among these same things, when the ruling part and the pair that are ruled are of the same opinion that the reasoning part ought to rule and aren’t in revolt against it?” d

“Moderation is certainly nothing other than that,” he said, “in a city or a private person.”

“But each person will be just on account of the thing we repeat so often, and in that manner.”

“That’s a big necessity.”

“Then what about this?” I said. “Surely it hasn’t gotten fuzzy around the edges for us in any way, has it, so it would seem to be some other sort of justice than the one that came to light in the city?”

“It doesn’t seem to me it has,” he said.

“Well,” I said, “we could establish this beyond all doubt, if anything in our soul still stands unconvinced, by applying the commonplace standards to it.” e

“What sort of standards exactly?”

“For example, if we were asked to come to an agreement about that city and the man who’s like that by nature and upbringing, as to whether it seemed such a man would steal a deposit of gold or silver he’d accepted in trust, do you think anyone would imagine he’d be more likely to do that than all those not of his sort?” 443a

“No one would,” he said.

“And wouldn’t temple robberies, frauds, and betrayals, either of friends in private or cities in public capacities, be out of the question for this person?”

“Out of the question.”

“And in no way whatever would he be unfaithful to oaths or other agreements.”

“How could he?”

“And surely adultery, neglect of parents, and lack of attentiveness to the gods belong more to any other sort of person than to this one.”

“Any other sort for sure,” he said.

“And isn’t the thing responsible for all that the fact that each of the parts within him does what properly belongs to it in connection with ruling and being ruled?” b

“That and nothing else.”

“So are you still looking for justice to be anything other than the power that produces men and cities of that sort?”

“By Zeus,” he said, “not I.”

c “So our dream has come to complete fulfillment; we said we suspected, right from when we started founding the city, that by the favor of some god we were liable to have gotten to an origin and outline of justice.”

“Absolutely so.”

“And what it was in fact, Glaucon—and this is why it was so helpful—was an image of justice, that it was right for the natural leatherworker to do leatherwork and not do anything else, and for the carpenter to do carpentry, and the same way for the rest.”

“So it appears.”

d “And the truth is, justice was something like that, as it seems, but not anything connected with doing what properly belongs to oneself externally, but with what’s on the inside, that truly concerns oneself and properly belongs to oneself, not allowing each thing in him to do what’s alien to it, or the classes of things in his soul to meddle with one another, but setting his own house in order in his very being, he himself ruling over and bringing order to himself and becoming his own friend and harmonizing three things, exactly like the three notes marking a musical scale at the low end, the high end, and the middle; and if any other things happen to be between them, he binds all of them together and becomes entirely one out of many, moderate and harmonized. Only when he’s in this condition does he act, if he performs any action having to do with acquiring money, or taking care of the body, as well as anything of a civic kind or having to do with private transactions; in all these cases he regards an action that preserves that condition and helps to complete it as a just and beautiful act, and gives it that name, and regards as wisdom the knowledge that directs that action. Anything that always breaks down that condition, he regards as an unjust action, and the opinion that directs that, he regards as ignorance.”

444a

“You’re absolutely telling the truth, Socrates,” he said.

“Okay,” I said, “if we were to claim that we’ve discovered the just man and the just city, and exactly what justice is in them, I imagine we wouldn’t seem to be telling a total lie.”

“By Zeus, certainly not,” he said.

“Shall we claim that, then?”

“Let’s claim it.”

“So be it,” I said. “What needs to be examined after this, I imagine, is injustice.”

“Clearly.”

b “Doesn’t it in turn have to be some sort of faction among these three things, a meddling and butting in and an uprising of a certain part of the soul against the whole, in order to rule in it when that’s not appropriate, because it’s of such a kind by nature that it’s only fitting for it to be a slave? I imagine we’ll claim something like that, and that the disorder and going off course of these parts is injustice as well as intemperance, cowardice, foolishness, and all vice put together.”

c “Those are the very things it is,” he said.

“Then as for doing unjust things and being unjust,” I said, “and in turn doing just things, isn’t it by now patently obvious exactly what all these are, if indeed that’s so for both injustice and justice?”

“How so?”

“Because,” I said, “they don’t happen to be any different from what’s healthy or diseased; what those are in a body, these are in a soul.”

“In what way?” he said.

“Presumably, healthful things produce health and diseased things produce disease.”

“Yes.”

d “Then is it also the case that doing just things produces justice, while doing unjust things produces injustice?”

“Necessarily.”

“And producing health is settling the things in the body into a condition of mastering and being mastered by one another in accord with nature, while producing disease is settling them into ruling and being ruled one by another contrary to nature.”

“That’s it.”

“Then in turn, as for producing justice,” I said, “isn’t that settling the things in the soul into a condition of mastering and being mastered by one another in accord with nature, while producing injustice is settling them into ruling and being ruled one by another contrary to nature?”

“Exactly,” he said.

“Therefore, it seems likely that virtue would be a certain health, beauty, and good condition of the soul, while vice would be a disease, deformity, and weakness.”

“That’s what they are.”

“And don’t beautiful practices lead to the acquisition of virtue, and shameful ones to vice?”

“Necessarily.”

“So what remains at this point, it seems, is for us to consider next whether it’s profitable to perform just actions, pursue beautiful practices, and be just, whether or not it goes unnoticed that one is of that sort, or to do injustice and be unjust, so long as one doesn’t pay the penalty or become better by being corrected.”

“But Socrates,” he said, “the question already appears to me to have become laughable, whether, when life doesn’t seem worth living with the body’s nature corrupted, even with all the foods and drinks and every sort of wealth and political rule, it will then be worth living with the nature of that very thing by which we live disordered and corrupted, even if someone does whatever he wants, but not the thing by which he’ll get rid of vice and injustice and acquire justice and virtue, seeing as how it’s become obvious that each of them is of the sort we’ve gone over.”

“It is laughable,” I said. “Nevertheless, since we’ve come this far, far enough to be able to see clearly that this is the way it is, it wouldn’t be right to get tired out.”

“By Zeus,” he said, “getting tired out is the last thing we ought to do.”

“Come up to the mark now,” I said, “so you too can see how many forms vice has, the way it seems to me, at least the ones that are even worth looking at.”

“I’m following,” he said; “just speak.”

“Well,” I said, “as though from a lookout spot, since we’ve climbed up to this point in the discussion, there appears to me to be one look that belongs to virtue and infinitely many to vice, but some four among them that are even worth mentioning.”

“How do you mean?” he said.

“There are liable to be as many dispositions of a soul,” I said, “as there are dispositions among polities that have looks to them.”

“How many, exactly?”

“Five for polities,” I said, “and five for a soul.”

“Say which ones,” he said.

“I say that one,” I said, “would be this type of polity we’ve been going over, but it could be named in two ways, since if one exceptional man arose among the rulers it would be called kingship, but aristocracy if there were more than one.”

“True,” he said.

“This, then,” I said, “is one form that I’m talking about, since whether one or more than one man arose, it wouldn’t change any of the laws of the city worthy of mention, since the upbringing and education they got would be the way we went over.”

“Likely not,” he said.

BOOK V

449 “Well, I call that kind of city and polity, and that kind of man, good and right, and if this sort are right, the rest are bad and wrong, in the ways the cities are managed and the way the soul’s disposition is constituted in private persons, and the badness takes four forms.”

“What sorts are they?” he said.

And I was going on to describe them in order, the way it appeared to me they
 b change out of one another in each case, but Polemarchus, who was sitting a little way from Adeimantus, reached out his hand and grabbed him from above by his cloak at the shoulder, drew him near, stretching himself forward, and was saying something while stooping toward him, of which we heard nothing but this: “Shall we let it go, then,” he said, “or what shall we do?”

“Not in the least,” said Adeimantus, now speaking loudly.

And I said, “What in particular won’t you let go?”

“You,” he said.

c “Because of what in particular?” I said.

“You seem to us to be taking the lazy way out,” he said, “and to be cheating us out of a whole form that belongs to the argument, and not the least important one, to avoid going over it, and you seem to have imagined you’d get away with speaking of it dismissively, saying it’s obvious, about women and children, that what belongs to friends will be shared in common.”

“And wasn’t I right, Adeimantus?” I said.

d “Yes,” he said, “but this ‘right’ needs explanation, like the rest of it, about what the manner of the sharing would be, since there could be many. So don’t pass over which of them you’re talking about, since we’ve been waiting all this time imagining you’d make some mention somewhere about the procreation of children, how they’ll be produced and once they’re born how they’ll be raised, and of this whole sharing of women and children you’re talking about. Because we think it has a big bearing, in fact a total impact, on whether the polity comes into being in the right way or not. But now, since you’re taking on another polity before you’ve determined these things sufficiently,
 450a it seemed right to us to do what you’ve heard, to refuse to let you go until you’ve gone over all these things just like the rest.”

“Me too,” said Glaucon; “put me down as a partner in this vote.”

“Don’t worry,” said Thrasymachus, “consider these things as having seemed good to all of us, Socrates.”

“Oh what you folks have done by ambushing me,” I said. “So much discussion about the polity you’re setting in motion again, as though from the beginning, when I was rejoicing at having already gotten to the end of it, feeling content if anyone would
 b leave these things alone and accept them the way they were stated then. You have no idea what a big swarm of arguments you’ve stirred up with the things you’re now demanding; since I saw that at the time I passed it by, fearing it would cause a lot of trouble.”

“What!” said Thrasymachus. “Do you imagine these people have come this far now to fritter away their time looking for gold rather than to listen to arguments?”

“All well and good,” I said, “but within measure.”

