

evidence we do have makes it clear that the Academy was a center of research both in theoretical subjects and also in more practical ones. Metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics all grew and developed there, as did mathematical science. Eudoxus (who gave a geometrical explanation of the revolutions of the sun, moon, and planets, and developed a general theory of proportion applicable to commensurable and incommensurable magnitudes) studied and taught in the Academy, as did Theaetetus (who developed solid geometry) and Heraclides Ponticus (who discovered the revolution of Venus and Mercury around the Sun)—Aristotle studied there for twenty years. But members of the Academy were also invited by a variety of cities—Arcadia, Pyrrha, Cidus, and Stagira are all mentioned—to help them develop new political constitutions. Thus it would be quite wrong to think that Plato and the other Academicians perpetually had their heads in the clouds. If this were so, they would hardly have been much use to politicians confronting practical constitutional problems.

The mixture of theory and practice—abstract speculation and more practical application—was, no doubt, part of philosophy from its very founding. (Even for us, indeed, the word “wisdom” continues to connote both the esoteric and the down-to-earth.) But Plato does more, perhaps, than any of his predecessors to convince us that we may have to cast our net very wide and dig very deep—that we may have to understand how things in the broadest sense of the term hang together in the broadest sense of the term—if we are to obey the Socratic commandment to know ourselves or discover how best to live.

EUTHYPHRO APOLOGY CRITO

IN 399 BCE at the age of seventy, Socrates was brought to trial by Meletus on a writ of impiety. In the *Euthyphro*, he is on his way to a preliminary hearing at which he will hear Meletus' formal charges for the first time and at which the official in charge of impiety cases—the King Archon—will determine whether there is a case to answer. Appropriately enough, the topic of the dialogue is the nature of piety. The *Apology* is (or purports to be) the speech of defense given at the trial itself. Under examination by Socrates, Meletus identifies his charges as these: Socrates is an atheist, who believes in strange daimonic activities, in the visitation of a *daimonion*, or divine voice; he corrupts the youth by teaching these beliefs to them. A majority of the jurors found Socrates guilty of these charges. Athenian law allowed him to propose a counterpenalty to the death penalty demanded by Meletus and required the jury to choose which of them to impose. A yet larger majority of them voted for the death penalty. In the *Crito*, Socrates is in prison awaiting death by hemlock poisoning. Crito wants him to escape; Socrates explains why he cannot. The topic is legal or political obligation.

EUTHYPHRO

Translated by C.D.C. Reeve.

2a EUTHYPHRO:¹ What's new, Socrates, to make you leave the Lyceum,² where you usually spend your time, to spend it here today at the court of the King Archon?³ Surely, *you* don't have some sort of lawsuit before the King, as I do.

SOCRATES: *Athenians* don't call it a lawsuit, Euthyphro, but an indictment.

b EUTHYPHRO: What? Someone has indicted you, apparently, for I'm not going to accuse you of indicting someone else!

SOCRATES: No, I certainly haven't.

EUTHYPHRO: But someone else has indicted you?

SOCRATES: Exactly.

EUTHYPHRO: Who is he?

SOCRATES: I hardly know the man myself, Euthyphro. He's young and unknown, it seems. But I believe his name's Meletus. He belongs to the Pitthean deme—if you recall a Meletus from that deme,⁴ with straight hair, not much of a beard, and a slightly hooked nose?

EUTHYPHRO: No, I don't recall him, Socrates. But tell me, what indictment has he brought
c against you?

SOCRATES: What indictment? Not a trivial one, it seems to me. I mean, it's no small thing for a young man to have come to know such an important matter. You see, according to him, he knows how the young men are being corrupted, and who's corrupting them. He's probably a wise man, who's seen that my own ignorance is corrupting his contemporaries, and is coming to accuse me to their mother the city, so to speak. In fact, he seems to me to be the only one who's starting up in politics correctly. For d it is correct to take care of the young first, to make them the best possible, just as it's reasonable for a good farmer to take care of the young plants first and all the others afterward. And so 3a Meletus, too, is presumably first weeding out those of us who corrupt the young shoots, as he claims. Then, after that, he'll clearly take care of the older people and bring about the greatest goods, both in number and in quality, for the city. That, at any rate, is the likely outcome of such a start.

EUTHYPHRO: I hope it happens, Socrates, but I'm terribly afraid the opposite may result. You see, by attempting to do an injustice to you, it seems to me he's simply starting out by wronging the city at its very hearth.⁵ Tell me, what on earth does he say you're doing that corrupts the young?

SOCRATES: Strange things, my excellent b friend, at any rate on first hearing: he says I'm an inventor of gods. And because I invent new gods, and don't acknowledge the old ones, he's indicted me for the latter's sake, so he says.

EUTHYPHRO: I understand, Socrates. That's no doubt because you say your daimonic sign comes to you on each occasion. So he has written this indictment against you for making innovations in religious matters and comes before the court to slander you, knowing that such things are easy

1. Euthyphro was a *mantis*, or prophet (3b–c, 3e), a self-proclaimed authority on Greek religion (4e–5a), who takes very literally the stories embodied in its myths (5e–6b).

2. The Lyceum was one of three great gymnasia outside the city walls of Athens.

3. The nine archons, chosen annually, were the chief public officials in Athens: one was civilian head of state, one was head of the army (*polemarchos*), and six had judicial roles (*thesmothetai*). The King Archon dealt with important religious matters (such as the indictment against Socrates for impiety) and also with homicide (the subject of Euthyphro's indictment). The king's court, or porch (*stoa*), was in the marketplace (*agora*).

4. A deme was a relatively independent administrative unit rather like a village or township. Athens consisted of 139 of them.

5. The reference is to the communal hearth in the Prytaneum, which was the symbolic center of Athens.

to misrepresent to the majority of people.⁶ Why, they even mock me as if I were crazy, when I speak in the Assembly on religious matters and predict the future for them! And yet not one of my predictions has failed to come true. But all
 c the same, they envy anyone like ourselves.⁷ We mustn't give them a thought, though. Just meet them head on.

SOCRATES: Yes, my dear Euthyphro, but being mocked is presumably nothing to worry about. Athenians, it seems to me, aren't much concerned if they think someone's clever, so long as he doesn't teach his own wisdom. But if they
 d think he's making other people wise like himself, they get angry, whether out of envy, as you say, or for some other reason.

EUTHYPHRO: As to that, I certainly have no desire to test their attitude toward *me*.

SOCRATES: Don't worry. They probably think you rarely put yourself at other people's disposal, and aren't willing to teach your own wisdom. But I'm afraid they think my love of people makes me tell whatever little I know unreservedly to any man, not only without charging a fee, but even
 e glad to lose money, so long as someone cares to listen to me. So, as I was just saying, if they were going to mock me, as you say they do you, there'd be nothing unpleasant about their spending time in the law court playing around and laughing. But if they're going to be serious, the outcome's unclear, except to you prophets.

EUTHYPHRO: Well, it will probably come to nothing, Socrates, and you'll fight your case satisfactorily, as I think I'll fight mine.

SOCRATES: But now, Euthyphro, what is this case of yours? Are you defending or prosecuting?

EUTHYPHRO: Prosecuting.

SOCRATES: Whom?

4a EUTHYPHRO: Someone I'm again thought to be crazy for prosecuting.

SOCRATES: What's that? Is your prosecution a wild-geese chase?

EUTHYPHRO: The goose is long past chasing: he's quite old.

SOCRATES: Who is he?

EUTHYPHRO: My father.

SOCRATES: My good man! Your own *father*?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: But what's the charge? What's the lawsuit about?

EUTHYPHRO: Murder, Socrates.

SOCRATES: In the name of Heracles!⁸ Well, b Euthyphro, I suppose most people don't know how it can be correct to do this. I mean, I can't imagine any ordinary person taking that action correctly, but only someone who's already far advanced in wisdom.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, far advanced indeed.

SOCRATES: Is the man your father killed one of your relatives then? Of course he must be, mustn't he? You'd hardly be prosecuting him for murder on behalf of a stranger.⁹

EUTHYPHRO: It's ridiculous, Socrates, for you to think it makes any difference whether the dead man's a stranger or a relative. It's ridiculous not to see that the sole consideration should be whether the killer killed justly or not. If he did, let him go, if he didn't, prosecute—if, that is to say, the killer shares your own hearth and table.¹⁰ For the pol- c lution's the same if you knowingly associate with such a person and don't cleanse yourself and him by bringing him to justice.

In point of fact, though, the victim was a day laborer of mine, and when we were farming on Naxos, he worked the land there for us. Well, he got drunk, became enraged with one of our household slaves, and cut his throat. So my father tied him hand and foot, threw him in a ditch, and sent a man here to find out from the official interpreter what should be done. In the mean- time, he ignored and neglected his captive as a murderer, thinking it mattered nothing if he did d

6. Five hundred (or 501) of whom will serve on the jury that will eventually try Socrates.

7. That is, people who have the gift of prophecy. Socrates' sign is mantic, or prophetic (*Apology* 40a).

8. Heracles (Hercules) was a hero of legendary strength. His famous labors—twelve extraordinarily difficult tasks—are alluded to at *Apology* 22a.

9. Normally, the close relatives of the victim took responsibility for prosecuting the murderer.

10. It is because Euthyphro shares hearth and table with his father—and so risks being contaminated by the pollution (*miasma*) thought to adhere to murderers—that he feels especially obliged to prosecute him.

die. And that's just what happened: hunger, cold, and being tied up caused his death before the messenger got back from the interpreter.

That's precisely why my father and my other relatives are angry with me: because I'm prosecuting my father for murder on the murderer's behalf, when my father didn't even kill him, so they claim, and when, even if he definitely did kill him, it's wrong—since the dead man was a murderer—to concern yourself with the victim *e* in that case. You see, it's impious, they say, for a son to prosecute his father for murder. Little do they know, Socrates, about the gods' position on the pious and the impious!

SOCRATES: But, in the name of Zeus, Euthyphro, do you think *you* have such exact knowledge about the positions the gods take, and about the pious and the impious, that in the face of these events, you've no fear of acting impiously yourself in bringing your father to trial?

EUTHYPHRO: I'd be no use at all, Socrates, and *5a* Euthyphro would be no different from the majority of people, if I didn't have exact knowledge of all such things.

SOCRATES: So, my excellent Euthyphro, the best thing, it seems, is for me to become your student, and to challenge Meletus on this very point before his case comes to trial, telling him that even in the past I always considered it of great importance to know about religious matters, and that now, when he says I've done wrong through improvising and innovating concerning the gods, I've become your student. Shouldn't I say to him, "Meletus, if you agree that Euthyphro is wise about the gods, you should also regard me *b* as correctly acknowledging them and drop the charge. But if you don't agree, prosecute this teacher of mine rather than me, for corrupting the old men—myself and his own father, me by his teaching, and his father by admonishment and punishment." If he isn't convinced by me, and doesn't drop the charge or prosecute you instead of me, shouldn't I say the same things in court as in my challenge to him?

c EUTHYPHRO: Yes, by Zeus, Socrates, and if he tried bringing an indictment against *me*, I think I'd soon find his weak spots, and the question in court would very quickly be about him rather than about me.

SOCRATES: I realize that as well as you do, my dear friend, and that's why I'm eager to become your student. I know that this Meletus, as well as others no doubt, pretends not to notice *you* at all, whereas he has seen *me* so sharply and so easily that he has indicted me for impiety.

Now then, in the name of Zeus, tell me what you were just claiming to know so clearly. What sort of thing would you say the holy and the unholy are, whether in cases of murder or of any- *d* thing else? Or isn't the pious itself the same as itself in every action? And conversely, isn't the impious entirely the opposite of the pious? And whatever's going to count as impious, isn't it itself similar to itself—doesn't it, as regards impiety, possess one single characteristic?

EUTHYPHRO: Absolutely, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Tell me, then, what do you say the pious and the impious are?

EUTHYPHRO: Very well, I say that what's pious is precisely what I'm doing now: prosecuting those who commit an injustice, such as murder or temple robbery, or those who've done some *e* other such wrong, regardless of whether they're one's father or one's mother or anyone else whatever. Not prosecuting them, on the other hand, is what's impious.

Why, Socrates, look at the powerful evidence I have that the law requires this—evidence I've already offered to show other people that such actions are right, that one must not let an impious person go, no matter who he may happen to be. You see, those very people acknowledge Zeus as *6a* the best and most just of the gods, and yet they agree that he put his own father in fetters because he unjustly swallowed down his children, and that *he*, in his turn, castrated his father because of other similar injustices.¹¹ Yet they're extremely angry with *me*, because I'm prosecuting my father for his injustice. And so they contradict themselves in what they say about the gods and about me.

SOCRATES: Could this be the reason, Euthyphro, I face indictment, that when people say

11. Cronus mutilated his father, Uranus (Sky), by cutting off his genitals when he was copulating with Gaia (Earth). He ate the children he had with his sister Rhea. Aided by her, however, their son Zeus escaped, overthrew Cronus, and fettered him.

such things about the gods, I find them somehow hard to accept? That, it seems, is why some people will say I'm a wrongdoer. But now if you, who know so much about such matters, share these views, it seems that the rest of us must assent to them too. I mean, what can we possibly say in reply, when we admit ourselves that we know nothing about them? But tell me, by the god of friendship, do you really believe those stories are true?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, and still more amazing things, Socrates, that the majority of people don't know.

SOCRATES: And do you believe that there really is war among the gods? And terrible hostilities and battles, and other such things of the sort the poets relate, and that the good painters embroider on our sacred objects—I'm thinking particularly of the robe covered with embroideries of such scenes that's carried up to the Acropolis at the Great Panathenaean festival?¹² Are we to say that these are true, Euthyphro?

EUTHYPHRO: Not only those, Socrates, but as I mentioned just now, I will, if you like, tell you lots of other things about religious matters that I'm sure you'll be amazed to hear.

SOCRATES: I wouldn't be surprised. But tell me about them some other time, when we've the leisure. Now, however, try to answer more clearly the very question I asked before. You see, my friend, you didn't teach me adequately earlier when I asked what the pious was, but you told me that what you're now doing is pious, prosecuting your father for murder.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, and what I said was true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Perhaps. But surely, Euthyphro, there are also many other things you call pious.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, indeed.

12. The Acropolis, set on the steep rocky hill that dominates Athens, was the central fortress and principal sanctuary of the goddess Athena. It was the site of the Parthenon, as well as of other temples. The Great Panathenaean festival took place every four years and was a more elaborate version of the yearly festival that marked Athena's birthday. At it, her statue in the Parthenon received a new robe embroidered with scenes from the mythical battle of the gods and the giants.

SOCRATES: Do you remember, then, that what I urged you to do wasn't to teach me about one or two of the many pieties, but rather about the form itself, by virtue of which all the pieties are pious? You see, you said, I believe, that it was by virtue of one characteristic that the impieties are impious, and the pieties pious. Or don't you remember?

EUTHYPHRO: I do indeed.

SOCRATES: Then teach me what that characteristic itself is, in order that by concentrating on it and using it as a model, I may call pious any action of yours or anyone else's that is such as it, and may deny to be pious whatever isn't such as it.

EUTHYPHRO: If that's what you want, Socrates, that's what I'll tell you.

SOCRATES: That is what I want.

