Seventh nor any other of them, when carefully analyzed, can be imagined to have proceeded from the hand or mind of Plato. The other testimonies to the voyages of Plato to Sicily and the court of Dionysius are all of them later by several centuries than the events to which they refer. No extant writer mentions them older than Cicero and Cornelius Nepos. It does not seem impossible that so attractive a theme as the meeting of a philosopher and a tyrant, once imagined by the genius of a Sophist, may have passed into a romance which became famous in Hellas and the world. It may have created one of the mists of history, like the Trojan war or the legend of Arthur, which we are unable to penetrate. In the age of Cicero, and still more in that of Diogenes Laertius and Appuleius, many other legends had gathered around the personality of Plato,—more voyages, more journeys to visit tyrants and Pythagorean philosophers. But if, as we agree with Karsten in supposing, they are the forgery of some rhetorician or sophist, we cannot agree with him in also supposing that they are of any historical value, the rather as there is no early independent testimony by which they are supported or with which they can be compared.

IV. There is another subject to which I must briefly call attention, lest I should seem to have overlooked it. Dr. Henry Jackson, of Trinity College, Cambridge, in a series of articles which he has contributed to the Journal of Philology, has put forward an entirely new explanation of the Platonic ‘Ideas.’ He supposes that in the mind of Plato they took, at different times in his life, two essentially different forms:—an earlier one which is found chiefly in the Republic and the Phaedo, and a later, which appears in the Theaetetus, Philebus, Sophist, Politicus, Parmenides, Timaeus. In the first stage of his philosophy Plato attributed Ideas to all things, at any rate to all things which have classes or common notions: these he supposed to exist only by participation in them. In the later Dialogues he no longer included in them manufactured articles and ideas of relation, but restricted them to ‘types of nature,’ and having become convinced that the many cannot be parts of the one, for the idea of participation in them he substituted imitation of them. To quote Dr. Jackson’s own expressions,—‘whereas in the period of the Republic and the Phaedo, it was proposed to pass through ontology to the sciences, in the period of the Parmenides and the Philebus, it is proposed to pass through the sciences to ontology’: or, as he repeats in nearly the same words,— ‘whereas in the Republic and in the Phaedo he had dreamt of passing through ontology to the sciences, he is now content to pass through the sciences to ontology.’

This theory is supposed to be based on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, a passage containing an account of the ideas, which hitherto scholars have found impossible to reconcile with the statements of Plato himself. The preparations for the new departure are discovered in the Parmenides and in the Theaetetus; and it is said to be expressed under a different form by the (Greek) and the (Greek) of the Philebus. The (Greek) of the Philebus is the principle which gives form and measure to the (Greek); and in the ‘Later Theory’ is held to be the (Greek) or (Greek) which converts the Infinite or Indefinite into ideas. They are neither (Greek) nor (Greek), but belong to the (Greek) which partakes of both.

With great respect for the learning and ability of Dr. Jackson, I find myself unable to agree in this newly fashioned doctrine of the Ideas, which he ascribes to Plato. I have not the space to go into the question fully; but I will briefly state some objections which are, I think, fatal to it.

1. First, the foundation of his argument is laid in the Metaphysics of Aristotle. But we cannot argue, either from the Metaphysics, or from any other of the philosophical treatises of Aristotle, to the dialogues of Plato until we have ascertained the relation in which his so-called works stand to the philosopher himself. There is of course no doubt of the great influence exercised upon Greece and upon the world by Aristotle and his philosophy. But on the other hand almost every one who is capable of understanding the subject acknowledges that his writings have not come down to us in an authentic form like most of the dialogues of Plato. How much of them is to be ascribed to Aristotle’s own hand, how much is due to his successors in the Peripatetic School, is a question which has never been determined, and probably never can be, because the solution of it depends upon internal evidence only. To ‘the height of this great argument’ I do not propose to ascend. But one little fact, not irrelevant to the present discussion, will show how hopeless is the attempt to explain Plato out of the writings of Aristotle. In the chapter of the Metaphysics quoted by Dr. Jackson, about two octavo pages in length, there occur no less than seven or eight references to Plato, although nothing really corresponding to them can be found in his extant writings:—a small matter truly; but what a light does it throw on the character of the entire book in which they occur! We can hardly escape from the conclusion that they are not statements of Aristotle respecting Plato, but of a later generation of Aristotelians respecting a later generation of Platonists. (Compare the striking remark of the great Scaliger respecting the Magna

Moralia:—Haec non sunt Aristotelis, tamen utitur auctor Aristotelis nomine tanquam suo.)

