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Portrait of a Philosopher in the Dialogues of Plato

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THE PORTRAIT OF A PHILOSOPHER
IN THE
DIALOGUES OF PLATO

ROBERT F. MARVANEK, S.J.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Loyola University.
Vita Auctoris

Robert Francis harvanek was born at Chicago, Illinois, November 28, 1918. He graduated from Our Lady of Angels Grammar School, Chicago, in 1930, and entered St. Ignatius High School, Chicago, in the same year. Upon graduation in 1934 he entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Milford, Ohio and was enrolled in the College of Arts of Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio. In August, 1938, he entered West Baden College and was enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts course of Loyola University, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in June, 1937. He then entered the Graduate School of Loyola University to pursue his studies for the degree of Master of Arts.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introductory: The Background of the Republic

Plato presents two portraits of a philosopher in his dialogues. One of them is the characterization of that man who for Plato is the personification of the ideal philosopher, Socrates. The dialogues present Socrates as a man whose fame is known throughout Greece for his intellectual ability. He is a master of dialectics; he has outstanding powers of concentration, of memory, of observation. He is a unique critic of thought and opinion, and a passionate lover of truth and knowledge. As for his moral virtues there is this tribute that a friend paid to him at his death:

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our companion, a man, we should say, the best, and further, the wisest and most just of the people of that time whom we encountered. 1

Alcibiades marvels at Socrates' self-control, bravery, and physical stamina. His youthful friends witness to his goodness and gentleness. He himself defends his fidelity to duty, both to his state and to the gods. The Oracle of Delphi, in Plato's mind, spoke more of the truth than Socrates admitted when it called him the wisest man in Greece.

The second portrait is the nature of a philosopher as analyzed, discussed, and presented by Socrates himself in
the works of Plato. There is no single dialogue which Plato devotes to the definition of a philosopher, though he seems to have contemplated writing one. In the opening pages of the _Sophist_ Socrates asks this question:

I would like to learn from our guest, if it pleases him, what the people in his land think about these things, and how they name them.

_Theocrates:_ Which things?
_Socrates:_ The sophist, statesman and philosopher...whether they consider them one, or two, or whether, just as the names are three, so they distinguish three natures corresponding to each name and attribute them to each. 2

The _Sophist_ and _Statesman_ follow, but the _Philosopher_ was never written. However, in addition to the indirect treatment which the Stranger in the _Sophist_ claims has necessarily been given of the philosopher in the discussion of what he is not, a sophist, there are frequent references and allusions to the attributes of a philosopher scattered throughout the dialogues. Moreover, there is an explicit treatment of the subject in the three central books (Books V,VI,VII) of the Republic which (as does the whole of the Republic for the doctrines of the Socratic dialogues in general) acts as a summary and epitome of all that has previously been stated either implicitly or explicitly. The study of this portrait of a philosopher against the background of the rest of the Republic and the earlier Socratic dialogues will give a sufficiently adequate notion of what Plato thought a philosopher ought to be.
Plato's peculiar method of exposition, the dialogue, and the slow evolution of his ideas by a haphazard progression rather than by a clear-cut, scientific division and analysis make any explanation of his concepts difficult. The dialogues vary in mood from the light satire of the Euthydemus to the strict business of the Philebus. Most of the Socratic dialogues are merely preliminary discussions that refrain from any definitive conclusions. Plato did not feel himself bound to abstain from digressions, but freely followed the discussion wherever it led. In opposition to the scientific presentation of Aristotle, Plato's was decidedly literary. As a result it is necessary to place the situation of Plato's particular treatment of a subject. This is especially true with regard to his notion of a philosopher, since he treats it as a part of a larger subject and incorporates it in the peculiar outline of the Republic.

We will give, therefore, a brief summary of this key dialogue, and then attempt to point out the progression of thought with regard to the special topic in question, the nature of a philosopher. This done, the stage will be prepared for the presentation of his definition of a philosopher and its analysis.

The theme of the Republic can be said to be threefold; it is a search for the definition of justice, the sketch of an ideal state, and the portrait of a perfect man. These three themes are so woven together as to form the pattern of the
work as a whole, Plato's pattern of the "blessed life". The first book, like many of the shorter dialogues, is a placing of the problem by the critical examination and rejection of the popular notions of the nature of justice. The definition of justice is the subject of the conversation not for its own sake, but because it will help to solve a larger question: is a just life a happy one? Grayhaired old Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus, whom Socrates had chanced to meet and consented to visit at his home, confessed that the greatest source of happiness to an old man about to die was the knowledge that he had lived justly. What is the nature of this justice that it should be the source of happiness? This is the complete question Socrates proposes to be answered in the Republic. When the nature of justice has been agreed upon at the end of the fourth book, Socrates reminds the company of the main question at issue:

Now, it seems, what still remains to us is to study whether it pays to act justly, pursue virtue and be just...3

The excuse for the exhaustive treatment of the nature of a philosopher in the central books is again given:

To my mind, certainly, it still seems that the matter would stand out more sharply if the man who wanted to learn in what respect a just life surpassed an unjust life were to discourse about this alone and not run through the many remaining questions.4

Then, after the digression on the philosopher the reason for
continuing the discussion of the various types of politics is stated in a sentence which is in reality the theme sentence of the Republic:

You said, as I remember, that there are four types of the remaining polities. It would be worth while to discuss these and to examine their defects, and also the men who resemble them. Thus when we had considered all of them and agreed as to the best man and the worst, we could find out whether the best man were the happiest and the worst the most wretched, or whether the truth were otherwise. 5

An examination of this passage will show how the Republic manages to be at once the sketch of the ideal state, the ideal man, and the description of the nature of justice. Plato draws a parallel between the state and the man. The state is the man "sketched large." The ideal state will have justice as one of its chief attributes. This justice will be mirrored in the ideal man. The ideal man is Plato's philosopher. By contrasting the ideal states with the lesser states, and in a parallel manner, the ideal man with lesser men, it will become plain that the best man, that is, the just man, the true philosopher, will be the happiest man. Thus is answered the question raised at the beginning of the first book of the Republic.

The whole of the Republic, therefore, is divided into five major parts. Book I constitutes the introduction in which the question is raised and the problem presented. Books II to IV
develop the ideal state out of natural circumstances, draw the parallel with man, and define the four cardinal virtues. Books V to VII digress to prove the possibility if not the probability of our ideal state, and to describe the nature of the philosopher-king. Books VIII and IX draw the portrait of the ideal state and man into relief by sketching the degeneration of the ideal types to the inferior types of state and man.

The tenth and last book adds by way of supplement, and in order to forestall objections, a discussion of the reasons for excluding poets from the ideal state, and finally the myth of immortality, the Vision of Er.

* * * * *

This should suffice for an outline of the Republic in general. As regards the definition of a philosopher, it will be possible to trace the progress of the definition through all of the first eight books of the Republic. After the opening discussion has raised the question of the nature of justice, it is decided to proceed by analyzing the virtues of a man "in the large", namely, in the ideal state. This ideal state rises from the natural exigencies of man as a social being and is built on the principle which requires coördination and subordination of the activity of the individual citizen for the good of the whole. In the ideal state there will be a definite division of labor based on the nature of man which fits him to perform only one function properly. The citizens
According to the proper functions allotted to them, will naturally fall into three major classes, the laborers, the guardians, and the rulers.

This sketch of a state with its three divisions has its parallel in the nature of man. Men find themselves affected in different ways at the same time with regard to the same objects. This fact argues to the existence of three different faculties in man: the reason, the emotions, and the appetites. The reasoning faculty is the ruling faculty of man; his emotions are its protective and operative agent. The appetites, as the mob in the state, requires the direction and curb of the superior faculties.

If these premises are granted, the man who is to be a guardian or ruler in the state will need a careful education. He will be trained from his earliest years in music and gymnastics, this even before we call upon him to use his intellect in its proper function. Music, by which is meant a literary and artistic training, will attune the soul to beauty, whose elements are rhythm, proportion and harmony. Since these are qualities of truth also—for through them truth becomes beauty—they will tend to conform the philosophic nature or reasoning element of the soul to truth. Gymnastics will develop the body and temper the emotions. The result of the coordinated training of the faculties of the future ruler (who is to be our philosopher) will be temperance and
fortitude....

And will not the soul of a balanced person be sober and brave?
By all means.
And that of an unbalanced person, cowardly and boorish?
Very much so.

Thus far the analogy between the ideal state and the ideal man has worked out well enough. It is appealed to once more to solve the fundamental question about the nature of justice in the soul of man.

The process of arriving at the nature of justice is one of elimination. The ideal state, since it is good, will possess four cardinal virtues, prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. The state is analyzed and that characteristic is found by which it is prudent. Prudence is seen to be a virtue proper to the rulers of the state and is a quality by which they are enabled to direct and guide the state for the good of each individual citizen and of the state as a whole. Fortitude is the virtue of the guardians and is a quality by which they protect and preserve the principles of truth in the state from corruption either from within or from without. The third and fourth cardinal virtues differ from the first two in that they are attributes of all classes within the state. The agreement and harmony of all factions, each well-controlled and properly subordinated to the good of the whole, adds temperance to the virtues of the state. This virtue disposes it for the performance of its proper activity as a state.
that quality by which a state is just. Justice then will be the consummate virtù of the state, for it is the principle of action and that action which is proper to the nature of the state as a whole. The other virtues dispose and prepare the state for this final quality. Justice is that quality by which the state and every part of it performs its own proper duty.