EUTHYPHRO: In that case: what's loved by the gods is pious, and what's not loved by the gods is impious.

SOCRATES: Excellent, Euthyphro! You've now given the sort of answer I was looking for. Whether it's true, however, that I don't know. But clearly you'll go on to demonstrate fully that what you say is true.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: Come on, then, let's examine what it is we're saying. A god-loved thing or a god-loved person is pious, whereas a god-hated thing or a god-hated person is impious. And the pious isn't the same as the impious, but its exact opposite. Isn't that what we're saying?

EUTHYPHRO: It is indeed.

SOCRATES: And does it seem to be true?

EUTHYPHRO: It does seem so, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And haven't we also said that the gods quarrel and differ with one another, and that there's mutual hostility among them?

EUTHYPHRO: Indeed, we did say that.

SOCRATES: But what are the issues, my good friend, on which differences produce hostility and anger? Let's examine it this way. If you and I differed about which of two groups was more numerous, would our differences on this issue make us hostile and angry toward one another? Or would we turn to calculation and quickly resolve our differences?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Again, if we differed about which was larger or smaller, we'd turn to measurement and quickly put a stop to our difference.

EUTHYPHRO: That's right.

SOCRATES: And we'd turn to weighing, I imagine, to settle a dispute about which was heavier or lighter?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then what sorts of issues *would* make us angry and hostile toward one another if we disagreed about them and were unable to reach a settlement? Perhaps you can't say just off-hand. But examine, while I'm speaking, whether they're issues about the just and unjust, fine and shameful, good and bad. Whenever we become enemies, aren't these the issues on which disagreement and an inability to reach a settlement make enemies of us—both you and I and all other human beings?

EUTHYPHRO: That is the difference, Socrates, and those are the things it has to do with.

SOCRATES: And what about the *gods*, Euthyphro? If indeed they differ, mustn't it be about those same things?

EUTHYPHRO: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Then, according to your account, my noble Euthyphro, different sets of gods, too, consider different things to be just, or fine or shameful, or good or bad. For if they didn't differ about these, they wouldn't quarrel, would they?

EUTHYPHRO: That's right.

SOCRATES: Then are the very things that each group of them regards as fine, good, and just also the ones they love, and are the opposites of these the ones they hate?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: But the very same things, so you say, that some gods consider to be just and others unjust are also the ones that lead them to quarrel and war with one another when they have disputes about them. Isn't that right?

EUTHYPHRO: It is.

SOCRATES: Then the same things, it seems, are both hated and loved by the gods, and so the same things would be both god-hated and god-loved.

EUTHYPHRO: It seems that way.

SOCRATES: So, on your account, Euthyphro, the same things would be both pious and impious.

EUTHYPHRO: Apparently.

SOCRATES: So, you haven't answered my question, my excellent friend. You see, I wasn't

asking you what the selfsame thing is that's both pious and impious. But a thing that's god-loved is, it seems, also god-hated. It follows, Euthyphro, that it wouldn't be at all surprising if what you're now doing in prosecuting your father was something pleasing to Zeus but displeasing to Cronus and Uranus, or lovable to Hephaestus and displeasing to Hera,¹³ and similarly for any other gods who may differ from one another on the matter.

EUTHYPHRO: But, Socrates, I think that on this point, at least, none of the gods do differ—that anyone who has unjustly killed another should be punished.

SOCRATES: Is that so? Well, what about men, Euthyphro? Have you never heard them arguing that someone who has killed unjustly or done anything else unjustly should *not* be punished?

EUTHYPHRO: Why yes, they never stop arguing like that, whether in the law courts or in other places. For people who've committed all sorts of injustices will do or say anything to escape punishment.

SOCRATES: But do they agree, Euthyphro, that they've committed injustice, and, in spite of agreeing, do they still say that they shouldn't be punished?

EUTHYPHRO: No, they certainly don't say that.

SOCRATES: So it isn't just anything that they'll do or say. You see, I don't think they'd dare to say or argue that if they act *unjustly*, they should not be punished. Instead, I think they deny acting unjustly, don't they?

EUTHYPHRO: That's true, they do.

SOCRATES: So they don't argue that someone who acts unjustly should not be punished, though they do, perhaps, argue about *who* acted unjustly, *what* his unjust action consisted of, and *when* he did it.

EUTHYPHRO: That's true.

13. Hephaestus, the god of fire and of blacksmithing, was armor maker to the gods. His mother, Hera, the wife and sister of Zeus, threw Hephaestus off Olympus because he was lame and deformed. This act pleased her, not him. In revenge, Hephaestus made her a throne that held her captive when she sat on it. This act pleased him, not her. Similarly, Cronus cannot have been pleased at being fettered by Zeus.

SOCRATES: Then doesn't the very same thing happen to the gods as well—if indeed they do quarrel about just and unjust actions, as on your account they do, and if one lot says that others have done wrong, and another lot denies it? For
 e surely no one, my excellent friend, whether god or human being, dares to say that one who acts unjustly should not be punished.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, what you say is true, Socrates, at least the main point.

SOCRATES: I think that men and gods who argue, Euthyphro, if indeed gods really do argue, argue instead about *actions*. It's about some action that they differ, some of them saying that it was done justly, others unjustly. Isn't that so?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

9a SOCRATES: Come then, my dear Euthyphro, and teach me, too, that I may become wiser. A man committed murder while employed as a day laborer and died as a result of being tied up before the master who tied him up found out from the proper authorities what to do about him. What evidence do you have that all the gods consider this man to have been killed unjustly, and that it's right
 b for a *son* to prosecute and denounce his *father* for murder on behalf of such a man? Come, try to give me a clear proof that all gods undoubtedly consider this action to be right. If you can give me adequate proof of that, I'll never stop praising your wisdom.

EUTHYPHRO: But presumably that's no small task, Socrates, though I could of course prove it to you very clearly.

SOCRATES: I understand. You think I'm a slower learner than the jury, since it's clear that you'll prove to *them* that those actions of your father's were unjust and that the gods all hate them.

EUTHYPHRO: I'll prove it to them very clearly, Socrates, provided they'll listen to what I say.

c SOCRATES: They'll listen all right, provided you seem to speak well. But a thought occurred to me while you were speaking, and I'm still examining it in my own mind: "Suppose Euthyphro so taught me that I became thoroughly convinced that all the gods do consider a death like that to be unjust. What more would I have learned from Euthyphro about what the pious and the impious are? *That action* would indeed be god-hated, so it seems. Yet it became evident just now that the pious and the impious aren't defined by that fact,

since it became evident that what's god-hated is also god-loved. So I'll let you off on that point, Euthyphro. If you like, let's suppose that all the gods consider the action unjust, and that they all
 d hate it. Is that, then, the correction we're now making in the account, that what *all* the gods hate is impious while what they *all* love is pious, and that whatever some love and others hate is neither or both? Is that how you'd now like us to define the pious and the impious?

EUTHYPHRO: What's to prevent it, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Nothing on my part, Euthyphro. But you examine your own view, and whether by assuming it you'll most easily teach me what you promised.

EUTHYPHRO: All right, I'd say that the pious is
 e what all the gods love, and its opposite, what all the gods hate, is the impious.

SOCRATES: Then aren't we going to examine that in turn, Euthyphro, to see whether what we said is true? Or are we going to let it alone and accept it from ourselves and from others just as it stands? And if someone merely asserts that something is so, are we going to concede that it's so? Or are we going to examine what the speaker says?

EUTHYPHRO: We're going to examine it. However, I for my part think that this time what we said *is* true.

SOCRATES: Soon, my good friend, we'll be
 10a better able to tell. Consider the following: is the pious loved by the gods because it's pious? Or is it pious because it's loved?

EUTHYPHRO: I don't know what you mean, Socrates.

SOCRATES: All right, I'll try to put it more clearly. We speak of a thing's being carried or carrying, and of its being led or leading, and of being seen or seeing. And you understand that these things are all different from one another and how they differ?

EUTHYPHRO: I think I understand, at any rate.

SOCRATES: Then is there also something that's loved, and is it different from something that's loving?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then tell me whether the carried
 b thing is a carried thing because it's carried or because of something else.

EUTHYPHRO: No, it's because of that.

SOCRATES: Again, the led thing is so, then, because it's led and the seen thing because it's seen?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: So it's not seen because it's a seen thing; on the contrary, it's a seen thing because it's seen; nor is it because it's a led thing that it's led, rather it's because it's led that it's a led thing; nor is something carried because it's a carried thing, rather it's a carried thing because it's carried. So is what I mean completely clear, Euthyphro? I
c mean this: if something's changed in some way or affected in some way, it's not changed because it's a changed thing; rather, it's a changed thing because it's changed. Nor is it affected because it's an affected thing; rather, it's an affected thing because it's affected. Or don't you agree with that?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Then isn't a loved thing, too, either a thing changed or a thing affected by something?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And so the same holds of it as of our earlier examples: it's not because it's a loved thing that it's loved by those who love it; rather it's because it's loved that it's a loved thing?

EUTHYPHRO: Necessarily.

d SOCRATES: Now what are we saying about the pious, Euthyphro? On your account, isn't it loved by all the gods?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: So is that because it's pious or because of something else?

EUTHYPHRO: No, it's because it's pious.

SOCRATES: So it's loved because it's pious, not pious because it's loved?

EUTHYPHRO: Apparently.

SOCRATES: On the other hand, what's god-loved is loved—that is to say, god-loved—because the gods love it?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then the god-loved is not what's pious, Euthyphro, nor is the pious what's god-loved, as you claim, but one differs from the other.

e EUTHYPHRO: How so, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Because we agreed that the pious is loved because it's pious, not pious because it's loved. Didn't we?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: The god-loved, on the other hand, is so because it is loved by the gods; it's god-loved by the very fact of being loved. But it's not because it's god-loved that it's being loved.

EUTHYPHRO: That's true.

SOCRATES: But if the god-loved and the pious were really the same thing, my dear Euthyphro, then, if the pious were loved because it's pious, what's god-loved would in turn be loved because
11a it's god-loved; and if what's god-loved were god-loved because it was loved by the gods, the pious would in turn be pious because it was loved by them. But, as it is, you can see that the two are related in the opposite way, as things entirely different from one another. For one of them is lovable because it's loved, whereas the other is loved because it's lovable.

And so, Euthyphro, when you're asked what the pious is, it looks as though you don't want to reveal its being to me, but rather to tell me one of its affections—that this happens to the pious, that it's loved by all the gods. What explains its being loved, however, you still haven't said. So please don't keep
b it hidden from me, but rather say again from the beginning what it is that explains the pious's being loved by the gods or having some other affection—for we won't disagree about which ones it has. Summon up your enthusiasm, then, and tell me what the pious and the impious are.

EUTHYPHRO: But Socrates, I have no way of telling you what I have in mind. For whatever proposals we put forward keep somehow moving around and won't stay put.

SOCRATES: Your proposals, Euthyphro, seem
c to be the work of my ancestor, Daedalus! Indeed, if I were to state them and put them forward myself, you might perhaps make a joke of me, and say that it's because of my kinship with him that my works of art in words run away and won't stay put.¹⁴ But, as it is, the proposals are your own. So you need a different joke, since it's for you that they won't stay put, as you can see yourself.

14. Daedalus was a legendary sculptor of great skill. His statues were so lifelike that they moved around by themselves just like living things. Socrates' father, Sophroniscus, is alleged to have been a sculptor or stone-carver, and some of the statues on the Acropolis may have been attributed to Socrates himself.

EUTHYPHRO: But it seems to me, Socrates, that pretty much the same joke does apply in the case of our definitions. You see, I'm not the one who makes them move around and not stay put. Rather, you seem to me to be the Daedalus, since as far as
d I'm concerned they would have stayed put.

SOCRATES: Then, my friend, it looks as though I've grown cleverer in my area of expertise than my venerated ancestor, in that he made only his own works not stay put, whereas I do this to my own, it seems, and also to other people's. And the most subtle thing about my area of expertise is that I'm wise in it without wanting to be. You see, I'd prefer to have accounts stay put and be immovably established for me than to acquire
e the wealth of Tantalus¹⁵ and the wisdom of Daedalus combined. But enough of this. Since you seem to me to be getting sated, I'll do my best to help you teach me about the pious—and don't you give up before you do. See whether you don't think that the pious as a whole must be just.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I do.

12a SOCRATES: Then is the just as a whole also pious? Or while the pious as a whole is just, is the just as a whole not pious, but part of it pious and part of it something else?

EUTHYPHRO: I don't follow what you're saying, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And yet you're as much younger as wiser than I. But as I say, your wealth of wisdom has weakened you. Well, pull yourself together, my dear fellow. What I'm saying isn't hard to understand. You see, what I'm saying is just the opposite of what the poet said, who wrote:

With Zeus the maker, who caused all these things to come about,

b You will not quarrel, since where there's dread there's shame too.¹⁶

I disagree with this poet. Shall I tell you where?

15. Tantalus, son of Zeus, was a legendary king proverbial for his wealth, who enjoyed the privilege of dining with the gods. He killed and cooked his son Pelops, and mixed pieces of his flesh in with the gods' food to see whether they could detect it. He was punished in Hades by being "tantalized"—any food or water he reached for always eluded his grasp.

16. Author unknown.

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: It doesn't seem to me that "where there's dread there's shame too." For many people seem to me to dread disease and poverty and many other things of that sort, but though they dread them, they feel no shame at what they dread. Or don't you agree?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: But where there's shame, there is also dread. For if anyone feels shame at a certain action—if he's ashamed of it—doesn't he fear, doesn't he dread, a reputation for wickedness at the same time?

EUTHYPHRO: He certainly does dread it.

SOCRATES: Then it isn't right to say that "where there's dread, there's shame too." But where there's shame there's also dread, even though shame isn't found everywhere there's dread. You see, dread is broader than shame, I think. For shame is a part of fear, just as odd is of number. Hence where there's a number, there isn't something odd too, but where there's something odd there is also a number. Do you follow me now at least?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Well, that's the sort of thing I was asking just now: whenever there's something
d just, is there also something pious? Or is something just whenever it's pious, but not pious whenever it's just, because the pious is part of the just? Is that what we're to say, or do you disagree?

EUTHYPHRO: No, let's say that, since it seems to me you're right.

SOCRATES: Then consider the next point. If the pious is a part of what's just, we must, it seems, find out what part of the just the pious is. Now if you asked me about one of the things we just mentioned, for example, which part of number is the even—that is to say, what sort of number it is—I'd say that it's any number not indivisible by two, but divisible by it. Or don't you agree?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I do.

SOCRATES: Then you try to teach me in the
e same fashion what part of the just is pious. Then we can tell Meletus not to treat us unjustly any longer or indict us for impiety, since I've now been sufficiently instructed by you about what things are holy or pious and what aren't.

EUTHYPHRO: Well then, it seems to me, Socrates, that the part of the just that's holy or pious is the one concerned with tending to the gods, while the remaining part of the just is concerned with tending to human beings.

13a SOCRATES: You seem to me to have put that very well, Euthyphro. But I'm still lacking one small piece of information. You see, I don't yet understand this tending you're talking about. You surely don't mean that in just the way that there's tending to other things, there's tending to the gods too. We do speak this way, don't we? We say, for example, that not everyone knows how to tend to horses, but only horse trainers. Isn't that right?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Because horse training is expertise in tending to horses?

b EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Nor does everyone know how to tend to dogs, but only dog trainers.