1. There is no hint in Plato’s own writings that he was conscious of having made any change in the Doctrine of Ideas such as Dr. Jackson attributes to him, although in the Republic the platonic Socrates speaks of ‘a longer and a shorter way’, and of a way in which his disciple Glaucon ‘will be unable to follow him’; also of a way of Ideas, to which he still holds fast, although it has often deserted him (Philebus, Phaedo), and although in the later dialogues and in the Laws the reference to Ideas disappears, and Mind claims her own (Phil.; Laws). No hint is given of what Plato meant by the ‘longer way’ (Rep.), or ‘the way in which Glaucon was unable to follow’; or of the relation of Mind to the Ideas. It might be said with truth that the conception of the Idea predominates in the first half of the Dialogues, which, according to the order adopted in this work, ends with the Republic, the ‘conception of Mind’ and a way of speaking more in agreement with modern terminology, in the latter half. But there is no reason to suppose that Plato’s theory, or, rather, his various theories, of the Ideas underwent any definite change during his period of authorship. They are substantially the same in the twelfth Book of the Laws as in the Meno and Phaedo; and since the Laws were written in the last decade of his life, there is no time to which this change of opinions can be ascribed. It is true that the theory of Ideas takes several different forms, not merely an earlier and a later one, in the various Dialogues. They are personal and impersonal, ideals and ideas, existing by participation or by imitation, one and many, in different parts of his writings or even in the same passage. They are the universal definitions of Socrates, and at the same time ‘of more than mortal knowledge’ (Rep.). But they are always the negations of sense, of matter, of generation, of the particular: they are always the subjects of knowledge and not of opinion; and they tend, not to diversity, but to unity. Other entities or intelligences are akin to them, but not the same with them, such as mind, measure, limit, eternity, essence (Philebus; Timaeus): these and similar terms appear to express the same truths from a different point of view, and to belong to the same sphere with them. But we are not justified, therefore, in attempting to identify them, any more than in wholly opposing them. The great oppositions of the sensible and intellectual, the unchangeable and the transient, in whatever form of words expressed, are always maintained in Plato. But the lesser logical distinctions, as we should call them, whether of ontology or predication, which troubled the pre-Socratic philosophy and came to the

front in Aristotle, are variously discussed and explained. Thus far we admit inconsistency in Plato, but no further. He lived in an age before logic and system had wholly permeated language, and therefore we must not always expect to find in him systematic arrangement or logical precision:—‘poema magis putandum.’ But he is always true to his own context, the careful study of which is of more value to the interpreter than all the commentators and scholiasts put together.

1. The conclusions at which Dr. Jackson has arrived are such as might be expected to follow from his method of procedure. For he takes words without regard to their connection, and pieces together different parts of dialogues in a purely arbitrary manner, although there is no indication that the author intended the two passages to be so combined, or that when he appears to be experimenting on the different points of view from which a subject of philosophy may be regarded, he is secretly elaborating a system. By such a use of language any premises may be made to lead to any conclusion. I am not one of those who believe Plato to have been a mystic or to have had hidden meanings; nor do I agree with Dr. Jackson in thinking that ‘when he is precise and dogmatic, he generally contrives to introduce an element of obscurity into the expostion’ (J. of Philol.). The great master of language wrote as clearly as he could in an age when the minds of men were clouded by controversy, and philosophical terms had not yet acquired a fixed meaning. I have just said that Plato is to be interpreted by his context; and I do not deny that in some passages, especially in the Republic and Laws, the context is at a greater distance than would be allowable in a modern writer. But we are not therefore justified in connecting passages from different parts of his writings, or even from the same work, which he has not himself joined. We cannot argue from the Parmenides to the Philebus, or from either to the Sophist, or assume that the Parmenides, the Philebus, and the Timaeus were ‘written simultaneously,’ or ‘were intended to be studied in the order in which they are here named (J. of Philol.) We have no right to connect statements which are only accidentally similar. Nor is it safe for the author of a theory about ancient philosophy to argue from what will happen if his statements are rejected. For those consequences may never have entered into the mind of the ancient writer himself; and they are very likely to be modern consequences which would not have been understood by him. ‘I cannot think,’ says Dr. Jackson, ‘that Plato would have changed his opinions, but have nowhere explained the nature of the change.’ But is it not much more improbable that he should have changed his opinions, and not

