

Meno

Plato

Greek original

[70a] MEN. ἔχεις μοι εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἄρα διδακτὸν ἢ ἀρετὴ; ἢ οὐ διδακτὸν ἀλλ' ἀσκητόν; ἢ οὔτε ἀσκητόν οὔτε μαθητόν, ἀλλὰ φύσει παραγίγνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἢ ἄλλω τινὶ τρόπῳ;

ΣΩ. ὦ Μένων, πρὸ τοῦ μὲν Θετταλοὶ εὐδόκιμοι ἦσαν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν καὶ ἐθαυμάζοντο ἐφ' ἵππικῇ τε καὶ πλούτῳ, [70b] νῦν δέ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, καὶ ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα οἱ τοῦ σοῦ ἐταίρου Ἀριστίππου πολῖται Λαρισαῖοι. τούτου δὲ ὑμῖν αἰτιὸς ἐστὶ Γοργίας· ἀφικόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐραστὰς ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ εἴληφεν Ἀλευαδῶν τε τοὺς πρώτους, ὧν ὁ σὸς ἐραστὴς ἐστὶν Ἀρίστιππος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Θετταλῶν. καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔθος ὑμᾶς εἴθικεν, ἀφόβως τε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς ἀποκρίνεσθαι ἐάν τις τι ἔρηται, ὥσπερ εἰκὸς τοὺς [70c] εἰδότας, ἅτε καὶ αὐτὸς παρέχων αὐτὸν ἐρωτᾶν τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ ὅτι ἂν τις βούληται, καὶ οὐδενὶ ὅτῳ οὐκ ἀποκρινόμενος.

ΣΩ. ἐνθάδε δέ, ὦ φίλε Μένων, τὸ ἐναντίον περιέστηκεν· ὥσπερ αὐχμὸς τις τῆς σοφίας γέγονεν, καὶ κινδυνεύει [71a] ἐκ τῶνδε τῶν τόπων παρ' ὑμᾶς οἵχεσθαι ἢ σοφία. εἰ γοῦν τινα ἐθέλεις οὕτως ἐρέσθαι τῶν ἐνθάδε, οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ γελάσεται καὶ ἐρεῖ· ὦ ξένε, κινδυνεύω σοι δοκεῖν μακάριός τις εἶναι—ἀρετὴν γοῦν εἴτε διδακτὸν εἶθ' ὅτῳ τρόπῳ παραγίγνεται εἰδέναι—ἐγὼ δὲ τοσοῦτον δέω εἴτε διδακτὸν εἴτε μὴ διδακτὸν εἰδέναι, ὥστ' οὐδὲ αὐτὸ ὅτι ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ παράπαν ἀρετὴ τυγχάνω εἰδώς.

[71b]

ἐγὼ οὖν καὶ αὐτός, ὦ Μένων, οὕτως ἔχω· συμπένομαι τοῖς πολίταις τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, καὶ ἐμαυτὸν καταμέμφομαι ὡς οὐκ εἰδώς περὶ ἀρετῆς τὸ παράπαν· ὁ δὲ μὴ οἶδα τί ἐστὶν, πῶς ἂν ὁποῖόν γέ τι εἰδείην; ἢ δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τε εἶναι, ὅστις Μένωνα μὴ γινώσκει τὸ παράπαν ὅστις ἐστίν, τοῦτον εἰδέναι εἴτε καλὸς εἴτε πλούσιος εἴτε καὶ γενναῖός ἐστιν, εἴτε καὶ τάναντία τούτων; δοκεῖ σοι οἷόν τ' εἶναι;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε. ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀληθῶς [71c] οὐδ' ὅτι ἀρετὴ ἐστὶν οἶσθα, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα περὶ σοῦ καὶ οἴκαδε ἀπαγγέλλωμεν;

ΣΩ. μὴ μόνον γε, ὦ ἐταῖρε, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι οὐδ' ἄλλῳ πῶ ἐνέτυχον εἰδότη, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκῶ.

MEN. τί δέ; Γοργία οὐκ ἐνέτυχες ὅτε ἐνθάδε ἦν;

ΣΩ. ἔγωγε.

MEN. εἴτα οὐκ ἐδόκει σοι εἰδέναι;

ΣΩ. οὐ πάνυ εἰμὶ μνήμων, ὦ Μένων, ὥστε οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ἐν τῷ παρόντι πῶς μοι τότε ἔδοξεν. ἀλλ' ἴσως ἐκεῖνός τε οἶδε, καὶ σὺ ἃ ἐκεῖνος ἔλεγε· ἀνάμνησον οὖν [71d] με πῶς ἔλεγεν. εἰ δὲ βούλει, αὐτὸς εἰπέ· δοκεῖ γὰρ δήπου σοὶ ἅπερ ἐκεῖνω.

MEN. ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. ἐκεῖνον μὲν τοίνυν ἐῷμεν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἅπεστιν· σὺ δὲ αὐτός, ὦ πρὸς θεῶν, Μένων, τί φῆς ἀρετὴν εἶναι; εἶπον καὶ μὴ φθονήσης, ἵνα εὐτυχέστατον ψεῦσμα ἐψευσμένος ὦ, ἂν φανῆς σὺ μὲν εἰδώς καὶ Γοργίας, ἐγὼ δὲ εἰρηκῶς μηδενὶ πώποτε εἰδότη ἐντετυχηκέναί.

[71e] MEN. ἀλλ' οὐ χαλεπὸν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰπεῖν. πρῶτον μὲν, εἰ βούλει ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν, ῥάδιον, ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴ, ἱκανὸν εἶναι τὰ τῆς πόλεως πράττειν, καὶ πράττοντα τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὖ ποιεῖν, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς, καὶ αὐτὸν εὐλαβεῖσθαι μηδὲν τοιοῦτον παθεῖν. εἰ δὲ βούλει γυναικὸς ἀρετὴν, οὐ χαλεπὸν διελθεῖν, ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὴν τὴν οἰκίαν εὖ οἰκεῖν, σῶζουσάν τε τὰ

ἔνδον καὶ κατήκοον οὕσαν τοῦ ἀνδρός. καὶ ἄλλη ἐστὶν παιδὸς ἀρετὴ, καὶ θηλείας καὶ ἄρρενος, καὶ πρεσβυτέρου ἀνδρός, εἰ μὲν βούλει, ἐλευθέρου, εἰ δὲ βούλει, [72a] δούλου.

MEN. καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι ἀρεταὶ εἰσιν, ὥστε οὐκ ἀπορία εἰπεῖν ἀρετῆς πέρι· ὅτι ἐστὶν· καθ' ἐκάστην γὰρ τῶν πράξεων καὶ τῶν ἡλικιῶν πρὸς ἕκαστον ἔργον ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἡ ἀρετὴ ἐστίν, ὡσαύτως δὲ οἶμαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ ἡ κακία.

ΣΩ. πολλῇ γέ τινα εὐτυχίᾳ ἔοικα κεχρησθαι, ὦ Μένων, εἰ μίαν ζητῶν ἀρετὴν σμήνός τι ἀνηύρηκα ἀρετῶν παρὰ σοὶ κείμενον. ἀτάρ, ὦ Μένων, κατὰ ταύτην τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν [72b] περὶ τὰ σμήνη, εἴ μου ἐρομένου μελίττης περὶ οὐσίας ὅτι ποτ' ἐστίν, πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς ἔλεγες αὐτὰς εἶναι, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω μοι, εἴ σε ἡρόμην· ἄρα τούτῳ φῆς πολλὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰς εἶναι καὶ διαφερούσας ἀλλήλων, τῷ μελίττας εἶναι; ἢ τούτῳ μὲν οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν, ἄλλῳ δὲ τῷ, οἷον ἢ κάλλει ἢ μεγέθει ἢ ἄλλῳ τῷ τῶν τοιούτων; εἰπέ, τί ἂν ἀπεκρίνω οὕτως ἐρωτηθεῖς;

MEN. τοῦτ' ἔγωγε, ὅτι οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν, ἢ μέλιτται εἰσὶν, ἢ ἐτέρα τῆς ἐτέρας.

[72c] ΣΩ. εἰ οὖν εἶπον μετὰ ταῦτα· τοῦτο τοίνυν μοι αὐτὸ εἰπέ, ὦ Μένων· ὥ οὐδὲν διαφέρουσιν ἀλλὰ ταυτόν εἰσιν ἅπασαι, τί τοῦτο φῆς εἶναι; εἶχες δήπου ἂν τί μοι εἰπεῖν;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν· κἂν εἰ πολλαὶ καὶ παντοδαπαὶ εἰσιν, ἔν γέ τι εἶδος ταυτὸν ἅπασαι ἔχουσιν δι' ὃ εἰσὶν ἀρεταί, εἰς ὃ καλῶς που ἔχει ἀποβλέψαντα τὸν ἀποκρινόμενον τῷ ἐρωτήσαντι ἐκεῖνο δηλῶσαι, ὃ τυγχάνει [72d] οὕσα ἀρετὴ· ἢ οὐ μανθάνεις ὅτι λέγω;

MEN. δοκῶ γέ μοι μανθάνειν· οὐ μέντοι ὥς βούλομαι γέ πω κατέχω τὸ ἐρωτώμενον.

ΣΩ. πότερον δὲ περὶ ἀρετῆς μόνον σοὶ οὕτω δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων, ἄλλη μὲν ἀνδρὸς εἶναι, ἄλλη δὲ γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ καὶ περὶ ὑγιείας καὶ περὶ μεγέθους καὶ περὶ ἰσχύος ὡσαύτως; ἄλλη μὲν ἀνδρὸς δοκεῖ σοὶ εἶναι ὑγίεια, ἄλλη δὲ γυναικός; ἢ ταυτὸν πανταχοῦ εἶδός ἐστιν, ἄνπερ ὑγίεια [72e] ἢ, ἔάντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ἔάντε ἐν ἄλλῳ ὅτῳ οὖν ἢ;

MEN. ἢ αὐτὴ μοι δοκεῖ ὑγιεῖα γέ εἶναι καὶ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ μέγεθος καὶ ἰσχύς; ἄνπερ ἰσχυρὰ γυνὴ ἢ, τῷ αὐτῷ εἶδει καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἰσχυροῦ ἰσχυρὰ ἔσται; τὸ γὰρ τῇ αὐτῇ τοῦτο λέγω· οὐδὲν διαφέρει πρὸς τὸ ἰσχύς εἶναι ἢ ἰσχύς, ἔάντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ ἢ ἔάντε ἐν γυναικί. ἢ δοκεῖ τί σοι διαφέρειν;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

[73a] ΣΩ. ἢ δὲ ἀρετὴ πρὸς τὸ ἀρετὴ εἶναι διοίσει τι, ἔάντε ἐν παιδί ἢ ἔάντε ἐν πρεσβύτῃ, ἔάντε ἐν γυναικὶ ἔάντε ἐν ἀνδρὶ;

MEN. ἔμοιγέ πως δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο οὐκέτι ὁμοιον εἶναι τοῖς ἄλλοις τούτοις.

ΣΩ. τί δέ; οὐκ ἀνδρὸς μὲν ἀρετὴν ἔλεγες πόλιν εὖ διοικεῖν, γυναικὸς δὲ οἰκίαν;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἄρ' οὖν οἷόν τε εὖ διοικεῖν ἢ πόλιν ἢ οἰκίαν ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν, μὴ σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως διοικοῦντα;

MEN. οὐ δῆτα.

[73b] ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ δικαίως καὶ σωφρόνως διοικῶσιν, δικαιοσύνη καὶ σωφροσύνη διοικήσουσιν;

MEN. ἀνάγκη.

ΣΩ. τῶν αὐτῶν ἄρα ἀμφοτέρωθεν δέονται, εἴπερ μέλλουσιν ἀγαθοὶ εἶναι, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ, δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης.

MEN. φαίνονται.

ΣΩ. τί δὲ παῖς καὶ πρεσβύτερος; μὴν ἀκόλαστοι ὄντες καὶ ἄδικοι ἀγαθοὶ ἂν ποτε γένοιτο;

MEN. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ σώφρονες καὶ [73c] δίκαιοι;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. πάντες ἄρ' ἀνθρώποι τῷ αὐτῷ τρόπῳ ἀγαθοὶ εἰσιν· τῶν αὐτῶν γὰρ τυχόντες ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται.

MEN. ἔοικε.

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἂν δήπου, εἴ γε μὴ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ ᾗν αὐτῶν, τῷ αὐτῷ ἂν τρόπῳ ἀγαθοὶ ᾗσαν.

MEN. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ πάντων ἐστίν, πειρῶ εἰπεῖν καὶ ἀναμνησθῆναι τί αὐτό φησι Γοργίας εἶναι καὶ σὺ μετ' ἐκείνου.

MEN. τί ἄλλο γ' ἢ ἄρχειν οἷόν τ' εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων; [73d] εἴπερ ἓν γέ τι ζητεῖς κατὰ πάντων.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴν ζητῶ γε. ἀλλ' ἄρα καὶ παιδὸς ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ, ὧς Μένων, καὶ δούλου, ἄρχειν οἷω τε εἶναι τοῦ δεσπότου, καὶ δοκεῖ σοι ἔτι ἂν δοῦλος εἶναι ὁ ἄρχων;

MEN. οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ, ὧς Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. οὐ γὰρ εἰκός, ὧς ἄριστε· ἔτι γὰρ καὶ τόδε σκόπει. ἄρχειν φῆς οἷόν τ' εἶναι. οὐ προσθήσομεν αὐτόσε τὸ δικαίως, ἀδίκως δὲ μή;

MEN. οἶμαι ἔγωγε· ἡ γὰρ δικαιοσύνη, ὧς Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ ἐστίν.

[73e] ΣΩ. πότερον ἀρετὴ, ὧς Μένων, ἢ ἀρετὴ τις;

MEN. πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις;

ΣΩ. ὥς περὶ ἄλλου ὁποιοῦν. οἷον, εἰ βούλει, στρογγυλότητος πέρι εἵποιμ' ἂν ἔγωγε ὅτι σχῆμά τί ἐστίν, οὐχ οὕτως ἀπλῶς ὅτι σχῆμα. διὰ ταῦτα δὲ οὕτως ἂν εἵποιμι, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἔστι σχήματα.

MEN. ὀρθῶς γε λέγων σύ, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐγὼ λέγω οὐ μόνον δικαιοσύνην ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄλλας εἶναι ἀρετάς.

[74a] ΣΩ. τίνας ταύτας; εἰπέ. οἷον καὶ ἐγὼ σοι εἵποιμι ἂν καὶ ἄλλα σχήματα, εἴ με κελεύεις· καὶ σὺ οὖν ἐμοὶ εἰπέ ἄλλας ἀρετάς.

MEN. ἡ ἀνδρεία τοίνυν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ ἀρετὴ εἶναι καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ σοφία καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ ἄλλαι πάμπολλαι.

ΣΩ. πάλιν, ὧς Μένων, ταῦτόν πεπόνθαμεν· πολλὰς αὖ ἡυρήκαμεν ἀρετάς μίαν ζητοῦντες, ἄλλον τρόπον ἢ νυνδὴ· τὴν δὲ μίαν, ἢ διὰ πάντων τούτων ἐστίν, οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀνευρεῖν.

MEN. οὐ γὰρ δύναμαί πω, ὧς Σώκρατες, ὥς σὺ ζητεῖς, [74b] μίαν ἀρετὴν λαβεῖν κατὰ πάντων, ὥσπερ ἓν τοῖς ἄλλοις.

ΣΩ. εἰκότως γε· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ προθυμήσομαι, ἐὰν οἷός τ' ὧς, ἡμᾶς προβιβάσαι. μανθάνεις γάρ που ὅτι οὕτως εἴχει περὶ παντός· εἴ τίς σε ἀνέροιτο τοῦτο ὃ νυνδὴ ἐγὼ ἔλεγον, τί ἐστίν σχῆμα, ὧς Μένων; εἰ αὐτῷ εἶπες ὅτι στρογγυλότης, εἴ σοι εἶπεν ἄπερ ἐγὼ, πότερον σχῆμα ἢ στρογγυλότης ἐστίν ἢ

σχῆμά τι; εἶπες δήπου ἂν ὅτι σχῆμά τι.

MEN. πάνυ γε.

[74c] ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν διὰ ταῦτα, ὅτι καὶ ἄλλα ἔστιν σχήματα;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶ εἴ γε προσανηρώτα σε ὅποῖα, ἔλεγες ἂν;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. καὶ αὖ εἰ περὶ χρώματος ὡσαύτως ἀνήρετο ὅτι ἐστίν, καὶ εἰπόντος σου ὅτι τὸ λευκόν, μετὰ ταῦτα ὑπέλαβεν ὁ ἐρωτῶν· πότερον τὸ λευκὸν χρώμά ἐστιν ἢ χρώμά τι; εἶπες ἂν ὅτι χρώμά τι, διότι καὶ ἄλλα τυγχάνει ὄντα;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. καὶ εἴ γέ σε ἐκέλευε λέγειν ἄλλα χρώματα, ἔλεγες [74d] ἂν ἄλλα, ἃ οὐδὲν ἦττον τυγχάνει ὄντα χρώματα τοῦ λευκοῦ;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. εἰ οὖν ὥσπερ ἐγὼ μετῆλει τὸν λόγον, καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι αἰεὶ εἰς πολλὰ ἀφικνούμεθα, ἀλλὰ μή μοι οὕτως, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τὰ πολλὰ ταῦτα ἐνί τινι προσαγορεύεις ὀνόματι, καὶ φῆς οὐδὲν αὐτῶν ὅτι οὐ σχῆμα εἶναι, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ ἐναντία ὄντα ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι ἐστὶν τοῦτο ὃ οὐδὲν ἦττον κατέχει τὸ στρογγύλον ἢ τὸ εὐθύ, ὃ δὴ ὀνομάζεις σχῆμα [74e] καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῆς τὸ στρογγύλον σχῆμα εἶναι ἢ τὸ εὐθύ; ἢ οὐχ οὕτω λέγεις;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἄρ' οὖν, ὅταν οὕτω λέγῃς, τότε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῆς τὸ στρογγύλον εἶναι στρογγύλον ἢ εὐθύ, οὐδὲ τὸ εὐθύ εὐθὺ ἢ στρογγύλον;

MEN. οὐ δήπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴν σχῆμά γε οὐδὲν μᾶλλον φῆς εἶναι τὸ στρογγύλον τοῦ εὐθέος, οὐδὲ τὸ ἕτερον τοῦ ἐτέρου.

MEN. ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. τί ποτε οὖν τοῦτο οὗ τοῦτο ὀνομά ἐστιν, τὸ σχῆμα; [75a] πειρῶ λέγειν. εἰ οὖν τῷ ἐρωτῶντι οὕτως ἢ περὶ σχήματος ἢ χρώματος εἶπες ὅτι ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μανθάνω ἔγωγε ὅτι βούλει, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, οὐδὲ οἶδα ὅτι λέγεις, ἴσως ἂν ἐθαύμασε καὶ εἶπεν· οὐ μανθάνεις ὅτι ζητῶ τὸ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν τούτοις ταῦτόν; ἢ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὦ Μένων, ἔχοις ἂν εἰπεῖν, εἴ τίς σε ἐρωτῶν· τί ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τῷ στρογγύλῳ καὶ εὐθεῖ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις, ἃ δὴ σχήματα καλεῖς, ταῦτόν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν; πειρῶ εἰπεῖν, ἵνα καὶ γένηται σοι μελέτη πρὸς τὴν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπόκρισιν.

[75b] MEN. μή, ἀλλὰ σύ, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἰπέ.

ΣΩ. βούλει σοι χαρίσωμαι;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἐθελήσεις οὖν καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. προθυμητέον τοίνυν· ἄξιον γάρ.

MEN. πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. φέρε δὴ, πειρώμεθά σοι εἰπεῖν τί ἐστὶν σχῆμα. σκόπει οὖν εἰ τόδε ἀποδέχη αὐτὸ εἶναι· ἔστω γὰρ δὴ ἡμῖν τοῦτο σχῆμα, ὃ μόνον τῶν ὄντων τυγχάνει χρώματι ἀεὶ ἐπόμενον. ἱκανῶς σοι, ἢ ἄλλως πως ζητεῖς; ἐγὼ γὰρ κἂν [75c] οὕτως ἀγαπῶην εἴ μοι ἀρετὴν εἴποις.

MEN. ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε εὐηθες, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. πῶς λέγεις;

MEN. ὅτι σχῆμά ποῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ὃ ἀεὶ χροῖα ἔπεται. εἶεν· εἰ δὲ δὴ τὴν χροῖαν τις μὴ φαίη εἰδέναι, ἀλλὰ ὡσαύτως ἀποροῖ ὥσπερ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, τί ἂν οἶε σοι ἀποκεκρίσθαι;

ΣΩ. τάληθ' ἔγωγε· καὶ εἰ μὲν γε τῶν σοφῶν τις εἴη καὶ ἐριστικῶν τε καὶ ἀγωνιστικῶν ὁ ἐρόμενος, εἴποιμ' ἂν [75d] αὐτῷ ὅτι ἐμοὶ μὲν εἴρηται· εἰ δὲ μὴ ὀρθῶς λέγω, σὸν ἔργον λαμβάνειν λόγον καὶ ἐλέγχειν. εἰ δὲ ὥσπερ ἐγὼ τε καὶ σὺ νυνὶ φίλοι ὄντες βούλοιντο ἀλλήλοις διαλέγεσθαι, δεῖ δὴ πρᾶότερόν πως καὶ διαλεκτικώτερον ἀποκρίνεσθαι. ἔστι δὲ ἴσως τὸ διαλεκτικώτερον μὴ μόνον τάληθ' ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ἐκείνων ὧν ἂν προσομολογῇ εἰδέναι ὁ ἐρωτώμενος. πειράσομαι δὴ καὶ ἐγὼ σοι οὕτως εἰπεῖν. [75e] λέγε γάρ μοι· τελευτὴν καλεῖς τι; τοιόνδε λέγω οἶον πέρας καὶ ἔσχατον—πάντα ταῦτα ταῦτόν τι λέγω· ἴσως δ' ἂν ἡμῖν Πρόδικος διαφέροιτο, ἀλλὰ σύ γέ που καλεῖς πεπεράνθαι τι καὶ τετελευτηκέναι—τὸ τοιοῦτον βούλομαι λέγειν, οὐδὲν ποικίλον.

MEN. ἀλλὰ καλῶ, καὶ οἶμαι μανθάνειν ὃ λέγεις.

[76a] ΣΩ. τί δ'; ἐπίπεδον καλεῖς τι, καὶ ἕτερον αὖ στερεόν, οἶον ταῦτα τὰ ἐν ταῖς γεωμετρίαις;

MEN. ἔγωγε καλῶ.