“The measure in hearing such arguments, Socrates,” said Glaucon, “for anyone who has any sense, is a whole life. So give up on that as far as we’re concerned; just see

that you don't get tired in any way of going all through the way it seems to you about the things we're asking, what the sharing of children and women will be among our guardians, and about the rearing of those who are still young that takes place in the time between birth and education, which seems to be the most troublesome time. So try to say in what way it needs to happen." c

"It's not easy to go through, you happy fellow," I said, "because it has a lot of doubtful points, even more than the things we went through before. It could even be doubted that what's spoken of is possible, and even if it came about as much as it possibly could, there will also be doubts even in that case that this would be the best thing. That's why there was a certain reluctance to touch on these things, for fear, dear comrade, the argument would seem to be only a prayer." d

"Don't be reluctant at all," he said, "since your listeners won't be unfair or disbelieving or ill-disposed."

And I said, "Most excellent fellow, I take it you're saying that to give me courage?"

"I am," he said.

"Well you're doing exactly the opposite," I said. "If I believed I knew what I was talking about, your pep talk would have been a beautiful one; to speak when one knows the truth, among people who are intelligent and friendly, about things that are of greatest importance and dear to us, is secure and encouraging, but to make one's arguments at the same time one is doubtful and searching, which is exactly what I'm doing, is a frightening and perilous thing. It's not because I'm liable to be laughed at—that's childish—but from fear that I'll not only tumble away myself from the truth, about things one least ought to fall down on, but that I'll also be lying in ruins with the friends I've dragged down with me. So instead I'll fall on my face in obeisance to Adrasteia, Glaucon, for her favor for what I'm about to say. I hope it's a lesser sin to become an unwilling murderer of someone than a deceiver about what's beautiful and good and just and lawful. That's a risk it's better to run among enemies rather than friends, so it's a good thing you gave me encouragement." 451a

And Glaucon, with a laugh, said, "Okay, Socrates, if we experience anything discordant from what you say, we'll release you like someone purified from being a murderer and cleared as no deceiver of us. Just speak up boldly." b

"Well, certainly someone who's released even in that situation is purified," I said, "as the law says, so it's likely that if it's that way there, it is here too."

"Speak, then," he said, "with that assurance."

"It's necessary to go back again now," I said, "and say what probably should have been said then in the proper place. And maybe this would be the right way, after the male drama has been completely finished, to finish the female drama in turn, especially since you're calling for it this way. To my way of thinking, for human beings born and educated in the way we went over, there is no other right way for them to get and treat children and women than to hasten down that road on which we first started them. We tried, I presume, in the argument, to set the men up like guardians of a herd." c

"Yes."

"Then let's follow that up by giving them the sort of birth and rearing that closely resemble that, and consider whether it suits us or not." d

"How?" he said.

"This way. Do we imagine that the females among the guard dogs ought to join in guarding the things the males guard, and hunt with them and do everything else in

common, or should they stay inside the house as though they were disabled by bearing and nursing the puppies, while the males do the work and have all the tending of the flock?"

"Everything in common," he said, "except that we'd treat the females as weaker and the males as stronger."

e "Is it possible, then," I said, "to use any animal for the same things if you don't give it the same rearing and training?"

"It's not possible."

"So if you're going to make use of women at the same tasks as men, they'll also have to be taught the same things."

"Yes."

452a "Music and gymnastic exercise were given to the men."

"Yes."

"Therefore this pair of arts needs to be made available to the women too, as well as the things connected with war, and they need to be applied in the same manner."

"It's likely, based on what you're saying," he said.

"Probably," I said, "many of the things being talked about now would look absurd if they're done the way they're being described, just because they're contrary to custom."

"Very much so indeed," he said.

b "Do you see which of them would be most absurd?" I said. "Isn't it obvious that it would be for the women to be exercising naked in the wrestling schools alongside the men, and not just the young ones but also those who're already on the older side, like the old men who're still devoted to exercising in the gyms when they're wrinkled and not a pleasant sight?"

"By Zeus," he said, "that would look absurd, at least the way things are at present."

c "But as long as we've got ourselves started talking about it, we shouldn't be afraid, should we, of all the jokes of whatever sort from witty people at the advent such a change in both gymnastic exercise and music, and not least about having war 'tools' and 'mounting' horses?"

"You've got that right," he said.

d "Instead, since we have started to talk about it, we need to pass right to the tough part of the law, asking these guys not to do what properly belongs to them but to be serious, and to recall that it's not much time since it seemed to the Greeks the way it does now to many of the barbarians, that it's shameful and absurd to look at a naked man, and when the people of Crete first introduced gymnasiums, and then the Spartans, the fashionable people of the time took the opportunity to ridicule all that. Don't you imagine they did?"

"I do."

e "But since it appeared to those who adopted the practice, I imagine, that it was better to uncover all such things than to hide them, what had been absurd in their eyes was stripped away by what was exposed as best in their reasoning. And this reveals that one who considers anything absurd other than what's bad is empty-headed, as is one who tries to get a laugh by looking at any other sight as laughable than one that's senseless and bad, or who takes seriously any mark of what's beautiful that he's set up other than what's good."

"Absolutely so," he said.

"Well then, isn't this the first thing that needs to be agreed about these things: whether they're possible or not? And shouldn't a chance for disputes be given to anyone

who wants to dispute it, whether it's someone fun-loving or the serious type, as to whether female human nature is capable of sharing in all the work that belongs to the nature of the male kind, or not in any at all, or in some sorts and not others, and whether in particular this last applies to things connected with war? Wouldn't someone be likely to get to the end of the subject most beautifully by starting off the most beautifully in this way?" 453a

"By far," he said.

"Then do you want us to carry on the dispute ourselves against ourselves, on behalf of the others," I said, "so that the opposing argument won't be under siege undefended?"

"There's no reason not to," he said.

"So let's say, on their behalf, 'Socrates and Glaucon, there's no need for anyone else to dispute with you, because you yourselves, at the beginning of the process of settling the city that you founded, agreed that each one person had to do the one thing that properly belonged to him by nature.'"

"Suppose we did agree to that; how could we not?"

"Well is there any way that a woman isn't completely different from a man in her nature?"

"How could she not be different?"

"Then isn't it also appropriate to assign each of them different work that's in accord with their nature?"

"Of course."

"So why aren't you mistaken now and contradicting yourselves, when you also declare that men and women ought to do the same things, despite having the most diverse natures? Will you be able to make any defense against this, you amazing fellow?" c

"Not very easily, just on the spur of the moment," he said; "but I'll ask you, in fact I am asking you, to be the interpreter of the argument on our side too, whatever it is."

"This is what I was afraid of a long time ago, Glaucon," I said, "as well as many other things I foresaw, and I was reluctant to touch on the law about the way of having and bringing up women and children." d

"No, by Zeus," he said, "it seems like it's no easy matter to digest."

"No, it's not," I said. "But it's like this: whether one falls into a little swimming tank or into the middle of the biggest sea, all the same one just swims none the less."

"Quite so."

"Well then, don't we too have to swim and try to save ourselves from the argument, and just hope for some dolphin to pick us up on his back or for some other sort of rescue that's hard to count on?"

"It looks that way," he said.

"Come on then," I said, "let's find a way out somewhere if we can. Because we're agreed that a different nature needs to follow a different pursuit, and that a woman and a man are different in nature; but we're claiming now that these different natures need to follow the same pursuits. Are these the things we're accused of?" e

"Precisely."

"Oh Glaucon," I said, "what a noble power the debater's art has."

454a

"Why in particular?"

"Because many people even seem to me to fall into it unwillingly," I said, "and imagine they're not being contentious but having a conversation, because they're not

able to examine something that's being said by making distinctions according to forms, but pounce on the contradiction in what's been said according to a mere word, subjecting one another to contention and not conversation."

"That is exactly the experience of many people," he said, "but that surely doesn't apply to us in the present circumstance, does it?"

b "It does absolutely," I said. "At any rate, we're running the risk of engaging in debate unintentionally."

"How?"

"We're pouncing, in an altogether bold and contentious manner, on 'the nature that's not the same' as a result of a word, because that's what's required not to have the same pursuits, but we didn't give any consideration whatever to what form of different or same nature we were marking off, and how far it extended, at the time when we delivered up different pursuits to a different nature and the same ones to the same nature."

"No, we didn't consider that," he said.

c "Well, according to that, then," I said, "it seems like we're entitled to ask ourselves whether it's the same nature that belongs to bald people as to longhaired ones, and not the opposite one, and whenever we agree that it's opposite, if bald people do leatherwork, not allow longhaired people to, or if the longhaired ones do, not allow the others."

"That would certainly be ridiculous," he said.

d "Well is it ridiculous for any other reason," I said, "than because we weren't reckoning on every sort of same and different nature at the time, but only watching out for that form of otherness and likeness that was relevant to the pursuits themselves? For example, with a male doctor and a female doctor, we meant that it's the soul that has the same nature. Don't you think so?"

"I do."

"But with a male doctor and a male carpenter, it's different?"

"Completely different, I presume."

e "So," I said, "if the men's or women's kind is manifestly superior in relation to any art or other pursuit, won't we claim that this needs to be given over to that one of the two? But if they apparently differ only in that the female bears the young and the male mounts the female, we'll claim instead that it hasn't yet been demonstrated in any way that a woman differs from a man in respect to what we're talking about, and we'll still believe that our guardians and the women with them ought to pursue the same activities."

"Rightly so," he said.