stated in an unmistakable manner that the most essential principle of his philosophy had been reversed? It is true that a few of the dialogues, such as the Republic and the Timaeus, or the Theaetetus and the Sophist, or the Meno and the Apology, contain allusions to one another. But these allusions are superficial and, except in the case of the Republic and the Laws, have no philosophical importance. They do not affect the substance of the work. It may be remarked further that several of the dialogues, such as the Phaedrus, the Sophist, and the Parmenides, have more than one subject. But it does not therefore follow that Plato intended one dialogue to succeed another, or that he begins anew in one dialogue a subject which he has left unfinished in another, or that even in the same dialogue he always intended the two parts to be connected with each other. We cannot argue from a casual statement found in the Parmenides to other statements which occur in the Philebus. Much more truly is his own manner described by himself when he says that ‘words are more plastic than wax’ (Rep.), and ‘whither the wind blows, the argument follows’. The dialogues of Plato are like poems, isolated and separate works, except where they are indicated by the author himself to have an intentional sequence.

It is this method of taking passages out of their context and placing them in a new connexion when they seem to confirm a preconceived theory, which is the defect of Dr. Jackson’s procedure. It may be compared, though not wholly the same with it, to that method which the Fathers practised, sometimes called ‘the mystical interpretation of Scripture,’ in which isolated words are separated from their context, and receive any sense which the fancy of the interpreter may suggest. It is akin to the method employed by Schleiermacher of arranging the dialogues of Plato in chronological order according to what he deems the true arrangement of the ideas contained in them. (Dr. Jackson is also inclined, having constructed a theory, to make the chronology of Plato’s writings dependent upon it (See J. of Philol.and elsewhere.).) It may likewise be illustrated by the ingenuity of those who employ symbols to find in Shakespeare a hidden meaning. In the three cases the error is nearly the same:—words are taken out of their natural context, and thus become destitute of any real meaning.

1. According to Dr. Jackson’s ‘Later Theory,’ Plato’s Ideas, which were once regarded as the summa genera of all things, are now to be explained as Forms or Types of some things only,—that is to say, of natural objects: these we conceive imperfectly, but are

always seeking in vain to have a more perfect notion of them. He says (J. of Philol.) that ‘Plato hoped by the study of a series of hypothetical or provisional classifications to arrive at one in which nature’s distribution of kinds is approximately represented, and so to attain approximately to the knowledge of the ideas. But whereas in the Republic, and even in the Phaedo, though less hopefully, he had sought to convert his provisional definitions into final ones by tracing their connexion with the summum genus, the (Greek), in the Parmenides his aspirations are less ambitious,’ and so on. But where does Dr. Jackson find any such notion as this in Plato or anywhere in ancient philosophy? Is it not an anachronism, gracious to the modern physical philosopher, and the more acceptable because it seems to form a link between ancient and modern philosophy, and between physical and metaphysical science; but really unmeaning?

1. To this ‘Later Theory’ of Plato’s Ideas I oppose the authority of Professor Zeller, who affirms that none of the passages to which Dr. Jackson appeals (Theaet.; Phil.; Tim.; Parm.) ‘in the smallest degree prove his point’; and that in the second class of dialogues, in which the ‘Later Theory of Ideas’ is supposed to be found, quite as clearly as in the first, are admitted Ideas, not only of natural objects, but of properties, relations, works of art, negative notions (Theaet.; Parm.; Soph.); and that what Dr. Jackson distinguishes as the first class of dialogues from the second equally assert or imply that the relation of things to the Ideas, is one of participation in them as well as of imitation of them (Prof. Zeller’s summary of his own review of Dr. Jackson, Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie.)

In conclusion I may remark that in Plato’s writings there is both unity, and also growth and development; but that we must not intrude upon him either a system or a technical language.

Balliol College, October, 1891.

NOTE

The chief additions to the Introductions in the Third Edition consist of Essays on the following subjects:—

1. Language.
2. The decline of Greek Literature.
3. The ‘Ideas’ of Plato and Modern Philosophy.
4. The myths of Plato.
5. The relation of the Republic, Statesman and Laws.
6. The legend of Atlantis.
7. Psychology.
8. Comparison of the Laws of Plato with Spartan and Athenian Laws and Institutions.