ΣΩ. ἤδη τοίνυν ἂν μάθοις μου ἐκ τούτων σχῆμα ὃ λέγω. κατὰ γὰρ παντὸς σχήματος τοῦτο λέγω, εἰς ὃ τὸ στερεὸν περαίνει, τοῦτ' εἶναι σχῆμα· ὅπερ ἂν συλλαβὼν εἴποιμι στερεοῦ πέρας σχῆμα εἶναι.

MEN. τὸ δὲ χρῶμα τί λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. ὑβριστὴς γ' εἶ, ὦ Μένων· ἀνδρὶ πρεσβύτῃ πράγματα προστάττεις ἀποκρίνεσθαι, αὐτὸς δὲ οὐκ ἐθέλεις [76b] ἀναμνησθεὶς εἰπεῖν ὅτι ποτε λέγει Γοργίας ἀρετὴν εἶναι.

MEN. ἀλλ' ἐπειδάν μοι σὺ τοῦτ' εἴπῃς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔρῳ σοι.

ΣΩ. κἂν κατακεκαλυμμένος τις γνοίῃ, ὦ Μένων, διαλεγομένου σου, ὅτι καλὸς εἶ καὶ ἐρασταί σοι ἔτι εἰσίν.

MEN. τί δὴ;

ΣΩ. ὅτι οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐπιτάττεις ἐν τοῖς λόγοις, ὅπερ ποιοῦσιν οἱ τρυφῶντες, ἅτε τυραννεύοντες ἕως ἂν ἐν ὥρᾳ [76c] ᾧσιν, καὶ ἅμα ἐμοῦ ἴσως κατέγνωνκας ὅτι εἰμὶ ἡττων τῶν καλῶν· χαριοῦμαι οὖν σοι καὶ ἀποκρινοῦμαι.

MEN. πάνυ μὲν οὖν χάρισαι.

ΣΩ. βούλει οὖν σοι κατὰ Γοργίαν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ἥ ἂν σὺ μάλιστα ἀκολουθήσῃς;

MEN. βούλομαι· πῶς γὰρ οὔ;

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν λέγετε ἀπορροάς τινας τῶν ὄντων κατὰ Ἐμπεδοκλέα;

MEN. σφόδρα γε.

ΣΩ. καὶ πόρους εἰς οὓς καὶ δι' ὧν αἱ ἀπορροαὶ πορεύονται;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. καὶ τῶν ἀπορροῶν τὰς μὲν ἀρμόττειν ἐνίοις τῶν [76d] πόρων, τὰς δὲ ἐλάττους ἢ μείζους εἶναι;

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ ὄψιν καλεῖς τι;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἐκ τούτων δὴ σύνες ὁ τοι λέγω, ἔφη Πίνδαρος. ἔστιν γὰρ χροὰ ἀπορροὴ σχημάτων ὄψει σύμμετρος καὶ αἰσθητός.

MEN. ἄριστα μοι δοκεῖς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταύτην τὴν ἀπόκρισιν εἰρηκέναι.

ΣΩ. ἴσως γάρ σοι κατὰ συνήθειαν εἴρηται· καὶ ἅμα οἶμαι ἐννοεῖς ὅτι ἔχοις ἂν ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰπεῖν καὶ φωνὴν ὃ ἔστι, [76e] καὶ ὁσμὴν καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ τῶν τοιούτων.

MEN. πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. τραγικὴ γάρ ἐστιν, ὦ Μένων, ἡ ἀπόκρισις, ὥστε ἀρέσκει σοι μάλλον ἢ ἡ περὶ τοῦ σχήματος.

MEN. ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ Ἀλεξιδήμου, ὥς ἐγὼ ἐμαυτὸν πείθω, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη βελτίων· οἶμαι δὲ οὐδ' ἂν σοὶ δόξαι, εἰ μὴ, ὥσπερ χθὲς ἔλεγες, ἀναγκαῖόν σοι ἀπιέναι πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων, ἀλλ' εἰ περιμέναις τε καὶ μυηθεῖς.

[77a] MEN. ἀλλὰ περιμένειμ' ἂν, ὦ Σώκρατες, εἴ μοι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγοις.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴν προθυμίας γε οὐδὲν ἀπολείψω, καὶ σοῦ ἔνεκα καὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, λέγων τοιαῦτα· ἀλλ' ὅπως μὴ οὐχ οἷός τ' ἔσομαι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα λέγειν. ἀλλ' ἴθι δὴ πειρῶ καὶ σὺ ἐμοὶ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν ἀποδοῦναι, κατὰ ὅλου εἰπὼν ἀρετῆς πέρι ὅτι ἐστίν, καὶ παῦσαι πολλὰ ποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ ἐνός, ὅπερ φασὶ τοὺς συντρίβοντάς τι ἐκάστοτε οἱ σκώπτοντες, ἀλλὰ ἐάσας ὅλην καὶ ὑγιῇ εἰπέ τί ἐστιν ἀρετῇ. τὰ δέ γε παραδείγματα [77b] παρ' ἐμοῦ εἴληφας.

MEN. δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ εἶναι, καθάπερ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει, χαίρειν τε καλοῖσι καὶ δύνασθαι· καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω ἀρετὴν, ἐπιθυμοῦντα τῶν καλῶν δυνατὸν εἶναι πορίζεσθαι.

ΣΩ. ἄρα λέγεις τὸν τῶν καλῶν ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι;

MEN. μάλιστα γε.

ΣΩ. ἄρα ὥς ὄντων τινῶν οἱ τῶν κακῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, ἐτέρων δὲ οἱ τῶν [77c] ἀγαθῶν; οὐ πάντες, ὦριστε, δοκοῦσί σοι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμεῖν;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ τινες τῶν κακῶν;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. οἰόμενοι τὰ κακὰ ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, λέγεις, ἢ καὶ γινώσκοντες ὅτι κακὰ ἐστίν ὅμως ἐπιθυμοῦσιν αὐτῶν;

MEN. ἀμφότερα ἔμοιγε δοκοῦσιν.

ΣΩ. ἦ γὰρ δοκεῖ τίς σοι, ὦ Μένων, γινώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακὰ ἐστίν ὅμως ἐπιθυμεῖν αὐτῶν;

MEN. μάλιστα.

ΣΩ. τί ἐπιθυμεῖν λέγεις; ἢ γενέσθαι αὐτῷ;

MEN. γενέσθαι· τί γὰρ [77d] ἄλλο;

ΣΩ. πότερον ἡγούμενος τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν ἐκείνον ᾧ ἂν γένηται, ἢ γινώσκων τὰ κακὰ ὅτι βλάπτει ᾧ ἂν παρῇ;

MEN. εἰσὶ μὲν οἱ ἡγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν, εἰσὶν δὲ καὶ οἱ γινώσκοντες ὅτι βλάπτει.

ΣΩ. ἢ καὶ δοκοῦσί σοι γινώσκειν τὰ κακὰ ὅτι κακά ἐστιν οἱ ἡγούμενοι τὰ κακὰ ὠφελεῖν;

MEN. οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ τοῦτό γε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὗτοι μὲν οὐ τῶν κακῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν, [77e] οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτά, ἀλλὰ ἐκείνων ἃ ᾧοντο ἀγαθὰ εἶναι, ἔστιν δὲ ταῦτά γε κακά· ὥστε οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες αὐτὰ καὶ οἰόμενοι ἀγαθὰ εἶναι δῆλον ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν. ἢ οὐ;

MEN. κινδυνεύουσιν οὗτοί γε.

ΣΩ. τί δέ; οἱ τῶν κακῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντες, ὡς φῆς σύ, ἡγούμενοι δὲ τὰ κακὰ βλάπτειν ἐκείνον ᾧ ἂν γίγνηται, γινώσκουσιν δήπου ὅτι βλαβήσονται ὑπ' αὐτῶν;

MEN. [78a] ἀνάγκη.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ τοὺς βλαπτομένους οὗτοι οὐκ οἶονται ἀθλίους εἶναι καθ' ὅσον βλάπτονται;

MEN. καὶ τοῦτο ἀνάγκη.

ΣΩ. τοὺς δὲ ἀθλίους οὐ κακοδαίμονας;

MEN. οἶμαι ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις βούλεται ἄθλιος καὶ κακοδαίμων εἶναι;

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἄρα βούλεται, ὦ Μένων, τὰ κακὰ οὐδεὶς, εἴπερ μὴ βούλεται τοιοῦτος εἶναι. τί γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἄθλιον εἶναι ἢ ἐπιθυμεῖν τε τῶν κακῶν καὶ κτᾶσθαι;

MEN. κινδυνεύεις [78b] ἀληθῆ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ οὐδεὶς βούλεσθαι τὰ κακά.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν νυνδὴ ἔλεγες ὅτι ἔστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ βούλεσθαι τε τὰγαθὰ καὶ δύνασθαι;

MEN. εἶπον γάρ.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν τοῦ λεχθέντος τὸ μὲν βούλεσθαι πᾶσιν ὑπάρχει, καὶ ταύτῃ γε οὐδὲν ὁ ἕτερος τοῦ ἐτέρου βελτίων;

MEN. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ δῆλον ὅτι εἴπερ ἐστὶ βελτίων ἄλλος ἄλλου, κατὰ τὸ δύνασθαι ἂν εἴη ἀμείνων.

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον ἀρετὴ, [78c] δύναμις τοῦ πορίζεσθαι τὰγαθὰ.

MEN. παντάπασί μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς σὺ νῦν ὑπολαμβάνεις.

ΣΩ. ἴδωμεν δὴ καὶ τοῦτο εἰ ἀληθὲς λέγεις· ἴσως γὰρ ἂν εὖ λέγοις. τὰγαθὰ φῆς οἷόν τ' εἶναι πορίζεσθαι ἀρετὴν εἶναι;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἀγαθὰ δὲ καλεῖς οὐχὶ οἷον ὑγίειάν τε καὶ πλοῦτον;

MEN. καὶ χρυσίον λέγω καὶ ἀργύριον κτᾶσθαι καὶ τιμὰς ἐν πόλει καὶ ἀρχάς.

ΣΩ. μὴ ἄλλ' ἅττα λέγεις τὰγαθὰ ἢ τὰ τοιαῦτα;

MEN. οὐκ, ἀλλὰ [78d] πάντα λέγω τὰ τοιαῦτα.

ΣΩ. εἶεν· χρυσίον δὲ δὴ καὶ ἀργύριον πορίζεσθαι ἀρετὴ ἐστίν, ὥς φησι Μένων ὁ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως πατρικὸς ξένος. πότερον προστιθεῖς τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ, ὃ Μένων, τὸ δικαίως καὶ ὀσίως, ἢ οὐδέν σοι διαφέρει, ἀλλὰ κἂν ἀδίκως τις αὐτὰ πορίζηται, ὁμοίως σὺ αὐτὰ ἀρετὴν καλεῖς;

MEN. οὐ δῆπου, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ κακίαν.

MEN. πάντως δῆπου.

ΣΩ. δεῖ ἄρα, ὥς ἔοικε, τούτῳ τῷ πόρῳ δικαιοσύνην ἢ σωφροσύνην ἢ [78e] ὁσιότητα προσεῖναι, ἢ ἄλλο τι μόνιον ἀρετῆς· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐκ ἔσται ἀρετὴ, καίπερ ἐκπορίζουσα τὰγαθὰ.

MEN. πῶς γὰρ ἄνευ τούτων ἀρετὴ γένοιτ' ἄν;

ΣΩ. τὸ δὲ μὴ ἐκπορίζειν χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον, ὅταν μὴ δίκαιον ᾖ, μήτε αὐτῷ μήτε ἄλλῳ, οὐκ ἀρετὴ καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπορία;

MEN. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. οὐδὲν ἄρα μᾶλλον ὁ πόρος τῶν τοιούτων ἀγαθῶν ἢ ἡ ἀπορία ἀρετῆς ἂν εἴη, ἀλλὰ, ὥς ἔοικεν, ὃ μὲν ἂν μετὰ δικαιοσύνης γίγνηται, ἀρετὴ ἔσται, ὃ δ' [79a] ἂν ἄνευ πάντων τῶν τοιούτων, κακία.

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι ὥς λέγεις.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν τούτων ἕκαστον ὀλίγον πρότερον μόνιον ἀρετῆς ἔφαμεν εἶναι, τὴν δικαιοσύνην καὶ σωφροσύνην καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. εἴτα, ὦ Μένων, παίζεις πρὸς με;

MEN. τί δῆ, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. ὅτι ἄρτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος σου μὴ καταγνύναι μηδὲ κερματίζειν τὴν ἀρετὴν, καὶ δόντος παραδείγματα καθ' ἃ δέοι ἀποκρίνεσθαι, τούτου μὲν ἡμέλησας, λέγεις δέ μοι ὅτι ἀρετὴ [79b] ἐστὶν οἷόν τ' εἶναι τὰγαθὰ πορίζεσθαι μετὰ δικαιοσύνης· τοῦτο δὲ φῆς μόνιον ἀρετῆς εἶναι;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν συμβαίνει ἐξ ὧν σὺ ὁμολογεῖς, τὸ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πράττειν ὅτι ἂν πράττη, τοῦτο ἀρετὴν εἶναι· τὴν γὰρ δικαιοσύνην μόνιον φῆς ἀρετῆς εἶναι, καὶ ἕκαστα τούτων. τί οὖν δὴ τοῦτο λέγω; ὅτι ἐμοῦ δεηθέντος ὅλον εἰπεῖν τὴν ἀρετὴν, αὐτὴν μὲν πολλοῦ δεῖς εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἐστίν, πᾶσαν δὲ φῆς πρᾶξιν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ἐάνπερ μετὰ μορίου [79c] ἀρετῆς πράττηται, ὥσπερ εἰρηκῶς ὅτι ἀρετὴ ἐστὶν τὸ ὅλον καὶ ἤδη γνωσομένου ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐὰν σὺ κατακερματίζης αὐτὴν κατὰ μόρια. δεῖται οὖν σοι πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, τῆς αὐτῆς ἐρωτήσεως, ὃ φίλε Μένων, τί ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ, εἰ μετὰ μορίου ἀρετῆς πᾶσα πρᾶξις ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη; τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν λέγειν, ὅταν λέγη τις, ὅτι πᾶσα ἢ μετὰ δικαιοσύνης πρᾶξις ἀρετὴ ἐστίν. ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι πάλιν δεῖσθαι τῆς αὐτῆς

ἐρωτήσεως, ἀλλ' οἶει τινὰ εἰδέναι μόνιον ἀρετῆς ὅτι ἐστίν, αὐτὴν μὴ εἰδότα;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

[79d] ΣΩ. εἰ γὰρ καὶ μέμνησαι, ὅτ' ἐγὼ σοι ἄρτι ἀπεκρινάμην περὶ τοῦ σχήματος, ἀπεβάλλομένου τὴν τοιαύτην ἀπόκρισιν τὴν διὰ τῶν ἔτι ζητουμένων καὶ μήπω ὠμολογημένων ἐπιχειροῦσαν ἀποκρίνεσθαι.

MEN. καὶ ὀρθῶς γε ἀπεβάλλομεν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. μὴ τοίνυν, ὦ ἄριστε, μηδὲ σὺ ἔτι ζητουμένης ἀρετῆς ὅλης ὅτι ἐστίν οἷου διὰ τῶν ταύτης μορίων ἀποκρινόμενος δηλώσειν αὐτὴν ὁπωσοῦν, ἢ ἄλλο ὅτιοῦν τούτῳ τῷ αὐτῷ [79e] τρόπῳ λέγων, ἀλλὰ πάλιν τῆς αὐτῆς δεήσεσθαι ἐρωτήσεως, τίνος ὄντος ἀρετῆς λέγεις ἢ λέγεις· ἢ οὐδὲν σοι δοκῶ λέγειν;

MEN. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖς ὀρθῶς λέγειν.

ΣΩ. ἀποκρίναι τοίνυν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς· τί φῆς ἀρετὴν εἶναι καὶ σὺ καὶ ὁ ἐταῖρός σου;

MEN. ὦ Σώκρατες, ἡκουον μὲν ἔγωγε πρὶν καὶ συγγενέσθαι [80a] σοι ὅτι σὺ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ αὐτός τε ἀπορεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖς ἀπορεῖν· καὶ νῦν, ὥς γέ μοι δοκεῖς, βοηθεύεις με καὶ φαρμάττεας καὶ ἀτεχνῶς κατεπάδεις, ὥστε μεστὸν ἀπορίας γεγονέναι. καὶ δοκεῖς μοι παντελῶς, εἰ δεῖ τι καὶ σκῶψαι, ὁμοιότατος εἶναι τό τε εἶδος καὶ τὰλλα ταύτῃ τῇ πλατεῖα νάρκη τῇ θαλαττίᾳ· καὶ γὰρ αὕτη τὸν ἀεὶ πλησιάζοντα καὶ ἀπτόμενον ναρκᾶν ποιεῖ, καὶ σὺ δοκεῖς μοι νῦν ἐμὲ τοιοῦτόν τι πεποιηκέναι, ναρκᾶν· ἀληθῶς γὰρ ἔγωγε καὶ [80b] τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ στόμα ναρκῶ, καὶ οὐκ ἔχω ὅτι ἀποκρίνωμαί σοι. καίτοι μυριάκις γε περὶ ἀρετῆς παμπόλλους λόγους εἶρηκα καὶ πρὸς πολλούς, καὶ πάνυ εὖ, ὥς γε ἐμαυτῷ ἐδόκουν· νῦν δὲ οὐδ' ὅτι ἐστὶν τὸ παράπαν ἔχω εἰπεῖν. καὶ μοι δοκεῖς εὖ βουλευέσθαι οὐκ ἐκπλέων ἐνθύνει οὐδ' ἀποδημῶν· εἰ γὰρ ξένος ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει τοιαῦτα ποιοῖς, τάχ' ἂν ὥς γόης ἀπαχθείης.

ΣΩ. πανοῦργος εἶ, ὦ Μένων, καὶ ὀλίγου ἐξηπάτησάς με.

MEN. τί μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες;

[80c] ΣΩ. γινώσκω οὗ ἕνεκά με ἤκασας.

MEN. τίνος δὴ οἶει;

ΣΩ. ἵνα σε ἀντεικάσω. ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο οἶδα περὶ πάντων τῶν καλῶν, ὅτι χαίρουσιν εἰκαζόμενοι—λυσιστελεῖ γὰρ αὐτοῖς· καλαὶ γὰρ οἶμαι τῶν καλῶν καὶ αἱ εἰκόνες—ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀντεικάσομαί σε. ἐγὼ δέ, εἰ μὲν ἡ νάρκη αὕτη ναρκῶσα οὕτω καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιεῖ ναρκᾶν, ἔοικα αὐτῇ· εἰ δὲ μή, οὐ. οὐ γὰρ εὐπορῶν αὐτὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ ἀπορεῖν, ἀλλὰ παντὸς μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἀπορῶν οὕτως καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιῶ [80d] ἀπορεῖν. καὶ νῦν περὶ ἀρετῆς ὃ ἔστιν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ οἶδα, σὺ μέντοι ἴσως πρότερον μὲν ἤδησθα πρὶν ἐμοῦ ἄψασθαι, νῦν μέντοι ὁμοίος εἶ οὐκ εἰδότι. ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ σκέψασθαι καὶ συζητῆσαι ὅτι ποτέ ἐστιν.

MEN. καὶ τίνα τρόπον ζητήσεις, ὦ Σώκρατες, τοῦτο ὃ μὴ οἶσθα τὸ παράπαν ὅτι ἐστίν; ποῖον γὰρ ὦν οὐκ οἶσθα προθέμενος ζητήσεις; ἢ εἰ καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα ἐντύχοις αὐτῷ, πῶς εἴσῃ ὅτι τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὃ σὺ οὐκ ἤδησθα;

[80e] ΣΩ. μανθάνω οἷον βούλει λέγειν, ὦ Μένων. ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις, ὥς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἀνθρώπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ—οἶδεν γάρ, καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως—οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν—οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσῃ.

[81a] MEN. οὐκοῦν καλῶς σοι δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι ὁ λόγος οὗτος, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

MEN. ἔχεις λέγειν ὅπη;

ΣΩ. ἔγωγε· ἀκήκοα γὰρ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν σοφῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα πράγματα—

MEN. τίνα λόγον λεγόντων;

ΣΩ. ἀληθῆ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖν, καὶ καλόν.

MEN. τίνα τοῦτον, καὶ τίνες οἱ λέγοντες;

ΣΩ. οἱ μὲν λέγοντές εἰσι τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται λόγον οἷοις τ' εἶναι [81b] διδόναι· λέγει δὲ καὶ Πίνδαρος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ὅσοι θεοὶ εἰσιν. ἃ δὲ λέγουσιν, ταυτί ἐστίν· ἀλλὰ σκόπει εἴ σοι δοκοῦσιν ἀληθῆ λέγειν. φασὶ γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι ἀθάνατον, καὶ τοτὲ μὲν τελευτᾶν—ὃ δὴ ἀποθνήσκειν καλοῦσι—τοτὲ δὲ πάλιν γίνεσθαι, ἀπόλλυσθαι δ' οὐδέποτε· δεῖν δὲ διὰ ταῦτα ὡς ὀσιώτατα διαβιώναι τὸν βίον· οἷσιν γὰρ ἂν—

Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος

δέξεται, εἰς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει

ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν,

[81c]

ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ

καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίᾳ τε μέγιστοι

ἄνδρες αὖξοντ'· ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥρωες ἄγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλεῦνται.

ἄτε οὖν ἡ ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός τε οὕσα καὶ πολλάκις γεγονυῖα, καὶ ἑωρακυῖα καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἄιδου καὶ πάντα χρήματα, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι οὐ μεμάθηκεν· ὥστε οὐδὲν θαυμαστὸν καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ περὶ ἄλλων οἷόν τ' εἶναι αὐτὴν ἀναμνησθῆναι, ἃ γε καὶ πρότερον ἠπίστατο. ἄτε γὰρ τῆς φύσεως [81d] ἀπάσης συγγενοῦς οὕσης, καὶ μεμαθηκυῖας τῆς ψυχῆς ἅπαντα, οὐδὲν κωλύει εἶναι μόνον ἀναμνησθέντα—ὃ δὲ μάθησιν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι—τᾶλλα πάντα αὐτὸν ἀνευρεῖν, ἐάν τις ἀνδρεῖος ᾗ καὶ μὴ ἀποκάμνη ζητῶν· τὸ γὰρ ζητεῖν ἄρα καὶ τὸ μαθάνειν ἀνάμνησις ὅλον ἐστίν. οὐκ οὖν δεῖ πείθεσθαι τούτῳ τῷ ἐριστικῷ λόγῳ· οὗτος μὲν γὰρ ἂν ἡμᾶς ἀργοὺς ποιήσειεν καὶ ἔστιν τοῖς μαλακοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡδὺς ἀκοῦσαι, ὅδε [81e] δὲ ἐργατικούς τε καὶ ζητητικούς ποιεῖ· ὧς ἐγὼ πιστεύων ἀληθεῖ εἶναι ἐθέλω μετὰ σοῦ ζητεῖν ἀρετὴν ὅτι ἐστίν.