455a "Now after this, don't we invite the one who says the opposite to teach us this very thing, what art or what pursuit it is, among those involved in the setup of the city, for which the nature of a woman is not the same as but different from that of a man?"

"That's the just thing to do, anyway."

"And perhaps someone else as well might say the very thing you were saying a little while ago, that it's not easy to say anything adequate on the spot, but not hard if someone has been considering it."

"He would say that."

b "Then do you want us to ask the person who contradicts this sort of thing to follow us, if we somehow show him that no pursuit related to the running of a city is uniquely for a woman?"

"Certainly."

"Come on then," we'll say to him, "answer: is this the way you meant that one person is naturally fitted for something and another isn't, that in it the one learns something

easily, the other with difficulty? And that the one, on the basis of a brief study, would be apt to discover a lot about what he'd learned, while the other, even when he's gotten a lot of study and practice, couldn't even hang on to what he'd learned? And for the one, the aptitudes of his body would adequately serve the purposes of his thinking, while for the other it would be the opposite? Are there any other things than these by which you marked off the one naturally suited for each thing from the one who's not?"

"No one's going to claim there're any others," he said.

"Then do you know of anything practiced by human beings in which the man's kind isn't of a condition that surpasses the woman's in all these respects? Or shall we make a long story out of it, talking about the art of weaving, and tending to things that are baked or boiled, the activities in which the female kind is held in high repute and for which it's most absurd of all for it to be outdone?"

"You're telling the truth," he said, "that the one kind is dominated by the other by far in everything, as one might put it. But many women are certainly better than many men at many things, though on the whole it's the way you say."

"Therefore, my friend, there isn't any pursuit of the people who run a city that belongs to a woman because she's a woman or to a man because he's a man, but the kinds of natures are spread around among both kinds of animal alike, and by nature a woman takes part in all pursuits and a man in them all, but in all of them a woman is weaker than a man."



Steps in Cloth-Making. Black-figure lekythos (oil jug) attributed to the potter Amasis (sixth century B.C.). The women on the left are hand spinning thread; those in the center are weaving wool. Given that Greek women generally remained at home fulfilling such domestic occupations, Plato's suggestions in the *Republic* were quite revolutionary. Though he claims that in all pursuits "a woman is weaker than a man," Plato's character, Socrates, concludes, ". . . there isn't any pursuit of the people who run a city that belongs to a woman because she's a woman or to a man because he's a man, but the kinds of natures are spread around among both. . . ." (*The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1931*) (*Amasis Painter, Lekythos, black figured. Greek, Attic, ca. 550–530 B.C. Womens working wool. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1931.[31.11.10]*)

“Quite so.”

“So are we going to assign all of them to men and none to women?”

“Really, how could we?”

“But we’ll claim, I imagine, that there’s a woman with an aptitude for the medical art and another without it, and a woman with an aptitude for music and another who’s unmusical by nature.”

“Of course.”

456a “Then isn’t there a woman with an aptitude for gymnastic training and warfare, and one who’s unwarlike and not fond of gymnastic exercise?”

“I imagine so.”

“What else? Is one woman philosophic and another antiphilosophic? Is one spirited and another lacking in spirit?”

“These things are possible too.”

“Then it’s also possible for there to be a woman with an aptitude as a guardian, and another without one. Wasn’t it that sort of nature we also selected as belonging to the men with an aptitude for being guardians?”

“That very sort.”

“And therefore the same nature for guardianship of a city belongs to a woman as to a man, except to the extent that one is weaker or stronger.”

“So it appears.”

b “And so women of that sort need to be selected to live together and guard together with men of that sort, since they’re competent and are akin to them in their nature.”

“Entirely so.”

“And don’t the same pursuits need to be assigned to the same natures?”

“The same ones.”

“Then we’ve come back around to what we said before, and we’re agreed that it’s not contrary to nature for the women among the guardians to be assigned to music and gymnastic training.”

“Absolutely so.”

c “So we weren’t legislating things that are impossible or like prayers, since we set down the law in accord with nature. But it seems instead that it’s the things that are done now, contrary to these, that are done contrary to nature.”

“So it seems.”

“Wasn’t our question whether the things we’d be talking about are possible and best?”

“It was indeed.”

“And it’s been agreed that they’re possible?”

“Yes.”

“And that they’re best is the thing that needs to be agreed to next?”

“Clearly.”

d “Now as for turning out a woman skilled at guardianship, one education won’t produce men for us and another one women, will it, especially since it gets the same nature to work with?”

“No other one.”

“Then what’s the state of your opinion about this in particular?”

“About what exactly?”

“About assuming in your own estimation that one man is better and another worse. Or do you regard them as all alike?”

“Not at all.”

“Then in the city we’ve been founding, which do you imagine would turn out as better men, the guardians, when they’ve gotten the education we went over, or the leatherworkers, educated in leathercraft?”

“You’re asking a ridiculous question,” he said.

“I understand,” I said. “What about it then? Compared to the rest of the citizens, aren’t these the best men?”

“By far.”

“And what about the women? Won’t these be the best among the women?” e

“They too, by far,” he said.

“And is there anything better for a city than for the best possible women and men to arise in it?”

“There isn’t.”

“And music and gymnastic training, when they come to their aid in the way we’ve gone over, bring this about?” 457a

“How could they not?”

“Therefore the ordinance we set down for the city is not only something possible but also the best thing.”

“So it is.”

“Then the women among the guardians need to take off their clothes, since they’re going to be clothed in virtue instead of a cloak, and they need to share in war and the rest of the guardianship connected with the city, and not engage in other activities, but less arduous parts of these same activities need to be given to the women than to the men because of the weakness of their kind. And a man who laughs at naked women engaged in gymnastic exercise for the sake of what’s best ‘plucks a laugh from his wisdom while it’s still an unripe fruit,’ having no idea, it seems, what he’s laughing at or what he’s doing. For the most beautiful thing that’s being said or will have been said is this: that what’s beneficial is beautiful and what’s harmful is ugly.” b

“Absolutely so.”

“Then shall we claim that we’re escaping from one wave, so to speak, by saying this about the law pertaining to women, so that we don’t get completely swamped when we set it down that our male and female guardians must pursue all things in common, but that in a way the argument that says that’s possible and beneficial is in agreement with itself?” c

“And it’s certainly no small wave you’re escaping,” he said.

“But you’ll claim it’s no big one either,” I said, “when you see what comes after this.”

“Speak, then, and I’ll see,” he said.

“A law that goes along with this one,” I said, “and with the others that preceded it, is, as I imagine, the following.”

“What?”

“That all these women are to be shared among all these men, and none of the women is to live together privately with any of the men, and their children are to be shared too; a parent is not to know the offspring that are its own, or a child its parent.” d

“This is much bigger than the former one,” he said, “in respect to doubtfulness about both what’s possible and what’s beneficial.”

“About what’s beneficial, anyway,” I said, “I don’t imagine there’d be any arguing that it’s not the greatest good for the women to be shared or for the children to be shared, if possible; but about whether it’s possible or not, I imagine there’d be a very great dispute.”

“There could very well be dispute about both,” he said. e

“You’re talking about a unified front among arguments,” I said, “and here I was imagining I could run away from one of them, if it seemed to you to be beneficial, and I’d have the one about whether it’s possible or not left.”

“But you didn’t get away with running away,” he said, “so give an account of yourself on both counts.”

458a “I’ll have to stand trial,” I said. “Do me this much of a favor though; let me go about it holiday-style, like dawdlers who’re in the habit of feasting on their own thoughts when they’re walking by themselves. People like that, you know, before finding out how there can be some thing they desire, put that aside so they won’t wear themselves out pondering about what’s possible or not, and taking it for granted that the thing they want is already there, they’re already arranging the rest and enjoying going through the sorts of things they’ll do when it happens, and otherwise making a lazy soul even lazier. I’ve gotten soft myself by now, and on those questions I desire to put them off and consider later how they’re possible, but now, taking it for granted that they’re possible, if you let me, I’ll consider how the rulers will organize them when they happen, and what would be the most advantageous way, for both the city and the guardians, for them to be done. I’ll try together with you to consider these things first, and those later, if you give permission.”

“I do give permission,” he said; “go ahead and consider.”

c “I imagine, then,” I said, “if in fact the rulers are going to be worthy of that name, and their auxiliaries by the same token worthy of theirs, the ones will wish to follow orders and the others to give them, while the latter themselves obey the laws on some matters, but imitate the laws on all the other matters that we’ll leave up to their judgment.”

“That sounds right,” he said.

d “Then you,” I said, “as their lawgiver, once you’ve selected the women in the same way you also selected the men, will distribute them as far as possible to those with similar natures; and they, since they have their houses and meals in common, and none of them possesses any property of that sort privately, will be together, and while they’re mingled together in the gyms and in the rest of their upbringing, they’ll be led, I imagine, by an inborn necessity, toward mingling with each other sexually. Or do the things I’m talking about not seem necessary to you?”

“Not in the geometrical sense anyway,” he said, “but they seem to be necessities of an erotic sort, which are liable to be sharper than the former at persuading and attracting most of the populace.”

e “Very much so,” I said. “But the next thing to consider, Glaucon, is that unregulated sexual contact with one another, or doing anything else at all of that sort, isn’t pious in a city of people favored by destiny, and the rulers aren’t going to allow it.”

“No, it wouldn’t be just,” he said.

“So it’s clear that the next thing we’ll do is make marriages sacred to the greatest extent possible, and it’s the most beneficial ones that would be sacred.”

“Absolutely so.”

459a “So in what way will they be the most beneficial? Tell me this, Glaucon, because I see in your household both hunting dogs and true-bred birds in great numbers. Well, by Zeus, have you paid any attention to their matings and breeding?”