Transfer this sketch of the virtues to the ideal man with his three faculties. Following the parallel already set down, prudence will be the virtue of the intellect, fortitude of the emotions, temperance of the appetites, justice of each faculty and of the whole as a unit. The result is Plato's first sketch of a perfect man:

But the truth is, it seems, that justice is something like this, though not with regard to the external activity of his faculties, but with regard to their internal activity, in a real sense with regard to himself and the things of self. He would not allow any of his faculties to perform tasks foreign to themselves, nor all the different principles in the soul to meddle with each other's affairs, but actually make good disposition of home affairs, govern himself and order his three faculties, just like the three divisions of harmony, the upper, the lower and the mean, and all others that should chance to be between, binding all these together and in every way becoming one person from many principles, temperate and unified. Then only is he ready to act, if he does anything either with regard to the possession of property or private business. In all these things he will consider and name that action just and noble which preserves this
condition and promotes it, and consider wisdom that knowledge which commands this action. On the other hand he will consider that action unjust which would always destroy this condition; ignorance, finally, that opinion commanding such an action. 7

Thus far Plato's treatment of the just man has been a broad outline, a general discussion of the question. He had two methods of attacking the problem—one, the psychological method, lays a foundation for the other, the metaphysical method—and he has only made use of the first of the two. Socrates points this out...

You certainly see clearly, Glaucon, as it seems to me, that we will never attain to this with exactitude by the use of such methods as we are employing in our present discussion—for there is a longer and a fuller way which leads to this... 8

The lack of exactness of the psychological method in explaining the nature of the "good man" allows openings for difficulties and objections against the possibility of such a state as has been erected. The first objection is turned against the socialism of the state, which goes so far as to include the community of women and children. The second question concerns the possibility of such an ideal state taken as a whole. The answer to the first objection occupies but a few pages and does not pertain to the subject under discussion. In response to the second question Socrates affirms that the state will be possible if the rulers are philosophers. The full explanation of the truth of this statement
necessitates the use of the "longer and more complete way", the metaphysical reply. It calls for a study of the nature of a philosopher in order to learn whether such a nature is capable of governing a state such as has been proposed.

With this Plato enters upon the more complete discussion of the best man possible. But before following the structure of this discussion, it will be profitable to notice what has occurred so far in the Republic and what will develop in the next three books. Plato has stated that the ideal state, and therefore the ideal man, will possess the four cardinal virtues. Though it is true that he has explicitly given the definitions of all four virtues in the fourth book, he has nevertheless devoted a general treatment to temperance, roughly speaking, in the second book where he discusses the training of his guardians in music and letters. In the third book gymnastics were considered as the development of the virtue of fortitude. In the fourth book the main purpose in mind is to arrive at the definition of justice from a psychological analysis of man through a comparison with the state. The only virtue left to be fully discussed is prudence, or wisdom. And it is this virtue which is necessary to man to give him his complete nature as man, and to complement and bring to full development the other virtues in man. It does not usurp the place of justice, for justice is still the active virtue, but justice and temperance and fortitude are all the
result of the apprehension of truth, ἀληθείας ἔφαντεος, which is wisdom, the characteristic virtue of the philosopher. This virtue then, with all its implications of knowledge, truth, and being, gives coloring to the complete explanation of all virtues in man, and provides a principle of unity to the personality of man, namely, the knowledge of his ultimate end.

Plato's discussion of the nature of a philosopher falls into three parts. First, he formulates a definition of a philosopher from the name itself while supposing all that has gone before. Secondly, the definition requires an explanation of truth or reality, which is taken up in the second major portion of the discussion. Finally, the education necessary for the development of the philosopher is presented. The entire treatment in this section of the Republic and that of the preceding books and whatever else has been said elsewhere in earlier dialogues about the "best man", the philosopher, is summed up in Plato's descriptive definition of a philosopher, and forms his second and final sketch of his perfect natural man:

Would there be any possibility of criticizing a study of such a nature that one would not sufficiently be able to undertake it unless he were by nature retentive in mind, intelligent, large-souled, balanced in temperament, a lover of and kindred to truth, justice, fortitude and temperance?
Indeed, he said, not even the god of criticism could condemn such a work.

Rather, I said, if such men should be perfected by time and education, would you not intrust the city to their care alone? 9

The characteristics mentioned in these lines will form the outline of our explanation of Plato's notion of a philosopher,
Notes for Chapter One

7. Plato, *op. cit.* 443 c,d,e.
CHAPTER TWO
Facility in Learning and Memory

The core of Plato's notion of a philosopher is contained in the word itself. He repeats it in the definition noted at the end of the last chapter in the words: ἄνευς τή καὶ 
ουράνιος ἀληθείας. The philosopher is a lover, and he is a lover of wisdom, or truth. Around these two ideas center all the qualities that go to make up the character of the philosopher.

"Lover" is the first core idea. In the Symposium Plato develops that idea for us and points out a few things about it that help to explain his description of a lover of wisdom. He tells us, in the words of Diotima, that Love is the Child of Want and of Resourcefulness. Love is a desire, a yearning for something which the lover does not possess. But the desire alone is not sufficient. The lover must be able to attain the object of his love; he must be resourceful. Therefore, though a lover lacks indeed that which he loves and that after which he is striving, yet he possesses something, the capability of attaining his object. This general notion holds true when it is applied to the lover of wisdom, the philosopher. He does not possess wisdom. But he is not altogether lacking in it, for if he had absolutely none at all he might as well
despair of ever attaining any. Philosophy, therefore, can be said to stand somewhere between wisdom and ignorance.

(Philosophy)...stands in the mid-space between wisdom and ignorance. No god is a seeker of wisdom; he does not even desire to become wise—for he is wise—nor if there is anyone else who is wise, does he seek wisdom. Nor again are the ignorant philosophers, nor do they even desire to be wise; for this is the hard part about ignorance, that a person who is not noble and good, nor prudent seems sufficient to himself. He does not desire that for which he perceives no need.

The second core idea in the nature of a philosopher is truth, the possession of which is wisdom. From truth flow other qualities of the ideal philosopher. He who is truly wise will also necessarily be brave, temperate, and just, that is, will possess the cardinal virtues of a perfect man.

In the first part of this explanation we will take up those qualities which are prerequisites for the pursuit of the truth. They are summarized by Plato in the first half of his definition in the words: 

\[
e\nui\, \mu\nu\, \mu\mu\, \varepsilon\, \nu\, \mu\, \theta\varepsilon\, \nu\, \kappa\, \rho\varepsilon\, \varepsilon\, \kappa\, \varphi\varepsilon\, \nu\, \iota\, \varepsilon,\ 
\]

When a man stands on the threshold of philosophy, his intellectual equipment must contain facility in learning, a good memory, largeness of mind, and a balanced outlook. Each of these terms will be taken up in order and discussed. In the second part we will examine the cardinal virtues with relation to the ideal philosopher.

Plato's explanation of what he expects his aspiring philosopher to be able to do throws light on all that lies in the
shadow of the two words \( \nu\nu\nu\nu \) and \( \epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\theta\nu\iota\varsigma \). The young student had to undergo a rigorous training which would be completed only when he was an accomplished dialectician.

The training was a process of transformation. The student's mind must be changed from a mirror to a vital power of abstraction. He must be taught how to form abstract ideas. In the analogy of the cave the training of a philosopher is the gradual turning of his vision from the multiple changing phenomena shadowed in the darkness of the cave to the single changeless source of all reality made resplendent by the brilliance of the sun. This process of transformation:

As it seems, would not be a "twirling of potsherds" but a drawing of the soul out of a nocturnal sort of day to the true day, the highway of being, which we call true philosophy. 2

The subject matter best calculated to develop this power of abstraction is set down as logistics, geometry, and astronomy. But the training derived from these studies are not sufficient for the philosopher. "(His soul)...will be able to undertake the highest studies." 3 In the realm of knowledge philosophy wears the crown. It is the highest study of all. Its patron must be more than a grammarian or a scientist; he must be a dialectician.

Dialectics is Plato's equivalent for our "metaphysics". It is the study of the essence of things.

And do you call that man a dialectician who grasps the essence of each thing? 4
It is evident of course that our metaphysics means much more than Plato's dialectics. Metaphysics is interested in four ultimate causes. Plato was interested in one, but a very important one, the formal cause. 

The dialectician must be able to distinguish one form or idea from another. He must be able to give an account of it to others. Beyond that he must be able to defend the idea and his explanation of it in the face of objections and difficulties. This is of great importance. If he is unable to survive the objections, if he has not been able to comprehend the idea itself, but some image of it, he must be branded as not really knowing his subject.

\[\text{... ἀφεῖ, οὐκ ἐπιστήμη ἐφάτης τὸν. ( República, 534 c)}\]

There is a special method to be used by the dialectician in finding the essences of things, the Socratic Method. For Socrates and Plato this method meant the give and take of definite question and definite answer in a philosophical conversation. It excluded long-winded explanations that slurred over obscure points. Socrates proceeded in this manner not only when he himself was hunting down an essence, but also when he was elucidating his doctrine to a pupil. Thus in the República he introduces an explanation with these words:

\[\text{ἀκούε ὅ, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀποκρίνου.} \]
\[\text{ἐρώτα. (Républie, 595 c)}\]

This called for precise and exact thinking and was disconcerting to superficial minds. It required ability of a
high order to engage in a discussion with Socrates. Young people and street-corner philosophers frequently found themselves, like Meno, tongue-tied and paralyzed by his questions, as though they had come in contact with a torpedo-fish. The immediate result of Socrates' cross-examination was that attitude of mind essential to any sincere search for truth. There must be intellectual humility, the oδδέ ὁμοι εἰδέναι of Socrates. No one can learn who knows nothing; he need not learn what he already knows; he must know at least this, that he does not know what he is to learn.

No evil and ignorant person is a philosopher. There remains, then, not even the ignorant, but rather those who realize that they do not know what they do not know.

The forward progress of the Socratic Method was the process of induction. The philosopher proceeds step by step with the aid of hypotheses, τὰς ὑποθέσεις ἁρμοδοτά, testing their solidity, using them as stepping-stones to the succeeding point in the argument. Each hypothesis is an attempt to explain the facts of a given case, σώσει τὰ φαινόμενα. It must be tested and criticized from all possible angles. If it is found to contain no contradictions it may be used as another step upward to a still more general and more abstract notion.

Socrates realized and put into practice that most important axiom: the nature of the being determines its operations.
Thus, the main question of the Republic is: will a just man be happy? Socrates replies by asking: what is the nature of justice? In the central books of the Republic the question is: should philosophers be kings? The reply is the answer to the question: what is the nature of a philosopher? With their method Socrates and Plato taught philosophy the important lesson that the answer to the question "why?" is the answer to the question "what?" Therein lies the charm of philosophy. For the answer to the question "what?" is a lifelong search that must ultimately end with God. And when the philosopher asks what God is he begins all over again on a search that will last for eternity.