EUTHYPHRO: That's right.

SOCRATES: Because dog training is expertise in tending to dogs.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And cattle breeding is expertise in tending to cattle.

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Well, but piety or holiness is tending to the gods, Euthyphro? That's what you're saying?

EUTHYPHRO: It is.

SOCRATES: But doesn't all tending accomplish the same end? I mean something like some good or benefit for what's being tended to—as you see that horses tended to by horse trainers are benefited and made better. Or don't you agree that they are?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I do.

c SOCRATES: And so dogs, of course, are benefited by dog training and cattle by cattle breeding, and similarly for all the others. Or do you think that tending aims to harm what's being tended?

EUTHYPHRO: No, by Zeus, I don't.

SOCRATES: Rather, it aims to benefit it?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then if piety is tending to the gods, does it benefit the gods and make the gods better? Would you concede that whenever you

do something pious, you're making some god better?

EUTHYPHRO: No, by Zeus, I wouldn't.

SOCRATES: No, I didn't think that that was what you meant, Euthyphro—far from it. But it *d* is why I asked what you did mean by tending to the gods, because I didn't think you meant that sort of tending.

EUTHYPHRO: And you were right, Socrates, since that's not the sort I meant.

SOCRATES: All right. But then what sort of tending to the gods would the pious be?

EUTHYPHRO: The very sort of tending, Socrates, that slaves provide to their masters.

SOCRATES: I understand. Then it would seem to be some sort of service to the gods.

EUTHYPHRO: It is indeed.

SOCRATES: Now could you tell me about service to doctors? What result does that service—insofar as it is service—aim to produce? Don't you think it aims at health?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: What about service to shipbuild- *e* ers? What result does the service aim to produce?

EUTHYPHRO: Clearly, Socrates, its aim is a ship.

SOCRATES: And in the case of service to builders, I suppose, the aim is a house?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then tell me, my good friend, at what result does service to the gods aim? Clearly, you know, since you say you've a finer knowledge of religious matters than any other human being.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, and what I say is true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then tell me, in the name of Zeus, what is that supremely fine result that the gods produce by using our services?

EUTHYPHRO: They produce many fine ones, Socrates.

SOCRATES: So too do generals, my friend. *14a* Nonetheless, you could easily tell me the main one, which is to produce victory in war, is it not?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And farmers, too, I think, produce many fine results. Nonetheless, the main one is to produce food from the earth.

EUTHYPHRO: Of course.

SOCRATES: What, then, about the many fine results that the gods produce? Which is the main one they produce?

EUTHYPHRO: I told you a moment ago, Socrates, that it's a pretty difficult task to learn
 b the exact truth about all these matters. But to put it simply: if a person knows how to do and say the things that are pleasing to the gods in prayer and sacrifice—those are the ones that are pious. And actions like them preserve both the private welfare of households and the common welfare of the city, whereas those that are the opposite of pleasing are unholy, and they, of course, overturn and destroy everything.

SOCRATES: If you'd wanted to, Euthyphro, you could have put the main point I asked about much more briefly. But you're not eager to teach
 c me—that's clear. You see, when you were just now on the point of answering you turned away. If you had given the answer, I'd already have been adequately instructed by you about piety. But as it is, the questioner must follow the one being questioned wherever he leads. Once again, then, what are you saying that the pious, or piety, is? Didn't you say that it was some sort of knowledge of sacrificing and praying?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I did.

SOCRATES: And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and praying is asking from them?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, indeed, Socrates.

d SOCRATES: So, on that account, piety would be knowing how to ask from the gods and how to give to them.

EUTHYPHRO: You've grasped my meaning perfectly, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Yes, my friend, that's because I really desire your wisdom and apply my mind to it, so that what you say won't fall on barren ground. But tell me, what is this service to the gods? You say it's asking for things from them and giving things to them?

EUTHYPHRO: I do.

SOCRATES: Well then, wouldn't asking in the right way consist of asking for the things we need from them?

EUTHYPHRO: What else could it be?

e SOCRATES: And, conversely, giving in the right way would consist of giving them, in turn, the things they need from us? For surely giving someone what he didn't at all need isn't something that an expert in the art of giving would do.

EUTHYPHRO: That's true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then piety, Euthyphro, would be a sort of expertise in mutual trading between gods and men.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, trading, if that's what you prefer to call it.

SOCRATES: I don't prefer anything, if it isn't true. But tell me, what benefit do the gods get from the gifts they receive from us? I mean, what they give is clear to everyone, since we possess
 15a nothing good that they don't give us. But how are they benefited by what they receive from us? Or do we get so much the better of them in the trade that we receive all our good things from them while they receive nothing from us?

EUTHYPHRO: But Socrates, do you really think gods are benefited by what they receive from us?

SOCRATES: If not, Euthyphro, what could those gifts of ours to gods possibly be?

EUTHYPHRO: What else do you think but honor and reverence and—as I said just now—what's pleasing to them.

SOCRATES: So is the pious pleasing to the gods, b Euthyphro, but not beneficial to them or loved by them?

EUTHYPHRO: No, I think that it's in fact the most loved of all.

SOCRATES: So, once again, it seems, the pious is what's loved by the gods.

EUTHYPHRO: Absolutely.

SOCRATES: Well, if you say that, can you wonder that your accounts seem not to stay put but to move around? And will you accuse me of being the Daedalus who makes them move, when you yourself are far more expert than Daedalus in the art of making them move in a circle? Or don't you see that our account has circled back again to the same place? For surely you remember that
 c earlier we discovered the pious and the god-loved are not the same, but different from one another. Or don't you remember that?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes, I do.

SOCRATES: Then don't you realize that you're now saying the pious is what the gods love? And that's the same, isn't it, as what's god-loved? Or is that not so?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course, it is.

SOCRATES: Then either we weren't right to agree before, or, if we were right, our present suggestion is wrong.

EUTHYPHRO: So it seems.

SOCRATES: So we must examine again from the beginning what the pious is, since I won't willingly give up until I learn this. Don't scorn me, but apply your mind to the matter in as many ways and as fully as you can, and then tell me the truth—for you must know it, if indeed any human being does, and, like Proteus,¹⁷ you mustn't be let go until you tell it. For if you didn't know with full clarity what the pious and the impious are, you'd never have ventured to prosecute your old father for murder on behalf of a day laborer. On the contrary, you wouldn't have

17. Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, was a god who could change himself into any shape he wished. In this way, he avoided being captured, until his daughter, Eidothea, revealed this secret: keep tight hold of him, no matter what he changes into.

risked acting wrongly because you'd have been afraid before the gods and ashamed before men. As things stand, however, I well know that you think you have fully clear knowledge of what's pious and what isn't. So tell me what you think it is, my excellent Euthyphro, and don't conceal it.

EUTHYPHRO: Some other time, Socrates. You see, I'm in a hurry to get somewhere, and it's time for me to be off.

SOCRATES: What a way to treat me, my friend! Going off like that and dashing the high hopes I had that I'd learn from you what things are pious and what aren't. Then I'd escape Meletus' indictment by showing him that Euthyphro had now made me wise in religious matters, and ignorance would no longer cause me to improvise and innovate about them. What's more, I'd live a better way for the rest of my life. 16a

APOLOGY

Translated by C.D.C. Reeve.

^{17a} I don't know, men of Athens, how you were affected by my accusers. As for me, I was almost carried away by them, they spoke so persuasively. And yet almost nothing they said is true. Among their many falsehoods, however, one especially amazed me: that you must be careful not to be deceived by me, since I'm a dangerously clever speaker. That they aren't ashamed at being immediately refuted by the facts, once it becomes apparent that I'm not a clever speaker at all, that seems to me most shameless of them. Unless, of course, the one they call "clever" is the one who tells the truth. If that's what they mean, I'd agree that I'm an orator—although not one of their sort. No, indeed. Rather, just as I claimed, they have said little or nothing true, whereas from me you'll hear the whole truth. But not, by Zeus, men of Athens, expressed in elegant language like theirs, arranged in fine words and phrases. Instead, what you hear will be spoken extemporaneously in

whatever words come to mind, and let none of you expect me to do otherwise—for I put my trust in the justice of what I say. After all, it wouldn't be appropriate at my age, gentlemen, to come before you speaking in polished, artificial language like a young man.

Indeed, men of Athens, this I positively entreat of you: if you hear me making my defense using the same sort of language that I'm accustomed to use both in the marketplace next to the bankers' tables—where many of you have heard me—and also in other places, please don't be surprised or create an uproar on that account. For the fact is that this is the first time I've appeared before a law court, although I'm seventy years old. So the language of this place is totally foreign to me. Now, if I were really a foreigner, you'd certainly forgive me if I spoke in the accents and manner in which I'd been raised. So now, too, I'm asking you, justly it seems to me, to overlook my manner 18a

of speaking (maybe it will be less good, maybe it will be better), but consider and apply your mind to this alone, whether I say what's just or not. For that's the virtue or excellence of a juror,¹ just as the orator's lies in telling the truth.

The first thing justice demands, then, men of Athens, is that I defend myself from the first false accusations made against me and from my first accusers, and then from the later accusations and the later accusers. You see, many people
 b have been accusing me in front of you for very many years now—and nothing they say is true. And I fear them more than Anytus² and the rest, though the latter are dangerous as well. But the earlier ones, gentlemen, are more dangerous. They got hold of most of you from childhood and persuaded you with their accusations against me—accusations no more true than the current ones. They say there's a man called Socrates, a
 c “wise” man, a thinker about things in the heavens, an investigator of all things below the earth, and someone who makes the weaker argument the stronger. Those who've spread this rumor, men of Athens, are my dangerous accusers, since the people who hear them believe that those who investigate such things do not acknowledge the gods either. Moreover, those accusers are numerous and have been accusing me for a long time now. Besides, they also spoke to you at that age when you would most readily believe them, when some of you were children or young boys. Thus they simply won their case by default, as there was no defense. But what's most unreasonable in all this is that I can't discover even their
 d names and tell them to you—unless one of them happens to be a comic playwright. In any case, the ones who used malicious slander to persuade you—as well as those who persuaded others after having been persuaded themselves—all of

these are impossible to deal with. One cannot bring any of them here to court or cross-examine them. One must literally fight with shadows to defend oneself and cross-examine with no one to respond.

So you too, then, should allow, as I claimed, that there are two groups of accusers: those who accused me just now and the older ones I've been discussing. Moreover, you should consider
 e it proper for me to defend myself against the latter first, since you've heard them accusing me earlier, and at much greater length, than these recent ones here.

All right. I must defend myself, then, men of Athens, and try to take away in this brief time
 19a prejudices you acquired such a long time ago. Certainly, that's the outcome I'd wish for—if it's in any way better for you and for me—and I'd like to succeed in my defense. But I think it's a difficult task, and I am not at all unaware of its nature. Let it turn out, though, in whatever way pleases the god. I have to obey the law and defend myself.

Let's examine, then, from the beginning, what
 b the charge is from which the slander against me arose—the very one on which Meletus relied when he wrote the present indictment of me. Well, then, what exactly did the slanderers say to slander me? Just as if they were real accusers their affidavit must be read. It's something like this:

Socrates commits injustice and is a busy-body, in that he investigates the things beneath the earth and in the heavens, makes the weaker argument the stronger, and teaches these things to others.
 c

Indeed, you saw these charges expressed yourselves in Aristophanes' comedy.³ There, some fellow named Socrates swings around claiming he's walking on air and talking a lot of other nonsense on subjects that I know neither a lot nor a little but nothing at all about. Not that I mean to disparage this knowledge, if anyone's wise in such subjects—I don't want to have to defend myself

1. A member of an Athenian jury (a *dikastēs*) combined the responsibilities that are divided between judge and jury in our legal system. Hence *dikastēs* is sometimes translated as “judge” and sometimes (as in the present translation) as “juror.”

2. Anytus was a democratic leader who helped restore democracy to Athens in 403 BCE after the overthrow of the Thirty Tyrants (32c note), under whom he had lost most of his wealth.

3. Aristophanes was an Athenian comic dramatist (c. 450–385 BCE). The version of his play *Clouds* referred to here, which is earlier than the revised version we possess, was first staged in 423 BCE.

against more of Meletus' lawsuits!—but I, men of Athens, take no part in them. I call on the majority of you as witnesses to this, and I appeal to you *d* to make it perfectly plain to one another—those of you who've heard me conversing (as many of you have). Tell one another, then, whether any of you has ever heard me discussing such subjects, either briefly or at length, and from this you'll realize that the other things commonly said about me are of the same baseless character.

In any case, none of them is true. And if you've heard from anyone that I undertake to educate people and charge fees, that's not true either. Although, it also seems to me to be a fine thing if anyone's able to educate people in the way Gorgias of Leontini does, and Prodicus of Ceos, and *e* Hippias of Elis.⁴ For each of them, gentlemen, can enter any city and persuade the young—who may associate with any of their own fellow citizens they want to free of charge—to abandon those *20a* associations, and associate with them instead, pay them a fee, and be grateful to them besides.

Since we're on that topic, I heard that there's another wise gentleman here at present, from Paros. For I happened to run into a man who has spent more money on Sophists than everyone else put together—Callias, the son of Hipponicus.⁵ So I questioned him, since he has two sons himself.

"Callias," I said, "if your two sons had been born colts or calves, we could engage and pay a knowledgeable supervisor—one of those expert *b* horse breeders or farmers—who could turn them into fine and good examples of their proper virtue or excellence. But now, seeing that they're human beings, whom do you have in mind to engage as a supervisor? Who is it that has the

knowledge of *this* virtue, the virtue of human beings and of citizens? I assume you've investigated the matter, because you have two sons. Is there such a person," I asked, "or not?"

"Certainly," he replied.

"Who is he?" I said.

"His name's Evenus, Socrates," he replied, "from Paros. He charges five minas."⁶

I thought Evenus blessedly happy if he truly *c* did possess that expertise and taught it for so modest a fee. I, at any rate, would pride myself and give myself airs if I had knowledge of those things. But in fact, men of Athens, I don't know them.

Now perhaps one of you will interject: "But Socrates, what, then, is *your* occupation? What has given rise to these slanders against you? Surely if you weren't in fact occupied with something out of the ordinary, if you weren't doing something different from most people, all this rumor and talk wouldn't have arisen. Tell us, then, what *d* it is, so that we don't judge you hastily." These are fair questions, I think, for the speaker to ask, and I'll try to show you just what it is that has brought me this slanderous reputation. Listen, then. Perhaps, some of you will think I'm joking. But you may be sure that I'll be telling you the whole truth.

You see, men of Athens, I've acquired this reputation because of nothing other than a sort of wisdom. What sort of wisdom, you ask, is that? The very sort, perhaps, that is *human* wisdom. For it may just be that I really do have that sort of wisdom, whereas the people I mentioned just now may, perhaps, be wise because they possess *superhuman* wisdom. I don't know what else to *e* call it, since I myself certainly don't possess that knowledge, and whoever says I do is lying and speaking in order to slander me.