“To what sort of thing?” he said.

“First, among those of the same kind, even though they’re true bred, aren’t there some that also turn out best?”

“There are.”

“Then do you breed from all of them alike, or are you eager to breed as much as possible from the best ones?”

“From the best ones.”

“And then what? From the youngest, or from the oldest, or as much as possible from those in their prime?”

“From those in their prime.”

“And if they weren’t bred that way, do you expect the race of birds or of dogs would be much worse?”

“I do,” he said.

“And what do you suppose about horses,” I said, “and the rest of the animals? That it would be any different?”

“That would certainly be strange,” he said.

“Ayayay, dear comrade,” I said, “how greatly in need we are, then, of top-notch rulers if it’s also the same way with the human race.”

“Well it is the same way,” he said, “but what does that have to do with the rulers?”

“There’ll be a necessity,” I said, “for them to use a lot of medicines. Presumably we believe that for bodies that don’t need medicines, those of people willing to follow a prescribed way of life, even a rather ordinary doctor is sufficient; but when there’s a need to use medicine, we know that a more courageous doctor is needed.”

“True, but what point are you making?”

“This one,” I said: “our rulers are liable to need to use falsehood and deception in abundance for the benefit of those they rule. And we claimed, of course, that all that sort of thing is useful in the form of medicine.”

“And rightly so,” he said.

“Well, it seems like it’s not least in the marriages and procreation that this rightness comes into play.”

“How so?”

“It follows from the things that have been agreed to,” I said, “that as often as possible the best men ought to have sex with the best women, and the worst on the contrary with the worst, and the offspring of the former ought to be reared, but not those of the latter, if the flock is going to be of top quality to the highest degree possible. And all these things ought to happen without the notice of anyone except the rulers themselves, if the guardians’ herd is also going to be as free as possible of internal conflict.”

“With the utmost rightness,” he said.

“Then don’t some sort of festivals and sacrifices need to be set up by law, in which we’ll bring together the brides and grooms, and suitable hymns need to be made by our poets for the marriages that take place? We’ll make the number of marriages be up to the rulers, in order that they might preserve the same number of men as much as they can, having regard to wars, diseases, and everything of the sort, and in order that, as far as possible, our city might not become either big or little.”

“Rightly,” he said.

“I imagine some ingenious lotteries need to be made up, so that the ordinary man mentioned before will blame chance and not the rulers for each marriage pairing.”

“Very much so,” he said.

“And presumably those among the young men who are good in war or anywhere else need to be given special honors and prizes, and among other things a more unrestricted privilege to sleep with the women, so that on this pretext, as great a number of children as possible would also at the same time be begotten by such people.”

“Rightly so.”

“And won’t the officials set up for this purpose take over the offspring born on each occasion, male or female officials or both, since, of course, the ruling offices are shared among the women and men?”

“Yes.”

- c “So I expect they’ll take those born to the good ones into the fold and turn them over to some sort of nurses who live separately in a certain part of the city; but the offspring of the worse sort of people, and any of the others that might have been born with defects, they’ll hide away in a place not spoken of and not seen, as is fitting.”

“If indeed the race of the guardians is going to be pure,” he said.

- d “Won’t these officials also be in charge of the feeding, bringing the mothers to the fold when they’re swollen with milk, contriving every sort of means so that none of them will recognize her own child, and providing other women who have milk if they don’t have enough, and see to it that the mothers themselves suckle for a moderate time, but turn over the watchfulness and other work to wet nurses and nurses?”

“You’re describing a great ease of childbearing,” he said, “for the women among the guardians.”

“And it’s appropriate,” I said. “Let’s go on to the next thing we proposed, since we claimed that the offspring ought to be born particularly from those in their prime.”

“True.”

- e “Then do you share my opinion that twenty years is the average time of the prime of life for a woman, and thirty for a man?”

“Which of the years?” he said.

“Starting from her twentieth and up to her fortieth, for a woman to bear children for the city,” I said, “and for a man, once he passes his swiftest peak at running, to beget children for the city from then until his fifty-fifth.”

- 461a “For them both,” he said, “that’s certainly their prime both in body and in intelligence.”

“Then if someone older or younger than that engages in generating offspring into the community, we’ll claim it’s a transgression that’s not pious or just, since it produces for the city a child that, if it escapes notice, will have been brought forth without being born with the sacrifices and prayers that would be offered at every marriage by priestesses, priests, and the whole city together, that from good and beneficial people better and more beneficial offspring might always come forth; instead, it will have been born under cover of darkness in the presence of terrible unrestraint.”

“We’ll rightly make that claim,” he said.

“And the same law applies,” I said, “if any of the men still propagating has sexual contact with any of the women who are of childbearing age when a ruler hasn’t joined him with her; we’ll charge him with bringing a bastard child into the city, unsanctioned and unconsecrated.”

“Quite rightly,” he said.

- c “But, I imagine, when both the women and the men get beyond the age to reproduce, we’ll no doubt leave them free to have sex with anyone they want, except with a daughter, a mother, a daughter’s children, a mother’s parent, or the women with a son or his children or with a father or his parent, and all that only after it’s been insisted that they take the most zealous care not to bring forth even a single fetus into the light of day, if one is conceived, and if any is forced on them, to handle it on the understanding that there’s to be no raising of such a child.”

“These things too are reasonably said,” he said; “but how are they going to distinguish their fathers and daughters, and the others you just mentioned, one from another?”

“There’s no way,” I said. “But from that day on which any of them becomes a bridegroom, whatever offspring are born in the tenth month after that, or even the seventh, to all of these he’ll apply the name sons to the males and daughters to the females, and they’ll call him father, and in the same way he’ll call their offspring his grandchildren, and they in turn will call people like him grandfathers and grandmothers, and they’ll call those who were born at the same time their mothers and fathers were producing children sisters and brothers, so that, as we were just saying, they won’t have sexual contact with one another. But the law will grant brothers and sisters permission to be joined together if the lottery falls out that way and the Pythia* confirms it.”

“Quite rightly,” he said.

“So, Glaucon, this or something like it is the way of sharing women and children among the guardians of your city. The next thing after this ought to be to have it established out of the argument that this goes along with the rest of the polity and is by far the best way. Or how should we proceed?”

“That way, by Zeus,” he said.

“Well then, wouldn’t this be a source from which an agreement might come, that we ask ourselves what’s the greatest good we can state in the organization of a city, at which the lawgiver ought to aim in setting down the laws, and what’s the greatest evil, and then consider on that basis whether the things we were just now going over fit into the footprint of the good while they don’t fit into that of the evil?”

“That most of all would be the way,” he said.

“Then can we have any greater evil in a city than that which tears it apart and makes it many instead of one? Or a greater good than that which binds it together and makes it one?”

“No we can’t.”

“And doesn’t the sharing of pleasure and pain bind it together, when as much as possible all the citizens feel joy and pain in almost the same way at the coming into being and passing away of the same things?”

“Absolutely so,” he said.

“But the private appropriation of such things dissolves it, when some people become overwhelmed with pain and others overcome with joy at the same experiences of the city and of the people in the city?”

“How could it not?”

“And doesn’t that sort of thing come from this, that people in the city don’t utter such words as mine and not mine at the same time, and the same with somebody else’s?”

“Exactly so.”

“So isn’t that city governed best in which the most people say this mine and not mine on the same occasion about the same things?”

“Much the best.”

“And this is precisely whichever city is in a condition closest to that of a single human being? For instance, whenever a finger of any of us is wounded, presumably the whole community extending from the body to the soul in a single ordering under the ruler within it would be aware of it, and it all would suffer pain as a whole together with the part that’s afflicted, and is that the sense in which we mean that a human being has a pain in his finger? And is it the same story for any other part of a human being whatever, both for a part afflicted with pain and for one that’s eased by pleasure?”

*The priestess of Apollo at Delphi. Presumably the rulers would know which cases involved actual incest and avoid them, and would take her into their confidence.

“It’s the same,” he said, “and as for what you’re asking, the best constituted city is the one situated closest to such a condition.”

e “So I imagine that when one of its citizens undergoes anything at all, good or bad, such a city most of all will claim the thing that happened to him as its own, and all of it will share the pleasure or share the pain.”

“Necessarily,” he said, “if it’s one with good laws, anyway.”

* * *

473b “It looks like the next thing for us to do is try to search out and demonstrate whatever is now done badly in cities, on account of which they aren’t managed this way, and what would be the smallest change by which a city could come into this mode of political association— preferably a change of one thing, or if not that, of two, and if not that, of as few things as possible in number and the smallest in strength.”

c “Absolutely so,” he said.

“Well with one change,” I said, “it seems to me we can show that it could be transformed, though it’s not a small or easy one, but it is possible.”

“What’s that?” he said.

“I’m in for it now,” I said, “up against what we likened to the biggest wave. But it’s got to be said, even if, literally just like an uproarious wave, it’s going to drown me in laughter and humiliation. Consider what I’m about to say.”

“Say it,” he said.

d “Unless philosophers rule as kings in their cities,” I said, “or those now called kings and supreme rulers genuinely and adequately engage in philosophy, and this combination of political power and philosophy joins together in the same position, while the many natures that are now carried away to one of the two in isolation are forcibly blocked off from that, there is no rest from evils for the cities, dear Glaucon, or, I think, for the human race, and this polity that we’ve now gone over in speech will never before e that sprout as far as it can and see the light of the sun. This is what’s been putting a reluctance to speak in me all this time, my seeing that it would be proclaimed to be far beyond belief, because it’s hard to see that in no other way would anyone be happy in private, or any city in public.”