Viewed in the light of the preceding paragraphs the intellectual qualities Plato attributes to his philosopher will be easily understood. At the outset he will be οὐδὲν "οὐδὲν ἀμέθεν ἀλλ' ἑκάσθη. The aim of his life will be to become "οὐδὲν as far as it is possible for him. His actual beginning in the search for wisdom is marked by two omens, a clear sky and a crossroad. His mind must have been cleansed of all false certitude in preconceived and erroneous opinions. At least he must be able to recognize them as opinions. He must know what he knows. That is the first sign of progress. The second is his ability to recognize a difficulty. 'Απορία is the beginning of philosophical thought. It is when one is confronted with contradictories that the philosophical spirit...
is stirred. The changeableness of shape and form contrasted with the permanence of the "idea of a thing", the unity of being and its multiplicity, these are the contradictories which have been the source of philosophy and have encouraged thought. Logistics is praised by Plato as a propaideutic to philosophy for this very reason, that it offers difficulties when the difficulties are raised...

Would not the soul, I said, in those circumstances necessarily be at a loss to know what this perception signified? 8

In all probability, therefore, I said, in such circumstances the soul first calls on the aid of calculation and thought and attempts to investigate whether each of those which have been brought forward is one or whether it is two. 9

Given that state of mind most conducive to learning, as the Arabian Proverb has it: "He who knows not and knows that he knows not, he is a child: teach him," and given the difficulty, the philosopher must be able to set about solving the difficulty.

Simply, he must be intelligent, have a keen, vigorous mind. The philosopher moves away from the cross-road before him by choosing one path and seeing whether it takes him where he wants to go. He must make an hypothesis, and then see if it fulfills all the requirements.

And so, I said, the dialectical method alone proceeds in this manner, by eliminating hypotheses in order that the very beginning might be secure...10
The first guess may be wrong but in the process of testing and criticizing it the keen mind will see aspects and relations that will suggest another hypothesis closer to the truth. Without this agility the mind will remain passive in the presence of the difficulty and continue on its way unconcerned.

(it is)...impassive and stupid, as a thing benumbed, and it is heavy with sleep and yawns whenever there is labor of that sort to do. 11

Facility in learning is absolutely essential to the philosopher. Plato knew human nature well enough to realize that without it a man would become disgruntled and uneasy in his work. He would not be seeking the deeper truths out of love. He would even come to hate the search for truth. That was altogether alien to the lover of wisdom.

The further progress of the hypothetical method suggests other qualities of the perfect philosophical mind. The mind must not only be keen enough to suggest a likely hypothesis, but it must be critical enough to examine and test it thoroughly. Plato was a pioneer in laying down the laws of certitude, but his requirements were surprisingly stringent for a beginner.

For the intelligent critic also, intellectual humility was a prerequisite. There would be many a topic and many an occasion which would not yield certitude. Argument might be heaped on argument, but if a necessary connection between the hypothesis and the point in question could not be demonstrated, the philosopher must be satisfied with probability.
He must realize that there are many answers that man does not and will not know.

But God knows whether it chances to be true. 12

Coupled with this spirit of caution, however, there must also be the confidence of certitude when it is given. Evident truths should be accepted joyfully. One more truth (the whole of a philosopher's existence) has been found. The philosopher will greet it with open arms.

Plato insists still more on the critical spirit. The philosopher's nature is so akin to truth and inimical to anything that has the slightest tinge of falsity that it is not enough for him merely to accept truth when and only when he sees it. It is not sufficient that he be on the alert for truth. He must have a keen nose for falsity. There must be a sort of sixth sense by which he is warned of the lurking lie hid in the shadow of some very plausible argument. Even subconsciously he must shun error: otherwise...

he heedlessly wallows like brute swine in ignorance. 13

Intelligent skepticism will stop at its source another vice which has no place in the character of the philosopher. Because of their own ignorance and lack of intellectual humility young philosophers not infrequently give their allegiance with a positive surety to some opinion or other. All is well until a Socrates comes along and begins raising
objections. They see their opinion to be false and swing violently in the other direction. After several repetitions of the occurrence they begin to lose heart. Their self-confidence is shattered, but their pride remains. They begin to distrust all reason, no matter how sound. The blame for their discomfiture is laid at the door of reason instead of within the darkroom of their own minds. In the end they become μισολόγοι, the exact contradictories of philosophers. In Socrates' own words...

Then, Phaedo, I said, if, though there should be some true and solid proposition and one that is capable of being understood, yet because one took part in such arguments, the arguments should seem at one time to be true and false at another, and thereupon he should not blame himself or his own lack of ability, but in the end because of his own discomfiture should leave them and put the blame not on himself but on the arguments, and then end by spending the rest of his life in hatred and condemnation of the arguments, and be bereft of the truth and knowledge of being? 14

In connection with this note of discouragement and with the energy and vigor with which falsehood must be avoided and hypotheses tested, another characteristic of the true philosopher makes itself evident.

There is no royal road to learning. There is no room for a shirker in philosophy. A character is not wholly formed whenever anyone is addicted to athletics or hunting and enjoys exercise in everything pertaining to the body but does
not love study, or is a poor listener
or investigator, and rather hates work
along this line. And he also is a
crippled character who transfers his
love of labor to the opposite pursuit.15

Plato insists strongly on a willingness to undergo hard
intellectual labor for his philosopher. There must be Sitzen-
schaft as well as Wissenschaft. It is interesting to note
that one reason he gives for including mathematics in the
philosopher's curriculum is the difficulty of the subject.

* * * * * *

All the brilliance in the world and all the labor in the
world will help a philosopher not one bit if he is unable to
retain that which he has learned. For this reason Plato
couples memory with facility in learning as a pre-requisite
for the study of philosophy. Without memory the labor under-
gone will be useless, the man will come to be discouraged and
hate his work and his study.

What if he should not be able to preserve
anything that he has learned, being
extremely forgetful? Would it be possible
for him to avoid being wanting in all
knowledge? 16

Therefore the philosopher's soul must be retentive and solid,
in addition to being keen and quick.

But we say that he ought indeed to be well
developed in both of them (keenness
and firmness of mind)? 17

Memory played a particularly important part in Plato's
system of dialectics. With him the method of procedure was
an active discussion unhampered by the restriction of a rigid, formal method. The custom was to "follow the argument" wherever it should chance to lead. Digressions were not shunned, as the analysis of the Republic has shown. Add to this the fact that Socrates' devastating elenchus usually scattered the antagonists' thoughts far and wide. The result was that at the end of a discussion bits of thought were lying all about and had to be scraped together. Thus it is that throughout the dialogues of Plato brief summaries of the discussion are found which recall all that has been said and accomplished. Again, after a digression, the main argument and point of discussion has to be brought back to mind. Plato's whole notion of a philosopher was that of one whose bundle of knowledge was all wound together and could be brought out for inspection whenever a new strand was to find its proper place in it.

Plato makes this point clear when he lays down as an essential attribute of a dialectician the ability to correlate his knowledge. He wants a period towards the end of the course of studies set aside for this specific purpose, to gather the scattered threads of his learning together and weave them into an intelligible whole. If a student has done this, he has gained a vantage point from which he can view securely any new notion that will come into his ken. He will be better able to defend and explain his own judgments; for
he will realize their relationships more clearly. He will be better able to recall past concepts, since the associations will be greater in number and more orderly.

And indeed, said I, it is the best test of the dialectical nature and the undialectical; for he who can take a comprehensive view is a dialectician; he who cannot, is not a dialectician.18

Here Plato touches a note characteristic of his own philosophical thought, and of all variations of his thought followed in the centuries after him. It is the note of unity. The duty of a philosopher is to simplify and unify, reduce two to one, abstract a common concept from several concepts. Plato accentuated this characteristic, and therefore it means much more to him when he includes it among the qualities of a philosopher. He applied it to the doctrine of the ideas, and their hierarchy. The goal of the philosopher was the apprehension of the one idea that embraced all the others. Fundamentally true in all this is the fact that character or personality is developed by unification. One truth, one ideal vividly realized, to which everything else is related and subordinated is an absolute necessity for the development of a perfect man.

* * * * *

Plato's philosopher was a man constantly engaged in argument, discussion, search. He was always striving diligently to attain his object. He might tend to become a
belligerent sort of a person, combative in spirit and disquieted in mind. This would defeat his very purpose; the philosopher must be steady, quiet, determined, sincere in his search. He will be a man who proceeds in his mental activity without flurry, ἐν εἰρήνῃ, and without strife, ὑπὸ διόνυκσ. The philosopher, unlike the lawyer in the law courts is not bound by time or subject matter. He cannot hurry the argument faster than it will go. He does not force it to enter where it will not. His periods of study require a time of leisure and quiet, as free as possible from distracting influences, from anxiety of any sort.

You said that leisure is always on hand for philosophers, and that they pursue their discussions leisurely and in peace. They act just as we who have already changed the topic for discussion three times, if the new topic should please them more than the preceding one, as happened in our case. And there is no concern about the length and brevity of the discussions, provided only that they attain to reality. 19

The spirit of these words is much the same as the advice given by Robert of Sorbonne in the thirteenth century to his students:

Meditation is suitable not only for the master, but the good student ought also to go and take his promenade along the banks of the Seine, not to play there, but in order to repeat his lesson and meditate upon it. 20

It was with this steadiness and quiet of mind in view that Plato laid down the principle that only men of some
maturity should be allowed to take up the study of dialectics. Young zealots, especially if they have had some success in tripping up their companions, will get interested in the argument for its own sake. An older man will keep the one purpose of his study and discussion in mind, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔντος "that the truth may appear". We will not be φιλονίκως, "zealous that he may have the upper hand". Plato was impatient with quibbling sophists and the blustering rhetoricians whose pride was that they could make the "worse argument appear the better." His Socrates was a model of politeness in argument, all ready to yield to reason, but only to reason.