MEN. ναί, ὦ Σώκρατες· ἀλλὰ πῶς λέγεις τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ μαθάνομεν, ἀλλὰ ἦν καλοῦμεν μάθησιν ἀνάμνησίς ἐστιν; ἔχεις με τοῦτο διδάξαι ὡς οὕτως ἔχει;

ΣΩ. καὶ ἄρτι εἶπον, ὦ Μένων, ὅτι πανοῦργος εἶ, καὶ [82a] νῦν ἐρωτᾷς εἰ ἔχω σε διδάξαι, ὃς οὐ φημι διδασκῆναι εἶναι ἀλλ' ἀνάμνησιν, ἵνα δὲ εὐθύς φαίνωμαι αὐτὸς ἐμαυτῷ τάναντία λέγων.

MEN. οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐ πρὸς τοῦτο βλέψας εἶπον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔθους· ἀλλ' εἰ πῶς μοι ἔχεις ἐνδείξασθαι ὅτι ἔχει ὥσπερ λέγεις, ἐνδείξει.

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' ἔστι μὲν οὐ ῥάδιον, ὅμως δὲ ἐθέλω προθυμηθῆναι σοῦ ἕνεκα. ἀλλὰ μοι προσκάλεσον τῶν πολλῶν [82b] ἀκολούθων τουτωνὶ τῶν σαυτοῦ ἕνα, ὄντινα βούλει, ἵνα ἐν τούτῳ σοι ἐπιδείξωμαι.

MEN. πάνυ γε. δεῦρο πρόσελθε.

ΣΩ. Ἕλληνας μὲν ἐστὶ καὶ ἐλληνίζει;

ΜΕΝ. πάντως γε σφόδρα, οἰκογενὴς γε.

ΣΩ. πρόσεχε δὴ τὸν νοῦν ὁπότ' ἂν σοὶ φαίνεται, ἢ ἀναμνησκόμενος ἢ μανθάνων παρ' ἐμοῦ.

ΜΕΝ. ἀλλὰ προσέξω.

ΣΩ. εἰπέ δή μοι, ὦ παῖ, γινώσκεις τετράγωνον χωρίον ὅτι τοιοῦτόν ἐστιν;

ΠΑΙ. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἔστιν οὖν [82c] τετράγωνον χωρίον ἴσας ἔχον τὰς γραμμὰς ταύτας πάσας, τέτταρας οὐσας;

ΠΑΙ. πάντως γε.

ΣΩ. οὐ καὶ ταυταὶ τὰς διὰ μέσου ἐστὶν ἴσας ἔχον;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἴη ἂν τοιοῦτον χωρίον καὶ μεῖζον καὶ ἔλαττον;

ΠΑΙ. πάντως γε.

ΣΩ. εἰ οὖν εἴη αὕτη ἡ πλευρὰ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ αὕτη δυοῖν, πόσων ἂν εἴη ποδῶν τὸ ὅλον; ὧδε δὲ σκοπεῖ· εἰ ἦν ταύτη δυοῖν ποδοῖν, ταύτη δὲ ἐνὸς ποδὸς μόνον, ἄλλο τι ἅπαξ ἂν ἦν δυοῖν ποδοῖν τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙ. [82d] ναί.

ΣΩ. ἐπειδὴ δὲ δυοῖν ποδοῖν καὶ ταύτη, ἄλλο τι ἢ δις δυοῖν γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙ. γίγνεται.

ΣΩ. δυοῖν ἄρα δις γίγνεται ποδῶν;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. πόσοι οὖν εἰσιν οἱ δύο δις πόδες; λογισάμενος εἰπέ.

ΠΑΙ. τέτταρες, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν γένοιτ' ἂν τούτου τοῦ χωρίου ἕτερον διπλάσιον, τοιοῦτον δέ, ἴσας ἔχον πάσας τὰς γραμμὰς ὥσπερ τοῦτο;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. πόσων οὖν ἔσται ποδῶν;

ΠΑΙ. ὀκτώ.

ΣΩ. φέρε δή, πειρῶ μοι εἰπεῖν πηλίκη τις ἔσται [82e] ἐκείνου ἡ γραμμὴ ἐκάστη. ἡ μὲν γὰρ τοῦδε δυοῖν ποδοῖν· τί δὲ ἡ ἐκείνου τοῦ διπλασίου;

ΠΑΙ. δῆλον δὴ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι διπλασία.

ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς, ὦ Μένων, ὥς ἐγὼ τοῦτον οὐδὲν διδάσκω, ἀλλ' ἐρωτῶ πάντα; καὶ νῦν οὗτος οἶεται εἰδέναι ὅποια ἐστὶν ἀφ' ἧς τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον γενήσεται· ἢ οὐ δοκεῖ σοι;

ΜΕΝ. ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. οἶδεν οὖν;

ΜΕΝ. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. οἶται δέ γε ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας;

ΜΕΝ. ναί.

ΣΩ. θεῶ δὴ αὐτὸν ἀναμνησκόμενον ἐφεξῆς, ὥς δεῖ ἀναμνησθεσθαι.

σὺ δέ μοι λέγε· ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας γραμμῆς φῆς τὸ [83a] διπλάσιον χωρίον γίνεσθαι; τοιόνδε λέγω, μὴ ταύτη μὲν μακρόν, τῇ δὲ βραχύ, ἀλλὰ ἴσον πανταχῇ ἔστω ὥσπερ τουτί, διπλάσιον δὲ τούτου, ὁκτώπουν· ἀλλ' ὅρα εἰ ἔτι σοι ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας δοκεῖ ἔσεσθαι.

ΠΑΙ. ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν διπλασία αὕτη ταύτης γίγνεται, ἂν ἐτέραν τοσαύτην προσθῶμεν ἐνθένδε;

ΠΑΙ. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἀπὸ ταύτης δὴ, φῆς, ἔσται τὸ ὁκτώπουν χωρίον, ἂν τέτταρες τοσαῦται [83b] γένωνται;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. ἀναγραφώμεθα δὴ ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἴσας τέτταρας. ἄλλο τι ἢ τουτὶ ἂν εἴη ὃ φῆς τὸ ὁκτώπουν εἶναι;

ΠΑΙ. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστὶν ταυτὶ τέτταρα, ὧν ἕκαστον ἴσον τούτῳ ἐστὶν τῷ τετράποδι;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. πόσον οὖν γίγνεται; οὐ τετράκις τοσοῦτον;

ΠΑΙ. πῶς δ' οὔ;

ΣΩ. διπλάσιον οὖν ἐστὶν τὸ τετράκις τοσοῦτον;

ΠΑΙ. οὐ μὰ Δία.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ ποσαπλάσιον;

ΠΑΙ. τετραπλάσιον.

ΣΩ. ἀπὸ τῆς διπλασίας [83c] ἄρα, ὧ παῖ, οὐ διπλάσιον ἀλλὰ τετραπλάσιον γίγνεται χωρίον.

ΠΑΙ. ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. τεττάρων γὰρ τετράκις ἐστὶν ἑκκαίδεκα. οὐχί;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. ὁκτώπουν δ' ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς; οὐχὶ ἀπὸ μὲν ταύτης τετραπλάσιον;

ΠΑΙ. φημί.

ΣΩ. τετράπουν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμισέας ταυτησὶ τουτί;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. εἴεν· τὸ δὲ ὁκτώπουν οὐ τοῦδε μὲν διπλάσιον ἐστὶν, τούτου δὲ ἡμισυ;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἀπὸ μὲν μείζονος ἔσται ἢ τοσαύτης γραμμῆς, ἀπὸ ἐλάττονος δὲ ἢ [83d] τοσησδί; ἢ οὔ;

ΠΑΙ. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ οὕτω.

ΣΩ. καλῶς· τὸ γάρ σοι δοκοῦν τοῦτο ἀποκρίνου. καί μοι λέγε· οὐχ ἦδε μὲν δυοῖν ποδοῖν ἦν, ἢ δὲ

τεττάρων;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. δεῖ ἄρα τὴν τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμὴν μείζω μὲν εἶναι τῆσδε τῆς δίποδος, ἐλάττω δὲ τῆς τετράποδος.

ΠΑΙ. δεῖ.

[83e] ΣΩ. πειρῶ δὴ λέγειν πηλίκην τινὰ φῆς αὐτὴν εἶναι.

ΠΑΙ. τρίποδα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἄνπερ τρίπους ἦ, τὸ ἥμισυ ταύτης προσληψόμεθα καὶ ἔσται τρίπους; δύο μὲν γὰρ οἶδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ ἐνθένδε ὡσαύτως δύο μὲν οἶδε, ὁ δὲ εἷς· καὶ γίγνεται τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ὃ φῆς.

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἂν ἦ τῆδε τριῶν καὶ τῆδε τριῶν, τὸ ὅλον χωρίον τριῶν τρεῖς ποδῶν γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙ. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. τρεῖς δὲ τρεῖς πόσοι εἰσὶ πόδες;

ΠΑΙ. ἐννέα.

ΣΩ. ἔδει δὲ τὸ διπλάσιον πόσων εἶναι ποδῶν;

ΠΑΙ. ὀκτώ.

ΣΩ. οὐδ' ἄρ' ἀπὸ τῆς τρίποδός πω τὸ ὀκτώπουν χωρίον γίγνεται.

ΠΑΙ. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ποίας; πειρῶ ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν ἀκριβῶς· καὶ [84a] εἰ μὴ βούλει ἀριθμεῖν, ἀλλὰ δεῖξον ἀπὸ ποίας.

ΠΑΙ. ἀλλὰ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔγωγε οὐκ οἶδα.

ΣΩ. ἐννοεῖς αὖ, ὦ Μένων, οὗ ἐστὶν ἤδη βαδίζων ὅδε τοῦ ἀναμιμνήσκεσθαι; ὅτι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἦδει μὲν οὐ, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ ὀκτώποδος χωρίου γραμμὴ, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ νῦν πω οἶδεν, ἀλλ' οὖν ὥτετό γ' αὐτὴν τότε εἰδέναι, καὶ θαρραλέως ἀπεκρίνετο ὡς εἰδώς, καὶ οὐχ ἡγεῖτο ἀπορεῖν· νῦν δὲ ἡγεῖται [84b] ἀπορεῖν ἤδη, καὶ ὥσπερ οὐκ οἶδεν, οὐδ' οἶεται εἰδέναι.

MEN. ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν νῦν βέλτιον ἔχει περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ οὐκ ἦδει;

MEN. καὶ τοῦτό μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. ἀπορεῖν οὖν αὐτὸν ποιήσαντες καὶ ναρκᾶν ὥσπερ ἡ νάρκη, μὴν τι ἐβλάψαμεν;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. προὔργου γοῦν τι πεποιήκαμεν, ὡς ἔοικε, πρὸς τὸ ἐξευρεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει· νῦν μὲν γὰρ καὶ ζητήσκειν ἂν ἡδέως οὐκ εἰδώς, τότε δὲ ῥαδίως ἂν καὶ πρὸς πολλοὺς καὶ πολλάκις [84c] ὥτετ' ἂν εὔ λέγειν περὶ τοῦ διπλασίου χωρίου, ὡς δεῖ διπλασίαν τὴν γραμμὴν ἔχειν μήκει.

MEN. ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. οἶει οὖν ἂν αὐτὸν πρότερον ἐπιχειρῆσαι ζητεῖν ἢ μαθάνειν τοῦτο ὃ ὥτετο εἰδέναι οὐκ εἰδώς, πρὶν εἰς ἀπορίαν κατέπεσεν ἡγησάμενος μὴ εἰδέναι, καὶ ἐπτόθησεν τὸ εἰδέναι;

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. ὦνητο ἄρα ναρκήσας;

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι.

ΣΩ. σκέψαι δὴ ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπορίας ὅτι καὶ ἀνευρήσει ζητῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐδὲν ἄλλ' ἢ ἐρωτῶντος ἐμοῦ καὶ οὐ διδάσκοντος· [84d] φύλαττε δὲ ἄν που εὐρύης με διδάσκοντα καὶ διεξιόντα αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ μὴ τὰς τούτου δόξας ἀνερρωτῶντα.

λέγε γάρ μοι σύ· οὐ τὸ μὲν τετράπουν τοῦτο ἡμῖν ἐστι χωρίον; μανθάνεις;

ΠΑΙ. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. ἕτερον δὲ αὐτῷ προσθεῖμεν ἂν τουτὶ ἴσον;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶ τρίτον τόδε ἴσον ἐκατέρῳ τούτων;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν προσαναπληρωσαίμεθ' ἂν τὸ ἐν τῇ γωνίᾳ τόδε;

ΠΑΙ. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἄλλο τι οὖν γένοιτ' ἂν τέτταρα ἴσα χωρία [84e] τάδε;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. τί οὖν; τὸ ὅλον τόδε ποσαπλάσιον τοῦδε γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙ. τετραπλάσιον.

ΣΩ. ἔδει δέ γε διπλάσιον ἡμῖν γενέσθαι· ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;

ΠΑΙ. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἐστὶν αὕτη γραμμὴ ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν [85a] τινὰ τέμνουσα δίχα ἕκαστον τούτων τῶν χωρίων;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν τέτταρες αὗται γίνονται γραμμαὶ ἴσαι, περιέχουσαι τουτὶ τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙ. γίνονται γάρ.

ΣΩ. σκόπει δὴ· πηλίκον τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον;

ΠΑΙ. οὐ μανθάνω.

ΣΩ. οὐχὶ τεττάρων ὄντων τούτων ἡμῖς ἐκάστου ἐκάστη ἡ γραμμὴ ἀποτέτμηκεν ἐντός; ἢ οὐ;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. πόσα οὖν τηλικάῳτα ἐν τούτῳ ἔνεστιν;

ΠΑΙ. τέτταρα.

ΣΩ. πόσα δὲ ἐν τῷδε;

ΠΑΙ. δύο.

ΣΩ. τὰ δὲ τέτταρα τοῖν δυοῖν τί ἐστὶν;

ΠΑΙ. διπλάσια.

ΣΩ. τόδε οὖν [85b] ποσάπουν γίγνεται;

ΠΑΙ. ὀκτώπουν.

ΣΩ. ἀπὸ ποίας γραμμῆς;

ΠΑΙ. ἀπὸ ταύτης.

ΣΩ. ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκ γωνίας εἰς γωνίαν τεινούσης τοῦ τετράποδος;

ΠΑΙ. ναί.

ΣΩ. καλοῦσιν δέ γε ταύτην διάμετρον οἱ σοφισταί· ὥστ' εἰ ταύτη διάμετρος ὄνομα, ἀπὸ τῆς διαμέτρου ἂν, ὥς σὺ φῆς, ὧ παῖ Μένωνος, γίγνοιτ' ἂν τὸ διπλάσιον χωρίον.

ΠΑΙ. πάνυ μὲν οὖν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. τί σοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Μένων; ἔστιν ἥντινα δόξαν οὐχ αὐτοῦ οὔτος ἀπεκρίνατο;

[85c] ΜΕΝ. οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἐαυτοῦ.

ΣΩ. καὶ μὴν οὐκ ᾔδει γε, ὥς ἔφαμεν ὀλίγον πρότερον.

ΜΕΝ. ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

ΣΩ. ἐνήσαν δέ γε αὐτῷ αὐταὶ αἱ δόξαι· ἦ οὐ;

ΜΕΝ. ναί.

ΣΩ. τῷ οὐκ εἰδότι ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἰδῇ ἐνεισιν ἀληθεῖς δόξαι περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδε;

ΜΕΝ. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. καὶ νῦν μὲν γε αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ὄναρ ἄρτι ἀνακεκίνηται αἱ δόξαι αὐταί· εἰ δὲ αὐτόν τις ἀνερῆσεται πολλάκις τὰ αὐτὰ ταῦτα καὶ πολλαχῇ, οἷσθ' ὅτι τελευτῶν οὐδενὸς ἦττον ἀκριβῶς [85d] ἐπιστήσεται περὶ τούτων.

ΜΕΝ. ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν οὐδενὸς διδάξαντος ἀλλ' ἐρωτήσαντος ἐπιστήσεται, ἀναλαβὼν αὐτὸς ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιστήμην;

ΜΕΝ. ναί.

ΣΩ. τὸ δὲ ἀναλαμβάνειν αὐτὸν ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπιστήμην οὐκ ἀναμιμνήσκεισθαί ἐστιν;

ΜΕΝ. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἄρ' οὖν οὐ τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἣν νῦν οὔτος ἔχει, ἥτοι ἔλαβέν ποτε ἢ αἰεὶ εἶχεν;

ΜΕΝ. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν αἰεὶ εἶχεν, αἰεὶ καὶ ἦν ἐπιστήμων· εἰ δὲ ἔλαβέν ποτε, οὐκ ἂν ἐν γε τῷ νῦν βίῳ εἰληφῶς εἶη. ἢ [85e] δεδίδαχέν τις τοῦτον γεωμετρεῖν; οὔτος γὰρ ποιήσει περὶ πάσης γεωμετρίας ταῦτα ταῦτα, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων μαθημάτων ἀπάντων. ἔστιν οὖν ὅστις τοῦτον πάντα δεδίδαχεν; δίκαιος γάρ που εἴ εἰδέναι, ἄλλως τε ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ σῇ οἰκίᾳ γέγονεν καὶ τέθραπται.

ΜΕΝ. ἀλλ' οἶδα ἔγωγε ὅτι οὐδεὶς πώποτε ἐδίδαξεν.

ΣΩ. ἔχει δὲ ταύτας τὰς δόξας, ἢ οὐχί;

MEN. ανάγκη, ὦ Σώκρατες, φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν τῷ νῦν βίω λαβών, οὐκ ἤδη τοῦτο [86a] δῆλον, ὅτι ἐν ἄλλῳ τινὶ χρόνῳ εἶχε καὶ ἐμεμαθήκει;

MEN. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν οὗτός γέ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος ὅτ' οὐκ ἦν ἄνθρωπος;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. εἰ οὖν ὃν τ' ἂν ἦ χρόνον καὶ ὃν ἂν μὴ ἦ ἄνθρωπος, ἐνέσονται αὐτῷ ἀληθεῖς δόξαι, αἱ ἐρωτήσῃ ἐπεγερεθεῖσαι ἐπιστῆμαι γίνονται, ἄρ' οὖν τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον μεμαθηκυῖα ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ; δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος.

MEN. φαίνεται.

[86b] ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ ἀεὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἡμῖν τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἀθάνατος ἂν ἡ ψυχὴ εἴη, ὥστε θαρροῦντα χρὴ ὁ μὴ τυγχάνεις ἐπιστάμενος νῦν—τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν ὁ μὴ μεμνημένος—ἐπιχειρεῖν ζητεῖν καὶ ἀναμνησθεσθαι;

MEN. εὖ μοι δοκεῖς λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως.

ΣΩ. καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἐμοί, ὦ Μένων. καὶ τὰ μὲν γε ἄλλα οὐκ ἂν πάνυ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λόγου διισχυρισαίμην· ὅτι δ' οἰόμενοι δεῖν ζητεῖν ἢ μὴ τις οἶδεν βελτίους ἂν εἴμεν καὶ ἀνδρικώτεροι καὶ ἥττον ἀργοὶ ἢ εἰ οἰοίμεθα ἢ μὴ ἐπιστάμεθα μηδὲ [86c] δυνατόν εἶναι εὑρεῖν μηδὲ δεῖν ζητεῖν, περὶ τούτου πάνυ ἂν διαμαχοίμην, εἰ οἷός τε εἴην, καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ.

MEN. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν γε δοκεῖς μοι εὖ λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. βούλει οὖν, ἐπειδὴ ὁμονοοῦμεν ὅτι ζητητέον περὶ οὗ μὴ τις οἶδεν, ἐπιχειρήσωμεν κοινῇ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἐστὶν ἀρετή;

MEN. πάνυ μὲν οὖν. οὐ μέντοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλ' ἔγωγε ἐκείνο ἂν ἡδιστα, ὅπερ ἠρόμην τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ σκεψαίμην καὶ ἀκούσαιμι, πότερον ὡς διδασκῶ ὄντι αὐτῷ δεῖ ἐπιχειρεῖν, [86d] ἢ ὡς φύσει ἢ ὡς τίνι ποτὲ τρόπῳ παραγιγνομένης τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τῆς ἀρετῆς.

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐγὼ ἦρχον, ὦ Μένων, μὴ μόνον ἐμαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ σοῦ, οὐκ ἂν ἐσκεψάμεθα πρότερον εἴτε διδασκὸν εἴτε οὐ διδασκὸν ἢ ἀρετῇ, πρὶν ὅτι ἐστὶν πρῶτον ἐζητήσαμεν αὐτό· ἐπειδὴ δὲ σὺ σαυτοῦ μὲν οὐδ' ἐπιχειρεῖς ἄρχειν, ἵνα δὴ ἐλεύθερος ᾖς, ἐμοῦ δὲ ἐπιχειρεῖς τε ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεις, συγχωρήσομαί σοι—τί γὰρ χρὴ ποιεῖν; —ἔοικεν οὖν σκεπτέον [86e] εἶναι ποῖόν τί ἐστὶν ὁ μήπω ἴσμεν ὅτι ἐστίν. εἰ μὴ τι οὖν ἀλλὰ σμικρόν γέ μοι τῆς ἀρχῆς χάλασον, καὶ συγχώρησον ἐξ ὑποθέσεως αὐτὸ σκοπεῖσθαι, εἴτε διδασκὸν ἐστὶν εἴτε ὅπως οὖν.