Please don't create an uproar, men of Athens, even if you think I'm somehow making grand claims. You see, I'm not the author of the story I'm about to tell, though I'll refer you to a reliable source. In fact, as a witness to the existence

4. All three, like Evenus of Paros mentioned below, were Sophists— itinerant professors who charged sometimes substantial fees for popular lectures and specialized instruction in a wide variety of fields, including natural science, rhetoric, grammar, ethics, and politics. Sophists did not constitute a single school or movement, however, and were neither doctrinally nor organizationally united.

5. Callias was one of the richest men in Greece and a patron of the Sophists. Plato's *Protagoras* is set in his house.

6. Evenus is described as a poet (*Phaedo* 60c–e) and as an orator (*Phaedrus* 267a). A few fragments of his elegies survive. A drachma was a day's pay for someone engaged in public works; a mina was a hundred silver drachmas.

of my wisdom—if indeed it is a sort of wisdom—and to its nature, I'll present the god at Delphi to you.⁷

21a You remember Chaerephon, no doubt.⁸ He was a friend of mine from youth and also a friend of your party, who shared your recent exile and restoration.⁹ You remember, then, what sort of man Chaerephon was, how intense he was in whatever he set out to do. Well, on one occasion in particular he went to Delphi and dared to ask the oracle¹⁰—as I said, please don't create an uproar, gentlemen—he asked, exactly as I'm telling you, whether anyone was wiser than myself. The Pythia drew forth the response that no one is wiser. His brother here will testify to you about it, since Chaerephon himself is dead.¹¹

b Please consider my purpose in telling you this, since I'm about to explain to you where the slander against me has come from. You see, when I heard these things, I thought to myself as follows: "What can the god be saying? What does his riddle mean? For I'm only too aware that I've no claim to being wise in anything either great or small. What can he mean, then, by saying that I'm wisest? Surely he can't be lying: that isn't lawful for him."

For a long time I was perplexed about what he meant. Then, very reluctantly, I proceeded to examine it in the following sort of way. I approached one of the people thought to be

wise, assuming that in his company, if anywhere, I could refute the pronouncement and say to the oracle, "Here's someone wiser than I, yet you said I was wisest."

c Then I examined this person—there's no need for me to mention him by name; he was one of our politicians. And when I examined him and talked with him, men of Athens, my experience was something like this: I thought this man seemed wise to many people, and especially to himself, but wasn't. Then I tried to show him that he thought himself wise, but wasn't. As a result, d he came to dislike me, and so did many of the people present. For my part, I thought to myself as I left, "I'm wiser than that person. For it's likely that neither of us knows anything fine and good, but he thinks he knows something he doesn't know, whereas I, since I don't in fact know, don't think that I do either. At any rate, it seems that I'm wiser than he in just this one small way: that what I don't know, I don't think I know." Next, I approached another man, one of those thought to be wiser than the first, and it seemed to me that e the same thing occurred, and so I came to be disliked by that man too, as well as by many others.

After that, then, I kept approaching one person after another. I realized, with distress and alarm, that I was arousing hostility. Nevertheless, I thought I must attach the greatest importance to what pertained to the god. So, in seeking what the oracle meant, I had to go to all those with any 22a reputation for knowledge. And, by the dog, men of Athens—for I'm obliged to tell the truth before you—I really did experience something like this: in my investigation in response to the god, I found that, where wisdom is concerned, those who had the best reputations were practically the most deficient, whereas men who were thought to be their inferiors were much better off. Accordingly, I must present all my wanderings to you as if they were labors of some sort that I undertook in order to prove the oracle utterly irrefutable.

You see, after the politicians, I approached the poets—tragic, dithyrambic,¹² and the rest— b thinking that in their company I'd catch myself in the very act of being more ignorant than

7. Apollo, who was god of, among other things, healing, prophecy, purification, care for young citizens, music, and poetry.

8. A long-time companion of Socrates.

9. Members of the democratic party left Athens when the Thirty Tyrants came to power in 404 BCE. They returned to power when the tyrants were overthrown in 403.

10. The Delphic oracle was one of the most famous in antiquity. There were two methods of consulting it. One method, involving the sacrifice of sheep and goats, was quite expensive but resulted in a written response. The other—the so-called method of the two beans—was substantially cheaper but resulted only in a response by lot. Since Chaerephon was notoriously poor, it is probable that he consulted the oracle by the latter method (something also suggested by Socrates' characterization of the priestess as *drawing forth* the response at 21a).

11. The brother is Chaerecrates.

12. A dithyramb was a choral song in honor of the god Dionysus.

they. So I examined the poems with which they seemed to me to have taken the most trouble and questioned them about what they meant, in order that I might also learn something from them at the same time.

Well, I'm embarrassed to tell you the truth, gentlemen, but nevertheless it must be told. In a word, almost all the people present could have discussed these poems better than their authors themselves. And so, in the case of the poets as well, I soon realized it wasn't wisdom that enabled them to compose their poems, but some sort of natural inspiration, of just the sort you find in seers and soothsayers. For these people, too, say many fine things, but know nothing of what they speak about. The poets also seemed to me to be in this sort of situation. At the same time, I realized that, because of their poetry, they thought themselves to be the wisest of people about the other things as well when they weren't. So I left their company, too, thinking that I had gotten the better of them in the very same way as of the politicians.

Finally, I approached the craftsmen. You see, I was conscious of knowing practically nothing myself, but I knew I'd discover that they, at least, would know many fine things. And I wasn't wrong about this. On the contrary, they did know things that I didn't know, and in that respect they were wiser than I. But, men of Athens, the good craftsmen also seemed to me to have the very same flaw as the poets: because he performed his own craft well, each of them also thought himself to be wisest about the other things, the most important ones; and this error of theirs seemed to overshadow their wisdom. So I asked myself on behalf of the oracle whether I'd prefer to be as I am, not in any way wise with their wisdom nor ignorant with their ignorance, or to have both qualities as they did. And the answer I gave to myself, and to the oracle, was that it profited me more to be just the way I was.

From this examination, men of Athens, much hostility has arisen against me of a sort that is harshest and most onerous. This has resulted in many slanders, including that reputation I mentioned of being "wise." You see, the people present on each occasion think that I'm wise about the subjects on which I examine others. But in fact, gentlemen, it's pretty certainly the god who is really wise, and

by his oracle he meant that human wisdom is worth little or nothing. And it seems that when he refers to the Socrates here before you and uses my name, he makes me an example, as if he were to say, "That one among you is wisest, mortals, who, like Socrates, has recognized that he's truly worthless where wisdom's concerned."

So even now I continue to investigate these things and to examine, in response to the god, any person, citizen, or foreigner I believe to be wise. Whenever he seems not to be so to me, I come to the assistance of the god and show him that he's not wise. Because of this occupation, I've had no leisure worth talking about for either the city's affairs or my own domestic ones; rather, I live in extreme poverty because of my service to the god.

In addition to these factors, the young people who follow me around of their own accord, those who have the most leisure, the sons of the very rich, enjoy listening to people being cross-examined. They often imitate me themselves and in turn attempt to cross-examine others. Next, I imagine they find an abundance of people who think they possess some knowledge, but in fact know little or nothing. The result is that those they question are angry not at themselves, but at me, and say that Socrates is a thoroughly pestilential fellow who corrupts the young. Then, when they're asked what he's doing or teaching, they've nothing to say, as they don't know. Yet, so as not to appear at a loss, they utter the stock phrases used against all who philosophize: "things in the sky and beneath the earth," and "not acknowledging the gods," and "making the weaker argument the stronger." For they wouldn't be willing to tell the truth, I imagine: that it has become manifest they pretend to know, but know nothing. So, seeing that these people are, I imagine, ambitious, vehement, and numerous, and have been speaking earnestly and persuasively about me, they've long been filling your ears with vehement slanders. On the basis of these slanders, Meletus has brought his charges against me, and Anytus and Lycon along with him: Meletus is aggrieved on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the artisans and politicians, and Lycon on behalf of the orators. So, as I began by saying, I'd be amazed if I could rid your minds of this slander in the brief time available, when there's so much of it in them.

There, men of Athens, is the truth for you. I've spoken it without concealing or glossing over anything, whether great or small. And yet I pretty much know that I make enemies by doing these very things. And that's further evidence that I'm right—that this is the prejudice against me and these its causes. Whether you investigate these
b matters now or later, you'll find it to be so.

Enough, then, for my defense before you against the charges brought by my first accusers. Next, I'll try to defend myself against Meletus—who is, he claims, both good and patriotic—and against my later accusers. Once again, then, just as if they were really a different set of accusers, their affidavit must be examined in turn. It goes something like this:

Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young, and of not acknowledging the gods the city acknowledges, but new daimonic activities instead.

c Such, then, is the charge. Let us examine each point in this charge.

Meletus says, then, that I commit injustice by corrupting the young. But I, men of Athens, reply that it's Meletus who is guilty of playing around with serious matters, of lightly bringing people to trial, and of professing to be seriously concerned about things he has never cared about at all—and I'll try to prove this.

Step forward, Meletus, and answer me. You regard it as most important, do you not, that our young people be as good as possible?

d I certainly do.

Come, then, and tell these jurors who improves them. Clearly you know, since you care. For having discovered, as you assert, the one who corrupts them—namely, myself—you bring him before these jurors and accuse him. Come, then, speak up, tell the jurors who it is that improves them. Do you see, Meletus, that you remain silent and have nothing to say? Yet don't you think that's shameful and sufficient evidence of exactly what I say, that you care nothing at all? Speak up, my good man. Who improves them?

The laws.

e But that's not what I'm asking, my most excellent fellow, but rather which *person*, who knows the laws themselves in the first place, does this?

These gentlemen, Socrates, the jurors.

What are you saying, Meletus? Are they able to educate and improve the young?

Most certainly.

All of them, or some but not others?

All of them.

That's good news, by Hera, and a great abundance of benefactors that you speak of! What, *25a* then, about the audience present here? Do they improve the young or not?

Yes, they do so too.

And what about the members of the Council?¹³

Yes, the councilors too.

But, if that's so, Meletus, surely those in the Assembly, the assemblymen, won't corrupt the young, will they? Won't they all improve them too?

Yes, they will too.

But then it seems that all the Athenians except for me make young people fine and good, whereas I alone corrupt them. Is that what you're saying?

Most emphatically, that's what I'm saying.

I find myself, if you're right, in a most unfortunate situation. Now answer me this. Do you *b* think that the same holds of horses? Do people in general improve them, whereas one particular person corrupts them or makes them worse? Or isn't it wholly the opposite: one particular person—or the very few who are horse trainers—is able to improve them, whereas the majority of people, if they have to do with horses and make use of them, make them worse? Isn't that true, Meletus, both of horses and of all other animals? Of course it is, whether you and Anytus say so or not. Indeed, our young people are surely in a very happy situation if only one person corrupts them, whereas all the rest benefit them.

Well then, Meletus, it has been adequately *c* established that you've never given any thought to young people—you've plainly revealed your indifference—and that you care nothing about the issues on which you bring me to trial.

13. The Council consisted of five hundred male citizens over the age of thirty, elected annually by lot, fifty from each of the ten tribes of Athens. The Council met daily (except for some holidays and the like) as a steering committee for the Assembly.

Next, Meletus, tell us, in the name of Zeus, whether it's better to live among good citizens or bad ones. Answer me, sir. Surely, I'm not asking you anything difficult. Don't bad people do something bad to whoever's closest to them at the given moment, whereas good people do something good?

Certainly.

d Now is there anyone who wishes to be harmed rather than benefited by those around him? Keep answering, my good fellow. For the law requires you to answer. Is there anyone who wishes to be harmed?

Of course not.

Well, then, when you summon me here for corrupting the young and making them worse, do you mean that I do so intentionally or unintentionally?

Intentionally, I say.

What's that, Meletus? Are you so much wiser at your age than I at mine, that you know bad people do something bad to whoever's closest
e to them at the given moment, and good people something good? Am I, by contrast, so very ignorant that I don't know even this: that if I do something bad to an associate, I risk getting back something bad from him in return? And is the result, as you claim, that I do so very bad a thing intentionally?

I'm not convinced by you of that, Meletus, and neither, I think, is anyone else. No, either I'm not corrupting the young or, if I am corrupting them, it's unintentionally, so that in either case what you say is false. But if I'm corrupting them unintentionally, the law doesn't require that I be brought to court for such mistakes—that is, unintentional ones—but that I be taken aside for private instruction and admonishment. For
26a it's clear that if I'm instructed, I'll stop doing what I do *unintentionally*. You, however, avoided associating with me and were unwilling to instruct me. Instead, you bring me here, where the law requires you to bring those in need of punishment, not instruction.

b Well, men of Athens, what I said before is absolutely clear by this point, namely, that Meletus has never cared about these matters to any extent, great or small. Nevertheless, please tell us now, Meletus, how is it you say I corrupt

the young? Or is it absolutely clear, from the indictment you wrote, that it's by teaching them not to acknowledge the gods the city acknowledges, but new daimonic activities instead? Isn't that what you say I corrupt them by teaching?

I most emphatically do say that.

Then, in the name of those very gods we're now discussing, Meletus, speak yet more clearly, *c* both for my sake and for that of these gentlemen. You see, I'm unable to tell what you mean. Is it that I teach people to acknowledge that some gods exist—so that I, then, acknowledge their existence myself and am not an out-and-out atheist and am not guilty of that—yet not, of course, the very ones acknowledged by the city, but different ones? Is that what you're charging me with, that they're different ones? Or are you saying that I myself don't acknowledge any gods at all, and that that's what I teach to others?

That's what I mean, that you don't acknowledge any gods at all.

You're a strange fellow, Meletus! What makes
d you say that? Do I not even acknowledge that the sun and the moon are gods, then, as other men do?

No, by Zeus, gentlemen of the jury, he doesn't, since he says that the sun's a stone and the moon earth.

My dear Meletus, do you think it's Anaxagoras¹⁴ you're accusing?

Are you that contemptuous of the jury? Do you think they're so illiterate that they don't know that the books of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of such arguments? And, in particular, do young people learn these views from me, views they can occasionally acquire in the Orchestra¹⁵ *e* for a drachma at most and that they'd ridicule Socrates for pretending were his own—especially as they're so strange? In the name of Zeus, is that really how I seem to you? Do I acknowledge the existence of no god at all?

No indeed, by Zeus, none at all.

You aren't at all convincing, Meletus, not even, it seems to me, to yourself. You see, men

14. Some of the views of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are discussed at *Phaedo* 97b–99d.

15. The Orchestra was part of the marketplace (*agora*) in Athens.

of Athens, this fellow seems very arrogant and intemperate to me and to have written this indictment simply out of some sort of arrogance, 27a intemperance, and youthful rashness. Indeed, he seems to have composed a sort of riddle in order to test me: “Will the so-called wise Socrates recognize that I’m playing around and contradicting myself? Or will I fool him along with the other listeners?” You see, he seems to me to be contradicting himself in his indictment, as if he were to say, “Socrates is guilty of not acknowledging gods, but of acknowledging gods.” And that’s just childish playing around, isn’t it?

Please examine with me, gentlemen, why it b seems to me that this is what he’s saying. And you, Meletus, answer us. But you, gentlemen, please remember what I asked of you at the beginning: don’t create an uproar if I make my arguments in my accustomed manner.

