

# EUTHYPHRO.

## PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE.

SOCRATES.

EUTHYPHRO.

SCENE:—The Porch of the King Archon.

Steph. *Euthyphro.* WHY have you left the Lyceum, Socrates? and  
2 what are you doing in the porch of the King Archon? Surely you cannot be engaged in an action before the king, as I am.

*Socrates.* Not in an action, Euthyphro; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

*Euth.* What! I suppose that some one has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

*Soc.* Certainly not.

*Euth.* Then some one else has been prosecuting you?

*Soc.* Yes.

*Euth.* And who is he?

*Soc.* A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him: his name is Meletus, and he is of the deme of Pitthis. Perhaps you may remember his appearance; he has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

*Euth.* No, I do not remember him, Socrates. But what is the charge which he brings against you?

*Soc.* What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am anything but a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of

corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the state is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth; like a good husbandman, he makes the young shoots his first care, and clears away us who are the 3 destroyers of them. That is the first step; he will afterwards attend to the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be a very great public benefactor.

*Euth.* I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Socrates, that the reverse will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the state in a sacred place. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the young?

*Soc.* He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I make new gods and deny the existence of old ones; this is the ground of his indictment.

*Euth.* I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you about the familiar sign which occasionally, as you say, comes to you. He thinks that you are a neologian, and he is going to have you up before the court for this. He knows that such a charge is readily received by the world. I can tell you that, for when I myself speak in the assembly about divine things, and foretell the future to them, they laugh at me as a madman; and yet every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of all of us. I suppose that we must be brave and not mind them.

*Soc.* Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not a matter of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the Athenians, I suspect, do not trouble themselves about him until he begins to impart his wisdom to others; and then for some reason or other, perhaps, as you say, from jealousy, they are angry.

*Euth.* I am never likely to try their temper in this way.

*Soc.* I dare say not, for you are select in your acquaintance, and seldom impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid that the Athenians know this; and therefore, as I was saying, if the Athenians would only laugh at me as you say that they laugh at you, the time might

pass gaily enough in the court ; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

*Euth.* I dare say that the affair will end in nothing, Socrates, and that you will win your cause ; and I think that I shall win mine.

*Soc.* And now what is your suit, Euthyphro ? are you the pursuer or the defendant ?

*Euth.* I am the pursuer.

*Soc.* Of whom ?

*Euth.* You will think me mad when I tell you.

*Soc.* Why, has the fugitive wings ?

*Euth.* Nay, he is not very volatile at his time of life.

*Soc.* Who is he ?

*Euth.* My father.

*Soc.* Your father ! my good man ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And of what is he accused ?

*Euth.* Of murder, Socrates.

*Soc.* By the powers, Euthyphro ! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be an extraordinary man, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to this.

*Euth.* Indeed, Socrates, he must have made great strides.

*Soc.* I suppose that the man whom your father murdered was one of your relatives ; if he had been a stranger you would never have thought of prosecuting him.

*Euth.* I am amused, Socrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation ; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself and him by proceeding against him. The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone ; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer is under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him. Now the man who is dead was a poor dependant of mine who worked for us as a field labourer at our farm in Naxos, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic

servants and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, and then sent to Athens to ask of a diviner what he should do with him. Meantime he had no care or thought of him, being under the impression that he was a murderer; and that even if he did die there would be no great harm. And this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he did not kill him, and that if he did, the dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious who prosecutes a father. Which shows, Socrates, how little they know of the opinions of the gods about piety and impiety.

*Soc.* Good heavens, Euthyphro! and have you such a precise knowledge of piety and impiety, and of divine things in general, that, supposing the circumstances to be as you state, you are not afraid that you too may be doing an impious thing in bringing an action against your father?

*Euth.* The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all these matters. What should I be good for without that?

*Soc.* Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your disciple. Then before the trial with Meletus comes on I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple. You, Meletus, as I shall say to him, acknowledge Euthyphro to be a great theologian, and sound in his opinions; and if you approve of him you ought to approve of me, and not have me into court; but if you disapprove, you should begin by indicting him who is my teacher, and who is the real corruptor, not of the young, but of the old; that is to say, of myself whom he instructs, and of his old father whom he admonishes and chastises. And if Meletus refuses to listen to me, but will go on, and will not shift the indictment from me to you, I cannot do better than repeat this challenge in the court.

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates; and if he attempts to indict me I am

mistaken if I do not find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me.

*Soc.* And I, my dear friend, knowing this, am desirous of becoming your disciple. For I observe that no one appears to notice you—not even this Meletus; but his sharp eyes have found me out at once, and he has indicted me for impiety. And therefore, I adjure you to tell me the nature of piety and impiety, which you said that you knew so well, and of murder, and the rest of them. What are they? Is not piety in every action always the same? and impiety, again, is not that always the opposite of piety, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious?

*Euth.* To be sure, Socrates.

*Soc.* And what is piety, and what is impiety?

*Euth.* Piety is doing as I am doing; that is to say, prosecuting any one who is guilty of murder, sacrilege, or of any similar crime—whether he be your father or mother, or whoever he may be, that makes no difference—and not prosecuting them is impiety. And please to consider, Socrates, what a notable proof I will give you of the truth of what I am saying, which I have already given to others:—of the principle, I mean, that the impious, whoever he may be, ought not to go unpunished. For do not men regard Zeus as the best and most righteous of the gods?—and yet they admit that he bound his father (Cronos) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (Uranus) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner. And yet when I proceed against my father, they are angry with me. So inconsistent are they in their way of talking when the gods are concerned, and when I am concerned.

*Soc.* May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged with impiety—that I cannot away with these stories about the gods? and therefore I suppose that people think me wrong. But, as you who are well informed about them approve of them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. For what else can I say, confessing as I do, that I know nothing about them? I wish you would tell me whether you really believe that they are true.