ΣΩ. λέγω δὲ τὸ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ὥδε, ὥσπερ οἱ γεωμέτραι πολλάκις σκοποῦνται, ἐπειδὴν τις ἔρηται αὐτούς, οἷον περὶ χωρίου, εἰ οἷόν τε ἐς τόνδε τὸν κύκλον τόδε τὸ χωρίον [87a] τρίγωνον ἐνταθῆναι, εἴποι ἂν τις ὅτι οὕτω οἶδα εἰ ἔστιν τοῦτο τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ μὲν τινα ὑπόθεσιν προὔργου οἶμαι ἔχειν πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα τοιάνδε· εἰ μὲν ἐστὶν τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον τοιοῦτον οἷον παρὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῦ γραμμὴν παρατείναντα ἐλλείπειν τοιούτῳ χωρίῳ οἷον ἂν αὐτὸ τὸ παρατεταμένον ᾖ, ἄλλο τι συμβαίνει μοι δοκεῖ, καὶ ἄλλο αὖ, εἰ ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν ταῦτα παθεῖν. ὑποθέμενος οὖν ἐθέλω [87b] εἰπεῖν σοι τὸ συμβαῖνον περὶ τῆς ἐντάσεως αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κύκλον, εἴτε ἀδύνατον εἴτε μή. οὕτω δὴ καὶ περὶ ἀρετῆς ἡμεῖς, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἴσμεν οὐθ' ὅτι ἐστὶν οὐθ' ὁποῖόν τι, ὑποθέμενοι αὐτὸ σκοπῶμεν εἴτε διδασκὸν εἴτε οὐ διδασκὸν ἐστίν, ὥδε λέγοντες· εἰ ποῖόν τί ἐστὶν τῶν περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὄντων ἀρετῇ, διδασκὸν ἂν εἴη ἢ οὐ διδασκὸν; πρῶτον μὲν δὴ

εἰ ἔστιν ἀλλοῖον ἢ οἷον ἐπιστήμη, ἄρα διδακτὸν ἢ οὐ, ἢ ὁ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, ἀναμνηστὸν—διαφερέτω δὲ μηδὲν ἡμῖν [87c] ὅποτέρω ἂν τῷ ὀνόματι χρώμεθα—ἀλλ' ἄρα διδακτὸν; ἢ τοῦτο γε παντὶ δῆλον, ὅτι οὐδὲν ἄλλο διδάσκεται ἄνθρωπος ἢ ἐπιστήμην;

MEN. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. εἰ δέ γ' ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη τις ἡ ἀρετὴ, δῆλον ὅτι διδακτὸν ἂν εἴη.

MEN. πῶς γὰρ οὐ;

ΣΩ. τούτου μὲν ἄρα ταχὺ ἀπηλλάγμεθα, ὅτι τοιοῦδε μὲν ὄντος διδακτὸν, τοιοῦδε δ' οὐ.

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. τὸ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο, ὡς ἔοικε, δεῖ σκέψασθαι πότερόν ἐστιν ἐπιστήμη ἡ ἀρετὴ ἢ ἀλλοῖον ἐπιστήμης.

[87d] MEN. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ τοῦτο μετὰ τοῦτο σκεπτέον εἶναι.

ΣΩ. τί δὲ δῆ; ἄλλο τι ἢ ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ φάμεν εἶναι τὴν ἀρετὴν, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ὑπόθεσις μένει ἡμῖν, ἀγαθὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι;

MEN. πάνυ μὲν οὖν.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ μὲν τί ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἄλλο χωριζόμενον ἐπιστήμης, τάχ' ἂν εἴη ἡ ἀρετὴ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη τις· εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ἐστιν ἀγαθὸν ὃ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη περιέχει, ἐπιστήμην ἂν τιν' αὐτὸ ὑποπτεύοντες εἶναι ὀρθῶς ὑποπτεύοιMEN.

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. καὶ μὴν [87e] ἀρετὴ γ' ἐσμὲν ἀγαθοί;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. εἰ δὲ ἀγαθοί, ὠφέλιμοι· πάντα γὰρ τὰγαθὰ ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ δὴ ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν;

MEN. ἀνάγκη ἐκ τῶν ὠμολογημένων.

ΣΩ. σκεψώμεθα δὴ καθ' ἕκαστον ἀναλαμβάνοντες ποῖά ἐστιν ἃ ἡμᾶς ὠφελεῖ. ὑγίεια, φαμέν, καὶ ἰσχύς καὶ κάλλος καὶ πλοῦτος δῆ· ταῦτα λέγομεν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὠφέλιμα. οὐχί;

MEN. ναί.

[88a] ΣΩ. ταῦτά δὲ ταῦτά φαμεν ἐνίοτε καὶ βλάπτειν· ἢ σὺ ἄλλως φῆς ἢ οὕτως;

MEN. οὐκ, ἀλλ' οὕτως.

ΣΩ. σκόπει δῆ, ὅταν τί ἐκάστου τούτων ἡγῆται, ὠφελεῖ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ὅταν τί, βλάπτει; ἄρ' οὐχ ὅταν μὲν ὀρθῇ χρῆσις, ὠφελεῖ, ὅταν δὲ μή, βλάπτει;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἔτι τοίνυν καὶ τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν σκεψώμεθα. σωφροσύνην τι καλεῖς καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀνδρείαν καὶ εὐμαθίαν καὶ μνήμην καὶ μεγαλοπρέπειαν καὶ πάντα τὰ [88b] τοιαῦτα;

MEN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. σκόπει δῆ, τούτων ἅττα σοι δοκεῖ μὴ ἐπιστήμη εἶναι ἀλλ' ἄλλο ἐπιστήμης, εἰ οὐχὶ τοτὲ μὲν

βλάπτει, τοτὲ δὲ ὠφελεῖ; οἷον ἀνδρεία, εἰ μὴ ἔστι φρόνησις ἢ ἀνδρεία ἀλλ' οἷον θάρρος τι· οὐχ ὅταν μὲν ἄνευ νοῦ θαρρῇ ἄνθρωπος, βλάπτεται, ὅταν δὲ σὺν νῷ, ὠφελεῖται;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ σωφροσύνη ὡσαύτως καὶ εὐμαθία· μετὰ μὲν νοῦ καὶ μανθανόμενα καὶ καταρτυόμενα ὠφέλιμα, ἄνευ δὲ νοῦ βλαβερά;

MEN. πάνυ [88c] σφόδρα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν συλλήβδην πάντα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιχειρήματα καὶ καρτερήματα ἡγουμένης μὲν φρονήσεως εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν τελευτᾷ, ἀφροσύνης δ' εἰς τούναντίον;

MEN. ἔοικεν.

ΣΩ. εἰ ἄρα ἀρετὴ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ τί ἐστὶν καὶ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτῷ ὠφελίμῳ εἶναι, φρόνησιν αὐτὸ δεῖ εἶναι, ἐπειδὴ περ πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτὰ μὲν καθ' αὐτὰ οὔτε ὠφέλιμα οὔτε βλαβερά ἐστὶν, προσγενομένης δὲ φρονήσεως [88d] ἢ ἀφροσύνης βλαβερά τε καὶ ὠφέλιμα γίνονται. κατὰ δὴ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὠφέλιμόν γε οὖσαν τὴν ἀρετὴν φρόνησιν δεῖ τιν' εἶναι.

MEN. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ τᾶλλα ἃ νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν, πλοῦτόν τε καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα, τοτὲ μὲν ἀγαθὰ τοτὲ δὲ βλαβερά εἶναι, ἄρα οὐχ ὥσπερ τῇ ἄλλῃ ψυχῇ ἢ φρόνησις ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐποίει, ἢ δὲ ἀφροσύνη βλαβερά, οὕτως αὖ [88e] καὶ τούτοις ἢ ψυχὴ ὀρθῶς μὲν χρωμένη καὶ ἡγουμένη ὠφέλιμα αὐτὰ ποιεῖ, μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ βλαβερά;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς δέ γε ἢ ἔμφρων ἡγεῖται, ἡμαρτημένως δ' ἢ ἄφρων;

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν οὕτω δὴ κατὰ πάντων εἰπεῖν ἔστιν, τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνηρτῆσθαι, τὰ δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῆς εἰς φρόνησιν, εἰ [89a] μέλλει ἀγαθὰ εἶναι· καὶ τούτῳ τῷ λόγῳ φρόνησις ἂν εἴη τὸ ὠφέλιμον· φαμέν δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν ὠφέλιμον εἶναι;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. φρόνησιν ἄρα φαμέν ἀρετὴν εἶναι, ἥτοι σύμπασαν ἢ μέρος τι;

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, τὰ λεγόμενα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει, οὐκ ἂν εἶεν φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοί.

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

[89b] ΣΩ. καὶ γὰρ ἂν που καὶ τόδ' ἦν· εἰ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἐγίνοντο, ἥσαν που ἂν ἡμῖν οἱ ἐγίγνωσκον τῶν νέων τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς τὰς φύσεις, οὓς ἡμεῖς ἂν παραλαβόντες ἐκείνων ἀποφηνάντων ἐφυλάττομεν ἂν ἐν ἀκροπόλει, κατασημνήμενοι πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ χρυσίον, ἵνα μηδεὶς αὐτοὺς διέφθειρεν, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἀφίκοντο εἰς τὴν ἡλικίαν, χρήσιμοι γίνοντο ταῖς πόλεσι.

MEN. εἰκός γέ τοι, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. ἄρ' οὖν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται, [89c] ἄρα μαθήσει;

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι ἤδη ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι· καὶ δῆλον, ὦ Σώκρατες, κατὰ τὴν ὑπόθεσιν, εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστὶν ἀρετὴ, ὅτι διδακτόν ἐστιν.

ΣΩ. ἴσως νῆ Δία· ἀλλὰ μὴ τοῦτο οὐ καλῶς ὠμολογήσαμεν;

MEN. καὶ μὴν ἐδόκει γε ἄρτι καλῶς λέγεσθαι.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἄρτι μόνον δέη αὐτὸ δοκεῖν καλῶς λέγεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῷ ἔπειτα, εἰ μέλλει τι αὐτοῦ ὑγιὲς εἶναι.

[89d] MEN. τί οὖν δῆ; πρὸς τί βλέπων δυσχεραίνεις αὐτὸ καὶ ἀπιστεῖς μὴ οὐκ ἐπιστήμη ἢ ἡ ἀρετή;

ΣΩ. ἐγὼ σοι ἐρῶ, ὦ Μένων. τὸ μὲν γὰρ διδακτὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι, εἵπερ ἐπιστήμη ἐστίν, οὐκ ἀνατίθεμαι μὴ οὐ καλῶς λέγεσθαι· ὅτι δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη, σκέψαι ἐάν σοι δοκῶ εἰκότως ἀπιστεῖν. τόδε γάρ μοι εἰπέ· εἰ ἔστιν διδακτὸν ὅτιοῦν πρᾶγμα, μὴ μόνον ἀρετή, οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον αὐτοῦ καὶ διδασκάλους καὶ μαθητὰς εἶναι;

MEN. ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ.

[89e] ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν τούναντίον αὖ, οὗ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, καλῶς ἂν αὐτὸ εἰκάζοντες εἰκάζοιμεν μὴ διδακτὸν εἶναι;

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα· ἀλλ' ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλοι οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι εἶναι;

ΣΩ. πολλάκις γοῦν ζητῶν εἴ τινες εἶεν αὐτῆς διδάσκαλοι, πάντα ποιῶν οὐ δύναμαι εὐρεῖν. καίτοι μετὰ πολλῶν γε ζητῶ, καὶ τούτων μάλιστα οὓς ἂν οἶμαι ἐμπειροτάτους εἶναι τοῦ πράγματος. καὶ δὴ καὶ νῦν, ὦ Μένων, εἰς καλὸν ἡμῖν Ἄνυτος ὅδε παρεκαθέζετο, ὃ μεταδῶμεν τῆς ζητήσεως. [90a] εἰκότως δ' ἂν μεταδοῖμεν· Ἄνυτος γὰρ ὅδε πρῶτον μὲν ἐστὶ πατρὸς πλουσίου τε καὶ σοφοῦ Ἀνθεμίωνος, ὃς ἐγένετο πλούσιος οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου οὐδὲ δόντος τινός, ὥσπερ ὁ νῦν νεωστὶ εἰληφώς τὰ Πολυκράτους χρήματα Ἰσμηνίας ὁ Θηβαῖος, ἀλλὰ τῇ αὐτοῦ σοφίᾳ κτησάμενος καὶ ἐπιμελείᾳ, ἔπειτα καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οὐχ ὑπερήφανος δοκῶν εἶναι πολίτης οὐδὲ ὀγκώδης τε καὶ ἐπαχθής, ἀλλὰ κόσμιος καὶ εὐσταλῆς [90b] ἀνὴρ· ἔπειτα τοῦτον εὖ ἔθρεψεν καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν, ὥς δοκεῖ Ἀθηναίων τῷ πληθύνει· αἰροῦνται γοῦν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰς μεγίστας ἀρχάς. δίκαιον δὴ μετὰ τοιούτων ζητεῖν ἀρετῆς πέρι διδασκάλους, εἴτ' εἰσὶν εἴτε μή, καὶ οἵτινες. σὺ οὖν ἡμῖν, ὦ Ἄνυτε, συζήτησον, ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ σαυτοῦ ξένῳ Μένωνι τῷδε, περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος τίνες ἂν εἶεν διδάσκαλοι. ὧδε δὲ σκέψαι· εἰ βουλοίμεθα Μένωνα τόνδε ἀγαθὸν ἱατρὸν [90c] γενέσθαι, παρὰ τίνας ἂν αὐτὸν πέμποιμεν διδασκάλους; ἄρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς ἱατρούς;

AN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. τί δ' εἰ σκυτοτόμον ἀγαθὸν βουλοίμεθα γενέσθαι, ἄρ' οὐ παρὰ τοὺς σκυτοτόμους;

AN. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶ τᾶλλα οὕτως;

AN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ὧδε δὴ μοι πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν εἰπέ. παρὰ τοὺς ἱατρούς, φαμέν, πέμποντες τόνδε καλῶς ἂν ἐπέμπομεν, βουλόμενοι ἱατρὸν γενέσθαι· ἄρ' ὅταν τοῦτο λέγωμεν, τόδε [90d] λέγομεν, ὅτι παρὰ τούτους πέμποντες αὐτὸν σωφρονοῖμεν ἂν, τοὺς ἀντιποιοιμένους τε τῆς τέχνης μᾶλλον ἢ τοὺς μή, καὶ τοὺς μισθὸν πραττομένους ἐπ' αὐτῷ τούτῳ, ἀποφῆναντας αὐτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῦ βουλομένου ἰέναι τε καὶ μανθάνειν; ἄρ' οὐ πρὸς ταῦτα βλέψαντες καλῶς ἂν πέμποιμεν;

AN. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ αὐλήσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὰ αὐτὰ [90e] ταῦτα; πολλὴ ἄνοιιά ἐστι βουλομένους αὐλητὴν τινα ποιῆσαι παρὰ μὲν τοὺς ὑπισχνουμένους διδάξαι τὴν τέχνην καὶ

μισθὸν πραττομένους μὴ ἐθέλιν πέμπειν, ἄλλοις δέ τισιν πράγματα παρέχειν, ζητοῦντα μαθάνειν παρὰ τούτων, οἳ μήτε προσποιοῦνται διδάσκαλοι εἶναι μήτ' ἔστιν αὐτῶν μαθητὴς μηδεὶς τούτου τοῦ μαθήματος ὃ ἡμεῖς ἀξιοῦμεν μαθάνειν παρ' αὐτῶν ὃν ἂν πέμπωμεν. οὐ πολλή σοι δοκεῖ ἀλογία εἶναι;

ΑΝ. ναὶ μὰ Δία ἔμοιγε, καὶ ἀμαθία γε πρός.

ΣΩ. καλῶς λέγεις. νῦν τοίνυν ἔξεστί σε μετ' ἐμοῦ [91a] κοινῇ βουλευέσθαι περὶ τοῦ ξένου τουτουῖ Μένωνος. οὗτος γάρ, ὦ Ἄνυτε, πάλαι λέγει πρός με ὅτι ἐπιθυμεῖ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας καὶ ἀρετῆς ἣ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰς τε οἰκίας καὶ τὰς πόλεις καλῶς διοικοῦσι, καὶ τοὺς γονέας τοὺς αὐτῶν θεραπεύουσι, καὶ πολίτας καὶ ξένους ὑποδέξασθαι τε καὶ ἀποπέμψαι ἐπίστανται ἀξίως ἀνδρὸς ἀγαθοῦ. ταύτην οὖν τὴν [91b] ἀρετὴν σκόπει παρὰ τίνας ἂν πέμποντες αὐτὸν ὀρθῶς πέμποιμεν. ἢ δῆλον δὴ κατὰ τὸν ἄρτι λόγον ὅτι παρὰ τούτους τοὺς ὑπischynομένους ἀρετῆς διδασκάλους εἶναι καὶ ἀποφῆναντας αὐτοὺς κοινούς τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ βουλομένῳ μαθάνειν, μισθὸν τούτου ταξαμένους τε καὶ πραττομένους;

ΑΝ. καὶ τίνας λέγεις τούτους, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. οἷσθα δήπου καὶ σὺ ὅτι οὗτοί εἰσιν οὓς οἱ ἄνθρωποι καλοῦσι σοφιστάς.

[91c] ΑΝ. Ἡράκλεις, εὐφήμει, ὦ Σώκρατες. μηδένα τῶν γ' ἐμῶν μήτε οἰκείων μήτε φίλων, μήτε ἀστὸν μήτε ξένον, τοιαύτη μανία λάβοι, ὥστε παρὰ τούτους ἐλθόντα λωβηθῆναι, ἐπεὶ οὗτοί γε φανερά ἐστι λώβη τε καὶ διαφθορὰ τῶν συγγιγνομένων.

ΣΩ. πῶς λέγεις, ὦ Ἄνυτε; οὗτοι ἄρα μόνοι τῶν ἀντιποιοιμένων τι ἐπίστασθαι εὐεργετεῖν τοσοῦτον τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρουσιν, ὅσον οὐ μόνον οὐκ ὠφελοῦσιν, ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι, ὅτι ἂν τις αὐτοῖς παραδῷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον διαφθείρουσιν; [91d] καὶ τούτων φανερώς χρήματα ἀξιοῦσι πράττεσθαι; ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἔχω ὅπως σοι πιστεῦσω· οἶδα γὰρ ἄνδρα ἓνα Πρωταγόραν πλείω χρήματα κτησάμενον ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς σοφίας ἢ Φειδίαν τε, ὃς οὕτω περιφανῶς καλὰ ἔργα ἡργάζετο, καὶ ἄλλους δέκα τῶν ἀνδριαντοποιῶν. καίτοι τέρας λέγεις εἰ οἱ μὲν τὰ ὑποδήματα ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ παλαιὰ καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ἐξακούμενοι οὐκ ἂν δύναιντο λαθεῖν τριάκονθ' [91e] ἡμέρας μοχθηρότερα ἀποδιδόντες ἢ παρέλαβον τὰ ἱμάτιά τε καὶ ὑποδήματα, ἀλλ' εἰ τοιαῦτα ποιοῖεν, ταχὺ ἂν τῷ λιμῷ ἀποθάνοιεν, Πρωταγόρας δὲ ἄρα ὅλην τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐλάνθανεν διαφθείρων τοὺς συγγιγνομένους καὶ μοχθηροτέρους ἀποπέμπων ἢ παρελάμβανεν πλέον ἢ τετταράκοντα ἔτη— οἶμαι γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀποθανεῖν ἐγγὺς καὶ ἐβδομήκοντα ἔτη γεγονότα, τετταράκοντα δὲ ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ ὄντα—

ΣΩ. καὶ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἔτι εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν ταυτηνὴ εὐδοκιμῶν οὐδὲν πέπαυται, καὶ οὐ μόνον Πρωταγόρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ [92a] ἄλλοι πάμπολλοι, οἱ μὲν πρότερον γεγονότες ἐκείνου, οἱ δὲ καὶ νῦν ἔτι ὄντες. πότερον δὴ οὖν φῶμεν κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον εἰδότας αὐτοὺς ἐξαπατᾶν καὶ λωβᾶσθαι τοὺς νέους, ἢ λεληθέναι καὶ ἑαυτούς; καὶ οὕτω μαίνεσθαι ἀξιώσομεν τούτους, οὓς ἔνιοί φασι σοφωτάτους ἀνθρώπων εἶναι;

ΑΝ. πολλοῦ γε δέουσι μαίνεσθαι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις διδόντες ἀργύριον τῶν νέων, τούτων [92b] δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον οἱ τούτοις ἐπιτρέποντες, οἱ προσήκοντες, πολὺ δὲ μάλιστα πάντων αἱ πόλεις, ἑῷσαι αὐτοὺς εἰσαφικνεῖσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἐξελαύνουσαι, εἴτε τις ξένος ἐπιχειρεῖ τοιοῦτόν τι ποιεῖν εἴτε ἀστός.

ΣΩ. πότερον δέ, ὦ Ἄνυτε, ἡδίκηκέ τίς σε τῶν σοφιστῶν, ἢ τί οὕτως αὐτοῖς χαλεπὸς εἶ;

ΑΝ. οὐδὲ μὰ Δία ἔγωγε συγγέγονα πώποτε αὐτῶν οὐδενί, οὐδ' ἂν ἄλλον ἐάσαιμι τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδένα.

ΣΩ. ἄπειρος ἄρ' εἴ παντάπασι τῶν ἀνδρῶν;

ΑΝ. καὶ εἶην γε.

[92c] ΣΩ. πῶς οὖν ἂν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, εἰδείης περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, εἴτε τι ἀγαθὸν ἔχει ἐν αὐτῷ εἴτε φλαυρον, οὗ παντάπασις ἄπειρος εἴης;

ΑΝ. ῥαδίως· τούτους γοῦν οἶδα οἱ εἰσιν, εἴτ' οὖν ἄπειρος αὐτῶν εἰμι εἴτε μή.

ΣΩ. μάντις εἴ ἴσως, ὦ Ἄνυτε· ἐπεὶ ὅπως γε ἄλλως οἴσθα τούτων πέρι, ἐξ ὧν αὐτὸς λέγεις θαυμάζοιμ' ἂν. ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ τούτους ἐπιζητοῦμεν τίνες εἰσίν, παρ' οὓς ἂν [92d] Μένων ἀφικόμενος μοχθηρὸς γένοιτο—οὔτοι μὲν γάρ, εἰ σὺ βούλει, ἔστων οἱ σοφισταί—ἀλλὰ δὴ ἐκείνους εἰπέ ἡμῖν, καὶ τὸν πατρικὸν τόνδε ἐταῖρον εὐεργέτησον φράσας αὐτῷ παρὰ τίνος ἀφικόμενος ἐν τοσαύτῃ πόλει τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν νυνδὴ ἐγὼ διήλθον γένοιτ' ἂν ἄξιός λόγου.