But the man is certainly not to be esteemed above truth. 21

The older philosopher will initiate

the one who wishes rather to discuss and examine the truth. 22
Notes for Chapter Two

1. Plato, Symposium, 204 e.
2. Plato, Republic, 521 c.
3. Plato, op.cit. 503 a.
4. Plato, op.cit. 534 b.
5. Plato, op.cit. 534 c.
6. Plato, op.cit. 595 c.
10. Plato, op.cit. 533 c.
11. Plato, op.cit. 503 d.
14. Plato, Phaedo, 90 d.
15. Plato, Republic, 535 d.
16. Plato, op.cit. 486 c.
17. Plato, op.cit. 503 d.
18. Plato, op.cit. 537 c.
19. Plato, Theaetetus, 172 d.
22. Plato, op.cit. 539 c.
CHAPTER THREE
Largeness of Mind

In the foregoing pages we have noted that there were certain characteristics which Plato postulated as prerequisites for a philosopher because he was essentially a lover. The first of these prerequisites were intelligence and memory. The qualities suggested by these two notions may be summarized as clearness and keenness of mind, an instinct for truth, love of labor, ability to recall, correlate and unify, calmness and steadiness of mind.

The next adjective to be included in the concept of a philosopher is μεγαλομεταμνήμον. "Largeness of mind" is perhaps a sufficiently general translation to cover most of its meanings. The term recurs regularly enough in the lists of those things "which pertain to the soul." Plato couples the word with ἔλεος Θερία. Both notions are characteristically Greek and closely related to each other. It is only a free man who can be a large-souled man. He is likewise the only man who will have true intellectual interests, and will appreciate the meaning of intellectual pleasure. These notions will be, then, the next to come under consideration.

Though the statement of R. W. Livingstone, "That was the Greek ideal -- unrestricted liberty," might be questioned,
it need not be mentioned that freedom was dear to the hearts of the Hellenic people. That it was dear to the heart of Plato is shown by the statement that his perfectly trained guardians should be "men who fear slavery more than death." Slavery meant first of all the condition of actual subservience to another man as his slave. Of course, it also embraced the political domination of another state. Ultimately it meant the inability to rule oneself in any way whatever, a condition which militated against the very rational nature of man.

Look at the point in this way also. Since both soul and body are in the same subject, nature prescribes that the latter serve and obey, the former rule and command. In like manner, which of these seems to you to be similar to the divine and which to the mortal? Does it not indeed seem to you that that is divine whose nature it is to rule and direct, and that mortal whose nature it is to obey and serve?

The slavery which it was the peculiar function of the philosopher to avoid was the submission of the soul to the dictates of the body. He should have free control of himself, of his passions and emotions. His soul should be free to follow its own proper activity, the contemplation of things in themselves, knowledge for its own sake, not for the sake of someone else, or for the increase of wealth. Anything of that nature would deter man from the pursuit of that object in which man alone of the things of earth was interested, truth. Aristotle seems to have quoted his master in his Metaphysics.
We quote from St. Thomas' commentary:

Quintam ponit: et est, quod illa de numero scientiarum est sapientia, quae per se est magis eligibilis et voluntaria id est volita gratia scientiae et propter ipsum scire, quam illa scientia quae est quorumque allorum contingentium quae possunt ex scientia generari; cuiusmodi est necessitas vitae, delectatio, et huiusmodi alia. 5

Plato certainly did not equate freedom with license. It could run riot and really develop into anarchy, even though some people might still insist on calling it freedom. In the intellectual order it meant the ability or capability of thinking just for the sake of thinking, not the ability to think anything one wanted regardless of the objective state of affairs. Children were not to be allowed to grow wild. They had to be kept in control until they also had organized a city within their own souls.

Freedom of soul was opposed to áneleusēria and όμιχρολογία, a pragmatical and petty attitude of mind. This did not at all mesh with the nature of a philosopher.

Let not its illiberality hide from you; for smallness of mind is in direct opposition to a soul which intends to reach out for the universe and everything divine and human. 6

And it is in this respect that the freedom proper to a philosopher shades over into μεγάλομπρες. Rather than pragmatical the philosopher should be artistic; rather than small and petty in his outlook and interests he should be
catholic and aristocratic. He should have that quality which we usually attribute to a man when we say that he is liberally educated, have what Cardinal Newman calls, in the phrase we have borrowed, "largeness of mind."

Plato, like Aristotle and people of a pagan caste of mind generally, considered menial work degrading to the spirit as well as oppressive to the body. It cramped the mind, held the nose down to a few mechanical particulars and prevented it from roaming free in the land of universals.

Nevertheless in contrast to the other arts, although philosophy should act thus, the estimable largeness of mind is retained. This many desire who are imperfect in nature, but as bodies are deformed by the arts and trades, so they cramp and crush their souls because of their occupation with mechanical things. Is it not inevitable?

In its social aspect was largeness of heart. It was carefully distinguished from prodigality, by no means a virtue. In the intellectual order the vice which sinned by excess was arrogance.

(One might)...have in himself two diseases contrary to one another, illiberality along with love of gain and on the other hand arrogance before gods and men.

Large-mindedness was rather the mean between this arrogance and pettiness, a wholesome independence mingled with an intelligent interest and concern in the larger issues of life.

It follows from the affinity of the nature of a
philosopher to knowledge for its own sake that he must be a
man who is interested in everything. He has his eyes wide
open in constant search for the truths "of all time and of
all being." After all, the philosopher is a lover of wisdom,
and it is characteristic of a lover that he wants as much of
whatever he loves as he can get.

Interest is all-important. In this connection the
psychologist in Plato promoted him to point out the fact that
the mind is not helped much, as the body is, if it is driven
by an external force to apply itself to its work.

I said, the liberal man ought not to
study any subject under compulsion; for
when the labors of the body are forcibly
undertaken, the body suffers no harm
thereby, but in the soul no enforced
study is enduring.

The interest required of a philosopher is not forced. It
ought to be a very natural thing. Interest follows willingly
where pleasure leads. Plato never tires of affirming that the
highest and greatest pleasure of which man is capable is that
which is the result of the satisfaction of his rational
faculties. The philosopher finds his truest joy in knowing.

No one but the philosopher can appreci-
ate what pleasure there is in the
contemplation of being.

Young men confessed themselves captivated and intrigued by
the philosophical conversations of Socrates. Alcibiades
compares the pursuit of philosophy to a kind of madness and
wild revelry, and speaks of being bitten and taken with the fever.

Taken all in all a philosopher is a man whose one pleasure in life is to think, in the fullest sense of the word, to find out the answers to the last questions about the biggest things. He is never satisfied, always eager for more. But let Plato put it in his own words.

And from institutions he will lead him up to the sciences in order that he might perceive then the beauty of the sciences, and gazing still at the manifold beauty, not perceiving the one beauty, just as a maiden who loves the beauty of a boy, or some man or thing, he is subservient and common and small-minded. But turning to the vast sea of beauty and beholding many beautiful and grand sights, he produces thoughts in the abundance of philosophy, until having there grown and increased in strength, he beholds some one such science,--which is the science of this beauty. 12
Notes for Chapter Three

1. Plato, Republic, 402 c; 536 a; Meno, 38a.


4. Plato, Phaedo, 80 a.


7. Plato, op. cit. 495 d.

8. Plato, op. cit. 391 c.


11. Plato, op. cit. 582 c.

12. Plato, Symposium, 210 c-d.
CHAPTER FOUR

Balance and Moderation

The ideal philosopher will have the ability to learn and he will have a "large" desire to learn. It is characteristically Greek that Plato should have added that the lover of wisdom, as any true lover, must possess moderation.

True love on the other hand temperately and harmoniously loves by nature that which is well-ordered and beautiful. 1

Moderation is used here not only in the sense of restraint, but also in its literal meaning of "measured; proportioned; ordered". The seeker after truth must come to the pursuit of wisdom with a balanced character. He must not be lop-sided, ἀρχήμαν for love and disproportion are inimical to each other.

...as ugliness and love are eternal enemies of one another. 2

Prejudice of any sort must be ruled out of a philosopher's life.

The qualities common to a balanced soul are linked together by Plato under the term εὐχαρίς. Docility of disposition is joined to ἐμετρείδα, evenness of character.

We seek in addition to the other qualities a naturally well-balanced and gracious spirit whose natural condition will prepare the soul for the vision of being. 3

Both are opposed to an unevenly developed and deformed soul.

The quality comes to be that balance and harmony of the soul
which was the aim of the early system of education laid down in the first books of the Republic. It was the result of a training in the liberal arts and athletics.

In its broadest and crudest outline the balance desired was the equivalent of Juvenal's mens sana in corpore sano. By what sort of education is it to be achieved?

With regard to the body it is gymnastics, with regard to the soul, music. A man who was not developed physically in proportion with his mental development would fall under the accusation of being ἀσθενέων, deformed. Especially was this true in the case of the philosopher. It must be born in mind that for Plato a philosopher was not defined as a dealer in abstract concepts. A philosopher was nothing more than a man, but a man with nothing left out. That is, he was a man who was fully developed in all his faculties and who took his part in the daily affairs of his family and his country. He himself was made up of body and soul, and like all men had to take care that both were kept together. He was a social being enjoying all the privileges of community life but likewise subject to all its duties. This meant, in the concrete, an active interest in public leadership, welfare, and defense. The philosopher, other things being equal, had no right to desert these duties; he was unable to neglect the care of his body. But the distinguishing note of the philosopher by which he was set apart from the ordinary run of men was that he had fully developed
his nature. This meant that he had trained his intellect to its highest perfection, and had given it the proper place in his life, the position of dictator, leader, and guide for all his activities as a man. "What must predominate in man is the perfection of man as man. Man is man by reason; reason must rule within him." The exclusive cultivation of the intellect would be almost as contrary to the nature of man as the exclusive cultivation of his body. For the active life of a leading citizen a philosopher required both a sound mind and a sound body.

The sound mind, Plato recognized, was dependent to a great extent for its energy and endurance on the sound body. The philosopher needs both to be able to bear the labor of the studies required of him and to penetrate their innermost meaning.