# The Apology by

**Plato**

# Translated with an introduction by Benjamin Jowett

**Introduction.**

In what relation the Apology of Plato stands to the real defence of Socrates, there are no means of determining. It certainly agrees in tone and character with the description of Xenophon, who says in the Memorabilia that Socrates might have been acquitted ‘if in any moderate degree he would have conciliated the favour of the dicasts;’ and who informs us in another passage, on the testimony of Hermogenes, the friend of Socrates, that he had no wish to live; and that the divine sign refused to allow him to prepare a defence, and also that Socrates himself declared this to be unnecessary, on the ground that all his life long he had been preparing against that hour. For the speech breathes throughout a spirit of defiance, (ut non supplex aut reus sed magister aut dominus videretur esse judicum’ (Cic. de Orat.); and the loose and desultory style is an imitation of the ‘accustomed manner’ in which Socrates spoke in ‘the agora and among the tables of the money-changers.’ The allusion in the Crito may, perhaps, be adduced as a further evidence of the literal accuracy of some parts. But in the main it must be regarded as the ideal of Socrates, according to Plato’s conception of him, appearing in the greatest and most public scene of his life, and in the height of his triumph, when he is weakest, and yet his mastery over mankind is greatest, and his habitual irony acquires a new meaning and a sort of tragic pathos in the face of death. The facts of his life are summed up, and the features of his character are brought out as if by accident in the course of the defence. The conversational manner, the seeming want of arrangement, the ironical simplicity, are found to result in a perfect work of art, which is the portrait of Socrates.

Yet some of the topics may have been actually used by Socrates; and the recollection of his very words may have rung in the ears of his disciple. The Apology of Plato may be compared generally with those speeches of Thucydides in which he has embodied his conception of the lofty character and policy of the great Pericles, and which at the same time furnish a commentary on the situation of affairs from the point of view of the historian. So in the Apology there is an ideal rather than a literal truth; much is said which was not said, and is only Plato’s view of the situation. Plato was not, like Xenophon, a chronicler of facts; he does not appear in any of his writings to have aimed at literal accuracy. He is not therefore to be supplemented from the Memorabilia and Symposium of Xenophon, who belongs to an entirely different class of writers. The Apology of Plato is not the report of what Socrates said, but an elaborate composition,

quite as much so in fact as one of the Dialogues. And we may perhaps even indulge in the fancy that the actual defence of Socrates was as much greater than the Platonic defence as the master was greater than the disciple. But in any case, some of the words used by him must have been remembered, and some of the facts recorded must have actually occurred. It is significant that Plato is said to have been present at the defence (Apol.), as he is also said to have been absent at the last scene in the Phaedo. Is it fanciful to suppose that he meant to give the stamp of authenticity to the one and not to the other?—especially when we consider that these two passages are the only ones in which Plato makes mention of himself. The circumstance that Plato was to be one of his sureties for the payment of the fine which he proposed has the appearance of truth. More suspicious is the statement that Socrates received the first impulse to his favourite calling of cross-examining the world from the Oracle of Delphi; for he must already have been famous before Chaerephon went to consult the Oracle (Riddell), and the story is of a kind which is very likely to have been invented. On the whole we arrive at the conclusion that the Apology is true to the character of Socrates, but we cannot show that any single sentence in it was actually spoken by him. It breathes the spirit of Socrates, but has been cast anew in the mould of Plato.

There is not much in the other Dialogues which can be compared with the Apology. The same recollection of his master may have been present to the mind of Plato when depicting the sufferings of the Just in the Republic. The Crito may also be regarded as a sort of appendage to the Apology, in which Socrates, who has defied the judges, is nevertheless represented as scrupulously obedient to the laws. The idealization of the sufferer is carried still further in the Gorgias, in which the thesis is maintained, that ‘to suffer is better than to do evil;’ and the art of rhetoric is described as only useful for the purpose of self-accusation. The parallelisms which occur in the so-called Apology of Xenophon are not worth noticing, because the writing in which they are contained is manifestly spurious. The statements of the Memorabilia respecting the trial and death of Socrates agree generally with Plato; but they have lost the flavour of Socratic irony in the narrative of Xenophon.

The Apology or Platonic defence of Socrates is divided into three parts: 1st. The defence properly so called; 2nd. The shorter address in mitigation of the penalty; 3rd. The last words of prophetic rebuke and exhortation.