ΑΝ. τί δὲ αὐτῷ οὐ σὺ ἔφρασας;

ΣΩ. ἀλλ' οὓς μὲν ἐγὼ ὥμην διδασκάλους τούτων εἶναι, εἶπον, ἀλλὰ τυγχάνω οὐδὲν λέγων, ὥς σὺ φῆς· καὶ ἴσως τί [92e] λέγεις. ἀλλὰ σὺ δὴ ἐν τῷ μέρει αὐτῷ εἰπέ παρὰ τίνος ἔλθῃ Ἀθηναίων· εἰπέ ὄνομα ὅτου βούλει.

ΑΝ. τί δὲ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ὄνομα δεῖ ἀκοῦσαι; ὅτῳ γὰρ ἂν ἐντύχῃ Ἀθηναίων τῶν καλῶν καγαθῶν, οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὃς οὐ βελτίῳ αὐτὸν ποιήσῃ ἢ οἱ σοφισταί, ἐάνπερ ἐθέλῃ πείθεσθαι.

ΣΩ. πότερον δὲ οὔτοι οἱ καλοὶ καγαθοὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου ἐγένοντο τοιοῦτοι, παρ' οὐδενὸς μαθόντες ὅμως μέντοι ἄλλους διδάσκειν οἷσι τε ὄντες ταῦτα ἃ αὐτοὶ οὐκ [93a] ἔμαθον;

ΑΝ. καὶ τούτους ἔγωγε ἀξιῶ παρὰ τῶν προτέρων μαθεῖν, ὄντων καλῶν καγαθῶν· ἢ οὐ δοκοῦσί σοι πολλοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ γεγονέναι ἐν τῇδε τῇ πόλει ἄνδρες;

ΣΩ. ἔμοιγε, ὦ Ἄνυτε, καὶ εἶναι δοκοῦσιν ἐνθάδε ἀγαθοὶ τὰ πολιτικά, καὶ γεγονέναι ἔτι οὐχ ἥττον ἢ εἶναι· ἀλλὰ μὲν καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἀγαθοὶ γεγονόσιν τῆς αὐτῶν ἀρετῆς; τοῦτο γὰρ ἔστιν περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν τυγχάνει ὦν· οὐκ εἰ εἰσιν ἀγαθοὶ ἢ μὴ ἄνδρες ἐνθάδε, οὐδ' εἰ γεγονόσιν ἐν τῷ [93b] πρόσθεν, ἀλλ' εἰ διδακτὸν ἔστιν ἀρετὴ πάλαι σκοποῦμεν. τοῦτο δὲ σκοποῦντες τότε σκοποῦμεν, ἄρα οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες καὶ τῶν νῦν καὶ τῶν προτέρων ταύτην τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν αὐτοὶ ἀγαθοὶ ἦσαν ἠπίσταντο καὶ ἄλλῳ παραδοῦναι, ἢ οὐ παραδοτὸν τοῦτο ἀνθρώπῳ οὐδὲ παραληπτὸν ἄλλῳ παρ' ἄλλου· τοῦτ' ἔστιν ὃ πάλαι ζητοῦμεν ἐγὼ τε καὶ Μένων. ὥδε οὖν σκόπει ἐκ τοῦ σαυτοῦ λόγου· Θεμιστοκλέα οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἂν [93c] φαίης ἄνδρα γεγονέναι;

ΑΝ. ἔγωγε, πάντων γε μάλιστα.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ διδάσκαλον ἀγαθόν, εἴπερ τις ἄλλος τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀρετῆς διδάσκαλος ἦν, κακεῖνον εἶναι;

ΑΝ. οἶμαι ἔγωγε, εἴπερ ἐβούλετό γε.

ΣΩ. ἀλλ', οἶει, οὐκ ἂν ἐβουλήθη ἄλλους τέ τινος καλοὺς καγαθοὺς γενέσθαι, μάλιστα δέ που τὸν ὑὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ; ἢ οἶει αὐτὸν φθονεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξεπίτηδες οὐ παραδιδόναι [93d] τὴν ἀρετὴν ἣν αὐτὸς ἀγαθὸς ἦν; ἢ οὐκ ἀκήκοας ὅτι Θεμιστοκλῆς Κλεόφαντον τὸν ὑὸν ἱππέα μὲν ἐδιδάξατο ἀγαθόν; ἐπέμενεν γοῦν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθὸς ἐστηκώς, καὶ ἠκόντιζεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων ὀρθός, καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἠργάζετο ἃ ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸν ἐπαιδεύσατο καὶ ἐποίησε σοφόν, ὅσα διδασκάλων ἀγαθῶν εἶχετο· ἢ ταῦτα οὐκ ἀκήκοας τῶν πρεσβυτέρων;

ΑΝ. ἀκήκοα.

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἂν ἄρα τὴν γε φύσιν τοῦ ὑέος αὐτοῦ ἠτιάσατ' ἂν τις εἶναι κακὴν.

[93e] AN. ἴσως οὐκ ἄν.

ΣΩ. τί δὲ τόδε; ὡς Κλεόφαντος ὁ Θεμιστοκλέους ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ σοφὸς ἐγένετο ἅπερ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, ἥδη του ἀκήκοας ἢ νεωτέρου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου;

AN. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. ἄρ' οὖν ταῦτα μὲν οἰόμεθα βούλεσθαι αὐτὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ ὑὸν παιδεῦσαι, ἣν δὲ αὐτὸς σοφίαν ἦν σοφός, οὐδὲν τῶν γειτόνων βελτίω ποιῆσαι, εἴπερ ἦν γε διδακτὸν ἢ ἀρετή;

AN. ἴσως μὰ Δί' οὐ.

ΣΩ. οὗτος μὲν δὴ σοι τοιοῦτος διδάσκαλος ἀρετῆς, ὃν καὶ σὺ ὁμολογεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἄριστον τῶν προτέρων εἶναι· ἄλλον [94a] δὲ δὴ σκεψώμεθα, Ἀριστείδην τὸν Λυσιμάχου· ἢ τοῦτον οὐχ ὁμολογεῖς ἀγαθὸν γεγονέναι;

AN. ἔγωγε, πάντως δῆπου.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν καὶ οὗτος τὸν ὑὸν τὸν αὐτοῦ Λυσίμαχον, ὅσα μὲν διδασκάλων εἶχετο, κάλλιστα Ἀθηναίων ἐπαίδευσεν, ἄνδρα δὲ βελτίω δοκεῖ σοι ὅτουοῦν πεποιηκέναι; τούτῳ γάρ που καὶ συγγέγονας καὶ ὀρθὸς οἶός ἐστιν. εἰ δὲ βούλει, [94b] Περικλέα, οὕτως μεγαλοπρεπῶς σοφὸν ἄνδρα, οἷσθ' ὅτι δύο ὑεῖς ἔθρεψε, Πάραλον καὶ Ξάνθιππον;

AN. ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. τούτους μέντοι, ὡς οἶσθα καὶ σὺ, ἱππέας μὲν ἐδίδαξεν οὐδενὸς χεῖρους Ἀθηναίων, καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ ἀγωνίαν καὶ τᾶλλα ἐπαίδευσεν ὅσα τέχνης ἔχεται οὐδενὸς χεῖρους· ἀγαθοὺς δὲ ἄρα ἄνδρας οὐκ ἐβούλετο ποιῆσαι; δοκῶ μὲν, ἐβούλετο, ἀλλὰ μὴ οὐκ ἦ διδακτὸν. ἵνα δὲ μὴ ὀλίγους οἷη καὶ τοὺς φαυλοτάτους Ἀθηναίων ἀδυνάτους γεγονέναι τοῦτο [94c] τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἐνθυμήθητι ὅτι Θουκυδίδης αὖ δύο ὑεῖς ἔθρεψεν, Μελησίαν καὶ Στέφανον, καὶ τούτους ἐπαίδευσεν τά τε ἄλλα εὖ καὶ ἐπάλαισαν κάλλιστα Ἀθηναίων—τὸν μὲν γὰρ Ξανθία ἔδωκε, τὸν δὲ Εὐδῶρ· οὗτοι δὲ που ἐδόκουν τῶν τότε κάλλιστα παλαίειν—ἢ οὐ μέμνησαι;

AN. ἔγωγε, ἀκοῇ.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν δῆλον ὅτι οὗτος οὐκ ἄν ποτε, οὗ μὲν ἔδει [94d] δαπανώμενον διδάσκειν, ταῦτα μὲν ἐδίδαξε τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς αὐτοῦ, οὗ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔδει ἀναλώσαντα ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας ποιῆσαι, ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἐδίδαξεν, εἰ διδακτὸν ἦν; ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἴσως ὁ Θουκυδίδης φαῦλος ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἦσαν αὐτῷ πλεῖστοι φίλοι Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν συμμάχων; καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλης ἦν καὶ ἐδύνατο μέγα ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις Ἑλλησιν, ὥστε εἴπερ ἦν τοῦτο διδακτὸν, ἐξευρεῖν ἂν ὅστις ἔμελλεν αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὑεῖς ἀγαθοὺς ποιήσκειν, ἢ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων τις ἢ τῶν [94e] ξένων, εἰ αὐτὸς μὴ ἐσχόλαζεν διὰ τὴν τῆς πόλεως ἐπιμέλειαν. ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὦ ἑταῖρε Ἄνυτε, μὴ οὐκ ἦ διδακτὸν ἀρετή;

AN. ὦ Σώκρατες, ῥαδίως μοι δοκεῖς κακῶς λέγειν ἀνθρώπους. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἂν σοι συμβουλεύσαιμι, εἰ ἐθέλεις ἐμοὶ πείθεσθαι, εὐλαβεῖσθαι· ὡς ἴσως μὲν καὶ ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει ῥᾶόν ἐστιν κακῶς ποιεῖν ἀνθρώπους ἢ εὖ, ἐν τῇδε δὲ καὶ [95a] πάνυ· οἷμαι δὲ σὲ καὶ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι.

ΣΩ. ὦ Μένων, Ἄνυτος μὲν μοι δοκεῖ χαλεπαίνειν, καὶ οὐδὲν θαυμάζω· οἶται γάρ με πρῶτον μὲν κακηγορεῖν τούτους τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἔπειτα ἡγεῖται καὶ αὐτὸς εἶναι εἷς τούτων. ἀλλ' οὗτος μὲν ἂν ποτε γνῶ οἷόν ἐστιν τὸ κακῶς λέγειν, παύσεται χαλεπαίνων, νῦν δὲ ἀγνοεῖ· σὺ δέ μοι εἶπέ, οὐ καὶ παρ' ὑμῖν εἰσιν καλοὶ καγαθοὶ ἄνδρες;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

[95b] ΣΩ. τί οὖν; ἐθέλουσιν οὗτοι παρέχειν αὐτοὺς διδασκάλους τοῖς νέοις, καὶ ὁμολογεῖν

διδάσκαλοί τε εἶναι καὶ διδακτὸν ἀρετὴν;

MEN. οὐ μὰ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν ἂν αὐτῶν ἀκούσαις ὡς διδακτὸν, τοτὲ δὲ ὡς οὐ.

ΣΩ. φῶμεν οὖν τούτους διδασκάλους εἶναι τούτου τοῦ πράγματος, οἷς μὴδὲ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὁμολογεῖται;

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. τί δὲ δῆ; οἱ σοφισταὶ σοι οὗτοι, οἵπερ μόνοι ἐπαγγέλλονται, δοκοῦσι διδάσκαλοι εἶναι ἀρετῆς;

[95c] MEN. καὶ Γοργίου μάλιστα, ὦ Σώκρατες, ταῦτα ἄγαμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ποτε αὐτοῦ τοῦτο ἀκούσαις ὑπισχνουμένου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καταγελᾷ, ὅταν ἀκούσῃ ὑπισχνουμένων· ἀλλὰ λέγειν οἶεται δεῖν ποιεῖν δεινούς.

ΣΩ. οὐδ' ἄρα σοὶ δοκοῦσιν οἱ σοφισταὶ διδάσκαλοι εἶναι;

MEN. οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ πέπονθα· τοτὲ μὲν μοι δοκοῦσιν, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ.

ΣΩ. οἶσθα δὲ ὅτι οὐ μόνον σοὶ τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς πολιτικοῖς τοῦτο δοκεῖ τοτὲ μὲν εἶναι διδακτὸν, τοτὲ δ' οὐ, [95d] ἀλλὰ καὶ Θέογνιν τὸν ποιητὴν οἶσθ' ὅτι ταῦτα ταῦτα λέγει;

MEN. ἐν ποίοις ἔπεσιν;

ΣΩ. ἐν τοῖς ἐλεγείοις, οὗ λέγει—

καὶ παρὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν

ἴξε, καὶ ἄνδανε τοῖς, ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις.

ἐσθλῶν μὲν γὰρ ἅπ' ἐσθλὰ διδάσσει· ἦν δὲ κακοῖσιν

[95e]

συμμίσγης, ἀπολεῖς καὶ τὸν ἐόντα νόον.

οἶσθ' ὅτι ἐν τούτοις μὲν ὡς διδακτοῦ οὔσης τῆς ἀρετῆς λέγει;

MEN. φαίνεται γε.

ΣΩ. ἐν ἄλλοις δέ γε ὀλίγον μεταβάς,—

εἰ δ' ἦν ποιητόν, φησί, καὶ ἔνθετον ἀνδρὶ νόημα,

λέγει πως ὅτι—

πολλοὺς ἂν μισθοὺς καὶ μεγάλους ἔφερον

οἱ δυνάμενοι τοῦτο ποιεῖν, καὶ—

οὐ ποτ' ἂν ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πατρὸς ἔγεντο κακός,

[96a]

πειθόμενος μῦθοισι σαόφροσιν. ἀλλὰ διδάσκων

οὐ ποτε ποιήσεις τὸν κακὸν ἄνδρ' ἀγαθόν.

ἐννοεῖς ὅτι αὐτὸς αὐτῷ πάλιν περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν τάναντία λέγει;

MEN. φαίνεται.

ΣΩ. ἔχεις οὖν εἰπεῖν ἄλλου ὅτου οὖν πράγματος, οὗ οἱ μὲν φάσκοντες διδάσκαλοι εἶναι οὐχ ὅπως ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι ὁμολογοῦνται, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ ἐπίστασθαι, ἀλλὰ πονηροὶ [96b] εἶναι περὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ πρᾶγμα οὗ φασι διδάσκαλοι εἶναι, οἱ δὲ ὁμολογούμενοι αὐτοὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι τοτὲ μὲν φασιν αὐτὸ διδακτὸν εἶναι, τοτὲ δὲ οὐ; τοὺς οὖν οὕτω τεταραγμένους περὶ ὅτου οὖν φαίης ἂν σὺ κυρίως διδασκάλους εἶναι;

MEN. μὰ Δί' οὐκ ἔγωγε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ μήτε οἱ σοφισταὶ μήτε οἱ αὐτοὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι ὄντες διδάσκαλοί εἰσι τοῦ πράγματος, δῆλον ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλοι γε;

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

[96c] ΣΩ. εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι ἔχειν ὡς λέγεις.

ΣΩ. ὠμολογήκαμεν δέ γε, πράγματος οὗ μήτε διδάσκαλοι μήτε μαθηταὶ εἶεν, τοῦτο μὴδὲ διδακτὸν εἶναι;

MEN. ὠμολογήκαMEN.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἀρετῆς οὐδαμοῦ φαίνονται διδάσκαλοι;

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. εἰ δέ γε μὴ διδάσκαλοι, οὐδὲ μαθηταί;

MEN. φαίνεται οὕτως.

ΣΩ. ἀρετὴ ἄρα οὐκ ἂν εἴη διδακτόν;

[96d] MEN. οὐκ ἔοικεν, εἴπερ ὀρθῶς ἡμεῖς ἐσκέμμεθα. ὥστε καὶ θαυμάζω δὴ, ὦ Σώκρατες, πότερόν ποτε οὐδ' εἰσὶν ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες, ἢ τίς ἂν εἴη τρόπος τῆς γενέσεως τῶν ἀγαθῶν γιγνομένων.

ΣΩ. κινδυνεύομεν, ὦ Μένων, ἐγὼ τε καὶ σὺ φαῦλοί τινες εἶναι ἄνδρες, καὶ σέ τε Γοργίας οὐχ ἱκανῶς πεπαιδευκέναι καὶ ἐμὲ Πρόδικος. παντὸς μᾶλλον οὖν προσεκτέον τὸν νοῦν ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ζητητέον ὅστις ἡμᾶς ἐνὶ γέ τῳ τρόπῳ βελτίους [96e] ποιήσῃ· λέγω δὲ ταῦτα ἀποβλέψας πρὸς τὴν ἄρτι ζήτησιν, ὡς ἡμᾶς ἔλαθεν καταγελάστως ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἐπιστήμης ἡγουμένης ὀρθῶς τε καὶ εὖ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πράττεται τὰ πράγματα, ἢ ἴσως καὶ διαφεύγει ἡμᾶς τὸ γνῶναι τίνα ποτὲ τρόπον γίνονται οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες.

MEN. πῶς τοῦτο λέγεις, ὦ Σώκρατες;

ΣΩ. ὦδε· ὅτι μὲν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας δεῖ ὠφελίμους εἶναι, [97a] ὀρθῶς ὠμολογήκαμεν τοῦτό γε ὅτι οὐκ ἂν ἄλλως ἔχοι· ἦ γάρ;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶ ὅτι γε ὠφελίμοι ἔσονται, ἂν ὀρθῶς ἡμῖν ἡγῶνται τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τοῦτό που καλῶς ὠμολογοῦμεν;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖσθαι, ἐὰν μὴ φρόνιμος ᾖ, τοῦτο ὁμοιοὶ ἐσμεν οὐκ ὀρθῶς ὠμολογηκόσιν.

MEN. πῶς δὴ ὀρθῶς λέγεις;

ΣΩ. ἐγὼ ἐρῶ. εἰ εἰδὼς τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν εἰς Λάρισαν ἢ ὅποι βούλει ἄλλοσε βαδίζοι καὶ ἄλλοις ἡγοῖτο, ἄλλο τι ὀρθῶς ἂν καὶ εὖ ἡγοῖτο;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

[97b] ΣΩ. τί δ' εἴ τις ὀρθῶς μὲν δοξάζων ἦτις ἐστὶν ἡ ὁδός, ἐληλυθὼς δὲ μὴ μὴδ' ἐπιστάμενος, οὐ καὶ οὗτος ἂν ὀρθῶς ἡγοῖτο;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. καὶ ἔως γ' ἂν που ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἔχη περὶ ὧν ὁ ἕτερος ἐπιστήμην, οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμὼν ἔσται, οἰόμενος μὲν ἀληθῆ, φρονῶν δὲ μή, τοῦ τοῦτο φρονούντος.

MEN. οὐδὲν γάρ.

ΣΩ. δόξα ἄρα ἀληθῆς πρὸς ὀρθότητα πράξεως οὐδὲν χείρων ἡγεμὼν φρονήσεως· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστὶν ὃ νυνδὴ παρελείπομεν ἐν τῇ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς σκέψει ὁποῖόν τι εἶη, λέγοντες [97c] ὅτι φρόνησις μόνον ἡγεῖται τοῦ ὀρθῶς πράττειν· τὸ δὲ ἄρα καὶ δόξα ἦν ἀληθῆς.

MEN. ἔοικέ γε.

ΣΩ. οὐδὲν ἄρα ἥττον ὠφέλιμόν ἐστιν ὀρθὴ δόξα ἐπιστήμης.

MEN. τοσοῦτῳ γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἔχων ἀεὶ ἂν ἐπιτυχάνοι, ὁ δὲ τὴν ὀρθὴν δόξαν τοτὲ μὲν ἂν τυγχάνοι, τοτὲ δ' οὐ.

ΣΩ. πῶς λέγεις; ὁ ἀεὶ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἀεὶ ἂν τυγχάνοι, ἕωσπερ ὀρθὰ δοξάζοι;

MEN. ἀνάγκη μοι φαίνεται· ὥστε θαυμάζω, ὦ Σώκρατες, [97d] τούτου οὕτως ἔχοντος, ὅτι δὴ ποτε πολὺ τιμιωτέρα ἡ ἐπιστήμη τῆς ὀρθῆς δόξης, καὶ δι' ὅτι τὸ μὲν ἕτερον, τὸ δὲ ἕτερόν ἐστιν αὐτῶν.

ΣΩ. οἶσθα οὖν δι' ὅτι θαυμάζεις, ἢ ἐγὼ σοι εἶπω;

MEN. πάνυ γ' εἰπέ.

ΣΩ. ὅτι τοῖς Δαιδάλου ἀγάλμασιν οὐ προσέσχηκας τὸν νοῦν· ἴσως δὲ οὐδ' ἔστιν παρ' ὑμῖν.

MEN. πρὸς τί δὲ δὴ τοῦτο λέγεις;

ΣΩ. ὅτι καὶ ταῦτα, ἐὰν μὲν μὴ δεδεμένα ᾖ, ἀποδιδράσκει καὶ δραπετεύει, ἐὰν δὲ δεδεμένα, παραμένει.

[97e] MEN. τί οὖν δὴ;

ΣΩ. τῶν ἐκείνου ποιημάτων λελυμένον μὲν ἐκτῆσθαι οὐ πολλῆς τιнос ἄξιόν ἐστι τιμῆς, ὥσπερ δραπετὴν ἄνθρωπον —οὐ γὰρ παραμένει—δεδεμένον δὲ πολλοῦ ἄξιον· πάνυ γὰρ καλὰ τὰ ἔργα ἐστίν. πρὸς τί οὖν δὴ λέγω ταῦτα; πρὸς τὰς δόξας τὰς ἀληθεῖς. καὶ γὰρ αἱ δόξαι αἱ ἀληθεῖς, ὅσον μὲν ἂν χρόνον παραμένωσιν, καλὸν τὸ χρῆμα καὶ πάντ' [98a] ἀγαθὰ ἐργάζονται· πολὺν δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ἐθέλουσι παραμένειν, ἀλλὰ δραπετεύουσιν ἐκ τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὥστε οὐ πολλοῦ ἄξιαί εἰσιν, ἔως ἂν τις αὐτὰς δήσῃ αἰτίας λογισμῶ. τοῦτο δ' ἐστίν, ὦ Μένων ἐταῖρε, ἀνάμνησις, ὡς ἐν τοῖς πρόσθεν ἡμῖν ὡμολόγηται. ἐπειδὴν δὲ δεθῶσιν, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπιστῆμαι γίνονται, ἔπειτα μόνιμοι· καὶ διὰ ταῦτα δὴ τιμιώτερον ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης ἐστίν, καὶ διαφέρει δεσμῶ ἐπιστήμη ὀρθῆς δόξης.