Is there anyone, Meletus, who acknowledges that human activities exist but doesn’t acknowledge human beings? Make him answer, gentlemen, and don’t let him make one protest after another. Is there anyone who doesn’t acknowledge horses but does acknowledge equine activities? Or who doesn’t acknowledge that musicians exist but does acknowledge musical activities? There’s no one, best of men—if you don’t want to answer, I must answer for you and for the others here. But at least answer my next question. Is there anyone who acknowledges the existence of daimonic c activities but doesn’t acknowledge daimons?

No, there isn’t.

How good of you to answer, if reluctantly and when compelled to by these gentlemen. Well then, you say that I acknowledge daimonic activities, whether new or familiar, and teach about them. But then, on your account, I do at any rate acknowledge daimonic activities, and to this you’ve sworn in your indictment against me. However, if I acknowledge daimonic activities, surely it’s absolutely necessary that I acknowledge daimons. Isn’t that so? Yes, it is—I assume d you agree, since you don’t answer. But don’t we believe that daimons are either gods or, at any rate, children of gods? Yes or no?

Of course.

Then, if indeed I do believe in daimons, as you’re saying, and if daimons are gods of some

sort, that’s precisely what I meant when I said that you’re presenting us with a riddle and playing around: you’re saying that I don’t believe in gods and, on the contrary, that I do believe in gods, since in fact I do at least believe in daimons. But if, on the other hand, daimons are children of gods, some sort of bastard offspring of a nymph, or of whomever else tradition says each one is the child, what man could possibly believe that children of gods exist, but not gods? That would be just as unreasonable as believing in the children e of horses and asses—namely, mules—while not believing in the existence of horses and asses.

Well then, Meletus, you must have written these things to test us or because you were at a loss about what genuine injustice to charge me with. There’s no conceivable way you could persuade any man with even the slightest intelligence that the same person believes in both daimonic activities and gods, and, on the contrary, that this same person believes neither in 28a daimons, nor in gods, nor in heroes.¹⁶

In fact, then, men of Athens, it doesn’t seem to me to require a long defense to show that I’m not guilty of the charges in Meletus’ indictment, but what I’ve said is sufficient. But what I was also saying earlier, that much hostility has arisen against me and among many people—you may be sure that’s true. And it’s what will convict me, if I am convicted: not Meletus or Anytus, but the slander and malice of many people. It has certainly convicted many other good men as well, and I imagine it will do so again. There’s no danger it will stop with me. b

But perhaps someone may say, “Aren’t you ashamed, Socrates, to have engaged in the sort of occupation that has now put you at risk of death?” I, however, would be right to reply to him, “You’re not thinking straight, sir, if you think that a man who’s any use at all should give any opposing weight to the risk of living or dying, instead of looking to this alone whenever he does anything: whether his actions are just or unjust, the deeds of a good or bad man. You see, on your account, all those demigods who died on c

16. Heroes are demigods (28c), children of gods and mortals, whose existence therefore entails the existence of gods.

the plain of Troy were inferior people, especially the son of Thetis, who was so contemptuous of danger when the alternative was something shameful. When he was eager to kill Hector, his mother, since she was a goddess, spoke to him, I think, in some such words as these: 'My child, if you avenge the death of your friend Patroclus and slay Hector, you will die yourself immediately,' so the poem goes, 'as your death is fated to follow next after Hector's.' But though he heard that, he was contemptuous of death and danger, for he was far more afraid of living as a bad man
 d and of failing to avenge his friends: 'Let me die immediately, then,' it continues, 'once I've given the wrongdoer his just deserts, so that I do not remain here by the curved ships, a laughingstock and a burden upon the earth.' Do you really suppose he gave a thought to death or danger?"

You see, men of Athens, this is the truth of the matter: Wherever someone has stationed himself because he thinks it best, or wherever he's been stationed by his commander, there, it seems to me, he should remain, steadfast in danger, taking no account at all of death or of anything else,
 e in comparison to what's shameful. I'd therefore have been acting scandalously, men of Athens, if, when I'd been stationed in Potidea, Amphipolis, or Delium¹⁷ by the leaders you had elected to lead me, I had, like many another, remained where they'd stationed me and run the risk of death. But if, when the god stationed me here, as I became thoroughly convinced he did, to
 29a live practicing philosophy, examining myself and others, I had—for fear of death or anything else—abandoned my station.

That would have been scandalous, and someone might have rightly and justly brought me to court for not acknowledging that gods exist, by disobeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking I was wise when I wasn't. You see, fearing death, gentlemen, is nothing other than thinking one is wise when one isn't, since it's thinking one knows what one doesn't know. I mean, no one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all goods for people, but they fear it as if they
 b knew for certain that it's the worst thing of all. Yet

surely this is the most blameworthy ignorance of thinking one knows what one doesn't know. But I, gentlemen, may perhaps differ from most people by just this much in this matter too. And if I really were to claim to be wiser than anyone in any way, it would be in this: that as I don't have adequate knowledge about things in Hades, so too I don't think that I have knowledge. To act unjustly, on the other hand, to disobey someone better than oneself, whether god or man, that I do know to be bad and shameful. In any case, I'll never fear or avoid things that may for all I know be good more than things I know are bad.

Suppose, then, you're prepared to let me go
 c now and to disobey Anytus, who said I shouldn't have been brought to court at all, but that since I had been brought to court, you had no alternative but to put me to death because, as he stated before you, if I were acquitted, soon your sons would all be entirely corrupted by following Socrates' teachings. Suppose, confronted with that claim, you were to say to me, "Socrates, we will not obey Anytus this time. Instead, we are prepared to let you go. But on the following condition: that you spend no more time on this
 d investigation and don't practice philosophy, and if you're caught doing so, you'll die." Well, as I just said, if you were to let me go on these terms, I'd reply to you, "I've the utmost respect and affection for you, men of Athens, but I'll obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and am able, I won't give up practicing philosophy, exhorting you and also showing the way to any of you I ever happen to meet, saying just the sorts of things I'm accustomed to say:

My excellent man, you're an Athenian, you belong to the greatest city, renowned for its wisdom and strength; are you not ashamed that you take care to acquire as much wealth as possible—and reputation
 e and honor—but that about wisdom and truth, about how your soul may be in the best possible condition, you take neither care nor thought?

Then, if one of you disagrees and says that he *does* care, I won't let him go away immediately, but I'll question, examine, and test him. And if he doesn't seem to me to possess virtue, though

17. Three battles in the Peloponnesian War between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies.

he claims he does, I'll reproach him, saying that
 30a he treats the most important things as having the
 least value, and inferior ones as having more.
 This I will do for anyone I meet, young or old,
 alien or fellow citizen—but especially for you,
 my fellow citizens, since you're closer kin to me.
 This, you may be sure, is what the god orders me
 to do. And I believe that no greater good for you
 has ever come about in the city than my service
 to the god. You see, I do nothing else except go
 b around trying to persuade you, both young and
 old alike, not to care about your bodies or your
 money as intensely as about how your soul may
 be in the best possible condition. I say,

It's not from wealth that virtue comes,
 but from virtue comes money, and all
 the other things that are good for human
 beings, both in private and in public life.

Now if by saying this, I'm corrupting the
 young, *this* is what you'd have to think to be
 harmful. But if anyone claims I say something
 other than this, he's talking nonsense."

"It's in that light," I want to say, "men of Ath-
 ens, that you should obey Anytus or not, and let
 me go or not—knowing that I wouldn't act in any
 c other way, not even if I were to die many times
 over."

Don't create an uproar, men of Athens.
 Instead, please abide by my request not to create
 an uproar at what I say, but to listen. For I think
 it will profit you to listen. You see, I'm certainly
 going to say some further things to you at which
 you may perhaps exclaim—but by no means
 do so.

You may be sure that if you put me to death—
 a man of the sort I said I was just now—you won't
 harm me more than you harm yourselves. Cer-
 d tainly, Meletus or Anytus couldn't harm me in
 any way: that's not possible. For I don't think it's
 lawful for a better man to be harmed by a worse.
 He may, of course, kill me, or perhaps banish or
 disenfranchise me. And these *he* believes to be
 very bad things, and others no doubt agree. But
 I don't believe this. Rather, I believe that doing
 what he's doing now—attempts to kill a man
 unjustly—is far worse.

So, men of Athens, I'm far from pleading in
 my own defense now, as might be supposed.

Instead, I'm pleading in yours, so that you don't
 commit a great wrong against the god's gift to e
 you by condemning me. If you put me to death,
 you won't easily find another like me. For, even
 if it seems ridiculous to say so, I've literally been
 attached to the city, as if to a large thoroughbred
 horse that was somewhat sluggish because of its
 size and needed to be awakened by some sort of
 gadfly. It's as just such a gadfly, it seems to me,
 that the god has attached me to the city—one
 that awakens, cajoles, and reproaches each and
 every one of you and never stops alighting every-
 where on you the whole day. You won't easily
 find another like that, gentlemen. So if you obey
 me, you'll spare my life. But perhaps you'll be 31a
 resentful, like people awakened from a doze, and
 slap at me. If you obey Anytus, you might easily
 kill me. Then you might spend the rest of your
 lives asleep, unless the god, in his compassion for
 you, were to send you someone else.

That I am indeed the sort of person to be given
 as a gift to the city by the god, you may recognize b
 from this: it doesn't seem a merely human mat-
 ter—does it?—for me to have neglected all my
 own affairs and to have put up with this neglect
 of my domestic life for so many years now, but
 always to have minded your business, by visit-
 ing each of you in private, like a father or elder
 brother, to persuade you to care about virtue. Of
 course, if I were getting anything out of it or if I
 were being paid for giving this advice, my con-
 duct would be intelligible. But, as it is, you can
 plainly see for yourselves that my accusers, who
 so shamelessly accused me of everything else,
 couldn't bring themselves to be so utterly shame-
 less as to call a witness to say that I ever once
 accepted or asked for payment. In fact, it's I who
 can call what I think is a sufficient witness that c
 I'm telling the truth—my poverty.

But perhaps it may seem strange that I, of all
 people, give this advice by going around and
 minding other people's business in private, yet do
 not venture to go before your Assembly and give
 advice to the city in public. The reason for that,
 however, is one you've heard me give many times
 and in many places: A divine and daimonic thing
 comes to me—the very thing Meletus made
 mocking allusion to in the indictment he wrote.
 It's something that began happening to me in d

childhood: a sort of voice comes, which, whenever it does come, always holds me back from what I'm about to do but never urges me forward. *It* is what opposes my engaging in politics—and to me, at least, its opposition seems entirely right. For you may be sure, men of Athens, that if I'd tried to engage in politics I'd have perished long ago and have benefited neither you nor myself.

^e Please don't resent me if I tell you the truth. The fact is that no man will be spared by you or by any other multitude of people if he genuinely opposes a lot of unjust and unlawful actions and tries to prevent them from happening in the city. On the contrary, anyone who really fights for what's just, if indeed he's going to survive for
^{32a} even a short time, must act privately not publicly.

I'll present substantial evidence of that—not words, but what you value, deeds. Listen, then, to what happened to me, so you may see that fear of death wouldn't lead me to submit to a single person contrary to what's just, not even if I were to perish at once for not submitting. The things I'll tell you are of a vulgar sort commonly heard in the law courts, but they're true nonetheless.

^b You see, men of Athens, I never held any other public office in the city, but I've served on the Council. And it happened that my own tribe, Antiochis, was presiding¹⁸ when you wanted to try the ten generals—the ones who failed to rescue the survivors of the naval battle—as a group.¹⁹ That was unlawful, as you all came to recognize at a later time. On that occasion, I was the only presiding member opposed to your doing something illegal, and I voted against you. And though the orators were ready to lay information against me

18. A *phulē* is not a tribe in our sense, but an administrative division of the citizen body, most probably of military origin. The presiding committee of the Council (25a note) consisted of the fifty members of one of the ten tribes, selected by lot to serve for one-tenth of the year. It arranged meetings of the Council and Assembly, received envoys and letters to the state, and conducted other routine business.

19. After the naval battle at Arginusae on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor (406 BCE), ten Athenian generals were indicted for failing to rescue survivors and to pick up the bodies of the dead. Both Council and Assembly voted to try them as a group, which was against Athenian law.

and have me summarily arrested, and you were shouting and urging them on, I thought that I should face danger on the side of law and justice, rather than go along with you for fear of imprisonment or death when your proposals were unjust.

This happened when the city was still under democratic rule. But later, when the oligarchy had come to power, it happened once more. The Thirty²⁰ summoned me and four others to the Tholus²¹ and ordered us to arrest Leon of Salamis²² and bring him from Salamis to die. They gave many such orders to many other people too, of course, since they wanted to implicate as many as possible in their crimes. On *that* occasion, however, I showed once again not by words but
^d by deeds that I couldn't care less about death—if that isn't putting it too bluntly—but that all I care about is not doing anything unjust or impious. You see, that government, powerful though it was, didn't frighten me into unjust action: when we came out of the Tholus, the other four went to Salamis and arrested Leon, whereas I left and went home. I might have died for that if the government hadn't fallen shortly afterward.

There are many witnesses who will testify
^e before you about these events.

Do you imagine, then, that I'd have survived all these years if I'd been regularly active in public affairs, and had come to the aid of justice like a good man, and regarded that as most important, as one should? Far from it, men of Athens, and neither would any other man. But through-
^{33a} out my entire life, in any public activities I may have engaged in, it was evident I was the sort of person—and in private life I was the same—who

20. When Athens was defeated by Sparta in 404 BCE, its democratic government was replaced by a brutal oligarchy, the so-called Thirty Tyrants, which survived barely eight months. Two members of the Thirty—Critias and Charmides—were relatives of Plato and appear as Socratic interlocutors in the dialogues named after them. Socrates' association with them is often thought to have been one of the things that led to his indictment.

21. The Tholus was a dome-shaped building. The presiding committee of the Council (32b note) took its meals there.

22. Leon is otherwise unknown.

never agreed to anything with anyone contrary to justice, whether with others or with those who my slanderers say are my students. In fact, I've never been anyone's teacher at any time. But if anyone, whether young or old, wanted to listen to me while I was talking and performing my own task, I never begrudged that to him. Neither do I
 b engage in conversation only when I receive a fee and not when I don't. Rather, I offer myself for questioning to rich and poor alike, or, if someone prefers, he may listen to me and answer my questions. And if any one of these turned out well, or did not do so, I can't justly be held responsible, since I never at any time promised any of them that they'd learn anything from me or that I'd teach them. And if anyone says that he learned something from me or heard something in private that all the others didn't also hear, you may be sure he isn't telling the truth.

Why, then, you may ask, do some people enjoy
 c spending so much time with me? You've heard the answer, men of Athens. I told you the whole truth: it's because they enjoy listening to people being examined who think they're wise but aren't. For it's not unpleasant. In my case, however, it's something, you may take it from me, I've been ordered to do by the god, in both oracles and dreams, and in every other way that divine providence ever ordered any man to do anything at all.

All these things, men of Athens, are both true and easily tested. I mean, if I really do corrupt the young or have corrupted them in the past, surely if any of them had recognized when they became
 d older that I'd given them bad advice at some point in their youth, they'd now have come forward themselves to accuse me and seek redress. Or else, if they weren't willing to come themselves, some of their family members—fathers, brothers, or other relatives—if indeed their kinsmen had suffered any harm from me—would remember it now and seek redress.