* * *

BOOK VI

* * *

502c “Then since, by effort, [our discussion of lawgiving has] reached an end, don’t the things that remain after it need to be spoken about: in what manner, by what kinds of d things learned and pursued, the saviors of the polity will be present among us, and at what ages each group of them will take up each activity?”

“That surely needs to be spoken about,” he said.

“It didn’t turn out to be a wise thing in the earlier discussion,” I said, “for me to have left out the objectionable matter of possessing women, the propagation of children, and

the instituting of the rulers, even though I knew that the complete truth would be offensive and a hard thing to bring about, because as it is, the need to go through these things came along nonetheless. And while the particular things about women and children are finished, it's necessary to go into the ones about the rulers as if from the beginning. And we were saying, if you recall, that they must be seen to be passionately devoted to the city, standing the test amid pleasures and pains, and being seen not to drop this conviction through drudgery or terrors or any other vicissitude, or else the person who's incapable is to be rejected, while the one who comes through untarnished in every way, like gold tested in the fire, is to be established as a ruler and given honors and prizes both while living and at his death. Some such things as that were being said when the discussion slipped past them with its face covered, in fear of setting in motion what's now at hand." 503a

"You're telling the exact truth," he said; "I do recall." b

"I was reluctant, dear friend," I said, "to state what has now been daringly exposed, but now let it be boldly stated: it's imperative to put philosophers in place as guardians in the most precise sense."

"Let it be so stated," he said.

"Then consider it likely that you'll have few of them, since the nature we went through needs to belong to them, but its parts are rarely inclined to grow together in the same place, but in most cases grow as something severed."

"How do you mean?" he said.

"With natures that are good learners, have memories, are intellectually flexible, are quick, and have everything else that goes with these things, and are youthfully spirited and lofty in their thinking as well, you know that they aren't willing at the same time to grow up being the sort of natures that want to live with calmness and stability in an orderly way, but instead are the kind that are carried off wherever their quickness happens to take them, and everything stable goes right out of them." c

"You're telling the truth," he said.

"But with those natures with stable characters, on the other hand, that are not easily changeable, those one would treat as more trustworthy and that would be unmoved confronting terrors in war, wouldn't they be the same way confronting things to be learned also? They're hard to move and slow to learn as though they'd been numbed, and they're full of sleepiness and yawning whenever anything of the sort needs to be worked at." d

"That's how they are," he said.

"But we claimed it was necessary to have a good-sized and high-quality share of both, or else not be allowed to take part in the most precise sort of education or in honor or in ruling."

"Rightly," he said.

"And don't you imagine that will be rare?"

"How could it not be?"

"So not only does it need to be tested in the labors, terrors, and pleasures we spoke of then but also, something we passed over then and speak of now, one needs to give it exercise in many kinds of studies to examine whether it will be capable of holding up under the greatest studies, or whether it will shy away like people who show cowardice in other areas." 504a

"It's certainly appropriate to examine it that way," he said, "but what sort of studies in particular are you saying are the greatest?"

"No doubt you remember," I said, "that we pieced together what justice, moderation, courage, and wisdom each would be by distinguishing three forms that belong to the soul."

"If I didn't remember that," he said, "it would be just for me not to hear the rest."

"And what about what was said by way of preface to that?"

“What was it?”

- b “We were saying something to the effect that getting the most beautiful possible look at these things would take another, longer way around, which would make them become evident to someone who traveled that road, though it would be possible to provide illustrations approximating to the things that had already been said earlier, and you folks declared that would be sufficient. And so the things said at that time, as far as precision goes, as it appeared to me, were deficient; as for whether they were satisfactory to you people, that’s something you could say.”

“To me? In a measured way,” he said, “and it looked like they were to the others as well.”

- c “My friend,” I said, “measuredness in such matters that stops short in any respect whatever of what *is* turns out not to measure anything at all, because nothing incomplete is a measure of anything.

“But sometimes it seems to some people that they’re well enough off already and don’t need to search any further.”

“A great many people feel that way a lot,” he said, “because of laziness.”

“That feeling, anyway,” I said, “is one there’s the least need for in a guardian of a city and its laws.”

“Likely so,” he said.

- d “So, my comrade,” I said, “it’s necessary for such a person to go around by the longer road, and he needs to work as a learner no less hard than at gymnastic training, or else, as we were just saying, he’ll never get to the end of the greatest and most relevant study.”

“So these aren’t the greatest ones,” he said, “but there’s something still greater than justice and the things we’ve gone over?”

- e “Not only is there something greater,” I said, “but even for those things themselves, it’s necessary not just to look at a sketch, the way we’ve been doing now, but not to stop short of working them out to their utmost completion. Wouldn’t it be ridiculous to make a concentrated effort in every way over other things of little worth, to have them be as precise and pure as possible, while not considering the greatest things to be worthy of the greatest precision?”

“Very much so,” he said, “and a creditable thought it is, but what you mean by the greatest study, and what it’s about—do you imagine,” he said, “that anyone’s going to let you off without asking you what it is?”

- 505a “Not at all,” I said. “Just you ask. For all that, you’ve heard it no few times, but now you’re either not thinking of it or else, by latching onto me, you think you’ll cause me trouble. But I imagine it’s more the latter, since you’ve often heard that the greatest learnable thing is the look of the good, which just things and everything else need in addition in order to become useful and beneficial. So now you know pretty well that I’m going to say that, and in addition to it that we don’t know it well enough. But if we don’t know it, and we do know everything else as much as possible without it, you can be sure
b that nothing is any benefit to us, just as there would be none if we possessed something without the good. Or do you imagine it’s any use to acquire any possession that’s not good? Or to be intelligent about everything else without the good, and have no intelligence where anything beautiful and good is concerned?”

“By Zeus, I don’t!” he said.

“And surely you know this too, that to most people, the good seems to be pleasure, and to the more sophisticated ones, intelligence.”

“How could I not?”

“And, my friend, that the ones who believe the latter can’t specify what sort of intelligence, but are forced to end up claiming it’s about the good.”

“It’s very ridiculous,” he said.

“How could it be otherwise,” I said, “if after reproaching us because we don’t know what’s good they turn around and speak to us as though we do know? Because they claim that it’s intelligence about the good as though we for our part understand what they mean when they pronounce the name of the good.”

“That’s very true,” he said.

“And what about the people who define the good as pleasure? Are they any less full of inconsistency than the others? Aren’t they also forced to admit that there are bad pleasures?”

“Emphatically so.”

“So I guess they turn out to be conceding that the same things that are good are also bad. Isn’t that so?”

“Certainly.”

“Then isn’t it clear that the disagreements about it are vast and many?”

“How could it not be clear?”

“And what about this? Isn’t it clear that many people would choose the things that seem to be just and beautiful, and even when they aren’t, would still do them, possess them, and have the seeming, though no one is content to possess what seems good, but people seek the things that are good, and in that case everyone has contempt for the seeming?”

“Very much so,” he said.

“So this is exactly what every soul pursues, for the sake of which it does everything, having a sense that it’s something but at a loss and unable to get an adequate grasp of what it is, or even have the reliable sort of trust it has about other things; because of this it misses out even on any benefit there may have been in the other things. On such a matter, of such great importance, are we claiming that even the best people in the city, the ones in whose hands we’re going to put everything, have to be in the dark in this way?”

“Not in the least,” he said.

“I imagine anyway,” I said, “that when there’s ignorance of the way in which just and beautiful things are good, they won’t have gotten a guardian for themselves who’s worth much of anything, in someone who’s ignorant of that, and I have a premonition that no one’s going to discern them adequately before that.”

“You’re very good at premonitions,” he said.

“Then won’t our polity be perfectly ordered if that sort of guardian does watch over it, one who knows these things?”

“Necessarily,” he said. “But you in particular, Socrates, do you claim the good is knowledge or pleasure or some other thing besides these?”

“That’s a man for you,” I said; “you’ve done a beautiful job of making it plain all along that the way things seem to others about these things won’t be good enough for you.”

“But it doesn’t seem just to me either, Socrates,” he said, “to be able to state the opinions of others but not one’s own, when one has been concerned about these things for such a long time.”

“Well does it seem to you to be just,” I said, “to talk about things one doesn’t know as though one knew them?”

“Not by any means as though one knew them,” he said, “but certainly it’s just to be willing to say what one thinks as something one thinks.”

“What?” I said, “Haven’t you noticed about opinions without knowledge that they’re all ugly? The best of them are blind. Or do people who hold any true opinion

without insight seem to you to be any different from blind people who travel along the right road?"

"No different," he said.

"Then do you want to gaze on ugly things, blind and crooked, when you'll be able to hear bright and beautiful ones from others?"

d "Before Zeus, Socrates," said Glaucon, "you're not going to stand down as if you were at the end. It'll be good enough for us if, the same way you went over what has to do with justice and moderation and the other things, you also go over what has to do with the good."

e "For me too, comrade," I said, "and more than good enough. But I'm afraid I won't be capable of it, but I'll make a fool of myself in my eagerness and pay for it in ridicule. But, you blessed fellows, let's leave aside for the time being what the good itself is, since it appears to me to be beyond the trajectory of the impulse we've got at present to reach the things that now seem to me to be the case. But I'm willing to speak about what appears to be an offspring of the good and most like it, if that's also congenial to you folks, or if not, to let it go."

"Just speak," he said, "and some other time you'll pay off the balance with a description of the father."