MEN. νῆ τὸν Δία, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἔοικεν τοιούτῳ τινί.

[98b] ΣΩ. καὶ μὴν καὶ ἐγὼ ὡς οὐκ εἰδὼς λέγω, ἀλλὰ εἰκάζων· ὅτι δὲ ἐστίν τι ἄλλοῖον ὀρθὴ δόξα

καὶ ἐπιστήμη, οὐ πάνυ μοι δοκῶ τοῦτο εἰκάζειν, ἀλλ' εἶπερ τι ἄλλο φαίην ἂν εἰδέναι—ὀλίγα δ' ἂν φαίην—ἐν δ' οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐκείνων θείην ἂν ὧν οἶδα.

MEN. καὶ ὀρθῶς γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, λέγεις.

ΣΩ. τί δέ; τόδε οὐκ ὀρθῶς, ὅτι ἀληθῆς δόξα ἡγουμένη τὸ ἔργον ἐκάστης τῆς πράξεως οὐδὲν χεῖρον ἀπεργάζεται ἢ ἐπιστήμη;

MEN. καὶ τοῦτο δοκεῖς μοι ἀληθῆ λέγειν.

[98c] ΣΩ. οὐδὲν ἄρα ὀρθῇ δόξᾳ ἐπιστήμης χεῖρον οὐδὲ ἦττον ὠφελίμη ἔσται εἰς τὰς πράξεις, οὐδὲ ἀνὴρ ὁ ἔχων ὀρθὴν δόξαν ἢ ὁ ἐπιστήμην.

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. καὶ μὴν ὅ γε ἀγαθὸς ἀνὴρ ὠφέλιμος ἡμῖν ὡμολόγηται εἶναι.

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν οὐ μόνον δι' ἐπιστήμην ἀγαθοὶ ἄνδρες ἂν εἶεν καὶ ὠφέλιμοι ταῖς πόλεσιν, εἶπερ εἶεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ δι' ὀρθὴν δόξαν, τούτοις δὲ οὐδέτερον φύσει ἐστὶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, [98d] οὔτε ἐπιστήμη οὔτε δόξα ἀληθῆς, οὔτ' ἐπικτήτα—ἢ δοκεῖ σοι φύσει ὅποτερονοῦν αὐτοῖν εἶναι;

MEN. οὐκ ἔμοιγε.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ φύσει, οὐδὲ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ φύσει εἶεν ἄν.

MEN. οὐ δῆτα.

ΣΩ. ἐπειδὴ δέ γε οὐ φύσει, ἐσκοποῦμεν τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο εἰ διδακτὸν ἐστίν.

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν διδακτὸν ἔδοξεν εἶναι, εἰ φρόνησις ἢ ἀρετή;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. καὶν εἴ γε διδακτὸν εἴη, φρόνησις ἂν εἶναι;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

[98e] ΣΩ. καὶ εἰ μὲν γε διδάσκαλοι εἶεν, διδακτὸν ἂν εἶναι, μὴ ὄντων δὲ οὐ διδακτὸν;

MEN. οὕτω.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴν ὡμολογήκαμεν μὴ εἶναι αὐτοῦ διδασκάλους;

MEN. ἔστι ταῦτα.

ΣΩ. ὡμολογήκαμεν ἄρα μήτε διδακτὸν αὐτὸ μήτε φρόνησιν εἶναι;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ἀλλὰ μὴν ἀγαθὸν γε αὐτὸ ὁμολογοῦμεν εἶναι;

MEN. ναί.

ΣΩ. ὠφέλιμον δὲ καὶ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι τὸ ὀρθῶς ἡγούμενον;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

[99a] ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς δέ γε ἡγεῖσθαι δύο ὄντα ταῦτα μόνα, δόξαν τε ἀληθῆ καὶ ἐπιστήμην, ἃ ἔχων ἄνθρωπος ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖται— τὰ γὰρ ἀπὸ τύχης τινὸς ὀρθῶς γινόμενα οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνη ἡγεμονία

γίνεται—ὦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἡγεμὼν ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τὸ ὀρθόν, δύο ταῦτα, δόξα ἀληθὴς καὶ ἐπιστήμη.

MEN. δοκεῖ μοι οὕτω.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ οὐ διδακτὸν ἐστὶν, οὐδ' ἐπιστήμη δὴ ἔτι γίνεται ἢ ἀρετή;

MEN. οὐ φαίνεται.

[99b] ΣΩ. δυοῖν ἄρα ὄντοιν ἀγαθοῖν καὶ ὠφελίμοιν τὸ μὲν ἕτερον ἀπολέλυται, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐν πολιτικῇ πράξει ἐπιστήμη ἡγεμὼν.

MEN. οὐ μοι δοκεῖ.

ΣΩ. οὐκ ἄρα σοφία τινὶ οὐδὲ σοφοὶ ὄντες οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἄνδρες ἡγοῦντο ταῖς πόλεσιν, οἱ ἀμφὶ Θεμιστοκλέα τε καὶ οὖς ἄρτι Ἄνυτος ὅδε ἔλεγεν· διὸ δὴ καὶ οὐχ οἷοί τε ἄλλους ποιεῖν τοιούτους οἷοι αὐτοὶ εἰσι, ἅτε οὐ δι' ἐπιστήμην ὄντες τοιοῦτοι.

MEN. ἔοικεν οὕτως ἔχειν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὥς λέγεις.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ ἐπιστήμη, εὐδοξία δὴ τὸ λοιπὸν [99c] γίνεται· ἥ οἱ πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες χρώμενοι τὰς πόλεις ὀρθοῦσιν, οὐδὲν διαφερόντως ἔχοντες πρὸς τὸ φρονεῖν ἢ οἱ χρησμωδοὶ τε καὶ οἱ θεομάντιες· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι ἐνθουσιῶντες λέγουσιν μὲν ἀληθῆ καὶ πολλά, ἴσασι δὲ οὐδὲν ὦν λέγουσιν.

MEN. κινδυνεύει οὕτως ἔχειν.

ΣΩ. οὐκοῦν, ὦ Μένων, ἄξιον τούτους θεῖους καλεῖν τοὺς ἄνδρας, οἵτινες νοῦν μὴ ἔχοντες πολλά καὶ μεγάλα κατορθοῦσιν ὦν πράττουσι καὶ λέγουσι;

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. ὀρθῶς ἄρ' ἂν καλοῖμεν θεῖους τε οὖς νυνδὴ ἐλέγομεν [99d] χρησμωδούς καὶ μάντιες καὶ τοὺς ποιητικούς ἅπαντας· καὶ τοὺς πολιτικούς οὐχ ἥκιστα τούτων φαῖμεν ἂν θεῖους τε εἶναι καὶ ἐνθουσιάζειν, ἐπίπνους ὄντας καὶ κατεχομένους ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν κατορθῶσι λέγοντες πολλά καὶ μεγάλα πράγματα, μὴδὲν εἰδότες ὦν λέγουσιν.

MEN. πάνυ γε.

ΣΩ. καὶ αἱ γε γυναῖκες δήπου, ὦ Μένων, τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας θεῖους καλοῦσι· καὶ οἱ Λάκωνες ὅταν τινὰ ἐγκωμιάζωσιν ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα, θεῖος ἀνὴρ, φασίν, οὗτος.

[99e] MEN. καὶ φαίνονται γε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὀρθῶς λέγειν. καίτοι ἴσως Ἄνυτος ὅδε σοι ἄχθεται λέγοντι.

ΣΩ. οὐδὲν μέλει ἔμοιγε. τούτῳ μὲν, ὦ Μένων, καὶ αὐθις διαλεξόμεθα· εἰ δὲ νῦν ἡμεῖς ἐν παντὶ τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ καλῶς ἐζητήσαμέν τε καὶ ἐλέγομεν, ἀρετὴ ἂν εἴη οὔτε φύσει οὔτε διδακτὸν, ἀλλὰ θεῖα μοῖρα παραγιγνομένη ἄνευ νοῦ οἷς ἂν [100a] παραγίγνηται, εἰ μὴ τις εἴη τοιοῦτος τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀνδρῶν οἷος καὶ ἄλλον ποιῆσαι πολιτικόν. εἰ δὲ εἴη, σχεδὸν ἂν τι οὗτος λέγοιτο τοιοῦτος ἐν τοῖς ζῶσιν οἷον ἔφη Ὅμηρος ἐν τοῖς τεθνεῶσιν τὸν Τειρεσίαν εἶναι, λέγων περὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οἷος πέπνυται τῶν ἐν Ἄιδου, τοῖ δὲ σκιαὶ αἰσσοῦσι. ταῦτόν ἂν καὶ ἐνθάδε ὁ τοιοῦτος ὥσπερ παρὰ σκιάς ἀληθὲς ἂν πρᾶγμα εἴη πρὸς ἀρετήν.

[100b] MEN. κάλλιστα δοκεῖς μοι λέγειν, ὦ Σώκρατες.

ΣΩ. ἐκ μὲν τοίνυν τούτου τοῦ λογισμοῦ, ὦ Μένων, θεῖα μοῖρα ἡμῖν φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἢ ἀρετὴ οἷς ἂν παραγίγνηται· τὸ δὲ σαφὲς περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰσόμεθα τότε, ὅταν πρὶν ὥτινι τρόπῳ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραγίγνηται ἀρετὴ, πρότερον ἐπιχειρήσωμεν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ ζητεῖν τί ποτ' ἐστὶν

ἀρετή. νῦν δ' ἐμοὶ μὲν ὥρα ποιῆναι, σὺ δὲ ταῦτα ταῦτα ἅπερ αὐτὸς πέπεισαι πείθε καὶ τὸν ξένον τόνδε Ἄνυτον, ἵνα [100c] πρῶτος ᾗ· ὥς ἐὰν πείσῃς τοῦτον, ἔστιν ὅτι καὶ Ἀθηναίους ὀνήσεις.

English translation

[70a]

Men.

Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue can be taught, or is acquired by practice, not teaching? Or if neither by practice nor by learning, whether it comes to mankind by nature or in some other way?

Soc.

Meno, of old the Thessalians were famous and admired among the Greeks for their riding and [70b] their riches; but now they have a name, I believe, for wisdom also, especially your friend Aristippus's people, the Larisaeans. For this you have to thank Gorgias: for when he came to that city he made the leading men of the Aleuadae—among them your lover Aristippus—and the Thessalians generally enamored of wisdom. Nay more, he has given you the regular habit of answering any chance question in a fearless, magnificent manner, as befits those who know: [70c] for he sets the example of offering himself to be questioned by any Greek who chooses, and on any point one likes, and he has an answer for everybody.

Soc.

Now in this place, my dear Meno, we have a contrary state of things: [71a] a drought of wisdom, as it were, has come on; and it seems as though wisdom had deserted our borders in favour of yours. You have only to ask one of our people a question such as that, and he will be sure to laugh and say: Stranger, you must think me a specially favoured mortal, to be able to tell whether virtue can be taught, or in what way it comes to one: so far am I from knowing whether it can be taught or not, that I actually do not even know what the thing itself, virtue, is at all. [71b] And I myself, Meno, am in the same case; I share my townsmen's poverty in this matter: I have to reproach myself with an utter ignorance about virtue; and if I do not know what a thing is, how can I know what its nature may be? Or do you imagine it possible, if one has no cognizance at all of Meno, that one could know whether he is handsome or rich or noble, or the reverse of these? Do you suppose that one could?

Men.

Not I. But is it true, Socrates, [71c] that you do not even know what virtue is? Are we to return home with this report of you?

Soc.

Not only this, my friend, but also that I never yet came across anybody who did know, in my opinion.

Men.

What? You did not meet Gorgias when he was here?

Soc.

I did.

Men.

And you didn't consider that he knew?

Soc.

I have not a very good memory, Meno, so I cannot tell at the moment how he struck me then. It may be that he did know, and that you know what he said: [71d] remind me therefore how he expressed it; or if you like, make your own statement, for I expect you share his views.

Meno.

I do.

Soc.

Then let us pass him over, since in fact he is not present, and do you tell me, in heaven's name, what is your own account of virtue. Speak out frankly, that I may find myself the victim of a most fortunate falsehood, if you and Gorgias prove to have knowledge of it, while I have said that I never yet came across anyone who had.

[71e]

Meno.

Why, there is no difficulty, Socrates, in telling. First of all, if you take the virtue of a man, it is easily stated that a man's virtue is this—that he be competent to manage the affairs of his city, and to manage them so as to benefit his friends and harm his enemies, and to take care to avoid suffering harm himself. Or take a woman's virtue: there is no difficulty in describing it as the duty of ordering the house well, looking after the property indoors, and obeying her husband. And the child has another virtue—one for the female, and one for the male; and there is another for elderly men—one, if you like, for freemen, [72a] and yet another for slaves.

Meno.

And there are very many other virtues besides, so that one cannot be at a loss to explain what virtue is; for it is according to each activity and age that every one of us, in whatever we do, has his virtue; and the same, I take it, Socrates, will hold also of vice.

Soc.

I seem to be in a most lucky way, Meno; for in seeking one virtue I have discovered a whole swarm of virtues there in your keeping. Now, Meno, to follow this figure of a swarm, [72b] suppose I should ask you what is the real nature of the bee, and you replied that there are many different kinds of bees, and I rejoined: Do you say it is by being bees that they are of many and various kinds and differ from each other, or does their difference lie not in that, but in something else—for example, in their beauty or size or some other quality? Tell me, what would be your answer to this question?

Meno.

Why, this—that they do not differ, as bees, the one from the other.

[72c]

Soc.

And if I went on to say: Well now, there is this that I want you to tell me, Meno: what do you call the quality by which they do not differ, but are all alike? You could find me an answer, I

presume?

Men.

I could.

Soc.

And likewise also with the virtues, however many and various they may be, they all have one common character whereby they are virtues, and on which one would of course be wise to keep an eye when one is giving a definitive answer to the question of what virtue really is. [72d] You take my meaning, do you not?

Men.

My impression is that I do; but still I do not yet grasp the meaning of the question as I could wish.

Soc.

Is it only in the case of virtue, do you think, Meno, that one can say there is one kind belonging to a man, another to a woman, and so on with the rest, or is it just the same, too, in the case of health and size and strength? Do you consider that there is one health for a man, and another for a woman? Or, wherever we find health, is it of the same character universally, [72e] in a man or in anyone else?

Men.

I think that health is the same, both in man and in woman.

Soc.

Then is it not so with size and strength also? If a woman is strong, she will be strong by reason of the same form and the same strength; by the same I mean that strength does not differ as strength, whether it be in a man or in a woman. Or do you think there is any difference?

Men.

I do not.

[73a]

Soc.

And will virtue, as virtue, differ at all whether it be in a child or in an elderly person, in a woman or in a man?

Men.

I feel somehow, Socrates, that here we cease to be on the same ground as in those other cases.

Soc.

Why? Were you not saying that a man's virtue is to manage a state well, and a woman's a house?

Men.

I was.

Soc.

And is it possible to manage a state well, or a house, or anything at all, if you do not manage it temperately and justly?

[73b]

Men.

Surely not.

Soc.

Then whoever manages temperately and justly will manage with temperance and justice?

Men.

That must be.

Soc.

Then both the woman and the man require the same qualities of justice and temperance, if they are to be good.

Men.

Evidently.

Soc.

And what of a child or an old man? Can they ever hope to be good if they are intemperate and unjust?

Men.

Surely not.

Soc.

Only if they are temperate and just?

Men.

Yes.

[73c]

Soc.

So all mankind are good in the same way; for they become good when they acquire the same qualities.

Men.

So it seems.

Soc.

And I presume, if they had not the same virtue, they would not be good in the same way.

Men.

No, indeed.

Soc.

Seeing then that it is the same virtue in all cases, try and tell me, if you can recollect, what

Gorgias—and you in agreement with him—say it is.

Men.

Simply that it is the power of governing mankind— [73d] if you want some single description to cover all cases.

Soc.

That is just what I am after. But is virtue the same in a child, Meno, and in a slave—an ability to govern each his master? And do you think he who governed would still be a slave?

Men.

I should say certainly not, Socrates.

Soc.

No, indeed, it would be unlikely, my excellent friend. And again, consider this further point: you say it is to be able to govern; shall we not add to that—justly, not unjustly?

Men.

Yes, I think so; for justice, Socrates, is virtue.

[73e]

Soc.

Virtue, Meno, or a virtue?

Men.

What do you mean by that?

Soc.

What I would in any other case. To take roundness, for instance; I should call it a figure, and not figure pure and simple. And I should name it so because there are other figures as well.

Men.

You would be quite right—just as I say there are other virtues besides justice.

[74a]

Soc.

What are they? Tell me. In the same way as I can tell you of other figures, if you request me, so do you tell me of other virtues.

Men.

Well then, courage, I consider, is a virtue, and temperance, and wisdom, and loftiness of mind; and there are a great many others.

Soc.

Once more, Meno, we are in the same plight: again we have found a number of virtues when we were looking for one, though not in the same way as we did just now; but the one that runs through them all, this we are not able to find.

[74b]

Men.

No, for I am not yet able, Socrates, to follow your line of search, and find a single virtue common to all, as one can in other cases.

Soc.

And no wonder; but I will make an effort, so far as I can, to help us onward. You understand, of course, that this principle of mine applies to everything: if someone asked you the question I put to you just now: What is figure, Meno? and you replied: Roundness; and then he said, as I did: Is roundness figure or a figure? I suppose you would answer: A figure.

Men.

Certainly.

[74c]

Soc.

And for this reason—that there are other figures as well?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And if he went on to ask you of what sort they were, you would tell him?

Men.

I would.

Soc.

And if he asked likewise what color is, and on your answering white your questioner then rejoined: Is white color or a color? your reply would be: A color; because there are other colors besides.

Men.

It would.

Soc.

And if he bade you mention other colors, [74d] you would tell him of others that are colors just as much as white?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Now suppose that, like me, he pursued the argument and said: We are always arriving at a variety of things, but let me have no more of that: since you call these many things by one single name, and say they are figures, every one of them, even when they are opposed to one another, tell me what is that which comprises round and straight alike, and which you call figure— [74e] including straight equally with round under that term. For that is your statement, is it not?

Men.

It is.

Soc.

And in making it, do you mean to say that round is no more round than straight, or straight no more straight than round?

Men.

No, to be sure, Socrates.

Soc.

What you mean is that the round shape is no more a figure than the straight, or the straight than the round.

Men.

Quite right.

Soc.

Then what can this thing be, which bears the name of figure? Try and tell me. Suppose that, on being asked this question by someone, [75a] either about figure or about color, you had replied: Why, I don't so much as understand what you want, sir, or even know what you are saying: he might well have shown surprise, and said: Do you not understand that I am looking for that which is the same common element in all these things? Or would you still be unable to reply, Meno, if you were approached on other terms, and were asked: What is it that is common to the round and the straight and everything else that you call figures—the same in all? Try and tell me it will be good practice for your answer about virtue.

[75b]

Men.

No, it is you who must answer, Socrates.

Soc.

You wish me to do you the favour?

Men.

By all means.

Soc.

And then you will agree to take your turn and answer me on virtue?

Men.

I will.

Soc.

Well then, I must make the effort, for it is worth our while.

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

Come now, let me try and tell you what figure is. Just consider if you accept this description of it: figure, let us say, is the only existing thing that is found always following color. Are you satisfied, or are you looking for something different? I am sure I should be content with a similar account of virtue from you.

[75c]

Men.

But it is such a silly one, Socrates.

Soc.

How do you mean?

Men.

Well, figure, as I understand by your account, is what always follows color. Very good; but if some one said he did not know color, and was in the same difficulty about it as about figure, what answer do you suppose would have come from you?

Soc.

The truth, from me; and if my questioner were a professor of the eristic and contentious sort, I should say to him: [75d] I have made my statement; if it is wrong, your business is to examine and refute it. But if, like you and me on this occasion, we were friends and chose to have a discussion together, I should have to reply in some milder tone more suited to dialectic. The more dialectical way, I suppose, is not merely to answer what is true, but also to make use of those points which the questioned person acknowledges he knows. And this is the way in which I shall now try to argue with you. Tell me, is there something you call an end? Such a thing, I mean, [75e] as a limit, or extremity—I use all these terms in the same sense, though I daresay Prodicus might quarrel with us. But you, I am sure, refer to a thing as terminated or ended: something of that sort is what I mean—nothing complicated.

Men.

Yes, I do, and I think I grasp your meaning.

[76a]

Soc.

Well then, you speak of a surface, and also of a solid—the terms employed in geometrical problems?

Men.

I do.

Soc.

So now you are able to comprehend from all this what I mean by figure. In every instance of figure I call that figure in which the solid ends; and I may put that more succinctly by saying that figure is limit of solid.

Men.

And what do you say of color, Socrates?

Soc.

How overbearing of you, Meno, to press an old man with demands for answers, when you will not trouble yourself [76b] to recollect and tell me what account Gorgias gives of virtue!

Meno.

When you have answered my question, Socrates, I will answer yours.

Soc.

One might tell even blindfolded, Meno, by the way you discuss, that you are handsome and still have lovers.

Meno.

Why so?

Soc.

Because you invariably speak in a peremptory tone, after the fashion of spoilt beauties, holding as they do a despotic power so long as their bloom is on them. You have also, I daresay, [76c] made a note of my weakness for handsome people. So I will indulge you, and answer.

Meno.

You must certainly indulge me.

Soc.

Then would you like me to answer you in the manner of Gorgias, which you would find easiest to follow?

Meno.

I should like that, of course.

Soc.

Do not both of you say there are certain effluences of existent things, as Empedocles held?

Meno.

Certainly.

Soc.

And passages into which and through which the effluences pass?

Meno.

To be sure.

Soc.

And some of the effluences fit into various passages, [76d] while some are too small or too large?

Meno.

That is so.

Soc.

And further, there is what you call sight?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

So now conceive my meaning, as Pindar says: color is an effluence of figures, commensurate with sight and sensible.

Men.

Your answer, Socrates, seems to me excellently put.

Soc.

Yes, for I expect you find its terms familiar; and at the same time I fancy you observe that it enables you to tell what sound and smell are, and numerous other [76e] things of the kind.

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

It is an answer in the high poetic style, Meno, and so more agreeable to you than that about figure.

Men.

Yes, it is.

Soc.

But yet, son of Alexidemus, I am inclined to think the other was the better of the two; and I believe you also would prefer it, if you were not compelled, as you were saying yesterday, to go away before the mysteries, and could stay awhile and be initiated.

[77a]

Men.

But I should stay, Socrates, if you would give me many such answers.

Soc.