In any case, I see many of these people present
 e here: first of all, there's Crito, my contemporary and fellow demesman, the father of Critobulus here;²³ then there's Lysanius of Sphettus, father

of Aeschines here;²⁴ next, there's Epigenes' father, Antiphon of Cephisia here.²⁵ Then there are others whose brothers have spent time in this way: Nicostratus, son of Theozotides,²⁶ brother of Theodotus—by the way, Theodotus is dead, so that Nicostratus is at any rate not being held back by him; and Paralios here, son of Demodocus, whose brother was Theages;²⁷ and there's Adeimantus, the son of Ariston, whose brother is Plato here, and Aeantodorus, whose brother here is Apollodorus.²⁸ And there are many others I could mention, some of whom Meletus most certainly ought to have called as witnesses in the course of his own speech. If he forgot to do so, let him call them now—I yield time to him. Let him tell us if he has any such witness. No, it's entirely the opposite, gentlemen. You'll find that they're all prepared to come to my aid, their corruptor, the one who, Meletus and Anytus claim, is doing harm to their families. Of course, the corrupted ones themselves might indeed have reason to come to my aid. But the *uncorrupted* ones, their
 b relatives, who are older men now, what reason could they possibly have to support me, other than the right and just one: that they know perfectly well that Meletus is lying, whereas I am telling the truth?

Well then, gentlemen, those, and perhaps other similar things, are pretty much all I have to say in my defense. But perhaps one of you might be resentful when he recalls his own behavior.
 c Perhaps when he was contesting even a lesser charge than this charge, he positively entreated the jurors with copious tears, bringing forward his children and many other relatives and friends

24. Aeschines of Sphettus (fourth century BCE) was a devoted follower of Socrates, present at his death (*Phaedo* 59b). He taught oratory and wrote speeches for the law courts. He also wrote Socratic dialogues, only fragments of which are extant.

25. Epigenes was present at Socrates' death (*Phaedo* 59b) and was a member of his circle.

26. Theozotides introduced two important democratic reforms after the fall of the Thirty Tyrants (32c note).

27. Otherwise largely unknown.

28. Apollodorus, an enthusiastic follower of Socrates, given to emotion (*Phaedo* 59a–b, 117c–d), is the narrator in the *Symposium*.

23. Crito was a well-off farm owner, able and willing to help his friends financially (38b, *Crito* 44b–c).

as well, in order to arouse as much pity as possible. And then he finds that I'll do none of these things, not even when I'm facing what might be considered the ultimate danger. Perhaps someone with these thoughts might feel more willful where I'm concerned and, made angry by these very same thoughts, cast his vote in anger. Well, if there's someone like that among you—of course, *d* I don't expect there to be, but *if* there is—I think it appropriate for me to answer him as follows: "I do indeed have relatives, my excellent man. As Homer puts it,²⁹ I too 'wasn't born from oak or from rock' but from human parents. And so I do have relatives, sons too, men of Athens, three of them, one already a young man while two are still children. Nonetheless, I won't bring any of them forward here and then entreat you to vote for my acquittal."

Why, you may ask, will I do none of these *e* things? Not because I'm willful, men of Athens, or want to dishonor you—whether I'm boldly facing death or not is a separate story. The point has to do with reputation—yours and mine and that of the entire city: it doesn't seem noble to me to do these things, especially at my age and with my reputation—for whether truly or falsely, it's firmly believed in any case that Socrates is *35a* superior to the majority of people in some way. Therefore, if those of you who are believed to be superior—in either wisdom or courage or any other virtue whatever—behave like that, it would be shameful.

I've often seen people of this sort when they're on trial: they're thought to be someone, yet they do astonishing things—as if they imagined they'd suffer something terrible if they died and would be immortal if only you didn't kill them. People like that seem to me to bring such shame to the city that any foreigner might well suppose that *b* those among the Athenians who are superior in virtue—the ones they select from among themselves for political office and other positions of honor—are no better than women. I say this, men of Athens, because none of us who are in any way whatever thought to be someone should behave like that, nor, if we attempt to do so,

should you allow it. On the contrary, you should make it clear you're far more likely to convict someone who makes the city despicable by staging these pathetic scenes than someone who minds his behavior.

Reputation aside, gentlemen, it doesn't seem just to me to entreat the jury—nor to be acquitted by entreating it—but rather to inform it and persuade it. After all, a juror doesn't sit in order to grant justice as a favor, but to decide where justice lies. And he has sworn on oath not that he'll favor whomever he pleases, but that he'll judge according to law. We shouldn't accustom you to breaking your oath, then, nor should you become accustomed to doing so—neither of us would be doing something holy if we did. Hence *d* don't expect me, men of Athens, to act toward you in ways I consider to be neither noble, nor just, nor pious—most especially, by Zeus, when I'm being prosecuted for *impiety* by Meletus here. You see, if I tried to persuade and to force you by entreaties, after you've sworn an oath, I clearly would be teaching you not to believe in the existence of gods, and my defense would literally convict me of not acknowledging gods. But that's far from being the case: I do acknowledge them, men of Athens, as none of my accusers does. I turn it over to you and to the god to judge me in whatever way will be best for me and for yourselves.

[*The jury returns a guilty verdict.
Meletus proposes the death penalty.*]

There are many reasons, men of Athens, why *e* I'm not resentful at this outcome—that you voted to convict me—and this outcome wasn't unexpected by me. I'm much more surprised at the *36a* number of votes cast on each side: I didn't think that the decision would be by so few votes but by a great many. Yet now, it seems, that if a mere thirty votes had been cast differently, I'd have been acquitted. Or rather, it seems to me that where Meletus is concerned, I've been acquitted even as things stand. And not merely acquitted. On the contrary, one thing at least is clear to everyone: if Anytus had not come forward with Lycon to accuse me, Meletus would have been fined a thousand drachmas, since he wouldn't *b* have received a fifth of the votes.

29. Homer, *Odyssey* xix.163.

But be that as it may, the man demands the death penalty for me. Well then, what counter-penalty should I now propose to you, men of Athens? Or is it clear that it's whatever I deserve? What then should it be? What do I deserve to suffer or pay just because I didn't mind my own business throughout my life? Because I didn't care about the things most people care about—making money, managing an estate, or being a general, a popular leader, or holding some other political office, or joining the cabals and factions that come to exist in a city—but thought
 c myself too decent, in truth, to engage in these things and survive? Because I didn't engage in things, if engaging in them was going to benefit neither you nor myself, but instead went to each of you privately and tried to perform what I claim is the greatest benefaction? That was what I did. I tried to persuade each of you to care first not about any of his possessions, but about himself and how he'll become best and wisest; and not primarily about the city's possessions, but about the city itself; and to care about all other things
 d in the same way.

What, then, do I deserve to suffer for being such a man? Something good, men of Athens, if I'm indeed to propose a penalty that I truly deserve. Yes, and the sort of good thing, too, that would be appropriate for me. What, then, is appropriate for a poor man who is a public benefactor and needs to have the leisure to exhort you? Nothing could be more appropriate, men of Athens, than for such a man to be given free meals in the Prytaneum—much more so for him, at any rate, than for any one of you who has won a victory at Olympia, whether with a single horse or with a pair or a team of four.³⁰ You see, he makes you think you're happy, whereas I make
 e you actually happy. Besides, he doesn't need to be sustained in that way, but I do need it. So if,
 37a as justice demands, I must propose a penalty I deserve, that's the penalty I propose: free meals in the Prytaneum.

Now perhaps when I say this, you may think I'm speaking in a quite willful manner—just as when I talked about appeals to pity and suppli-

cations. That's not so, men of Athens, rather it's something like this: I'm convinced that I never intentionally do injustice to any man—but I can't get you to share my conviction, because we've talked together a short time. I say this, b because if you had a law, as other men in fact do, not to try a capital charge in a single day, but over several, I think you'd be convinced. But as things stand, it isn't easy to clear myself of huge slanders in a short time.

Since I'm convinced that I've done injustice to no one, however, I'm certainly not likely to do myself injustice, to announce that I deserve something bad and to propose a penalty of that sort for myself. Why should I do that? In order not to suffer what Meletus proposes as a penalty for me, when I say that I don't know whether it's a good or a bad thing? As an alternative to that, am I then to choose one of the things I know very well to be bad and propose it? Imprisonment, c for example? And why should I live in prison, enslaved to the regularly appointed officers, the Eleven?³¹ All right, a fine with imprisonment until I pay? But in my case the effect would be precisely the one I just now described, since I haven't the means to pay.

Well then, should I propose exile? Perhaps that's what you'd propose for me. But I'd certainly have to have an excessive love of life, men of Athens, to be so irrational as to do that. I see that you, my fellow citizens, were unable to tolerate my discourses and discussions but came to find d them so burdensome and odious that you're now seeking to get rid of them. Is it likely, then, that I'll infer that others will find them easy to bear? Far from it, men of Athens. It would be a fine life for me, indeed, a man of my age, to go into exile and spend his life exchanging one city for another, because he's always being expelled. You see, I well know that wherever I go, the young will come to hear me speaking, just as they do here. And if I drive them away, they will themselves persuade their elders to expel me; whereas if I don't drive them away, their fathers and rela- e tives will expel me because of these same young people.

30. See *Euthyphro* 3a note.

31. Officials appointed by lot to be in charge of prisons and executions.

Now perhaps someone may say, “But by keeping quiet and minding your own business, Socrates, wouldn’t it be possible for you to live in exile for us?” This is the very hardest point on which to convince some of you. You see, if I say that to do *that* would be to disobey the god, and that this is why I can’t mind my own business, 38a you won’t believe me, since you’ll suppose I’m being ironical. But again, if I say it’s the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day, and the other things you’ve heard me discussing and examining myself and others about, on the grounds that the unexamined life isn’t worth living for a human being, you’ll believe me even less when I say that. But in fact, things are just as I claim them to be, men of Athens, though it isn’t easy to convince you of them. At the same time, I’m not accustomed to thinking that I deserve b anything bad. If I had the means, I’d have proposed a fine of as much as I could afford to pay, since that would have done me no harm at all. But as things stand, I don’t have them—unless you want me to propose as much as I’m in fact able to pay. Perhaps I could pay you about a mina of silver. So I propose a fine of that amount.

One moment, men of Athens. Plato here, and Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus as well, are urging me to propose thirty minas and saying that they themselves will guarantee it.³² I propose a fine of that amount, therefore, and these men will be sufficient guarantors to you of the silver.

[The jury votes for the death penalty and Socrates begins the final part of this speech.]

c For the sake of a little time, men of Athens, you’re going to earn from those who wish to denigrate our city both the reputation and the blame for having killed Socrates—that wise man. For those who wish to reproach you will, of course, claim that I’m wise, even if I’m not. In any case, if you’d waited a short time, this would have happened of its own accord. You, of course, see my age, you see that I’m already far along in life and close to death. I’m saying this not to all of you,

but to those who voted for the death penalty. And d to those same people I also say this: Perhaps you imagine, gentlemen, that I was convicted for lack of the sort of arguments I could have used to convince you, if I’d thought I should do or say anything to escape the penalty. Far from it. I *have* been convicted for a lack—not of arguments, however, but of bold-faced shamelessness and for being unwilling to say the sorts of things to you you’d have been most pleased to hear, with me weeping and wailing, and doing and saying many other things I claim are unworthy of me, e but that are the very sorts of things you’re used to hearing from everyone else. No, I didn’t think then that I should do anything servile because of the danger I faced, and so I don’t regret now that I defended myself as I did. I’d far rather die after such a defense than live like that.

You see, whether in a trial or in a war, neither I nor anyone else should contrive to escape 39a death at all costs. In battle, too, it often becomes clear that one might escape death by throwing down one’s weapons and turning to supplicate one’s pursuers. And in each sort of danger there are many other ways one can contrive to escape death, if one is shameless enough to do or say anything. The difficult thing, gentlemen, isn’t escaping death; escaping villainy is much more b difficult, since it runs faster than death. And now I, slow and old as I am, have been overtaken by the slower runner while my accusers, clever and sharp-witted as they are, have been overtaken by the faster one—vice. And now I take my leave, convicted by you of a capital crime, whereas they stand forever convicted by the truth of wickedness and injustice. And just as I accept my penalty, so must they. Perhaps, things *had* to turn out this way, and I suppose it’s good they have.

Next, I want to make a prophecy to those who c convicted me. Indeed, I’m now at the point at which men prophesy most—when they’re about to die. I say to you men who condemned me to death that as soon as I’m dead vengeance will come upon you, and it will be much harsher, by Zeus, than the vengeance you take in killing me. You did this now in the belief that you’ll escape giving an account of your lives. But I say that quite the opposite will happen to you. There will be more people to test you, whom I now restrain, d

32. Thirty minas (3,000 silver drachmas) was almost ten years’ salary for someone engaged in public works.

though you didn't notice my doing so. And they'll be all the harsher on you, since they're younger, and you'll resent it all the more. You see, if you imagine that by killing people you'll prevent anyone from reproaching you for not living in the right way, you're not thinking straight. In fact, to escape is neither possible nor noble. On the contrary, what's best and easiest isn't to put down other people, but to prepare oneself to be the best one can. With that prophecy to those of you who voted to convict me, I take my leave.

e However, I'd gladly discuss this result with those who voted for my acquittal while the officers of the court are busy and I'm not yet on my way to the place where I must die. Please stay with me, gentlemen, just for that short time. After all, there's nothing to prevent us from having a talk with one another while it's still in
40a our power. To you whom I regard as friends I'm willing to show the meaning of what has just now happened to me. You see, gentlemen of the jury—for in calling you “jurors” I no doubt use the term correctly—an amazing thing has happened to me. In previous times, the usual prophecies of my daimonic sign were always very frequent, opposing me even on trivial matters, if I was about to do something that wasn't right. Now, however, something has happened to me, as you can see for yourselves, that one might think to be,
b and that's generally regarded as being, the worst of all bad things. Yet the god's sign didn't oppose me when I left home this morning, or when I came up here to the law court, or anywhere in my speech when I was about to say something, even though in other discussions it has often stopped me in the middle of what I was saying. Now, however, where this affair is concerned, it has opposed me in nothing I either said or did.

What, then, do I suppose is the explanation for that? I'll tell you. You see, it's likely that what has happened to me is a good thing and that
c those of you who suppose death to be bad make an incorrect supposition. I've strong evidence of this, since there's no way my usual sign would have failed to oppose me, if I weren't about to achieve something good.

But let's bear in mind that the following is also a strong reason to hope that death may be something good. Being dead is one of two

things: either the dead are nothing, as it were, and have no awareness whatsoever of anything at all; or else, as we're told, it's some sort of change, a migration of the soul from here to another place. Now, if there's in fact no awareness, but *d* it's like sleep—the kind in which the sleeper has no dream whatsoever—then death would be an amazing advantage. For I imagine that if someone had to pick a night in which he slept so soundly that he didn't even dream and had to compare all the other nights and days of his life with that one, and then, having considered the matter, had to say how many days or nights of his life he had spent better or more pleasantly than that night—I imagine that not just some private individual, but even the great king,³³ would find *e* them easy to count compared to the other days and nights. Well, if death's like that, *I* say it's an advantage, since, in that case, the whole of time would seem no longer than a single night.