We must be careful about all such things; so that if we should bring persons of sound body and sound mind to such studies and such exercises and educate them, the law will not criticize us, and we will save the city and the polity;—but if we lead persons of different character to these things we will achieve the opposite and we will occasion a greater flood of laughter at philosophy.

But beyond the strengthening of the mind and body the training of both of them was intended to develop character, a character such as may be called μουρικός or εὐχαρις. For an understanding of Plato's meaning, his psychology of the soul must again be recalled. Man's soul has a philosophic element,
his rational faculty. This element is of a gentle nature. It is capable of reacting to beauty, goodness, and truth. If overtrained it tends to make the soul effeminate and soft, but if properly trained it adds refinement and gentleness to the character. When is this element of the soul properly trained? When it has imbibed from its youth onward principles of truth and beauty. Literature, arithmetic, and music are the instruments of its training. The literature is to be of such a nature as to inform the soul with true beauty. Fables and legends of gods and heroes which tell of their excesses and vices are to be abhorred. The God who was to be described to the children must be the only possible God, He who is the source of good only and in no way of evil, who is changeless, and necessarily truthful. The heroes are to be praised for their virtues, their justice, and valor, and temperance. The form of the literature was to be such as would not stir up and arouse the emotions unduly, but moderate and temper them.

Music would impress on the soul a character of rhythm and harmony. It must be carefully chosen so that it itself expresses the restraint and moderation and mellowness which is desired in the soul of the man. For this reason the highly emotional Phrygian mode was to be excluded, as was the sensuous Ionic mode. The regulated and military Doric mode was to be preferred.
Athletics were not only for the development of the body, not even primarily so. The ideal man...

always appears to be ordering the harmony in the body for the sake of the con-
sonance in the soul. 7

Athletics likewise were to bring about a harmony in the soul, by developing its irascible element. The nature of this ele-
ment is such that, if overtrained, it will make the soul hard, brutal, and savage. It makes the man approximate the brute rather than the rational being. If it is correctly developed, however, it will produce a courageous and valorous soul. The athlete will take part in games and contests in the palaestra, but most of all he will take part in the great game of war. He will be subjected to severe discipline, be made to suffer hardships that will test his endurance and strength. His diet will be severe and wholesome. The athlete will train himself with a view to making a doctor's treatment unnecessary for him, but he will not overtrain for he is to remember that he is not exercising his body merely for the sake of its strength but with the intent of developing and tempering the courageous element of his soul.

In truth he will perform the gymnastic exercises with a view to the irascible part of his nature and its development rather than that of his bodily strength, not as the other athletes who partake of food and exercise for the sake of physical power. 8

The harmony of the two faculties will be effected if their
subordination to their common end is held in view and neither is stressed to the exclusion of the other. Both in their own distinct functions must be regulated with relation to the third element of the soul, the concupiscible passions. The total result is harmony.

We would speak correctly if we said that the man who best combines gymnastics with music and induces proportion in the soul is the most cultured and balanced.9

The characteristic object of this balanced nature of the soul is beauty. It has been perfected and developed through contact with beauty, eternal truths as mirrored in the liberal arts of the time. All the training has been undertaken τῶν καλῶν καρπῶν. Beauty of itself connotes proportion, moderation, balance harmony, grace—all that has been included under

Is it not therefore, Glaucon, on account of these things, I said, that nurture in music is sovereign, and especially because rhythm and harmony sink down into the soul, and whatever is comely affects it the most strongly, and makes it comely, if one is rightly nurtured,—but if not, the opposite occurs. 10

Such a man is the best prepared for the pursuit of philosophy. He will be much in need of ability to weigh arguments in the balance of his mind, test their objectivity, see their intrinsic worth. Bias will be eliminated, not by being extracted but by being balanced.
Notes for Chapter Four

1. Plato, Republic, 403 a.
2. Plato, Symposium, 196 a.
3. Plato, Republic, 486 d.
4. Plato, op.cit. 376 e.
6. Plato, Republic, 536 b.
7. Plato, op.cit. 531 d.
8. Plato, op.cit. 410 b.
CHAPTER FIVE

Love of and Kinship to Truth

As a summary of the account of the intellectual virtues which are required by Plato of his ideal philosopher the first part of a sentence from Cardinal Newman's Idea of a University might be quoted:

To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to know, and to digest, master, rule, and use its knowledge, to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression...1

All this must be verifiable in the character of the true philosopher when the finished product is produced. This intellectual equipment is the object and aim of the long course of training Plato would have his philosopher run through before, at the age of fifty, he can merit the title in its most complete sense with all its privileges and duties.

The concluding half of Newman's sentence may well suggest the transition to the discussion of the cardinal virtues, the second portion of Plato's notion of a philosopher:

(All this)...is an object as intelligible as the cultivation of virtue while, at the same time, it is absolutely distinct from it. 1

Plato would have denied and did deny this distinction.
These also are parts of virtue...wisdom and fortitude.²

In truth fortitude and temperance and justice and in short true virtue exist only with prudence.³

φρόνησις, which Plato uses in this second quotation is employed by him in the fourth book of the Republic as synonymous with σοφία, the first of the cardinal virtues. Prudence and wisdom are interchangeable in Plato's text.

Cardinal Newman's statement is an affirmation of the distinction between these two virtues which Aristotle had made in immediate criticism of Socrates and Plato in the the Ethica Nicomachea. Both Socrates and Plato tended to equate knowledge and virtue. They were forced to be somewhat hesitant in their doctrine by the obvious fact that intellectual talent did not always result in moral greatness. Socrates was bothered by the further fact that virtue seemed to be incapable of being taught to anyone. If virtue were knowledge, Plato has him say in the Meno, people would long ago have gathered children into colonies, sheltered them from all evil influence, and taught them to be good. Even the paragons of Athenian virtue had failed to educate their sons to moral greatness. Still Socrates could not understand why knowledge should be as important as it was to virtue unless it were virtue.

Socrates was partly right and partly wrong, wrote Aristotle...

Socrates in one respect was on the right
track while in another he went astray; in thinking that all the virtues were forms of practical wisdom he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom he was right. This is confirmed by the fact that even now all men, when they define virtue, after naming the state of character and its objects add "that (state) which is in accordance with the right rule"; now the right rule is that which is in accordance with practical wisdom.4

Socrates had not learned that the moral act was an act of choosing, not of knowing. He did not see that though an act of the will "involves", as Aristotle says, an act of the intellect, the two are not identical.

Plato, it would seem from Aristotle's criticism, progressed farther than Socrates. He did not make all virtues qualities of the rational part of man's nature, that is, of the intellect, but properly

divided the soul into rational and the irrational part—and in this he was right—assigning appropriate virtues to each.

So far so good. 5

Whereas Socrates had failed to distinguish between the rational part of the soul, the intellect, and the irrational parts, the appetitive faculties, Plato failed to distinguish between the speculative intellect and the practical intellect.

The perfection of the practical intellect, "practical wisdom", is "the reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods" 6. When human goods are the goods resulting from proper action in government, the governor
possesses the art of politics; he has practical wisdom in the order of administration. When the goods pertain to man's relation to the moral law, he possesses the moral virtue of prudence. Though the subject of this virtue is the intellect, nevertheless it partakes of the quality of the moral virtues, since its presence in the soul is implied by the presence of the moral virtues.

St. Thomas, who writes that prudence is perfectiva omnium virtutum moralium, affirms the same distinction between this intellectual quality and the other intellectual virtues.

Ad prudentiam autem pertinet applicatio rectae rationis ad opus quod non fit sine appetitu recto. It ideo prudentia non solum habet rationem virtutis quam habent aliae virtutes intellectuales sed etiam habet rationem virtutis quam habent aliae virtutes morales, quibus etiam connumeratur. 7

To return to Plato's difficulty. He did realize that the virtue of prudence had as its object "human goods", as his definition quoted later on in this chapter will show, but he also thought that "philosophic wisdom", or the virtue of the speculative intellect, had "good" as its object,—and here, criticizes Aristotle, is where he went astray.

For in speaking about the truth of things he ought not to have discoursed upon virtue; for there is nothing common to the two. 8

Plato's thesis was that there was something common to the two. He would have been more ready to agree with the statement made by Hilaire Belloc in his Characters of the Reformation:
Great artistic talent... is hardly inherent to the man... it hardly ever colours his character as a whole and has nothing to do with the moral and intellectual stuff of the mind and soul... perhaps most great artists have been poor fellows indeed whom to know was to despise. 9

Socrates had spent his life learning that craftsmen, poets, rhapsodists, could not explain and defend their own work, that their talent, if they had any, was something apart from them. Plato makes Ion, a rhapsodist, admit that neither he, nor any other artist, can explain his success by means of scientific knowledge, but only by means of divine inspiration. Artists are "possessed" by the muses, or "inspired" by greater artists. Ion is possessed by Homer, as are the majority of poets...

You are possessed by Homer... for it is not by skill nor even knowledge that you speak as you do about Homer, but by a divine dispensation and enchantment. 10

But as for intellectual talent, Plato would have shaken his head at the notion that it did not color a man's moral character. He would have conceded that great talent did not make a great man. He had Alcibiades as an immediate example of this truth. Plato's explanation was that other truth expressed in the well-known dictum, corruptio optimi pessima. Men of the greatest talent who fail to make use of it properly become the greatest evil-doers, and the greatest public enemies. Indeed a man's talent had much to do with his intellectual stuff and his intellectual stuff as possessed by a man in his soul, in Plato's mind, was also his moral stuff.
for Plato intellectual virtue and moral virtue were merged into the unity which formed the character of the ἅλθως ἠλφος. And the bond of that unity was truth. Thus his definition of a philosopher which has formed the theme of this discussion may be analyzed into three parts: 1. The intellectual virtues required of the philosopher: εἷς μνήμων, εὔμηθεις, μεγάλοπρεπὴς, εὐχαρίς. 2. The union between the philosopher and reality: ἠλφὸς τε καὶ αὐγγενῆ ἅλθως ἁλπεῖα. 3. The effect of that union with reality: δικαιοσύνη, ἄρεια, σωφροσύνη. All the virtues received their coloring and fullest signification from the one word ἅλπεῖα. The philosopher receives his essential characteristic in this that his nature is born for truth. For a pebble on the beach the outside world simply does not exist. For a dog by a fireside things are hardly more than sights and sounds. Man alone was made for more than this; he was made for truth.