507a "I'd like to have the power to pay it in full and for you folks to receive it, and not just the interest on it as you will now. Give a reception, then, to this dividend and offspring of the good itself. Be on your guard, though, in case I unintentionally deceive you by paying my account with counterfeit interest."

"We'll be on guard according to our power," he said, "so just speak."

"After I've gotten your agreement," I said, "and reminded you of things mentioned in the previous discussion and often spoken of before now elsewhere."

"What sort of things?" he said.

b "We claim that there are many beautiful things," I said, "and many good things, and the same way for each kind, and we distinguish them in speech."

"We do."

"But also a beautiful itself, and a good itself, and the same way with everything we were then taking as many, we go back the other way and take according to a single look of each kind, as though there is only one, and we refer to it as what each kind is."

"That's it."

"And we claim that the former are seen but not thought, while the 'looks' in turn are thought but not seen."

"Completely and totally so."

c "And by which of the things within ourselves do we see the ones that are seen?"

"By sight," he said.

"And perceive the things heard by hearing, and all the perceptible things by the other senses?" I said.

"Of course."

"Well," I said, "have you reflected about the craftsman of the senses, how he was by far the most bountiful in crafting the power of seeing and being seen?"

"Not at all," he said.

d "Then look at it this way: for one thing to hear and another to be heard, is there any need for another kind of thing in addition to the sense of hearing and a sound, such that, if that third thing isn't present, the first won't hear and the second won't be heard?"

"There's nothing like that," he said.

“And I don’t imagine,” I said, “that there are many others either, not to say none, that have any additional need for such a thing, or can you name any?”

“Not for my part,” he said.

“But don’t you realize that the power of sight and being seen does have an additional need?”

“How’s that?”

“Presumably you’re aware that when sight is present in eyes and the one who has it attempts to use it, and color is present there in things, unless there’s also a third kind of thing present, of a nature specifically for this very purpose, sight will see nothing and colors will be invisible.” e

“What’s this thing you’re speaking of?” he said.

“The one you call light,” I said.

“It’s true, as you say,” he said.

“Then the sense of sight and the power of being seen have been bound together by a bond more precious, by no small look, than that uniting other pairs, unless light is something to be despised.” 508a

“Surely it’s far from being despised,” he said.

“And which of the divine beings in the heavens can you point out as the ruling power responsible for this, whose light makes our sight see and visible things be seen as beautifully as possible?”

“The same one you and everyone else would,” he said, “since it’s obvious you’re asking about the sun.”

“And is it this way that sight is by its nature related to this god?”

“How?”

“The sun is not sight itself, nor is it that in which sight is present, what we call an eye.” b

“No indeed.”

“But I imagine that’s the most sunlike of the sense organs.”

“By far.”

“And doesn’t it acquire the power that it has as an overflow from that which is bestowed by the sun?”

“Very much so.”

“So while the sun isn’t sight, but is the thing responsible for it, isn’t it seen by that very thing?”

“That’s how it is,” he said.

“Now then,” I said, “say that this is what I’m calling the offspring of the good, which the good generated as something analogous to itself; the very thing the good itself is in the intelligible realm in relation to insight and the intelligible things, this is in the visible realm in relation to sight and the visible things.” c

“How so?” he said. “Go into it more for me.”

“With eyes,” I said, “do you know that when one no longer turns them on those things to whose colors the light of day extends, but on those on which nocturnal lights fall, they grow dim, and appear nearly blind, just as though no pure sight was present in them?”

“Very much so,” he said.

“But I imagine that whenever one turns them to the things the sun illumines, they see them clearly, and pure sight is manifestly present in these very same eyes.” d

“Certainly.”

“In this manner, think of the power of the soul too as being the same way. Whenever it becomes fixed on that which truth and being illumine, it has insight, discerns, and shows itself to have an intellect, but whenever it becomes fixed on something mixed with

darkness, something that comes into and passes out of being, it deals in seeming and grows dim, changing its opinions up and down, and is like something that has no intellect.”

“It does seem like that.”

e “Then say that what endows the things known with truth, and gives that which knows them its power, is the look of the good. Since it’s the cause of knowledge and truth, think of it as something known, but though both of these, knowing and truth, are so beautiful, by regarding it as something else, still more beautiful than they are, you’ll regard it
509a rightly. And as far as knowledge and truth are concerned, just as it’s right over there to consider light and sight sunlike, but isn’t right to consider them to be the sun, so too here it’s right to consider both of these as like the good, but not right to regard either of them as being the good; the condition of the good requires that it be held in still greater honor.”

“You’re talking about a beauty hard to conceive,” he said, “if it endows things with knowledge and truth but is itself beyond these in beauty, because it’s sure not pleasure you mean.”

“Watch your mouth,” I said; “but look into the image of it still more closely.”

“In what way?”

b “I imagine you’d claim that the sun not only endows the visible things with their power of being seen, but also with their coming into being, their growth, and their nurture, though it’s not itself coming-into-being.”

“How could it be?”

“Then claim as well that the things that are known not only get their being-known furnished by the good, but they’re also endowed by that source with their very being and their being what they are, even though the good is not being, but something over and above being, beyond it in seniority and surpassing it in power.”

c And Glaucon, in a very comical manner, said “By Apollo, that’s a stupendous stretcher.”

“You’re to blame for it,” I said, “for forcing me to tell the way things seem to me about it.”

“And don’t by any means stop,” he said, “not if there are any other things for you to go over in the likeness to the sun, in case you’re leaving something out anywhere.”

“That’s for sure,” I said; “I’m leaving out scads of things.”

“Well don’t skip over any little bit,” he said.

“I suspect I’ll skip over a lot,” I said, “but be that as it may, as far as it’s possible at present, I won’t willingly leave anything out.”

“See that you don’t,” he said.

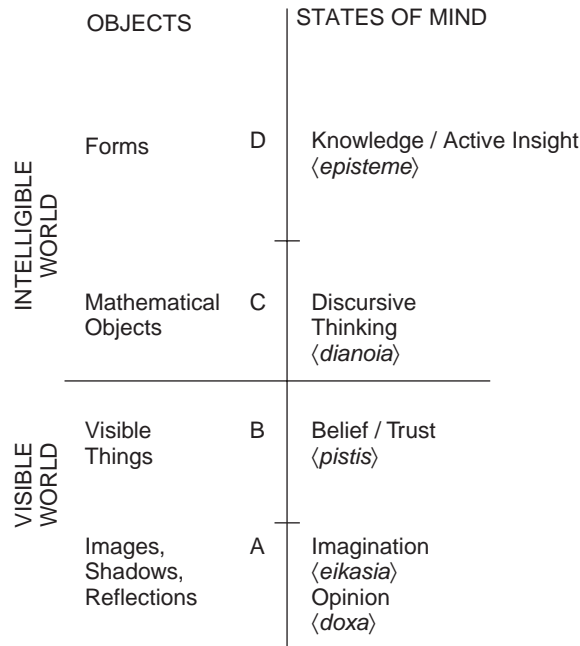
d “Well then, as we’re saying,” I said, “think of them as being a pair, one ruling as king over the intelligible race and realm, and the other, for its part, over the visible—note that I’m not saying ‘over the heavens,’ so I won’t seem to you to be playing verbal tricks with the name. But do you grasp these two forms, visible, intelligible?”

“I’ve got them.”

510a “Then take them as being like a line divided into two unequal segments, one for the visible class and the other for the intelligible, and cut each segment again in the same ratio, and you’ll get the parts to one another in their relation of clarity and obscurity; in the visible section, one segment [A] will be for images, and by images I mean first of all shadows, then semblances formed in water and on all dense, smooth, bright surfaces, and everything of that sort, if you get the idea.”

“I get it.”

“Then in the other part [B], put what this one is likened to, the animals around us, and every plant, and the whole class of artificial things.”



“I’m putting them,” he said.

“And would you also be willing to claim,” I said, “that it’s divided with respect to truth and its lack, such that the copy is to the thing it’s copied from as a seeming is to something known?”

“I would,” he said, “very much so.”

b

“Then consider next the way the division of the intelligible part needs to be made.”

“What way is that?”

“Such that in one part of it [C] a soul takes as images the things that were imitated before, and is forced to inquire based on presuppositions, proceeding not to a beginning but to an end, while in the other part [D] it goes from a presupposition to a beginning free of presuppositions, without the images involved in the other part, making its investigation into forms themselves and by means of them.”

“I didn’t sufficiently understand what you mean by these things,” he said.

“Once more, then,” I said; “since you’ll understand more easily after the following preface. [C] Now I imagine you know that people who concern themselves with matters of geometry and calculation and such things presuppose in accord with each investigation the odd and the even, the geometrical shapes, the three kinds of angles, and other things related to these; treating these as known and making them presuppositions, they don’t think it’s worth giving any further account of them either to themselves or to anyone else, as though they were obvious to everyone, but starting from these things and going through the subsequent things from that point, they arrive at a conclusion in agreement with that from which they set their inquiry in motion.”

c

d

“I do know that very well,” he said.

“Then you also know that they make additional use of visible forms, and make their arguments about them, even though they’re thinking not about these but about those things these are images of, since it’s in regard to the square itself, and its diagonal itself, that they’re making those arguments, and not in regard to the one that they draw, and likewise in the other cases; these very things that they model and draw, which also have their own shadows and images in water, they are now using as images in their turn, in an attempt to see those things themselves that one could not see* in any other way than by the power of thinking.”

“What you’re saying is true,” he said.