On the other hand, if death's a sort of journey from here to another place, and if what we're told is true, and all who've died are indeed there, what could be a greater good than that, gentle- *41a* men of the jury? If on arriving in Hades and leaving behind the people who claim to be jurors here, one's going to find those who are truly jurors or judges, the very ones who are said to sit in judgment there too—Minos,³⁴ Rhadamanthys, Aeacus, Triptolemus, and all the other demigods who were just in their own lifetimes—would the journey be a wretched one?

Or again, what would any one of you not give to talk to Orpheus and Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer?³⁵ I'd be willing to die many times over, if that were true. You see, for myself, at any rate, *b* spending time there would be amazing: when I met Palamedes or Ajax, the son of Telemon, or anyone else of old who died because of an unjust verdict, I could compare my own experience with theirs—as I suppose it wouldn't be unpleas-

33. The king of Persia, whose wealth and power made him a popular exemplar of human success and happiness.

34. Minos was a legendary king of Crete.

35. Orpheus was a legendary bard and founder of the mystical religion of Orphism. Musaeus, usually associated with Orpheus, was also a legendary bard.

ing to do. And in particular, the most important thing: I could spend time examining and searching people there, just as I do here, to find out who among them is wise, and who thinks he is, but isn't.

What wouldn't one give, gentlemen of the jury, to be able to examine the leader of the great expedition against Troy, or Odysseus, or Sisyphus,³⁶ or countless other men and women one could mention? To talk to them there, to associate with them and examine them, wouldn't that be inconceivable happiness? In any case, the people there certainly don't kill one for doing it. For if what we're told is true, the people there are both happier in all other respects than the people here and also deathless for the remainder of time.

But you too, gentlemen of the jury, should be of good hope in the face of death, and bear in mind this single truth: nothing bad can happen to a good man, whether in life or in death, nor are the gods unconcerned about his troubles.

36. Sisyphus was a legendary king and founder of Corinth.

What has happened to me hasn't happened by chance; rather, it's clear to me that to die now and escape my troubles was a better thing for me. It was for this very reason that my sign never opposed me. And so, for my part, I'm not at all angry with those who voted to condemn me or with my accusers. And yet this wasn't what they had in mind when they were condemning and accusing me. No, they thought to harm me—and for that they deserve to be blamed.

This small favor, however, I ask of them. When my sons come of age, gentlemen, punish them by harassing them in the very same way that I harassed you, if they seem to you to take care of wealth or anything before virtue, if they think they're someone when they're no one. Reproach them, just as I reproached you: tell them that they don't care for the things they should and think they're someone when they're worth nothing. If you will do that, I'll have received my own just deserts from you, as will my sons.

But now it's time to leave, I to die and you to live. Which of us goes to the better thing, however, is unclear to everyone except the god.

CRITO

Translated by C.D.C. Reeve.

^{43a} SOCRATES: Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Isn't it still early?

CRITO: It is indeed.

SOCRATES: About what time?

CRITO: Just before dawn.

SOCRATES: I'm surprised the prison warden was willing to let you in.

CRITO: He knows me by now, Socrates, I come here so often. And besides I've done him a good turn.

SOCRATES: Have you just arrived or have you been here for a while?

CRITO: For quite a while.

^b SOCRATES: Then why didn't you wake me right away, instead of sitting there in silence?

CRITO: In the name of Zeus, Socrates, I wouldn't do that! I only wish I weren't so sleepless and distressed myself. I've been amazed all this time to see how peacefully you were sleeping, and I deliberately kept from waking you, so that you could pass the time as pleasantly as possible. In the past—indeed, throughout my entire life—I've often counted you happy in your disposition, but never more so than in this present misfortune. You bear it so easily and calmly.

SOCRATES: Well, Crito, it would be an error for someone of my age to complain when the time has come when he must die.

CRITO: Other people get overtaken by such misfortunes too, Socrates, but their age doesn't

prevent them in the least from complaining about their fate.

SOCRATES: That's right. But tell me, why *have* you come so early?

CRITO: I bring bad news, Socrates. Not bad in your view, it seems to me, but bad and hard in mine and that of all your friends—and hardest of all, I think, for me to bear.

SOCRATES: What news is that? Or has the ship
d returned from Delos, at whose return I must die?¹

CRITO: No, it hasn't returned *yet*, but I think it will arrive today, judging from the reports of people who've come from Sunium,² where they left it. It's clear from these reports that it will arrive today. And so tomorrow, Socrates, you must end your life.

SOCRATES: I pray that it may be for the best, Crito. If it pleases the gods, let it be so. All the same, I don't think it will arrive today.

44a CRITO: What evidence have you for that?

SOCRATES: I'll tell you. I must die on the day after the ship arrives.

CRITO: That's what the authorities say, at least.

SOCRATES: Then I don't think it will arrive today, but tomorrow. My evidence for this comes from a dream I had in the night a short while ago. So it looks as though you chose the right time not to wake me.

CRITO: What was your dream?

SOCRATES: I thought a beautiful, graceful woman came to me, robed in white. She called
b me and said, "Socrates, you will arrive 'in fertile Phthia' on the third day."³

CRITO: What a strange dream, Socrates.

1. Legend had it that Athens was once obliged to send King Minos of Crete an annual tribute of seven young men and seven maidens to be given to the Minotaur—a monster, half man and half bull, that he kept in a labyrinth. With the help of a thread given to him by Minos' daughter Ariadne, Theseus, a legendary king of Athens, made his way through the labyrinth, killed the Minotaur, and escaped, thus ending the tribute. Each year, Athens commemorated these events by sending a mission of thanks to the sanctuary of Apollo on the sacred island of Delos. No executions could take place in Athens until the mission returned from its voyage. See *Phaedo* 58a–c.

2. A headland on the southeast coast of Attica, about thirty miles from Athens.

3. Homer, *Iliad* ix.363.

SOCRATES: Yet its meaning is quite clear, Crito—at least, it seems so to me.

CRITO: All too clear, apparently. But look here, Socrates, it's still not too late to take my advice and save yourself. You see, if you die, I won't just suffer a single misfortune. On the contrary, not only will I lose a friend the like of whom I'll never find again, but, in addition, many people, who don't know you or me well, will think that I didn't care about you, since I could have saved
c you if I'd been willing to spend the money. And indeed what reputation could be more shameful than being thought to value money more than friends? For the majority of people won't believe that it was you yourself who refused to leave this place, though we were urging you to do so.

SOCRATES: But my dear Crito, why should we care so much about what the majority think? After all, the most decent ones, who are worthier of consideration, will believe that matters were handled in just the way they were in fact handled.

CRITO: But you can surely see, Socrates, that
d one should care about majority opinion too. Your present situation itself shows clearly that the majority can do not just minor harms but the very worst things to someone who's been slandered in front of them.

SOCRATES: I only wish, Crito, that the majority *could* do the very worst things, then they might also be able to do the very best ones—and everything would be fine. But as it is, they can do neither, since they can't make someone either wise or unwise—the effects *they* produce are really the result of chance.

CRITO: Well, if you say so. But tell me this,
e Socrates. You're not worried about me and your other friends, are you—fearing that if you escaped, the informers⁴ would give us trouble, and that we might be forced to give up all our property, pay heavy fines, or even suffer some
45a further penalty? If you're afraid of anything like that, dismiss it from your mind. After all, we're surely justified in running this risk to save you

4. The *sukophantai* were individuals who prosecuted others in order to get the reward offered in Athenian law to successful prosecutors, or as a way of blackmailing someone who would pay to avoid prosecution, or for personal or political gain of some other sort.

or an even greater one if need be. Now take my advice, and don't refuse me.

SOCRATES: Yes, those things do worry me, Crito, among many others.

CRITO: Then don't fear them: the sum of money that certain people I know will accept in order to save you and get you out of here isn't that large. Next, don't you see how cheap these informers are and how little money is needed
b to deal with them? My own wealth's available to you, and it, I think, should be enough. Next, even if your concern for me makes you unwilling to spend my money, there are foreign visitors here who are willing to spend theirs. One of them, Simmias of Thebes, has even brought enough money for this very purpose; and Cebes, too, and a good many others are also willing to contribute. So, as I say, don't let these fears make you hesitate to save yourself. And don't let it trouble you, as you were saying in court, that if you
c went into exile you wouldn't know what to do with yourself. You see, wherever else you may go, there'll be people to welcome you. If you want to go to Thessaly, I have friends there who'll make much of you and protect you, so that no one in Thessaly will give you any trouble.⁵

Besides, Socrates, I think that what you're doing isn't just: throwing away your life, when you could save it, and hastening the very sort of fate for yourself that your enemies would hasten—and indeed have hastened—in their wish to destroy you. What's more I think you're also betraying those sons of yours by going away and
d deserting them when you could bring them up and educate them. So far as you're concerned, they must take their chances in life; and the chance they'll get, in all likelihood, is just the one that orphans usually get when they lose their parents. No. Either one shouldn't have children at all, or one ought to see their upbringing and education through to the end. But you seem to me to be choosing the easiest way out, whereas one should choose whatever a good and brave man would choose—particularly when one claims to have cared about virtue throughout one's life.

I feel ashamed on your behalf and on behalf e of myself and your friends. I fear that it's going to seem that this whole business of yours has been handled with a certain cowardice on our part. The case was brought to court when it needn't have been brought. Then there was the actual conduct of the trial. And now, to crown it all, this absurd finale to the affair. It's going to seem that we let the opportunity slip because of some vice, 46a such as cowardice, on our part, since we didn't save you nor did you save yourself, although it was quite possible had we been of even the slightest use.

See to it, then, Socrates, that all this doesn't turn out badly and a shameful thing both for you and for us. Come, deliberate—or rather, at this hour it's not a matter of deliberating but of having deliberated already—and only one decision remains. You see, everything must be done this coming night; and if we delay, it will no longer be possible. For all these reasons, Socrates, please take my advice and don't refuse me.

SOCRATES: My dear Crito, your enthusiasm's b most valuable, provided it's of the right sort. But if it isn't, the greater it is, the more difficult it will be to deal with. We must therefore examine whether we should do what you advise or not. You see, I'm not the sort of person who's just now for the first time persuaded by nothing within me except the argument that on rational reflection seems best to me; I've *always* been like that. I can't now reject the arguments I stated before just because this misfortune has befallen me. On the contrary, they seem pretty much the same to me, and I respect and value the same ones as I did before. So if we
c have no better ones to offer in the present situation, you can be sure I won't agree with you—not even if the power of the majority to threaten us, as if we were children, with the bogeymen of imprisonment, execution, and confiscation of property were far greater than it is now.

What, then, is the most reasonable way to examine these matters? Suppose we first take up d the argument you stated about people's opinions. Is it true or not that one should pay attention to some opinions but not to others? Or was it true before I had to die, whereas it's now clear that it was stated idly, for the sake of argument, and is really just childish nonsense? For my part, I'm

5. Thessaly is a region in the north of Greece.

eager to join you, Crito, in a joint examination of whether this argument will appear any differently to me, now that I'm here, or the same, and of whether we should dismiss it from our minds or be persuaded by it.

It used to be said, I think, by people who thought they were talking sense, that, as I said a moment ago, one should take some people's opinions seriously but not others. By the gods, Crito, don't you think that was true? You see, in all human probability, *you* are not going to die tomorrow, and so the present situation won't distort your judgment. Consider, then, don't you think it's a sound argument that one shouldn't value all the opinions people have, but some and not others, and not those of everyone, but those of some people and not of others? What do you say? Isn't that true?

CRITO: It is.

SOCRATES: And we should value good opinions, but not bad ones?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the good ones are those of wise people and the bad ones those of unwise people?

CRITO: Of course.

SOCRATES: Come then, what of such questions *b* as this? When a man's primarily engaged in physical training, does he pay attention to the praise or blame or opinion of every man or only to those of the one man who's a doctor or a trainer?

CRITO: Only to those of the one man.

SOCRATES: Then he should fear the blame and welcome the praise of that one man, but not those of the majority of people.

CRITO: Clearly.

SOCRATES: So his actions and exercises, his eating and drinking, should be guided by the opinion of the one man, the knowledgeable and understanding supervisor, rather than on that of all the rest?

CRITO: That's right.

c SOCRATES: Well, then, if he disobeys that one man and sets no value on his opinion or his praises but values those of the majority of people who have no understanding, won't something bad happen to him?

CRITO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And what is this bad effect? Where does it occur? In what part of the one who disobeys?

CRITO: Clearly, it's in his body, since that's what it destroys.

SOCRATES: That's right. And isn't the same true in other cases, Crito? No need to go through them all, but, in particular, in cases of just and unjust things, shameful and fine ones, good and bad ones—in cases of what we're now deliberating about—is it the opinion of the majority we should follow and fear? Or is it the opinion of the one man—if there *d* is one who understands these things—we should respect and fear above all others? On the grounds that, if we don't follow it, we shall seriously damage and maim that part of us which, as we used to say, is made better by what's just but is destroyed by what's unjust. Or is there no truth in that?

CRITO: I certainly think there is, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Come then, suppose we destroy the part of us that is made better by what's healthy but is seriously damaged by what causes disease when we don't follow the opinion of people who have understanding. Would our lives be worth living once it has been seriously damaged? And *e* that part, of course, is the body, isn't it?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then are our lives worth living with a wretched, seriously damaged body?

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: But our lives *are* worth living when the part of us that's maimed by what's unjust and benefited by what's just is seriously damaged? Or do we consider it—whichever part of us it is to which justice and injustice pertain—to be inferior to the body? *48a*

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: On the contrary, it's more valuable?

CRITO: Far more.

SOCRATES: Then, my very good friend, we should not give so much thought to what the majority of people will say about us, but think instead of what the person who understands just and unjust things will say—the one man and the truth itself. So your first claim—that we should give thought to the opinion of the majority about what's just, fine, good, and their opposites—isn't right.

“But,” someone might say, “the majority can put us to death.”

CRITO: That's certainly clear too. It would *b* indeed be said, Socrates.

SOCRATES: That's right. And yet, my dear friend, the argument we've gone through still seems the same to me, at any rate, as it did before. And now examine this further one to see whether we think it still stands or not: the most important thing isn't living, but living well.

CRITO: Yes, it still stands.

SOCRATES: And the argument that living well, living a fine life, and living justly are the same—does it still stand or not?

CRITO: It still stands.

SOCRATES: Then in the light of these agreements, we should examine whether or not it c would be just for me to try to get out of here when the Athenians haven't acquitted me. And if it does seem just, we should make the attempt, and if it doesn't, we should abandon the effort.

As for those other considerations you raise about loss of money and people's opinions and bringing up children—they, in truth, Crito, are appropriate considerations for people who readily put one to death and would as readily bring one back to life again if they could, without thinking; I mean, the majority of people. For us, however, the argument has made the decision. There's nothing else to be examined besides the very thing we just mentioned: whether we—both the ones who are rescued and also the rescuers themselves—will be acting justly if we pay d money to those who would get me out of here and do them favors, or whether we will in truth be acting unjustly if we do those things. And if it appears that we will be acting unjustly in doing them, we have no need at all to give any opposing weight to our having to die—or suffer in some other way—if we stay here and mind our behavior when the alternative is doing injustice.