Well then, I will spare no endeavor, both for your sake and for my own, to continue in that style; but I fear I may not succeed in keeping for long on that level. But come now, you in your turn must try and fulfil your promise by telling me what virtue is in a general way; and you must stop producing a plural from the singular, as the wags say whenever one breaks something, but leave virtue [77b] whole and sound, and tell me what it is. The pattern you have now got from me.

Men.

Well, in my view, Socrates, virtue is, in the poet's words, to rejoice in things honorable and be able for them ; and that, I say, is virtue—to desire what is honorable and be able to procure it.

Soc.

Do you say that he who desires the honorable is desirous of the good?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

Implying that there are some who desire the evil, and others the good? Do not all men, [77c] in your opinion, my dear sir, desire the good?

Men.

I think not.

Soc.

There are some who desire the evil?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Thinking the evil to be good, do you mean, or actually recognizing it to be evil, and desiring it nevertheless?

Men.

Both, I believe.

Soc.

Do you really believe, Meno, that a man knows the evil to be evil, and still desires it?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

What do you mean by desires? Desires the possession of it?

[77d]

Men.

Yes; what else could it be?

Soc.

And does he think the evil benefits him who gets it, or does he know that it harms him who has it?

Men.

There are some who think the evil is a benefit, and others who know that it does harm.

Soc.

And, in your opinion, do those who think the evil a benefit know that it is evil?

Men.

I do not think that at all.

Soc.

Obviously those who are ignorant of the evil do not desire it, but only what they supposed [77e] to be good, though it is really evil; so that those who are ignorant of it and think it good are really desiring the good. Is not that so?

Men.

It would seem to be so in their case.

Soc.

Well now, I presume those who, as you say, desire the evil, and consider that the evil harms him who gets it, know that they will be harmed by it?

Men.

They needs must.

[78a]

Soc.

But do they not hold that those who are harmed are miserable in proportion to the harm they suffer?

Men.

That too must be.

Soc.

And are not the miserable ill-starred?

Men.

I think so.

Soc.

Then is there anyone who wishes to be miserable and ill-starred?

Men.

I do not suppose there is, Socrates.

Soc.

No one, then, Meno, desires evil, if no one desires to be such an one: for what is being miserable but desiring evil and obtaining it?

[78b]

Men.

It seems that what you say is true, Socrates, and that nobody desires evil.

Soc.

Well now, you were saying a moment ago that virtue is the desire and ability for good?

Men.

Yes, I was.

Soc.

One part of the statement—the desire—belongs to our common nature, and in this respect one man is no better than another?

Men.

Apparently.

Soc.

But it is plain that if one man is not better than another in this, he must be superior in the ability.

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then virtue, it seems by your account, [78c] is ability to procure goods.

Men.

I entirely agree, Socrates, with the view which you now take of the matter.

Soc.

Then let us see whether your statement is true in another respect; for very likely you may be right. You say virtue is the ability to procure goods?

Men.

I do.

Soc.

And do you not mean by goods such things as health and wealth?

Men.

Yes, and I include the acquisition of gold and silver, and of state honors and offices.

Soc.

Are there any things besides this sort, that you class as goods?

Men.

No, I refer only to everything of that sort.

[78d]

Soc.

Very well: procuring gold and silver is virtue, according to Meno, the ancestral friend of the Great King. Tell me, do you add to such procuring, Meno, that it is to be done justly and piously, or is this indifferent to you, but even though a man procures these things unjustly, do you call them virtue all the same?

Men.

Surely not, Socrates.

Soc.

Rather, vice.

Men.

Yes, of course.

Soc.

Then it seems that justice or temperance or holiness or some other part of virtue must accompany the procuring of these things; [78e] otherwise it will not be virtue, though it provides one with goods.

Men.

Yes, for how, without these, could it be virtue?

Soc.

And not to procure gold and silver, when it would be unjust—what we call the want of such things—is virtue, is it not?

Men.

Apparently.

Soc.

So the procuring of this sort of goods will be no more virtue than the want of them; but it seems that whatever comes accompanied by justice will be virtue, [79a] and whatever comes without any such quality, vice.

Men.

I agree that it must be as you say.

Soc.

And were we saying a little while ago that each of these things was a part of virtue—justice and temperance and the rest of them?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And here you are, Meno, making fun of me?

Men.

How so, Socrates?

Soc.

Because after my begging you not to break up virtue into small change, and giving you a pattern on which you should answer, you have ignored all this, and now tell me that virtue is [79b] the ability to procure good things with justice; and this, you tell me, is a part of virtue?

Men.

I do.

Soc.

Then it follows from your own admission that doing whatever one does with a part of virtue is itself virtue; for you say that justice is a part of virtue, and so is each of such qualities. You ask the meaning of my remark. It is that after my requesting you to speak of virtue as a whole, you say not a word as to what it is in itself, but tell me that every action is virtue provided that it is done [79c] with a part of virtue; as though you had told me what virtue is in the whole, and I must understand it forthwith—when you are really splitting it up into fragments! I think therefore that you must face the same question all over again, my dear Meno—What is virtue?—if we are to be told that every action accompanied by a part of virtue is virtue; for that is the meaning of the statement that every action accompanied by justice is virtue. Or do you not agree that you have to meet the same question afresh? Do you suppose that anyone can know a part of virtue when he does not know virtue itself?

Meno.

No, I do not.

[79d]

Soc.

And I daresay you remember, when I answered you a while ago about figure, how we rejected the sort of answer that attempts to proceed in terms which are still under inquiry and has not yet been admitted.

Meno.

Yes, and we were right in rejecting it, Socrates.

Soc.

Well then, my good sir, you must not in your turn suppose that while the nature of virtue as a whole is still under inquiry you will explain it to anyone by replying in terms of its parts, or by any other statement [79e] on the same lines: you will only have to face the same question over again—What is this virtue, of which you are speaking all the time? Or do you see no force in what I say?

Meno.

I think what you say is right.

Soc.

Then answer me again from the beginning: what do both you and your associate say that virtue is?

Meno.

Socrates, I used to be told, before I began to meet you, [80a] that yours was just a case of being in doubt yourself and making others doubt also: and so now I find you are merely bewitching me with your spells and incantations, which have reduced me to utter perplexity. And if I am indeed to have my jest, I consider that both in your appearance and in other respects you are extremely like the flat torpedo sea-fish; for it benumbs anyone who approaches and touches it,

and something of the sort is what I find you have done to me now. For in truth [80b] I feel my soul and my tongue quite benumbed, and I am at a loss what answer to give you. And yet on countless occasions I have made abundant speeches on virtue to various people—and very good speeches they were, so I thought—but now I cannot say one word as to what it is. You are well advised, I consider, in not voyaging or taking a trip away from home; for if you went on like this as a stranger in any other city you would very likely be taken up for a wizard.

Soc.

You are a rogue, Meno, and had almost deceived me.

Meno.

How is that, Socrates?

[80c]

Soc.

I perceive your aim in thus comparing me.

Meno.

What was it?

Soc.

That I might compare you in return. One thing I know about all handsome people is this—they delight in being compared to something. They do well over it, since fine features, I suppose, must have fine similes. But I am not for playing your game. As for me, if the torpedo is torpid itself while causing others to be torpid, I am like it, but not otherwise. For it is not from any sureness in myself that I cause others to doubt: it is from being in more doubt than anyone else that [80d] I cause doubt in others. So now, for my part, I have no idea what virtue is, whilst you, though perhaps you may have known before you came in touch with me, are now as good as ignorant of it also. But none the less I am willing to join you in examining it and inquiring into its nature.

Meno.

Why, on what lines will you look, Socrates, for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all? Pray, what sort of thing, amongst those that you know not, will you treat us to as the object of your search? Or even supposing, at the best, that you hit upon it, how will you know it is the thing you did not know?

Soc.

I understand the point you would make, Meno. [80e] Do you see what a captious argument you are introducing—that, forsooth, a man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know? For he cannot inquire about what he knows, because he knows it, and in that case is in no need of inquiry; nor again can he inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what he is to inquire.

[81a]

Meno.

Now does it seem to you to be a good argument, Socrates?

Soc.

It does not.

Men.

Can you explain how not?

Soc.

I can; for I have heard from wise men and women who told of things divine that—

Men.

What was it they said ?

Soc.

Something true, as I thought, and admirable.

Men.

What was it? And who were the speakers?

Soc.

They were certain priests and priestesses who have studied so as to be able to give a reasoned account of their ministry; and Pindar also [81b] and many another poet of heavenly gifts. As to their words, they are these: mark now, if you judge them to be true. They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time comes to an end, which is called dying, and at another is born again, but never perishes. Consequently one ought to live all one's life in the utmost holiness. For from whomsoever Persephone shall accept requital for ancient wrong, the souls of these she restores in the ninth year to the upper sun again; from them arise [81c] glorious kings and men of splendid might and surpassing wisdom, and for all remaining time are they called holy heroes amongst mankind. Seeing then that the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has beheld all things both in this world and in the nether realms, she has acquired knowledge of all and everything; so that it is no wonder that she should be able to recollect all that she knew before about virtue and other things. For as [81d] all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no reason why we should not, by remembering but one single thing—an act which men call learning—discover everything else, if we have courage and faint not in the search; since, it would seem, research and learning are wholly recollection. So we must not hearken to that captious argument: it would make us idle, and is pleasing only to the indolent ear, whereas the other makes us energetic [81e] and inquiring. Putting my trust in its truth, I am ready to inquire with you into the nature of virtue.

Men.

Yes, Socrates, but what do you mean by saying that we do not learn, and that what we call learning is recollection? Can you instruct me that this is so?

Soc.

I remarked just now, Meno, that you are a rogue and so here you are asking if I can instruct you, when I say there is no teaching [82a] but only recollection: you hope that I may be caught contradicting myself forthwith.

Men.

I assure you, Socrates; that was not my intention I only spoke from habit. But if you can somehow prove to me that it is as you say, pray do so.

Soc.

It is no easy matter, but still I am willing to try my best for your sake. Just call one of your own troop of attendants there, [82b] whichever one you please, that he may serve for my demonstration.

Men.

Certainly. You, I say, come here.

Soc.

He is a Greek, I suppose, and speaks Greek?

Men.

Oh yes, to be sure—born in the house.

Soc.

Now observe closely whether he strikes you as recollecting or as learning from me.

Men.

I will.

Soc.

Tell me, boy, do you know that a square figure is like this?

Boy.

I do.

[82c]

Soc.

Now, a square figure has these lines, four in number, all equal?

Boy.

Certainly.

Soc.

And these, drawn through the middle, are equal too, are they not?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

And a figure of this sort may be larger or smaller?

Boy.

To be sure.

Soc.

Now if this side were two feet and that also two, how many feet would the whole be? Or let me put it thus: if one way it were two feet, and only one foot the other, of course the space would be two feet taken once ?

Boy.

Yes.

[82d]

Soc.

But as it is two feet also on that side, it must be twice two feet?

Boy.

It is.

Soc.

Then the space is twice two feet?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Well, how many are twice two feet? Count and tell me.

Boy.

Four, Socrates.

Soc.

And might there not be another figure twice the size of this, but of the same sort, with all its sides equal like this one?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Then how many feet will it be?

Boy.

Eight.

Soc.

Come now, try and tell me how long will each side [82e] of that figure be. This one is two feet long: what will be the side of the other, which is double in size?

Boy.

Clearly, Socrates, double.

Soc.

Do you observe, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but merely asking him each time? And now he supposes that he knows about the line required to make a figure of eight

square feet; or do you not think he does?

Men.

I do.

Soc.

Well, does he know?

Men.

Certainly not.

Soc.

He just supposes it, from the double size required?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Now watch his progress in recollecting, by the proper use of memory. Tell me, boy, [83a] do you say we get the double space from the double line? The space I speak of is not long one way and short the other, but must be equal each way like this one, while being double its size—eight square feet. Now see if you still think we get this from a double length of line.

Boy.

I do.

Soc.

Well, this line is doubled, if we add here another of the same length?

Boy.

Certainly.

Soc.

And you say we shall get our eight-foot space from four lines of this length?

Boy.

Yes.

[83b]

Soc.

Then let us describe the square, drawing four equal lines of that length. This will be what you say is the eight-foot figure, will it not?

Boy.

Certainly.

Soc.

And here, contained in it, have we not four squares, each of which is equal to this space of four feet?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Then how large is the whole? Four times that space, is it not?

Boy.

It must be.

Soc.

And is four times equal to double?

Boy.

No, to be sure.

Soc.

But how much is it?

Boy.

Fourfold.

[83c]

Soc.

Thus, from the double-sized line, boy, we get a space, not of double, but of fourfold size.

Boy.

That is true.

Soc.

And if it is four times four it is sixteen, is it not?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

What line will give us a space of eight feet? This one gives us a fourfold space, does it not?

Boy.

It does.

Soc.

And a space of four feet is made from this line of half the length?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Very well; and is not a space of eight feet double the size of this one, [83d] and half the size of this other?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Will it not be made from a line longer than the one of these, and shorter than the other?

Boy.

I think so.

Soc.

Excellent: always answer just what you think. Now tell me, did we not draw this line two feet, and that four?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Then the line on the side of the eight-foot figure should be more than this of two feet, and less than the other of four?

Boy.

It should.

[83e]

Soc.

Try and tell me how much you would say it is.

Boy.

Three feet.

Soc.

Then if it is to be three feet, we shall add on a half to this one, and so make it three feet? For here we have two, and here one more, and so again on that side there are two, and another one; and that makes the figure of which you speak.

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Now if it be three this way and three that way, the whole space will be thrice three feet, will it not?

Boy.

So it seems.

Soc.

And thrice three feet are how many?

Boy.

Nine.

Soc.

And how many feet was that double one to be?

Boy.

Eight.

Soc.

So we fail to get our eight-foot figure from this three-foot line.

Boy.

Yes, indeed.

Soc.

But from what line shall we get it? Try and tell us exactly; [84a] and if you would rather not reckon it out, just show what line it is.

Boy.

Well, on my word, Socrates, I for one do not know.

Soc.

There now, Meno, do you observe who progress he has already made in his recollection? At first he did not know what is the line that forms the figure of eight feet, and he does not know even now: but at any rate he thought he knew then, and confidently answered as though he knew, and was aware of no difficulty; whereas now he feels the difficulty he is in, and besides not knowing does not think [84b] he knows.

Men.

That is true.

Soc.

And is he not better off in respect of the matter which he did not know?

Men.

I think that too is so.

Soc.

Now, by causing him to doubt and giving him the torpedo's shock, have we done him any harm?

Men.

I think not.

Soc.

And we have certainly given him some assistance, it would seem, towards finding out the truth of the matter: for now he will push on in the search gladly, as lacking knowledge; whereas then he would have been only too ready to suppose he was right in saying, before any number of people any number of times, [84c] that the double space must have a line of double the length for its side.

Men.

It seems so.

Soc.

Now do you imagine he would have attempted to inquire or learn what he thought he knew, when he did not know it, until he had been reduced to the perplexity of realizing that he did not know, and had felt a craving to know?

Men.

I think not, Socrates.

Soc.

Then the torpedo's shock was of advantage to him?

Men.

I think so.

Soc.

Now you should note how, as a result of this perplexity, he will go on and discover something by joint inquiry with me, while I merely ask questions [84d] and do not teach him; and be on the watch to see if at any point you find me teaching him or expounding to him, instead of questioning him on his opinions. Tell me, boy: here we have a square of four feet, have we not? You understand?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

And here we add another square equal to it?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

And here a third, equal to either of them?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

Now shall we fill up this vacant space in the corner?

Boy.

By all means.

Soc.

So here we must have four equal spaces? [84e] BOY. Yes.

Soc.

Well now, how many times larger is this whole space than this other?

Boy.

Four times.

Soc.

But it was to have been only twice, you remember?

Boy.

To be sure.

Soc.

And does this line, drawn from corner to corner, [85a] cut in two each of these spaces?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

And have we here four equal lines containing this space?

Boy.

We have.

Soc.

Now consider how large this space is.

Boy.

I do not understand.

Soc.

Has not each of the inside lines cut off half of each of these four spaces?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

And how many spaces of that size are there in this part?

Boy.

Four.

Soc.

And how many in this?

Boy.

Two.

Soc.

And four is how many times two?

Boy.

Twice.

[85b]

Soc.

And how many feet is this space?

Boy.

Eight feet.

Soc.

From what line do we get this figure?

Boy.

From this.

Soc.

From the line drawn corner-wise across the (our-foot figure?

Boy.

Yes.

Soc.

The professors call it the diagonal: so if the diagonal is its name, then according to you, Meno's boy, the double space is the square of the diagonal.

Boy.

Yes, certainly it is, Socrates.

Soc.

What do you think, Meno? Was there any opinion that he did not give as an answer of his own thought?

[85c]

Men.

No, they were all his own.

Soc.

But you see, he did not know, as we were saying a while since.

Men.

That is true.

Soc.

Yet he had in him these opinions, had he not?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

So that he who does not know about any matters, whatever they be, may have true opinions on such matters, about which he knows nothing?

Men.

Apparently.

Soc.

And at this moment those opinions have just been stirred up in him, like a dream; but if he were repeatedly asked these same questions in a variety of forms, you know he will have in the end as exact an understanding [85d] of them as anyone.

Men.

So it seems.

Soc.

Without anyone having taught him, and only through questions put to him, he will understand, recovering the knowledge out of himself?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And is not this recovery of knowledge, in himself and by himself, recollection?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And must he not have either once acquired or always had the knowledge he now has?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Now if he always had it, he was always in a state of knowing; and if he acquired it all some time, he could not have acquired it in this life. [85e] Or has someone taught him geometry? You see, he can do the same as this with all geometry and every branch of knowledge. Now, can anyone have taught him all this? You ought surely to know, especially as he was born and bred in your house.

Men.

Well, I know that no one has ever taught him.

Soc.

And has he these opinions, or has he not?

Men.

He must have them, Socrates, evidently.

Soc.

And if he did not acquire them in this present life, is it not obvious at once [86a] that he had them and learnt them during some other time?

Men.

Apparently.

Soc.

And this must have been the time when he was not a human being?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

So if in both of these periods—when he was and was not a human being—he has had true opinions in him which have only to be awakened by questioning to become knowledge, his soul must have had this cognizance throughout all time? For clearly he has always either been or not been a human being.

Men.

Evidently.

Soc.

And if the truth of all things that are is always [86b] in our soul, then the soul must be immortal; so that you should take heart and, whatever you do not happen to know at present—that is, what you do not remember—you must endeavor to search out and recollect?

Men.

What you say commends itself to me, Socrates, I know not how.

Soc.

And so it does to me, Meno. Most of the points I have made in support of my argument are not such as I can confidently assert; but that the belief in the duty of inquiring after what we do not know will make us better and braver and less helpless than the notion that there is not even a possibility of discovering what we do not know, [86c] nor any duty of inquiring after it—this is a point for which I am determined to do battle, so far as I am able, both in word and deed.

Men.

There also I consider that you speak aright, Socrates.

Soc.

Then since we are of one mind as to the duty of inquiring into what one does not know, do you agree to our attempting a joint inquiry into the nature of virtue?

Men.

By all means. But still, Socrates, for my part I would like best of all to examine that question I asked at first, and hear your view as to whether in pursuing it we are to regard it as a thing to be taught, or as a gift of nature to mankind, [86d] or as arriving to them in some other way which I should be glad to know.

Soc.

Had I control over you, Meno, as over myself, we should not have begun considering whether virtue can or cannot be taught until we had first inquired into the main question of what it is. But as you do not so much as attempt to control yourself—you are so fond of your liberty— and both attempt and hold control over me, I will yield to your request—what else am I to do? [86e] So it seems we are to consider what sort of thing it is of which we do not yet know what it is! Well, the least you can do is to relax just a little of your authority, and allow the question—whether virtue comes by teaching or some other way—to be examined by means of hypothesis.

Soc.

I mean by hypothesis what the geometers often do in dealing with a question put to them; for example, [87a] whether a certain area is capable of being inscribed as a triangular space in a given circle: they reply—I cannot yet tell whether it has that capability; but I think, if I may put it so, that I have a certain helpful hypothesis for the problem, and it is as follows: If this area is such that when you apply it to the given line of the circle you find it falls short by a space similar to that which you have just applied, then I take it you have one consequence, and if it is impossible for it to fall so, then some other. Accordingly I wish to put a hypothesis, before I state our conclusion as regards inscribing this figure [87b] in the circle by saying whether it is impossible or not. In the same way with regard to our question about virtue, since we do not know either what it is or what kind of thing it may be, we had best make use of a hypothesis in considering whether it can be taught or not, as thus: what kind of thing must virtue be in the class of mental properties, so as to be teachable or not? In the first place, if it is something dissimilar or similar to knowledge, is it taught or not—or, as we were saying just now, remembered? Let us have no disputing about the choice of a name: [87c] is it taught? Or is not this fact plain to everyone—that the one and only thing taught to men is knowledge?

Meno.

I agree to that.

Soc.

Then if virtue is a kind of knowledge, clearly it must be taught?

Meno.

Certainly.

Soc.

So you see we have made short work of this question—if virtue belongs to one class of things it is teachable, and if to another, it is not.

Meno.

To be sure.

Soc.

The next question, it would seem, that we have to consider is whether virtue is knowledge, or of another kind than knowledge.

[87d]

Men.

I should say that is the next thing we have to consider.

Soc.

Well now, surely we call virtue a good thing, do we not, and our hypothesis stands, that it is good?

Men.

Certainly we do.

Soc.

Then if there is some good apart and separable from knowledge, it may be that virtue is not a kind of knowledge; but if there is nothing good that is not embraced by knowledge, our suspicion that virtue is a kind of knowledge would be well founded.

Men.

Quite so.

Soc.

Now it is by virtue that we are good?

Men.

Yes.

[87e]

Soc.

And if good, profitable; for all good things are profitable, are they not?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

So virtue is profitable?

Men.

That must follow from what has been admitted.

Soc.

Then let us see, in particular instances, what sort of things they are that profit us. Health, let us say, and strength, and beauty, and wealth—these and their like we call profitable, do we not?

Men.

Yes.

[88a]

Soc.

But these same things, we admit, actually harm us at times; or do you dispute that statement?

Men.

No, I agree.

Soc.

Consider now, what is the guiding condition in each case that makes them at one time profitable, and at another harmful. Are they not profitable when the use of them is right, and harmful when it is not?

Men.

To be sure.

Soc.

Then let us consider next the goods of the soul: by these you understand temperance, justice, courage, intelligence, memory, magnanimity, and so forth?

[88b]

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Now tell me; such of these as you think are not knowledge, but different from knowledge—do they not sometimes harm us, and sometimes profit us? For example, courage, if it is courage apart from prudence, and only a sort of boldness: when a man is bold without sense, he is harmed; but when he has sense at the same time, he is profited, is he not?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And the same holds of temperance and intelligence: things learnt and coordinated with the aid of sense are profitable, but without sense they are harmful?