“The latter, then, is what I meant by the intelligible form, and it’s for the inquiry about it that the soul is forced to make use of presuppositions, not going to the source, because it doesn’t have the power to step off above its presuppositions, but using as images those things that are themselves imaged down below, in comparison with which these images are reputed to be of preeminent clarity and are treated with honor.”

“I understand,” he said; “you’re talking about the things dealt with by geometrical studies and the arts akin to that.”

“Then understand me to mean the following by the other segment of the intelligible part [*D*]: what rational speech itself gets hold of by its power of dialectical motion, making its presuppositions not sources but genuinely standing places, like steppingstones and springboards, in order that, by going up to what is presuppositionless at the source of everything and coming into contact with this, by following back again the things that follow from it, rational speech may descend in that way to a conclusion, making no more use in any way whatever of anything perceptible, but dealing with forms themselves, arriving at them by going through them, it ends at forms as well.”

“I understand,” he said, “though not sufficiently, because you seem to me to be talking about a tremendous amount of work; however, I understand that you want to mark off that part of what is and is intelligible that’s contemplated by the knowledge that comes from dialectical thinking as being clearer than what’s contemplated by what are called arts, which have presuppositions as their starting points. Those who contemplate things by means of the arts are forced to contemplate them by thinking and not by sense perception, but since they examine things not by going up to the source but on the basis of presuppositions, they seem to you to have no insight into them, even though, by means of their starting point, they’re dealing with things that are intelligible. And you seem to me to be calling the activity of geometers and such people thinking but not insight, on the grounds that thinking is something in between opinion and insight.”

“You took it in utterly sufficiently,” I said. “Along with me, take it too that for the four segments of the line there are these four kinds of experiences that arise in the soul, active insight for the highest and thinking for the second, and assign the names trust to the third and imagination to the last, drawing them up as a proportion and holding that, in the same manner these experiences have their shares of clarity, the things they’re directed to have corresponding shares of truth.”

“I understand,” he said, “and I go along with it and rank them as you say.”

*A geometrical line is understood as having no breadth, and a plane figure as having no depth. A drawing in the sand, a shape cut out of some flat material, or even any appearance in our pictorial imaginations must falsify what it images if it is to image it at all.

BOOK VII

“Next,” I said, “make an image of our nature as it involves education and the lack of it, by likening it to a condition such as the following: picture human beings in a cave-like dwelling underground, having a long pathway open to the light all across the cave. They’re in it from childhood on with their legs and necks in restraints, so that they’re held in place and look only to the front, restricted by the neck-restraint from twisting their heads around. For them, the light is from a fire burning up above and a long way behind them, and between the fire and the prisoners there’s an upper road. Picture a little wall built along this road, like the low partitions puppeteers use to screen the humans who display the puppets above them.”

“I see it,” he said.

“Then see the humans going along this little wall carrying all sorts of articles that jut out over the wall, figurines of men and other animals fashioned out of stone and wood and materials of all kinds, with some of the people carrying them past making appropriate sounds and others silent.”

“You’re describing a bizarre image and bizarre prisoners,” he said.

“Like us,” I said. “First of all, do you imagine such people would have seen anything of themselves or one another other than the shadows cast by the fire onto the part of the cave right across from them?”

“How could they,” he said, “if they were forced to keep their heads immobile throughout life?”

“And what would they have seen of the things carried past? Wouldn’t that be the same thing?”

“What else?”

“So if they were able to converse with one another, don’t you think they’d speak of these very things they see as the beings?”

“Necessarily.”

“And what if their prison also had an echo from the side across from them? Any time any of the people carrying things past uttered a sound, do you imagine they’d believe anything other than the passing shadow had made the sound?”

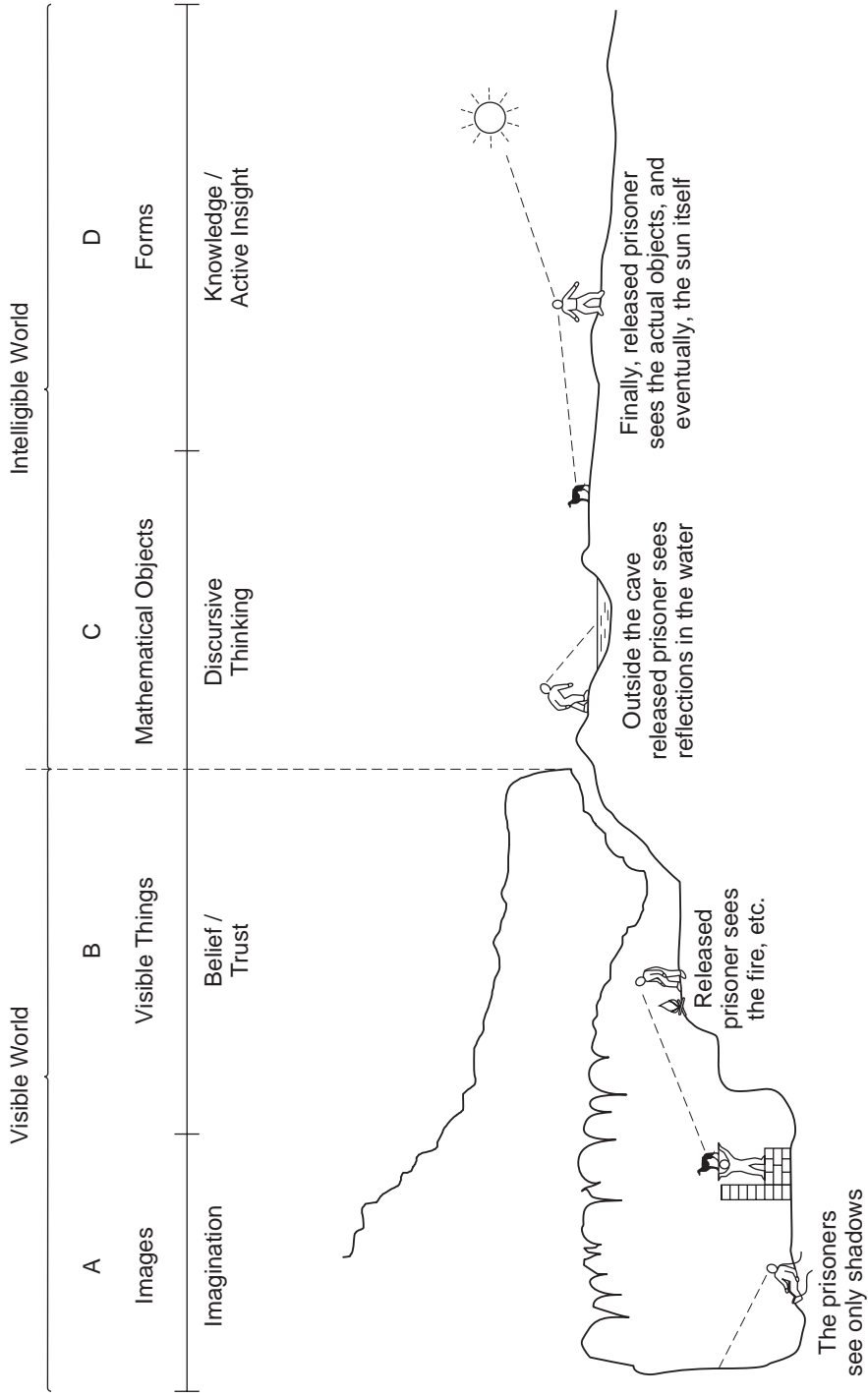
“By Zeus, I don’t,” he said.

“So in every way,” I said, “such people wouldn’t consider anything to be the truth other than the shadows of artificial things.”

“That’s a great necessity,” he said.

“Then consider,” I said, “what their release would be like, and their recovery from their restraints and their delusion, if things like that were to happen to them by nature. Whenever one of them would be released, and suddenly required to stand up, and turn his neck around, and walk, and look up toward the light, he’d suffer pain from doing all these things, and because of the blazes of light, he wouldn’t have the power to get a clear sight of the things whose shadows he’d seen before. What do you imagine he’d say if someone were to tell him that he’d been seeing rubbish then, but now, somewhat nearer to what is and turned toward the things that have more being, he was seeing more accurately? And especially if, pointing to each of the things passing by, one forced him to answer as he asked what they are, don’t you imagine he’d be at a loss and believe the things he’d seen before were truer than the ones pointed out to him now?”

“Very much so,” he said.



Adapted from N. Jordan, *Western Philosophy: From Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 95.

“And if one forced him to look at the light itself, wouldn’t he have pain in his eyes and escape by turning back toward those things he was able to make out, and consider them clearer in their very being than the ones pointed out to him?” e

“That’s how it would be,” he said.

“And if one were to drag him away from there by force,” I said, “along the rough, steep road up, and didn’t let go until he’d dragged him out into the light of the sun, wouldn’t he be feeling pain and anger from being dragged, and when he came into the light and had his eyes filled with its dazzle, wouldn’t he be unable to see even one of the things now said to be the true ones?” 516a

“That’s right,” he said, “at least not right away.”

“So I imagine he’d need to get accustomed to it, if he were going to have sight of the things above. At first, he’d most easily make out the shadows, and after that the images of human beings and other things in water, and only later the things themselves; and turning from those things, he’d gaze on the things in the heavens, and at the heavens themselves, more easily by night, looking at the starlight and moonlight, than by day, at the sun and its light.” b

“How could it be otherwise?”

“Then at last, I imagine, he’d gain sight of the sun, not its appearances in water or in any setting foreign to it, but he’d have the power to see it itself, by itself, in its own realm, and contemplate it the way it is.”

“Necessarily,” he said.