To understand fully the nature of a philosopher it will be necessary, therefore, to learn as far as possible what Plato meant by wisdom and truth. This will require some notion of his theory of knowledge and of being. With these ideas explained it will be possible to fill out the picture with a description of the three remaining cardinal virtues, fortitude, temperance, and justice.

Wisdom did not always mean prudence for Plato. In its wider application it denoted the possession of any true
knowledge whatsoever. Thus Socrates in the *Apology* talks of interviewing poets, statesmen, artisans about those things in which they were thought to be wise, that is, whatever constituted their particular business in life. In the *Republic* Socrates attributes wisdom to the laboring class in his ideal state, the first and lowest class, which is made up of artisans and mechanics. They are said to be wise in the things of their trade. But their wisdom is distinguished from the wisdom which is peculiar to the rulers of the state and which is identified with prudence. This is the knowledge of that which is for the benefit of each individual of the state and of the state as a whole. Put briefly it is the knowledge of the good. Wisdom or prudence resides in a small minority of the state. It resides in the governing body. Following out the general scheme of the parallel between the man seen in the large, namely, the state, and the individual, wisdom is found to be predicable of man in so far as his rational nature apprehends that which is good for the whole and all its parts.

(One is called)...wise in virtue of that small part of himself, that which rules in him and commands these things, and which has the knowledge in itself of whatever is to the advantage of each and all of them, three in number, taken together. 11

Just as wisdom was commonly praedicated of all forms of knowledge or skill in general, whether it was that of the carpenter or mason, sophist or philosopher, yet properly
speaking could be applied only to that knowledge of the ruling body of an organism by which it perceived the advantage of the whole and its members, so knowledge itself in its generic meaning denoted any form of knowledge from sense perception to the most abstract concepts and any degree of certitude from mere conjecture to absolute certainty, while in its most proper sense knowledge was restricted by Plato to a very specific type of knowledge. This type of knowledge was that by which a man knew being, in Plato's special sense: "Knowledge was made for being, to know what being is" 12. Even this concept of knowledge is yet capable of restriction, for Plato finally narrows it down to the knowledge of that being which is the source of all being and is itself the super-being, namely, the good.

Not only is "knowability" present in the objects of knowledge by virtue of the good, but also being. 13

Thus wisdom taken in its strictest meaning, the first of the virtues psychologically speaking, and knowledge taken in its strictest sense ultimately have for their objects the same thing, the good. To know, then, is to be prudent. To be prudent is to possess the other virtues; for all the moral virtues are intimately bound together and all must contain an element of prudence. Knowledge, then, is virtue—and the true philosopher, who is the wisest of men, will also be the best of men.
Knowledge, as described by Plato, is parallel to being. Truth is the establishment of that parallel. Thus when one says what is true he says that which is, and has knowledge in its pure sense. Also, in so far as a thing is, it is knowable, and the apprehension of that truth impresses a true image, ἀπεισθημα, of being in the soul.

We have then grasped this sufficiently, even supposing we were to examine it more thoroughly, namely that that which is perfect being is perfectly knowable, that which does not in any way exist is altogether unknowable.

The same idea is restated by Plato to say that knowledge as being for its object; ignorance, if it can be considered as a faculty, has non-being for its object. Between these two faculties lies a third which is commonly called opinion. This type of knowledge is what might philosophically be called natural certitude. It is uncriticised, unexamined, liable to error, may be false. Moreover, it deals with particulars, with the objects of the senses. It does not grasp that one idea, that "which is", but knows only the many things which have, say, beauty, or goodness, or justice. Thus, on being questioned, a person who has only opinion and not knowledge will say that beauty is this or that beautiful thing. Now, it is true that any particular beautiful thing is in some way not beautiful. People who have only opinions cannot explain the difference. Though, on occasion, they may happen to strike upon an answer which is true, it is only by accident.
Such a type of knowledge cannot be pure knowledge, for pure knowledge is essentially true.

To be correct in one's opinions without being able to give an account of them, she said, you know that that is not knowledge--an unexplainable something, how could that be knowledge? Nor is it ignorance; for how can that which attains to reality be ignorance? Such, then, is right opinion, something between wisdom and ignorance. 15

Being, which is the object of knowledge, is opposed to the particular, the changeable; it is the universal and the eternal. It is opposed to becoming and to corruption. The knowledge of this being is the knowledge which is peculiar to the philosopher.

Let this be agreed upon among us with regard to the nature of philosophers, that they always love any study which they see is the study of that being which is eternal and does not wander between generation and corruption. 16

To distinguish further the particular type of knowledge which belongs to a philosopher, it will be good to recall the last two stages of the mental training of the philosopher. He studies mathematics and the sciences. The objects of this science is the universal, but it is not the essence, the ωορία. This is the object of the last stage, the object of dialectics, which is

that which possesses the eternally similar and the immortal, and truth, and itself is such and exists in such. 17

This is the object the knowledge of which is called ἐπιστήμη.
and is at least one of the ultimate causes of being, the formal cause. It is opposed to δίνων which has the sciences for its object and although it knows the universal, and therefore is not mere opinion; it knows only the proximate causes of being.

Plato might have been content to define his philosopher by relating him to this high degree of knowledge of that "which is", but he added another grade of knowledge, and another grade of being which is the crown of the nature of his philosopher. Because the notion is so completely Plato's and because an abstract account of it would involve many a difficulty with his metaphysics, it will be more profitable simply to recount Socrates' tale of his progress towards this highest degree of truth and being which is the goal of the ὁσ ἄριστος διδάσκων.

When Socrates first began to be interested in the things of the mind in his early years, he went about searching for the causes of things. He listened to the physicists and they disappointed him with their restatement of facts in different terms. Anaxagoras at first held out some hope to him when he attributed the cause of things to νόος. But Anaxagoras never explained what νόος was, so Socrates was again left stranded and alone. Finally he struck out for himself and developed his dialectical method. This he felt was the answer to all his inquiries, for it brought him to a knowledge of the ideas of things. These ideas were the causes he was seeking—so he thought. But he did not rest there. He searched until he found that idea which was the cause of all and itself was
the supreme being. He came to the conclusion that this cause was the idea of good. Since this was true, he argued, it must be the end and aim of every philosopher to attain to the knowledge of this idea; for if it was the source of all being, it would also be the source of all knowledge and all truth. And these three transcendentals, being, knowledge, truth, contained everything that was to be contained.

And not only is knowableness present in the objects of knowledge because of the good but also being and essence is present to them through it, although the good is not essence but still surpasses those things in the dignity and power of its essence.18

What role did the knowledge of good play in the life of a philosopher? To explain that Plato makes use of an analogy. Men have a faculty of sight. The objects of that faculty are present in the external world. Yet there is a third requisite before the eye can see, namely, light. The source of this light for the world in general is the sun. Men also have a faculty of knowing being, τὸ δὲ ἔτι ὁνάς. τὸ ὄν is given in the external world, that is, somewhere outside the man. A third element, however, is required before the faculty of knowing can truly obtain its object, the effulgence of the idea of good which makes all being knowable. Seen in the light of this idea, whatever was known before but only in vague and shadowy outline, now takes on its full meaning and is finally completely grasped by the mind. When a man has
attained to the knowledge of τὸ Ὄρθρον and sees all being in the light of that being, sees all being eminently represented in that idea, then only can he truly be called a philosopher; for he has finally grasped eternal reality.

Philosophers are those who can grasp that which is always in the same respects the same.19

Another analogy may be used to elucidate the function of the knowledge of the good in the soul of man. Frequently when one is reading a paragraph in a foreign language he will not catch its meaning on first reading. Some of the words will be known to him; he will surmise something of what is said. After a little thumbing of the dictionary and another reading, the ideas become a little clearer. Finally, the central idea of the whole passage dawns on him and every sentence stands out in its proper perspective. So it is with Plato's idea of good. All being partakes of this super-being. Therefore all being receives its proper significance and meaning when this being is known.

A.E. Taylor relates Plato's Idea of Good to the Ens Realissimum of the Scholastics, to which all other being has a transcendental relation, from which all being receives its being, truth, and knowableness. Without the knowledge of the Ens Realissimum the would-be philosopher will find no satisfactory meaning in the things which present themselves to his mind. With it everything takes on a meaning and place in the
order of being and light is shed on the whole of creation and makes evident the eternal truths.

To return to wisdom. Whether it be considered as the knowledge of being or the knowledge of what is good, in Plato's scheme it will have the same object, the idea of good. Thus the wise and prudent man will have knowledge and truth. "Could you find anything more related to wisdom than truth?"21 This is contact with reality, and from this contact comes courage, temperance, and justice.

What then? Do we not seem to you to have enumerated all the necessary attributes which follow one another in the soul that intends to lay hold of being sufficiently and completely?22

When we have concluded the discussion of the last three cardinal virtues of a philosopher, we can answer with Glaucon, "The most necessary indeed."
Notes for Chapter Five


2. Plato, Protagoras, 329 e.


7. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 2-2, Q 47, a 4, c.

8. Aristotle, Ethica Eudemia, 1182 a 24


11. Plato, Republic, 442 c.


13. Plato, op.cit. 509 b.


17. Plato, op.cit. 495 c.

18. Plato, op.cit. 509 b.
19. Plato, Republic, 484 b.


22. Plato, op. cit. 536 c.
CHAPTER SIX
Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice

It has been mentioned above that the Republic completes many of the open questions discussed in the early Socratic dialogues of search. This is especially true of the virtues of the soul which "follow one another." The Platonic doctrine that virtue is knowledge is mentioned by everyone in even the shortest synopses of his philosophy. It is, however, in his description of the nature of the perfect man, the philosopher, that his reasons for maintaining the unity of virtue are definitely revealed. When in the Laches and in the Protagoras he discussed courage, the criticisms of the definitions of the virtue always pointed to the inclusion of the knowledge of the good and the bad as an essential note. Temperance in the Charmides is ultimately reduced to the knowledge of the good and bad. Justice is the active virtue of man, we learn in the Republic, and depends on the guiding light of wisdom, the knowledge of the good and bad. The Meno argues the teachability of virtue; the Protagoras urges its unity. The different virtues are but the different names of the same virtue, wisdom, or knowledge of the good. How get to the knowledge of the good and bad? The Phaedo gives the answer to that and the Republic elaborates it. The philosopher
alone has wisdom; he alone truly possesses virtue.