[88c]

Men.

Most certainly.

Soc.

And in brief, all the undertakings and endurances of the soul, when guided by wisdom, end in happiness, but when folly guides, in the opposite?

Men.

So it seems.

Soc.

Then if virtue is something that is in the soul, and must needs be profitable, it ought to be wisdom, seeing that all the properties of the soul are in themselves neither profitable nor harmful, but are made either one or the other [88d] by the addition of wisdom or folly; and hence, by this argument, virtue being profitable must be a sort of wisdom.

Men.

I agree.

Soc.

Then as to the other things, wealth and the like, that we mentioned just now as being sometimes good and sometimes harmful—are not these also made profitable or harmful by the soul according as she uses and guides them rightly or wrongly: [88e] just as, in the case of the soul generally, we found that the guidance of wisdom makes profitable the properties of the soul, while that of folly makes them harmful?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And the wise soul guides rightly, and the foolish erroneously?

Men.

That is so.

Soc.

Then may we assert this as a universal rule, that in man all other things depend upon the soul, while the things of the soul herself depend upon wisdom, [89a] if they are to be good; and so by this account the profitable will be wisdom, and virtue, we say, is profitable?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

Hence we conclude that virtue is either wholly or partly wisdom?

Men.

It seems to me that your statement, Socrates, is excellent.

Soc.

Then if this is so, good men cannot be good by nature.

Men.

I think not.

[89b]

Soc.

No, for then, I presume, we should have had this result: if good men were so by nature, we surely should have had men able to discern who of the young were good by nature, and on their pointing them out we should have taken them over and kept them safe in the citadel, having set our mark on them far rather than on our gold treasure, in order that none might have tampered with them, and that when they came to be of age, they might be useful to their country.

Men.

Yes, most likely, Socrates.

Soc.

So since it is not by nature that the good become good, [89c] is it by education?

Men.

We must now conclude, I think, that it is; and plainly, Socrates, on our hypothesis that virtue is knowledge, it must be taught.

Soc.

Yes, I daresay; but what if we were not right in agreeing to that?

Men.

Well, it seemed to be a correct statement a moment ago.

Soc.

Yes, but not only a moment ago must it seem correct, but now also and hereafter, if it is to be at all sound.

[89d]

Men.

Why, what reason have you to make a difficulty about it, and feel a doubt as to virtue being knowledge?

Soc.

I will tell you, Meno. I do not withdraw as incorrect the statement that it is taught, if it is knowledge; but as to its being knowledge, consider if you think I have grounds for misgiving. For tell me now: if anything at all, not merely virtue, is teachable, must there not be teachers and learners of it?

[89e]

Men.

I think so.

Soc.

Then also conversely, if a thing had neither teachers nor learners, we should be right in surmising that it could not be taught?

Men.

That is so: but do you think there are no teachers of virtue?

Soc.

I must say I have often inquired whether there were any, but for all my pains I cannot find one. And yet many have shared the search with me, and particularly those persons whom I regard as best qualified for the task. But look, Meno: here, at the very moment when he was wanted, we have Anytus sitting down beside us, [90a] to take his share in our quest. And we may well ask his assistance; for our friend Anytus, in the first place, is the son of a wise and wealthy father, Anthemion, who became rich not by a fluke or a gift—like that man the other day, Ismenias the

Theban, who has come into the fortune of a Polycrates—but as the product of his own skill and industry; and secondly, he has the name of being in general a well-conducted, mannerly person, [90b] not insolent towards his fellow-citizens or arrogant and annoying; and further, he gave his son a good upbringing and education, as the Athenian people think, for they choose him for the highest offices. This is the sort of man to whom one may look for help in the inquiry as to whether there are teachers of virtue or not, and who they may be. So please, Anytus, join with me and your family-friend Meno in our inquiry about this matter—who can be the teachers. Consider it thus: if we wanted Meno here to be a good doctor, [90c] to whom should we send him for instruction? Would it not be to the doctors?

An.

Certainly.

Soc.

And if we wanted him to become a good cobbler, should we not send him to the cobblers?

An.

Yes.

Soc.

And in the same way with every other trade?

An.

Certainly.

Soc.

Now let me ask you something more about these same instances. We should be right, we say, in sending him to the doctors if we wanted him to be a doctor. [90d] When we say this, do we mean that we should be wise in sending him to those who profess the art rather than those who do not, and to those who charge a fee for the particular thing they do, as avowed teachers of anyone who wishes to come and learn of them? If these were our reasons, should we not be right in sending him?

An.

Yes.

Soc.

And the same would hold in the case of flute-playing, and so on with the rest? What folly, when we wanted to make someone a flute-player, [90e] to refuse to send him to the professed teachers of the art, who charge a regular fee, and to bother with requests for instruction other people who neither set up to be teachers nor have a single pupil in that sort of study which we expect him, when sent, to pursue! Do you not consider this would be grossly unreasonable?

An.

Yes, on my word, I do, and stupid to boot.

Soc.

Quite right. And now there is an opportunity of your [91a] joining me in a consultation on my

friend Meno here. He has been declaring to me ever so long, Anytus, that he desires to have that wisdom and virtue whereby men keep their house or their city in good order, and honor their parents, and know when to welcome and when to speed citizens and strangers as befits a good man. [91b] Now tell me, to whom ought we properly to send him for lessons in this virtue? Or is it clear enough, from our argument just now, that he should go to these men who profess to be teachers of virtue and advertise themselves as the common teachers of the Greeks, and are ready to instruct anyone who chooses in return for fees charged on a fixed scale?

An.

To whom are you referring, Socrates?

Soc.

Surely you know as well as anyone; they are the men whom people call sophists.

[91c]

An.

For heaven's sake hold your tongue, Socrates! May no kinsman or friend of mine, whether of this city or another, be seized with such madness as to let himself be infected with the company of those men; for they are a manifest plague and corruption to those who frequent them.

Soc.

What is this, Anytus? Of all the people who set up to understand how to do us good, do you mean to single out these as conveying not merely no benefit, such as the rest can give, but actually corruption [91d] to anyone placed in their hands? And is it for doing this that they openly claim the payment of fees? For my part I cannot bring myself to believe you; for I know of one man, Protagoras, who amassed more money by his craft than Pheidias—so famous for the noble works he produced—or any ten other sculptors. And yet how surprising that menders of old shoes and furbishers of clothes should not be able to go undetected [91e] thirty days if they should return the clothes or shoes in worse condition than they received them, and that such doings on their part would quickly starve them to death, while for more than forty years all Greece failed to notice that Protagoras was corrupting his classes and sending his pupils away in a worse state than when he took charge of them! For I believe he died about seventy years old, forty of which he spent in the practice of his art;

Soc.

and he retains undiminished to this day the high reputation he has enjoyed all that time—and not only Protagoras, [92a] but a multitude of others too: some who lived before him, and others still living. Now are we to take it, according to you, that they wittingly deceived and corrupted the youth, or that they were themselves unconscious of it? Are we to conclude those who are frequently termed the wisest of mankind to have been so demented as that?

An.

Demented! Not they, Socrates: far rather the young men who pay them money, and still more the relations [92b] who let the young men have their way; and most of all the cities that allow them to enter, and do not expel them, whether such attempt be made by stranger or citizen.

Soc.

Tell me, Anytus, has any of the sophists wronged you? What makes you so hard on them?

An.

No, heaven knows I have never in my life had dealings with any of them, nor would I let any of my people have to do with them either.

Soc.

Then you have absolutely no experience of those persons?

[92c]

An.

And trust I never may.

Soc.

How then, my good sir, can you tell whether a thing has any good or evil in it, if you are quite without experience of it?

An.

Easily: the fact is, I know what these people are, whether I have experience of them or not.

Soc.

You are a wizard, perhaps, Anytus; for I really cannot see, from what you say yourself, how else you can know anything about them. But we are not inquiring now who the teachers are [92d] whose lessons would make Meno wicked; let us grant, if you will, that they are the sophists: I only ask you to tell us, and do Meno a service as a friend of your family by letting him know, to whom in all this great city he should apply in order to become eminent in the virtue which I described just now.

An.

Why not tell him yourself?

Soc.

I did mention to him the men whom I supposed to be teachers of these things; but I find, from what you say, that I am quite off the track, [92e] and I daresay you are on it. Now you take your turn, and tell him to whom of the Athenians he is to go. Give us a name—anyone you please.

An.

Why mention a particular one? Any Athenian gentleman he comes across, without exception, will do him more good, if he will do as he is bid, than the sophists.

Soc.

And did those gentlemen grow spontaneously into what they are, and without learning from anybody are they able, nevertheless, to teach others [93a] what they did not learn themselves?

An.

I expect they must have learnt in their turn from the older generation, who were gentlemen: or does it not seem to you that we have had many good men in this city?

Soc.

Yes, I agree, Anytus; we have also many who are good at politics, and have had them in the past as well as now. But I want to know whether they have proved good teachers besides of their own virtue: that is the question with which our discussion is actually concerned; not whether there are, or formerly have been, [93b] good men here amongst us or not, but whether virtue is teachable; this has been our problem all the time. And our inquiry into this problem resolves itself into the question: Did the good men of our own and of former times know how to transmit to another man the virtue in respect of which they were good, or is it something not to be transmitted or taken over from one human being to another? That is the question I and Meno have been discussing all this time. Well, just consider it in your own way of speaking: [93c] would you not say that Themistocles was a good man?

An.

I would, particularly so.

Soc.

And if any man ever was a teacher of his own virtue, he especially was a good teacher of his?

An.

In my opinion, yes, assuming that he wished to be so.

Soc.

But can you suppose he would not have wished that other people should become good, honorable men—above all, I presume, his own son? Or do you think he was jealous of him, and deliberately refused to impart the virtue [93d] of his own goodness to him? Have you never heard how Themistocles had his son Cleophantus taught to be a good horseman? Why, he could keep his balance standing upright on horseback, and hurl the javelin while so standing, and perform many other wonderful feats in which his father had had him trained, so as to make him skilled in all that could be learnt from good masters. Surely you must have heard all this from your elders?

An.

I have.

Soc.

Then there could be no complaints of badness in his son's nature?

[93e]

An.

I daresay not.

Soc.

But I ask you—did you ever hear anybody, old or young, say that Cleophantus, son of Themistocles, had the same goodness and accomplishments as his father?

An.

Certainly not.

Soc.

And can we believe that his father chose to train his own son in those feats, and yet made him no better than his neighbors in his own particular accomplishments—if virtue, as alleged, was to be taught?

An.

On my word, I think not.

Soc.

Well, there you have a fine teacher of virtue who, you admit, was one of the best men of past times. [94a] Let us take another, Aristides, son of Lysimachus: do you not admit that he was a good man?

An.

I do, absolutely, of course.

Soc.

Well, did he not train his son Lysimachus better than any other Athenian in all that masters could teach him? And in the result, do you consider he has turned out better than anyone else? You have been in his company, I know, and you see what he is like. Or take another example—[94b] the splendidly accomplished Pericles: he, as you are aware, brought up two sons, Paralus and Xanthippus.

An.

Yes.

Soc.

And, you know as well as I, he taught them to be the foremost horsemen of Athens, and trained them to excel in music and gymnastics and all else that comes under the head of the arts; and with all that, had he no desire to make them good men? He wished to, I imagine, but presumably it is not a thing one can be taught. And that you may not suppose it was only a few of the meanest sort of Athenians who failed in this matter, [94c] let me remind you that Thucydides' also brought up two sons, Melesias and Stephanus, and that besides giving them a good general education he made them the best wrestlers in Athens: one he placed with Xanthias, and the other with Eudorus—masters who, I should think, had the name of being the best exponents of the art. You remember them, do you not?

An.

Yes, by hearsay.

Soc.

Well, is it not obvious that this father would never have spent his money on having his children taught all those things, [94d] and then have omitted to teach them at no expense the others that would have made them good men, if virtue was to be taught? Will you say that perhaps Thucydides was one of the meaner sort, and had no great number of friends among the Athenians and allies? He, who was of a great house and had much influence in our city and all over Greece, so that if virtue were to be taught he would have found out the man who was likely to make his sons good, whether one of our own people [94e] or a foreigner, were he himself too busy owing to the cares of state! Ah no, my dear Anytus, it looks as though virtue were not a

teachable thing.

An.

Socrates, I consider you are too apt to speak ill of people. I, for one, if you will take my advice, would warn you to be careful: in most cities it is probably easier to do people harm than good, and particularly in this one; [95a] I think you know that yourself.

Soc.

Meno, I think Anytus is angry, and I am not at all surprised: for he conceives, in the first place, that I am speaking ill of these gentlemen; and in the second place, he considers he is one of them himself. Yet, should the day come when he knows what speaking ill means, his anger will cease; at present he does not know. Now you must answer me: are there not good and honorable men among your people also?

Men.

Certainly.

[95b]

Soc.

Well then, are they willing to put themselves forward as teachers of the young, and avow that they are teachers and that virtue is to be taught?

Men.

No, no, Socrates, I assure you: sometimes you may hear them refer to it as teachable, but sometimes as not.

Soc.

Then are we to call those persons teachers of this thing, when they do not even agree on that great question?

Men.

I should say not, Socrates.

Soc.

Well, and what of the sophists? Do you consider these, its only professors, [95c] to be teachers of virtue?

Men.

That is a point, Socrates, for which I admire Gorgias: you will never hear him promising this, and he ridicules the others when he hears them promise it. Skill in speaking is what he takes it to be their business to produce.

Soc.

Then you do not think the sophists are teachers of virtue?

Men.

I cannot say, Socrates. I am in the same plight as the rest of the world: sometimes I think that they are, sometimes that they are not.

Soc.

And are you aware that not only you and other political folk [95d] are in two minds as to whether virtue is to be taught, but Theognis the poet also says, you remember, the very same thing?

Men.

In which part of his poems?

Soc.

In those elegiac lines where he says—

Eat and drink with these men; sit with them, and be pleasing unto them, who wield great power; for from the good wilt thou win thee lessons in the good; but mingle with the bad,

[95e] and thou wilt lose even the sense that thou hast. Do you observe how in these words he implies that virtue is to be taught?

Men.

He does, evidently.

Soc.

But in some other lines he shifts his ground a little, saying—

Could understanding be created and put into a man

(I think it runs thus) many high rewards would they obtain

[96a] for he would have followed the precepts of wisdom: but not by teaching wilt thou ever make the had man good You notice how in the second passage he contradicts himself on the same point?

Men.

Apparently.

Soc.

Well, can you name any other subject in which the professing teachers are not only refused recognition as teachers of others, but regarded as not even understanding it themselves, [96b] and indeed as inferior in the very quality of which they claim to be teachers; while those who are themselves recognized as men of worth and honor say at one time that it is teachable, and at another that it is not? When people are so confused about this or that matter, can you say they are teachers in any proper sense of the word?

Men.

No, indeed, I cannot.

Soc.

Well, if neither the sophists nor the men who are themselves good and honorable are teachers of the subject, clearly no others can be?

Men.

I agree.

[96c]

Soc.

And if there are no teachers, there can be no disciples either?

Men.

I think that statement is true.

Soc.

And we have admitted that a thing of which there are neither teachers nor disciples cannot be taught?

Men.

We have.

Soc.

So nowhere are any teachers of virtue to be found?

Men.

That is so.

Soc.

And if no teachers, then no disciples?

Men.

So it appears.

Soc.

Hence virtue cannot be taught?

[96d]

Men.

It seems likely, if our investigation is correct. And that makes me wonder, I must say, Socrates, whether perhaps there are no good men at all, or by what possible sort of process good people can come to exist?

Soc.

I fear, Meno, you and I are but poor creatures, and Gorgias has been as faulty an educator of you as Prodicus of me. So our first duty is to look to ourselves, and try to find somebody who will have some means or other of making us better. [96e] I say this with special reference to our recent inquiry, in which I see that we absurdly failed to note that it is not only through the guidance of knowledge that human conduct is right and good; and it is probably owing to this that we fail to perceive by what means good men can be produced.

Men.

To what are you alluding, Socrates?

Soc.

I mean that good men must be useful: we were right, were we not, in admitting that [97a] this

must needs be so?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And in thinking that they will be useful if they give us right guidance in conduct: here also, I suppose, our admission was correct?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

But our assertion that it is impossible to give right guidance unless one has knowledge looks very like a mistake.

Men.

What do you mean by that?

Soc.

I will tell you. If a man knew the way to Larisa, or any other place you please, and walked there and led others, would he not give right and good guidance?

Men.

Certainly.

[97b]

Soc.

Well, and a person who had a right opinion as to which was the way, but had never been there and did not really know, might give right guidance, might he not?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And so long, I presume, as he has right opinion about that which the other man really knows, he will be just as good a guide—if he thinks the truth instead of knowing it—as the man who has the knowledge.

Men.

Just as good.

Soc.

Hence true opinion is as good a guide to rightness of action as knowledge; and this is a point we omitted just now in our consideration of the nature of virtue, [97c] when we stated that knowledge is the only guide of right action; whereas we find there is also true opinion.

Men.

So it seems.

Soc.

Then right opinion is just as useful as knowledge.

Men.

With this difference, Socrates, that he who has knowledge will always hit on the right way, whereas he who has right opinion will sometimes do so, but sometimes not.

Soc.

How do you mean? Will not he who always has right opinion be always right, so long as he opines rightly?

Men.

It appears to me that he must; and therefore I wonder, Socrates, [97d] this being the case, that knowledge should ever be more prized than right opinion, and why they should be two distinct and separate things.

Soc.

Well, do you know why it is that you wonder, or shall I tell you?

Men.

Please tell me.

Soc.

It is because you have not observed with attention the images of Daedalus. But perhaps there are none in your country.

Men.

What is the point of your remark?

Soc.

That if they are not fastened up they play truant and run away; but, if fastened, they stay where they are.

[97e]

Men.

Well, what of that?

Soc.

To possess one of his works which is let loose does not count for much in value; it will not stay with you any more than a runaway slave: but when fastened up it is worth a great deal, for his productions are very fine things And to what am I referring in all this? To true opinion. For these, so long as they stay with us, are a fine possession, [98a] and effect all that is good; but they do not care to stay for long, and run away out of the human soul, and thus are of no great value until one makes them fast with causal reasoning. And this process, friend Meno, is recollection, as in our previous talk we have agreed. But when once they are fastened, in the first place they turn into knowledge, and in the second, are abiding. And this is why knowledge is more prized than right opinion: the one transcends the other by its trammels.

Men.

Upon my word, Socrates, it seems to be very much as you say.

[98b]

Soc.

And indeed I too speak as one who does not know but only conjectures: yet that there is a difference between right opinion and knowledge is not at all a conjecture with me but something I would particularly assert that I knew: there are not many things of which I would say that, but this one, at any rate, I will include among those that I know.

Men.

Yes, and you are right, Socrates, in so saying.

Soc.

Well, then, am I not right also in saying that true opinion leading the way renders the effect of each action as good as knowledge does?

Men.

There again, Socrates, I think you speak the truth.

[98c]

Soc.

So that right opinion will be no whit inferior to knowledge in worth or usefulness as regards our actions, nor will the man who has right opinion be inferior to him who has knowledge.

Men.

That is so.

Soc.

And you know that the good man has been admitted by us to be useful.

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

Since then it is not only because of knowledge that men will be good and useful to their country, where such men are to be found, but also on account of right opinion; and since neither of these two things—knowledge [98d] and true opinion—is a natural property of mankind, being acquired—or do you think that either of them is natural?

Men.

Not I.

Soc.

Then if they are not natural, good people cannot be good by nature either.

Men.

Of course not.

Soc.

And since they are not an effect of nature, we next considered whether virtue can be taught.

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And we thought it teachable if virtue is wisdom?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And if teachable, it must be wisdom?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And if there were teachers, it could be taught, [98e] but if there were none, it could not?

Men.

Quite so.

Soc.

But surely we acknowledged that it had no teachers?

Men.

That is true.

Soc.

Then we acknowledged it neither was taught nor was wisdom?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

But yet we admitted it was a good?

Men.

Yes.

Soc.

And that which guides rightly is useful and good?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And that there are only two things— [99a] true opinion and knowledge—that guide rightly and a

man guides rightly if he have these; for things that come about by chance do not occur through human guidance; but where a man is a guide to what is right we find these two things—true opinion and knowledge.

Men.

I agree.

Soc.

Well now, since virtue is not taught, we no longer take it to be knowledge?

Men.

Apparently not.

[99b]

Soc.

So of two good and useful things one has been rejected: knowledge cannot be our guide in political conduct.

Men.

I think not.

Soc.

Therefore it was not by any wisdom, nor because they were wise, that the sort of men we spoke of controlled their states—Themistocles and the rest of them, to whom our friend Anytus was referring a moment ago. For this reason it was that they were unable to make others like unto themselves—because their qualities were not an effect of knowledge.

Men.

The case is probably as you say, Socrates.

Soc.

And if not by knowledge, as the only alternative it must have been by good opinion. [99c] This is the means which statesmen employ for their direction of states, and they have nothing more to do with wisdom than soothsayers and diviners; for these people utter many a true thing when inspired, but have no knowledge of anything they say.

Men.

I daresay that is so.

Soc.

And may we, Meno, rightly call those men divine who, having no understanding, yet succeed in many a great deed and word?

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

Then we shall be right in calling those divine of whom [99d] we spoke just now as soothsayers

and prophets and all of the poetic turn; and especially we can say of the statesmen that they are divine and enraptured, as being inspired and possessed of God when they succeed in speaking many great things, while knowing nought of what they say.

Men.

Certainly.

Soc.

And the women too, I presume, Meno, call good men divine; and the Spartans, when they eulogize a good man, say—He is a divine person.

[99e]

Men.

And to all appearance, Socrates, they are right; though perhaps our friend Anytus may be annoyed at your statement.

Soc.

For my part, I care not. As for him, Meno, we will converse with him some other time. At the moment, if through all this discussion our queries and statements have been correct, virtue is found to be neither natural nor taught, but is imparted to us by a divine dispensation without understanding in those who receive it, [100a] unless there should be somebody among the statesmen capable of making a statesman of another. And if there should be any such, he might fairly be said to be among the living what Homer says Teiresias was among the dead—He alone has comprehension; the rest are flitting shades. In the same way he on earth, in respect of virtue, will be a real substance among shadows.

[100b]

Men.

I think you put it excellently, Socrates.

Soc.

Then the result of our reasoning, Meno, is found to be that virtue comes to us by a divine dispensation, when it does come. But the certainty of this we shall only know when, before asking in what way virtue comes to mankind, we set about inquiring what virtue is, in and by itself. It is time now for me to go my way, but do you persuade our friend Anytus of that whereof you are now yourself persuaded, so as [100c] to put him in a gentler mood; for if you can persuade him, you will do a good turn to the people of Athens also.