CRITO: What you *say* seems true to me, Socrates. But I wish you'd consider what we're to *do*.

SOCRATES: Let's examine that question together, my dear friend, and if you can oppose e anything I say, oppose it, and I'll be persuaded by you. But if you can't, be a good fellow and stop telling me the same thing over and over, that I should leave here against the will of the Athenians. You see, I think it very important that I act in this matter having persuaded you, rather than against your will. Consider, then, the

starting point of our inquiry, to see if you find it adequately formulated, and try to answer my questions as you really think best. 49a

CRITO: I'll certainly try.

SOCRATES: Do we say that one should never do injustice intentionally? Or may injustice be done in some circumstances but not in others? Is doing injustice never good or fine, as we have often agreed in the past? Or have all these former agreements been discarded during these last few days? Can you and I at our age, Crito, have spent so long in serious discussion with one another b without realizing that we ourselves were no better than a pair of children? Or is what we used to say true above all else: that whether the majority of people agree or not, and whether we must suffer still worse things than at present or ones that are easier to bear, it's true, all the same, that doing injustice in any circumstances is bad and shameful for the one who does it? Is that what we say or not?

CRITO: It is what we say.

SOCRATES: So one should never do injustice.

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: So one shouldn't do injustice in return for injustice, as the majority of people think—seeing that one should *never* do injustice.

CRITO: Apparently not. c

SOCRATES: Well then, should one do wrong or not?

CRITO: Certainly not, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Well, what about when someone does wrong in return for having suffered wrongdoing? Is that just, as the majority of people think, or not just?

CRITO: It's not just at all.

SOCRATES: No, for there's no difference, I take it, between doing wrong and doing injustice?

CRITO: That's right.

SOCRATES: So one must neither do injustice in return nor wrong any man, no matter what one has suffered at his hands. And, Crito, in agreeing to this, watch out that you're not agreeing d to anything contrary to what you believe. You see, I know that only a few people do believe or will believe it. And between those who believe it and those who don't, there's no common basis for deliberation, but each necessarily regards the other with contempt when they see their deliber-

ations. You too, then, should consider very carefully whether you share that belief with me and whether the following is the starting point of our deliberations: that it's never right to do injustice, or to do injustice in return, or to retaliate with bad treatment when one has been treated badly. Or do you disagree and not share this starting point? You see, I've believed this for a long time myself and still believe it now. But if you've come to some other opinion, say so. Instruct me. If you stand by the former one, however, then listen to my next point.

CRITO: Yes, I do stand by it and share it with you, so go on.

SOCRATES: Then I'll state the next point—or rather, ask a question: should one do the things one has agreed with someone to do, provided they are just, or should one cheat?

CRITO: One should do them.

SOCRATES: Then consider what follows. If we leave this place without having persuaded the city, are we treating some people badly—and those whom we should least of all treat in that way—or not? Are we standing by agreements that are just or not?

CRITO: I can't answer your question, Socrates, since I don't understand it.

SOCRATES: Well, look at it this way. Suppose we were about to run away from here—or whatever what we'd be doing should be called. And suppose the Laws and the city community came and confronted us, and said,

"Tell us, Socrates, what do you intend to do? Do you intend anything else by this act you're attempting than to destroy us Laws, and the city as a whole, to the extent that you can? Or do you think that a city can continue to exist and not be overthrown if the legal judgments rendered in it have no force, but are deprived of authority and undermined by the actions of private individuals?"

What shall we say in response to that question, Crito, and to others like it? For there's a lot that one might say—particularly, if one were an orator—on behalf of this law we're destroying, the one requiring that legal judgments, once rendered, have authority. Or shall we say to them, "Yes, that's what we intend, for the city treated us unjustly and didn't judge our lawsuit correctly." Is that what we're to say—or what?

CRITO: Yes, by Zeus, that's what we're to say, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then what if the Laws replied, "Was that also part of the agreement between you and us, Socrates? Or did you agree to stand by whatever judgments the city rendered?" Then, if we were surprised at the words, perhaps they might say, "Don't be surprised at what we're saying, Socrates, but answer us—since you're so accustomed to using question and answer. Come now, what charge have you to bring against the city and ourselves that you should try to destroy us? In the first place, wasn't it we who gave you birth—wasn't it through us that your father married your mother and produced you? Tell us, do you have some complaint about the correctness of those of us Laws concerned with marriage?"

"No, I have no complaint," I'd reply.

"Well then, what about the Laws dealing with the bringing up and educating of children, under which you were educated yourself? Didn't those of us Laws who regulate that area prescribe correctly when we ordered your father to educate you in the arts and physical training?"

"They prescribed correctly," I'd reply.

"Good. Then since you were born, brought up, and educated, can you deny, first, that you're our offspring and slave, both yourself and your ancestors? And if that's so, do you think that what's just is based on an equality between you and us, that whatever we try to do to you it's just for you to do to us in return? As regards you and your father (or you and your master, if you happened to have one), what's just isn't based on equality, and so you don't return whatever treatment you receive—answering back when you're criticized or striking back when you're struck, or doing many other such things. As regards you and your fatherland and its Laws, then, are these things permitted? If we try to destroy you, believing it to be just, will you try to destroy us Laws and your fatherland, to the extent that you can? And will you claim that you're acting justly in doing so—you the man who really cares about virtue? Or are you so wise that it has escaped your notice that your fatherland is more worthy of honor than your mother and father and all your other ancestors; that it is more to be revered and more sacred and is held in greater esteem both

among the gods and among those human beings who have any sense; that you must treat your fatherland with piety, submitting to it and placating it more than you would your own father when it is angry; that you must either persuade it or else do whatever it commands; that you must mind your behavior and undergo whatever treatment it prescribes for you, whether a beating or imprisonment; that if it leads you to war to be wounded or killed, that's what you must do, and that's what is just—not to give way or retreat or leave where you were stationed, but, on the contrary, in war and law courts, and everywhere else, c to do whatever your city or fatherland commands or else persuade it as to what is really just; and that while it is impious to violate the will of your mother or father, it is yet less so than to violate that of your fatherland."

What are we to say to that, Crito? Are the Laws telling the truth or not?

CRITO: Yes, I think they are.

SOCRATES: "Consider, then, Socrates," the Laws might perhaps continue, "whether we're also telling the truth in saying this: that you aren't treating us justly in what you're now trying to do. You see, we gave you birth, upbringing, d and education, and have provided you, as well as every other citizen, with a share of all the fine things we could. Nonetheless, if any Athenian—who has been admitted to adult status and has observed both how affairs are handled in the city and ourselves, the Laws—is dissatisfied with us and wishes to leave, we grant him permission to take his property and go wherever he pleases. Not one of us Laws stands in his way or forbids it. If any one of you is dissatisfied with us and the city and wishes to go to a colony or to live as an alien elsewhere, he may go wherever he wishes e and hold on to what's his.

"But if any of you stays here, after he has observed the way we judge lawsuits and the other ways in which we manage the city, then we say that he has agreed with us by his action to do whatever we command. And we say that whoever does not obey commits a threefold injustice: he disobeys us as his parents; he disobeys us as those who brought him up; and, after having agreed to obey us, he neither obeys nor persuades us, if we're doing something that isn't right. Yet we

offer him a choice and do not harshly command him to do what he's told. On the contrary, we offer two alternatives: he must either persuade us or do what we say. And he does neither. These, then, are the charges, Socrates, to which we say you too will become liable, if you do what you have in mind—and you won't be among the least liable of the Athenians, but among the most."

Then, if I were to say, "Why is that?" perhaps they might justifiably reproach me by saying that I am among the Athenians who have made that agreement with them in the strongest terms.

"Socrates," they would say, "we have the strongest evidence that you were satisfied with us and with the city. After all, you'd never have stayed at home here so much more consistently than all the rest of the Athenians if you weren't also much more consistently satisfied. You never left the city for a festival, except once to go to the Isthmus.⁶ You never went anywhere else, except for military service. You never went abroad as other people do. You had no desire to acquaint yourself with other cities or other laws. On the contrary, c we and our city sufficed for you. So emphatically did you choose us and agree to live as a citizen under us, that you even produced children here. That's how satisfied you were with the city.

"Moreover, even at your very trial, you could have proposed exile as a counterpenalty if you'd wished, and what you're now trying to do against the city's will, you could then have done with its consent. On that occasion, you prided yourself on not feeling resentful that you had to die. You'd choose death before exile—so you said. Now, however, you feel no shame at those words and show no regard for us Laws as you try to destroy us. You're acting exactly the way the most d wretched slave would act by trying to run away, contrary to your commitments and your agreements to live as a citizen under us.

"First, then, answer us on this very point: are we telling the truth when we say that you agreed, by deeds not words, to live as a citizen under us? Or is that untrue?"

6. The Isthmus is the narrow strip of land connecting the Peloponnese to the rest of Greece, where the Isthmian Games were held.

What are we to reply to that, Crito? Mustn't we agree?

CRITO: We must, Socrates.

SOCRATES: "Well then," they might say, "surely
 e you're breaking the commitments and agree-
 ments you made with us. You weren't coerced
 or tricked into agreeing or forced to decide in a
 hurry. On the contrary, you had seventy years in
 which you could have left if you weren't satis-
 fied with us or if you thought those agreements
 53a unjust. You, however, preferred neither Sparta
 nor Crete—places you often say have good law
 and order—nor any other Greek or foreign city.
 On the contrary, you went abroad less often
 than the lame, the blind, or other handicapped
 people. Hence it's clear that you, more than any
 other Athenian, have been consistently satisfied
 with your city and with us Laws—for who would
 be satisfied by a city but not by its laws? Won't
 you, then, stand by your agreements now? Yes,
 you will, if you're persuaded by us, Socrates, and
 at least you won't make yourself a laughingstock
 by leaving the city.

"For consider now: if you break those agree-
 b ments, if you commit any of these wrongs, what
 good will you do yourself or your friends? You
 see, it's pretty clear that your friends will risk
 being exiled themselves as well as being disen-
 franchised and having their property confiscated.
 As for you, if you go to one of the nearest cit-
 ies, Thebes or Megara—for they both have good
 laws—you will be arriving there, Socrates, as an
 enemy of their political systems, and those who
 care about their own cities will look on you with
 suspicion, regarding you as one who undermines
 laws. You will also confirm your jurors in their
 opinion, so that they will think they judged your
 c lawsuit correctly. For anyone who undermines
 laws might very well be considered a corruptor of
 young and ignorant people.

"Will you, then, avoid cities with good law
 and order, and men of the most respectable
 kind? And if so, will your life be worth living?
 Or will you associate with these people and be
 shameless enough to converse with them? And
 what will you say, Socrates? The very things that
 you said here, about how virtue and justice are
 man's most valuable possessions, along with law
 and lawful conduct. Don't you think Socrates

and everything about him will look unseemly?
 Surely, you must.

"Or will you keep away from those places and
 go to Crito's friends in Thessaly? After all, there's
 complete disorder and laxity there, so perhaps
 they'd enjoy hearing about your absurd escape
 from prison when you dressed up in disguise,
 wore a peasant's leather jerkin or some other
 such escapee's outfit, and altered your appear-
 ance. And will no one remark on the fact that
 e you, an old man, with probably only a short time
 left to live, were so greedy for life that you dared
 to violate the most important laws? Perhaps not,
 provided you don't annoy anyone. Otherwise,
 you'll hear many disparaging things said about
 you. Will you live by currying favor with every
 man and acting the slave—and do nothing in
 Thessaly besides eat, as if you'd gone to live in
 Thessaly for a good dinner? As for those argu-
 54a ments about justice and the rest of virtue, where,
 tell us, will they be?

"Is it that you want to live for your children's
 sake, then, to bring them up and educate them?
 Really? Will you bring them up and educate
 them by taking them to Thessaly and making for-
 eigners of them, so they can enjoy that privilege
 too? If not, will they be better brought up and
 educated here without you, provided that you're
 still alive? 'Of course,' you may say, because your
 friends will take care of them. Then will they
 take care of them if you go to Thessaly, but not
 take care of them if you go to Hades? If those
 b who call themselves your friends are worth any-
 thing at all, you surely can't believe that.

"No, Socrates, be persuaded by us who reared
 you. Don't put a higher value on children, on
 life, or on anything else than on what's just, so
 that when you reach Hades you may have all this
 to offer as your defense before the authorities
 there. For if you do do that, it doesn't seem that
 it will be better for you *here*, or for any of your
 friends, or that it will be more just or more pious.
 And it won't be better for you when you arrive
there either. As it is, you'll leave here—if you do
 leave—as one who has been treated unjustly not
 c by us Laws, but by men. But suppose you leave,
 suppose you return injustice for injustice and
 bad treatment for bad treatment in that shameful
 way, breaking your agreements and commitments

with us and doing bad things to those whom you should least of all treat in that way—yourself, your friends, your fatherland, and ourselves. Then we'll be angry with you while you're still alive, and our brothers, the Laws of Hades, won't receive you kindly there, knowing that you tried to destroy us to the extent you could. Come, then, don't let Crito persuade you to follow his advice rather than ours."

That, Crito, my dear friend, is what I seem to hear them saying, you may be sure. And, just like

those Corybantes who think they are still hearing the flutes, the echo of their arguments reverberates in me and makes me incapable of hearing anything else. No, as far as my present thoughts go, at least, you may be sure that if you argue against them, you will speak in vain. All the same, if you think you can do any more, please tell me.

CRITO: No, Socrates, I've nothing to say.

SOCRATES: Then, let it be, Crito, and let's act in that way, since that's the way the god is leading us.

PROTAGORAS

(317e–334c, 348c–362a)

Translated by Stanley Lombardo and Karen Bell.

IN THE FOLLOWING selections, the great Sophist Protagoras (some fragments of whose actual writings are included in the Presocratics section of this anthology) is made to explain his view of virtue. When he finishes, Socrates begins to examine him on a series of related topics that are central to his view: the unity of the virtues, the possibility of weakness of will, the identity of virtue and knowledge, and their bearing on the teachability of virtue. The discussion ends in apparent *aporia*, or puzzlement, because the positions adopted and defended on these topics seem inconsistent.

317e When we had all taken our seats, Protagoras said, "Now, then, Socrates, since these gentlemen also are present, would you please say what it was you brought up to me a little while ago on the young man's behalf."

318a "Well, Protagoras," I said, "as to why we have come, I'll begin as I did before. Hippocrates here has gotten to the point where he wants to be your student, and, quite naturally, he would like to know what he will get out of it if he does study with you. That's really all we have to say."

Protagoras took it from there and said, "Young man, this is what you will get if you study with me: The very day you start, you will go home a better man, and the same thing will happen the day after. Every day, day after day, you will get better and better."

When I heard this I said, "What you're saying, Protagoras, isn't very surprising, but quite likely. Why, even you, though you are so old and wise, would get better if someone taught you something you didn't happen to know already. But what if the situation were a little different, and Hippocrates here all of a sudden changed his mind and set his heart on studying with this young fellow who has just come into town, Zeuxippus of Heraclea,¹ and came to him, as he now comes to you, and heard from him the very same thing as from you—that each day he spent with him he would become better and make progress. If Hippocrates asked him in what way he would become better, and toward what he

1. Zeuxippus (more commonly spelled Zeuxis), a painter who flourished in the late fifth century.