However, Plato seems to have identified the various virtues because he saw them in the concrete, as qualities of a man considered as man. And since man is one, virtue must be one. Since man is one by reason of his intellect, all his actions as man must some way be reduced to the action of his intellect, and thus likewise be one in principle. The unity of intellect in turn is achieved by the knowledge of that which is the principle of all knowableness, all being, and all virtue, the idea of good.

When in the Republic Plato considers man not only as a whole but in his parts, he likewise assigns different virtues to the different faculties in man. Thus he does admit some distinction between them. At least, fortitude, temperance, and justice were different aspects of wisdom with their separate connotations. These different aspects would certainly be verified in the nature of a philosopher. Moreover, since the philosopher possessed the key virtue in an eminent degree, he would likewise possess the other virtues in an eminent degree. Fortitude, temperance, and justice, then, will complete the nature of a philosopher.

* * * * *

Bravery is conceived as a soldier's virtue. Therefore Socrates went to two soldiers, Laches and Nicias, to learn its definition. The dialogue called the Laches is the story of
their failure to satisfy him. It is suggested that bravery is that quality which enables a soldier "not to run from the enemy". But though bravery may be a soldier's virtue, it does not belong to him exclusively; other people ought to be brave, even in private life and in time of peace. Men ought to be brave not only in fighting enemy soldiers but also in fighting against desires, pleasures, and fears. Perhaps the correct definition is a "certain steadfastness of the soul". This definition also appears to be unsatisfactory; for steadfastness without prudence is foolhardiness. And given prudence dangerous situations will be avoided. But then there will no longer be any room for courage. Therefore courage must be "the knowledge of things to be feared and dared". But the only thing that ought to be the cause of fear is evil, so that we seem to be forced to the conclusion that bravery must ultimately consist in the knowledge of what is good and what is bad. Such a knowledge of course is not bound down by the present, but must be the knowledge of that which is always good and always bad.

Fortitude is knowledge not only of what is to be feared and dared, but fortitude would practically be knowledge of all goods and evils in all their aspects. This last would appear to be a definition of all virtue rather than of bravery alone, and leaves the problem still wide open. Socrates picks it up again in the Republic, and once more starts off by examining the characteristic virtue of the soldier.
The soldier is in need of physical courage as well as of moral courage. All his soldierly qualities center about the idea of ὑπομενέως; he is a man of "high spirit". A good fighter, he never gives up and is unconquerable in battle. Danger holds no terrors for him. He must be physically fit, swift, and strong, be able to endure long hardships, sleepless nights, days out in the wind and cold, long labors with little food. Calm in danger, he wields his weapons and follows the maneuvers with skill. He must pursue his enemies relentlessly, be "hard" on them, and yet he must be gentle towards his friends.

But they ought to be gentle towards their own neighbors, and harsh towards their enemies.5

These characteristics chosen from theoretic treatments of the soldier's spirit find an excellent practical application in Alcibiades' eulogy of the wonderful Socrates found in the closing pages of the Symposium. Alcibiades tells us that during the campaign at Potidaea Socrates outdid everyone in enduring the rigors of war. He bore the marches on an empty stomach more easily than any other. He went out into the cold and snow clad in his summer garments and barefoot—and managed to move about as easily as his fur-clad fellows. At Delium his courage on the field should have won him the reward that was wrongfully given to Alcibiades himself. In retreat he calmly surveyed the situation and quietly gave way, warding off the enemy by his confident bearing alone.6
That courage which merits the name ἀρετή is a virtue of man, not of beasts. It is the virtue of man as man, therefore must be rational in some respect or other. Recklessness and the abandon of a daredevil is not the true courage of a man.

Therefore, I said, do not those who are bold in this manner appear to be not brave but mad? 6

True courage calls for the ability to distinguish; it is not blind impulse. Therefore it is "philosophic", the "knowledge of what is fearful and what is not". 9

As the truly courageous man must be a philosopher, so the truly philosophic man must be courageous. The philosopher alone has the touchstone to change his boldness into courage, the knowledge of the idea of good. But since the philosopher by nature is a highly refined character a special type of courage was demanded of him. This was suggested in the Laches where Socrates pointed out that bravery also referred to the ability to combat desires and pleasures. We find the thought extended and elaborated in the Republic.

Socrates and his companions have dissected the nature of man, magnified his parts, and studied them separately. An integral part of the ideal state was the soldiery in whom was emodied the courage of the state. It was their duty to ward off the enemies of the state, the hostile forces from without and the subversive influences from within. Who were the enemies? It was the duty of the ruling class to point them out.
In general they were all who in any way tended to oppose the 
dictates and ordinances of the rulers. In like manner the 
idéal man had his irascible passions for his soldiery. Their 
proper virtue was bravery, which would enable them to ward off 
all assailants of the principles of truth and justice laid 
down by the reason. They relied on the reason for their gui-
dance and direction.

And we would call every individual brave, 
I think, in virtue of this part, whenever 
his passions preserve against pains and 
pleasures that which has been pronounced 
by reason to be fearful and not fearful.10

The philosopher of Plato was the embodiment of truth. 
Truth was the object of all his desires, its attainment the 
perfection of his nature. The enemy of truth, that which the 
soul of a philosopher shunned most of all, was falsehood. All 
the gods and all men hate a lie. To receive and harbor a lie 
within his soul is most repugnant to the true man.11 Truth 
should be stained into the soul with an indelible dye.12 The 
soul must protect its truth from three great enemies; theft, 
blandishments, and force. For truth is stolen from the soul 
by the persuasive arguments of another or by the slow abrasion 
of time. The soul is deceived by the appeal of pleasures and 
the fear of pain. Truth is wrung from the soul by the force 
of great sorrow and grief.13 The courageous soul will protect 
its treasure of truth against all these enemies. To return 
to the figure of a color dyed into cloth, truth must be so
stained into the soul

that these soaps may not wash out their
dye; for they are very effective cleansers,
namely, pleasure—which is more able to
accomplish this than lye and all the soda
of Chalastra—pain, fear, and desire,
which surpass every other cleanser.14

When a man is able to preserve through all the vicissitudes of
his life right notions about what is to be feared and what is
not, then he is courageous in the fullest sense of the word.

Again Socrates can be cited as the ideal philosopher in
person in this regard. An instance is his calmness and philos-
ophic fearlessness in the face of a condemnation and death
which he might have avoided had he been willing to compromise
his convictions. Death is an example Socrates himself gives
in the Phaedo and in the Republic of one of those things which
people as a whole fear but which a philosopher, who truly knows
what is to be feared and what is not, faces with courage. In
fact, the philosopher ought to welcome it and prepare for it;
his life should be a series of deaths. For death will free
the soul entirely of the prison of the body and allow it to
contemplate truth unhampered.

* * * * *

Socrates raised the question of temperance in the Charm-
mides. As usual the discussion ran through all the preferred
definitions, pointed toward one which suggested the inclusion
of the knowledge of the good, and then left the problem to
be settled at a later date.
Here are the preliminary definitions:

...to do all things orderly and calmly.
...to make the man a modest person.
...to do his duty.
...he who does good things rather than evil is temperate.15

Then comes the suggestion that temperance may be self-knowledge. Self-knowledge can be accomplished by one means only, if it is granted that even that is possible, by reflection and cognition of our thoughts and judgments. Still, it cannot be simply the cognition of our thoughts for this alone can hardly be of any practical value. It must be the knowledge of our good thoughts and our bad ones.16 Here is the old question back again: how to know the good and the bad.

The Republic brings its answer with its theory of the philosopher who is able to contemplate with his reason the idea of good, and in its light temper all his actions.

But what of temperance itself? Before the "longer way" of demonstrating the natural happiness of the just man was undertaken temperance was discussed along with fortitude as the result of the two-fold aim of the artistic-athletic education. There the virtue included all that is contained above under the term ἔσις.

...making use of that simple music which we said produced temperance.17

Here the virtue was summed up in the phrase, "a balanced character". "Temperance is like to a kind of harmony."18
Psychologically this balance or harmony is later explained in terms of the three faculties of the soul. Wisdom and fortitude have been seen to be properties of particular faculties of a soul. Temperance on the other hand, since it implies a harmony or co-ordination of the parts of a unified whole, is a quality of all the faculties. It holds all the faculties within their proper sphere of activity, keeps them from interfering with one another, disposes them for the performance of their own proper function. As a city is tempered when all its citizens are agreed as to who is to be the ruler and who the worker, so a man is tempered when all his faculties consent to be ruled by the reason.

Though temperance implies the proper tuning of the intellect and irascible passions, it primarily is concerned with the control of the concupiscible passions.