“And after that, he could now draw the conclusion about it that this is what provides the seasons and the years, and has the governance of all things in the visible realm, and is in a certain manner the cause of all those things they’d seen.” c

“It’s clear that he’d come to these conclusions after those experiences,” he said.

“And then what? When he recalled his first home and the wisdom there and the people he was imprisoned with then, don’t you imagine he’d consider himself happy because of the change and pity the others?”

“Greatly so.”

“And if there had been any honors and commendations and prizes for them then from one another for the person who had the sharpest sight of the things passing by and remembered best all the things that usually passed by before and after them and at the same time, and based on those things had greatest ability to predict what was going to come, do you think he’d be longing for those rewards and feel jealousy toward the ones honored by those people and in power among them, or would he feel what Homer depicts, and wish powerfully d

To be a bond-servant to another, tilling the soil
For a man without land of his own,

and submit to anything whatever rather than hold those opinions and live that way?”

“The latter, I imagine,” he said; “he’d submit to enduring everything rather than live in that way.” e

“Then give this some thought too,” I said. “If such a person were to go back down and sit in the same spot, wouldn’t he get his eyes filled with darkness by coming suddenly out of the sun?”

“Indeed he would,” he said.

“And if he had to compete with those who’d always been imprisoned, at passing judgments on those shadows, at a time when his sight was dim before his eyes settled 517a

back in, and if this period of adjustment was not very short, wouldn't he make a laughingstock of himself, and wouldn't it be said about him that after having gone up above he returned with his eyes ruined, and that it's not worth it even to make the effort to go up? And as for anyone who attempted to release them and lead them up, if they had the power in any way to get him into their hands and kill him, wouldn't they kill him?"

"Ferociously," he said.

- b "Now this image, dear Glaucon," I said, "needs to be connected as a whole with what was said before, by likening the realm disclosed by sight to the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire within it to the power of the sun; and if you take the upward journey and sight of the things above as the soul's road up into the intelligible region, you won't miss my intended meaning, since you have a desire to hear about that. No doubt a god knows whether it happens to be true. What appears true to me appears this way: in the knowable region, the last thing to be seen, with great effort, is the look of the good, but
c once it's been seen, it has to be concluded that it's the very cause, for all things, of all things right and beautiful, that it generates light and its source in the visible realm, and is itself the source that bestows truth and insight in the intelligible realm. Anyone who's going to act intelligently in private or in public needs to have sight of it."

"I too join in assuming that," he said, "at least in whatever way I'm able to."

- d "Come, then," I said, "and join in assuming the following as well, and don't be surprised that those who've come to this point aren't willing to do what belongs to human beings, but their souls are eager to spend all their time up above; presumably it's likely to be that way, if this also stands in accord with the image already described."

"It's certainly likely," he said.

"And what about this? Do you imagine it's anything surprising," I said, "if someone coming from contemplation of divine things to things of a human sort is awkward and looks extremely ridiculous while his sight is still dim and if, before he's become sufficiently accustomed to the darkness around him, he's forced, in law courts or anywhere else, to contend over the shadows of the just or the images they're the shadows of, and to compete about that in whatever way these things are understood by people
e who've never looked upon justice itself?"

"It's not surprising in any way whatsoever," he said.

- 518a "But if someone had any sense," I said, "he'd remember that two sorts of disturbances occur in the eyes from two causes, when they're removed from light into darkness as well as from darkness into light. If he regarded these same things as occurring also with the soul, when he saw one that was confused and unable to make anything out, he wouldn't react with irrational laughter but would consider whether it had come from
b a brighter life and was darkened by its unaccustomed condition, or was coming out of a greater ignorance into a brighter place and was overwhelmed by the dazzle of a greater radiance. That way, he'd congratulate the one soul on the happiness of its experience and life and pity the other, and if he did want to laugh at that one, he'd be less laughable for laughing at it than someone who laughed at the one coming out of the light above."

"You're speaking in a very balanced way," he said.

- c "So," I said, "if those things are true, we ought to regard them in the following way: education is not the sort of thing certain people who claim to be professors of it claim that it is. Surely they claim they put knowledge into a soul it wasn't present in, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes."

"Indeed they do claim that," he said.

"But the current discussion indicates," I said, "that this power is present in the soul of each person, and the instrument by which each one learns, as if it were an eye

that's not able to turn away from darkness toward the light in any other way than along with the whole body, needs to be turned around along with the whole soul, away from what's fleeting, until it becomes able to endure gazing at what is and at the brightest of what is, and this, we're claiming, is the good. Isn't that right?" d

"Yes."

"Then there would be an art to this very thing," I said, "this turning around, having to do with the way the soul would be most easily and effectively redirected, not an art of implanting sight in it, but of how to contrive that for someone who has sight, but doesn't have it turned the right way or looking at what it needs to."

"That seems likely," he said.

"Then the other virtues said to belong to a soul probably tend to be near the things belonging to the body, since they're not present in the being of the soul before they've been inculcated by habits and practice, but the virtue involving understanding, more than all, attains to being something more divine, as it seems, which never loses its power, but by the way it's turned becomes either useful and beneficial or useless and harmful. Or haven't you ever reflected about the people said to be depraved but wise, how penetrating a gaze their little souls have and how sharply they discern the things they're turned toward, since they don't have poor sight but force it to serve vice, so that the more sharply it sees, that much more evil it accomplishes?" e 519a

"Very much so," he said.

"But surely," I said, "if, straight from childhood, this tendency of such a nature had been curtailed by having the edges knocked off that have an affinity with becoming, like lead weights that, through eating and the pleasures and greediness involved in such things, get to be growths on the soul that turn its sight excessively downward, and if, freed from them, it was turned toward things that are true, this same power of these same people would have seen them too most sharply, just as it sees the ones it's now turned toward." b

"Very likely," he said.

"And what about this?" I said. "Isn't it likely, even necessary from what's been said before, that those who are uneducated and lacking experience with truth could never adequately manage a city, and neither could those who've been allowed to devote all their time to education—the former because they don't have any one goal in life that they need to aim at in doing all the things they do in private and in public, and the latter because they wouldn't willingly engage in action, believing they'd taken up residence in the Isles of the Blessed while still living?" c

"True," he said.

"So our job as founders," I said, "is to require the best natures to get to the study we were claiming earlier is the greatest thing, to see the good as well as to climb the path up to it, and when, having climbed up, they've seen it sufficiently, not to allow what they're now permitted to do." d

"What in particular?"

"To stay there," I said, "and not be willing to come back down among those prisoners or take part beside them in their labors and honors, the more frivolous ones or even the more serious."

"What?" he said. "Are we going to do them an injustice and make them live worse when it's possible for them to live better?"

"My friend," I said, "you let it slip back out of your memory that this is no concern of the law, for some one class of people in a city to be exceptionally well off, but that it contrive things so that this arises in the city as a whole, by harmonizing the citizens through persuasion and compulsion and making them contribute to one another a share of e 520a

the benefit with which each sort is capable of improving the community; the law doesn't produce men of this sort in the city to allow them to turn whichever way each one wants but so that it may make full use of them for the binding together of the city."

"That's true," he said; "that did slip my mind."

"Then consider, Glaucon," I said, "that we won't be doing any injustice anyway to the philosophers who arise among us, but we'll be asking just things of them in requiring them also to care for the other people and watch over them. We'll tell them that when people of their sort come along in other cities, it's reasonable for them not to share the burdens in those cities, since they spring up spontaneously in each of them against the will of the polity, and something that grows up on its own, not owing its upbringing to anyone, has just cause not to be too keen on paying for its support. 'But we've bred you both for yourselves and for the rest of the city like the rulers and kings in beehives, to be educated in a better and more complete way than the others and more capable of taking part in both ways of life. So it's necessary for each of you in turn to go down into the communal dwelling and to get used to gazing at dark objects with the others, because when you're used to it you'll see thousands of times better than the people there, and recognize each sort of image for what it is and what it's an image of, from having seen the truth about beautiful and just and good things. And so the city will be governed by you and by us wide awake, and not in a dream the way most are governed now by people who fight with each other over shadows and form factions over ruling, as though that were some great good. But the truth is surely this: that city in which those who are going to rule are least eager to rule is necessarily governed best and with the least divisiveness, while the one that gets the opposite sort of rulers is governed in the opposite way.'"

"Quite so," he said.

"Then do you imagine those who've been brought up will be unpersuaded by us when they hear these things, and be unwilling to share, each in turn, in the labors of the city while dwelling among themselves a lot of the time in the pure region?"

"It's not possible," he said, "because we'll be giving just obligations to people who are just. More than anything, each of them will go into ruling as something unavoidable, which is opposite to what those who rule in each city now do."

"That's how it is, my comrade," I said; "if you find a way of life better than ruling for those who are going to rule, there's a possibility for a well-governed city to come into being for you, because only in it will the rulers be those who are rich in their very being, not in gold but in that in which someone who's happy needs to be rich: a good and intelligent life. But if beggars and people hungry for private goods go into public life imagining that's where they need to go to steal off with the good, there's no possibility, because when ruling becomes something that's fought over, since that sort of war, being domestic and internal, destroys them and the rest of the city."

"Very true," he said.

"Well," I said, "do you know of any way of life other than that of true philosophy that looks down on political offices?"

"No, by Zeus," he said.

"It's necessary, though, for people who aren't in love with ruling to go after it; if they don't, the rival lovers will do battle."

"Certainly."

"And who else are you going to require to go into guarding the city than the people who are most thoughtful about those things by which a city is governed best, and who have other honors and a better life than the political sort?"

"None other than they," he said.