In general are not these the principal elements of temperance, that they be submissive to the rulers and themselves govern the pleasures of drink, sex, and food? These are the passions which are most likely to usurp the authority of the intellect and change the man into a monstrous beast, which seeks one pleasure after another, neglects altogether the highest function of man, the pursuit of truth, and the greatest duty of man, the performance of his task in civic life. The tempered man will possess his soul in quiet. When he retires in the evening after granting neither too much nor
too little to his appetites, he will not be disturbed by their promptings, but he will be able to give himself to the contemplation of things he does not as yet understand. His irascible passions will be in repose, his appetites at peace, and his intellect

most easily attains to truth in such circumstances and will also be least apt to see disordered visions in his dreams.20

The control of the passions, which is temperance, takes on a semi-religious character when it is considered in the light of the contemplation of the ideas, especially the "intelligible sun" of all, the idea of good. The one thing that is hindering the soul from its highest possible life, pure contemplation, is the body with all its insistent cravings and yearnings. The satisfaction of its loves and appetites, the soothing of its fears take away the leisure necessary for the pursuit of philosophy. Intemperance throws nations into war with one another. It disturbs the peace and tranquillity of soul that is required if one wishes to perceive the truth. It follows from all this that the true philosopher will shun as much as possible the converse of the body, abstain from its pleasures and satisfactions as far as is possible in this life that he may more truly come to know. The faculty of reasoning must be cleansed from all the barnacles and sea-weed that cling to it as a result of its life in the depths of the sea, where the rays of the beautiful world of light above hardly penetrate.
And thus we will be cleansed free of the irrationality of the body, as is probable after such happenings, and we will know all purity by our own power—this perhaps is truth; for that impurity should comprehend purity is not right.21

And if the philosopher is freed from the unsoundness, ἀφροσύνη, of the body, he will have soundness, ἰφροσύνη, of the soul. This natural asceticism of Plato does carry with it all the implications of his concept of the soul, the theory of reminiscence, metempsychosis, the world of ideas, and other hypotheses which are wrongly suggested as the ultimate explanation of facts. However, in its major points this notion of temperance does not transgress the evidence naturally presented to a keen psychologist such as Plato.

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The fourth and last cardinal virtue is justice. The preliminary discussion in which the concepts of the crowd regarding justice are criticized takes place as a part of the Republic itself, and constitutes the subject matter of the whole first book. Thrasymachus as the antagonist proposes two definitions: "rendering every man his due;"22 and "right is right."23 Both of course fail to satisfy Socrates. The first leaves open the question of how one is to know what is every man's due, and is incomplete. Somehow or other the knowledge of good and evil ought to be brought into the definition. The second presupposes that temporal well-being is the greatest good a man can possess. But the justice we are considering
is a virtue of the soul, necessary to it for its own proper
good. Health and wealth without justice would not be sufficient
to provide happiness for the man.

This characteristically Socratic discussion which ends
by leaving the question open after strongly suggesting the
necessity of writing in knowledge as the fundamental note of
the virtue to be defined, completes the list of those qualities
which "pertain to the soul". The remaining portion of the
Republic is devoted to closing the question and discussing the
effects its presence will produce towards the future happiness
of man. Both the ideal state and the ideal man have been
created to prepare the way for the analysis of their crowning
virtue, justice.

The ideal state has been developed on two principles, the
first of which states that one man is fitted by nature to do
one and only one job. The second is that the ideal state must
not be a disorganized plurality, but a unified organism. The
ruling power in virtue of its wisdom will provide the unity.
Fortitude, the virtue of the soldiers, will protect it. Temperance
will keep every one in order. Justice will put everyone to work, at that job which he is best fitted by nature to
perform. To do one's duty, $\tau\alpha\;\varepsilon\alphaυτος\;\pi\rho\iota\tau\epsilon\iota\kappa\iota\mu$, under the leadership
and guidance of the ruling power is the true concept of
justice.

In the unified organism which is the soul of the philoso-
pher justice is the quality of those actions which will be
the natural result. Given wisdom, fortitude, and temperance, the actions cannot help but be just. There will be a sort of internal justice in the soul if all its faculties perform their proper functions. When such a soul turns to deal with men and states, it will perform its duty, possess civic justice.

It is rather evident that the philosopher will be just in an eminent degree, since he alone has that wisdom which is all-important, the knowledge of the good.

It is interesting to see that Plato does not allow his philosopher to isolate himself upon his own little island of contemplation. He has duties to perform to his fellow men, and since he is just, he will perform them.

Now look and observe, Glaucon, I said that we will do no injustice to those among us who have become philosophers but we will be asking them to be just if we constrain them to protect and guard the others.24

He has been fortunate enough to escape from the darkness of the cave, to dwell in the brightness of truth. He must return to the cave again and teach others the truth. In the state he will be its rules, its guide, its guardian, its teacher. He will take care of the education of the younger generation, see that there will be someone to take his place.

...and keeping the city, the citizens and themselves in order...besides the pursuit of philosophy, each of them undertaking burdens and ruling for the sake of the state.25

There is one large portion of knowledge that contemplation will not provide for the philosopher, practical experience.
This has place in the character of a wise and prudent man, especially one who is to take part in active life. For this reason Plato demands that the years of study be followed by fifteen years of labor in subordinate positions before his philosopher may consider himself at the peak of his perfection. His whole character must be rounded out, mellowed, matured.

Though Plato realized that a man's duty in this world did not stop with his duty to himself, he qualified the extent to which a man is bound to enter into the public life of his land. The state he was constructing was an ideal state, found only in heaven. The states we have on earth are hardly free from corruption and vice. They are rather turbulent, unruly commonwealths, governed by the fickle whims of the mob, or the self-will of the tyrant. In such a state a philosopher in active life will find it difficult to escape contamination. He should, therefore, remain aloof from politics and public affairs, unless commanded by the gods, keeping within shelter, much as a traveler in a storm seeks protection from the wind and rain in the safety of a wall.

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In a discussion of the fundamental virtues one would naturally expect some mention of man's relation to the Supreme Ruler. However, Plato transmits the question of religion to the discretion of Apollo, and does not mention it himself except to castigate the popular contradictory notions of the
gods. That he does expect religion to find some place in the life of the ideal man is evident from the fact that he permits true tales about God to be told to children as part of their earliest education. Ὀρθοτες is included in lists of the virtues of men.27

In a sense Plato has treated the virtue of religion. For in the Euthyphro, in which the discussion centers around the question: ἐστιν ὁ θεός; the argument seems to point to the conclusion that the virtue of religion is a part of justice.

For piety is a part of justice.28 Justice and religion are coupled by Plato much as mental ability and memory. When one is mentioned, the other is frequently also mentioned.29 Among the duties of the philosopher who is in the ruling chair is the offering of sacrifices to his predecessors who have departed to the land of the blessed, as to deities, or at least, as to blessed and sacred souls.30 This certainly suggests that the rulers are also to be the high priests of the state. When justice was finally described in the closing lines of the fourth book of the Republic, it was stated that internal justice would naturally result in external justice, the fulfillment of one's duty. This should include one's duty to the gods as well as to men, and this is stated in the Euthyphro.31 But the question is settled neither here nor in the Republic.
Notes for Chapter Six

1. Plato, Laches, 199 e; Protagoras 350.
2. Plato, Laches, 190-192.
3. Plato, op.cit. 196 d.
4. Plato, op.cit. 199 c.
5. Plato, Republic, 375 c.
6. Plato, Symposium, 221 sqq.
7. Plato, Republic, 430 b.
8. Plato, Protagoras, 353 c.
11. Plato, op.cit. 382.
13. Plato, op.cit. 413.
14. Plato, op.cit. 430 e.
15. Plato, Charmides, 139 b; 160 e; 161 b; 163 e.
16. Plato, op.cit. 174 d.
17. Plato, Republic, 410 a.
18. Plato, op.cit. 431 e.
19. Plato, op.cit. 359 d.
22. Plato, Republic, 331.
23. Plato, op.cit. 357.
27. Plato, Republic, 395 c; Protagoras, 349 b.
28. Plato, Euthyphro, 12 d.
29. Plato, Laws, 133d; Republic, 615 b.
30. Plato, Republic, 540 b.
31. Plato, Euthyphro, 12 e.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: τὸ ἄνθρωπο γέλον

Plato was the philosopher of man. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that Plato and Socrates were the philosophers of man, for in the dialogues the minds of these two thinkers are melted into one, like the light from a double star. However, Plato absorbed Socrates, and he it was who wrote the dialogues. His entire life was the study of man, of his nature, of his virtues, of his last end, and of his happiness. Even when he turned to the discussion of so un-human a notion as that of being, he dealt with the problem in the hopes of better understanding man's knowledge, how it could be true or false. Man in Plato's thought is that being which of all living things on the face of the earth is the one who

By his understanding surpasses all the others and he alone knows law and divinity.1

In the early Socratic dialogues up to and including the Republic Plato is drawing the portrait not merely of man but of the perfect man, the philosopher. He knows of only one higher title than "philosopher", lover of wisdom, to give to anyone, and that is ὁσφός, the Wise. But this last he reserved for God, for, he says,

To call a man wise, Phaedrus, seems to me to be a great thing and proper to God
alone, but to call him a seeker of wisdom or some such title, that would be more fitting for him and more appropriate.2

Plato uses the figure of the portrait himself with regard to the outline of the character of the philosopher. After he has finished mixing his paints and preparing his canvas, after he has filled in the background and drawn the outstanding features of his portrait, leaving only the light and shadow of perspective to be completed, he advises us to each take up his brush and paint a living portrait in our souls of the "philosopher". We are to use our imaginations and emotions, our bodies and souls, mix them and tint them until we achieve that shade which will best serve as a background for the rational part of our nature. Then we are to take our intellect, develop their powers, their retentiveness, their keenness, their depth, their suppleness. This done we should turn our gaze upward; we should turn

the ray of our soul to this, to behold that which gives light to all, and perceiving the good itself, use it as a model...3

The Good will provide the unity essential to a work of art. Guided by its rays, we should next paint in the colors of fortitude, temperance, and justice, striving always to keep that proportion so necessary in a portrait, continually correcting and completing.

And this line they would rub out, I think, and that again draw in.4
What will be the result of this idealistic picture, which is none the less useful because it is idealistic? The result will be ἄνδρεικελον, the likeness of man, which Homer said was the likeness and image of God. Our portrait will be finished when we have made

the human character to the limit of its capacity beloved by God.⁵
Notes for Chapter Seven

1. Plato, Menexenus, 236 d.
2. Plato, Phaedrus, 273 c-d.
4. Plato, op. cit. 301 c.
5. Plato, ibid.
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 Ion, Menexenus, Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Euthydemus, Gorgias, Meno, Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Symposium, Protagoras, Republic, Phaedrus, Theaetetus, Sophist.

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The thesis, "The Portrait of a Philosopher in the Dialogues of Plato", written by Robert F. Harvanek, S.J., has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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December 15, 1940

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January 4, 1941