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates ; and things more wonderful still, of which the world is in ignorance.

*Soc.* And do you really believe that the gods fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists? The temples are full of them ; and notably the robe of Athene, which is carried up to the Acropolis at the great Panathenaea, is embroidered with them. Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates ; and, as I was saying, I can tell you, if you would like to hear them, many other things about the gods which would quite amaze you.

*Soc.* I dare say ; and you shall tell me them at some other time when I have leisure. But just at present I would rather hear from you a more precise answer, which you have not as yet given, my friend, to the question, What is 'piety'? In reply, you only say that piety is, Doing as you do, charging your father with murder.

*Euth.* And that is true, Socrates.

*Soc.* I dare say, Euthyphro, but there are many other pious acts.

*Euth.* There are.

*Soc.* Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three examples of piety, but to explain the general idea which makes all pious things to be pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the pious pious?

*Euth.* I remember.

*Soc.* Tell me what you mean, and then I shall have a standard to which I may look, and by which I may measure the nature of actions, whether yours or any one's else, and say that this action is pious, and that impious.

*Euth.* I will tell you, if you like.

*Soc.* I should very much like.

*Euth.* Piety, then, is that which is dear to the gods, and impiety is that which is not dear to them.

*Soc.* Very good, Euthyphro ; you have now given me the sort of answer which I wanted. But whether what you say is true or not I cannot as yet tell, although I make no doubt that you will prove the truth of your words.

*Euth.* Of course.

*Soc.* Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious. Was not that said?

*Euth.* Yes, that was said.

*Soc.* And that seems to have been very well said too?

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates, I think so; it was certainly said.

*Soc.* And further, Euthyphro, the gods were admitted to have enmities and hatreds and differences—that was also said?

*Euth.* Yes, that was said.

*Soc.* And what sort of difference creates enmity and anger? Suppose for example that you and I, my good friend, differ about a number; do differences of this sort make us enemies and set us at variance with one another? Do we not go at once to calculation, and end them by a sum?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* Or suppose that we differ about magnitudes, do we not quickly put an end to that difference by measuring?

*Euth.* That is true.

*Soc.* And we end a controversy about heavy and light by resorting to a weighing-machine?

*Euth.* To be sure.

*Soc.* But what differences are those which, because they cannot be thus decided, make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? I dare say the answer does not occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that this happens when the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable. Are not these the points about which, when differing, and unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, you and I and all men quarrel, when we do quarrel?

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates, that is the nature of the differences about which we quarrel.

*Soc.* And the quarrels of the gods, noble Euthyphro, when they occur, are of a like nature?

*Euth.* They are.

*Soc.* They have differences of opinion, as you say, about good and evil, just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable: there

would have been no quarrels among them, if there had been no such differences—would there now?

*Euth.* You are quite right.

*Soc.* Does not every man love that which he deems noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?

*Euth.* Very true.

*Soc.* But, as you say, people regard the same things, some as just and others as unjust; about which they dispute; and so there arise wars and fightings among them.

*Euth.* Yes, that is true.

*Soc.* Then the same things, as appears, are hated by the gods and loved by the gods, and are both hateful and dear to them?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* And upon this view the same things, Euthyphro, will be pious and also impious?

*Euth.* That, I suppose, is true.

*Soc.* Then, my friend, I remark with surprise that you have not answered what I asked. For I certainly did not ask you to tell me what was that which is both pious and impious: and now what is loved by the gods appears also to be hated by them. And therefore, Euthyphro, in thus chastising your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Cronos or Uranus, and what is acceptable to Hephaestus but unacceptable to Here, and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

*Euth.* But I believe, Socrates, that all the gods would be agreed as to the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about that.

*Soc.* Well, but speaking of men, Euthyphro, did you ever hear any one arguing that a murderer or any sort of evil-doer ought to be let off?

*Euth.* I should rather say that these are the questions which they are always arguing, especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there is nothing which they will not do or say in order to escape punishment.

*Soc.* But do they admit their guilt, Euthyphro, and yet say that they ought not to be punished?

*Euth.* No; they do not.

*Soc.* Then there are some things which they do not venture

to say and do : for they do not venture to argue that the guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* Then they do not argue that the evil-doer should not be punished, but they argue about the fact of who the evil-doer is, and what he did and when ?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* And the gods are in the same case, if as you assert they quarrel about just and unjust, and some of them say that there is injustice done among them, and others of them deny this. For surely neither God nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of evil is not to be punished ?

*Euth.* That is true, Socrates, in the main.

*Soc.* But they join issue about particulars ; and this applies not only to men but to the gods, who, if they dispute at all, dispute about some act which is called in question, and which some affirm to be just, others to be unjust. Is not that true ?

*Euth.* Quite true.

9 *Soc.* Well then, my dear friend Euthyphro, do tell me, for my better instruction and information, what proof have you that in the opinion of all the gods a servant who is guilty of murder, and is put in chains by the master of the dead man, and dies because he is put in chains before his corrector can learn from the interpreters what he ought to do with him, dies unjustly ; and that on behalf of such an one a son ought to proceed against his father and accuse him of murder. How would you show that all the gods absolutely agree in approving of his act ? Prove to me that, and I will applaud your wisdom as long as you live.

*Euth.* That would not be an easy task, although I could make the matter very clear indeed to you.

*Soc.* I understand ; you mean to say that I am not so quick of apprehension as the judges : for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and hateful to the gods.

*Euth.* Yes indeed, Socrates ; at least if they will listen to me.

*Soc.* But they will be sure to listen if they find that you are a good speaker. There was a notion that came into my mind while you were speaking ; I said to myself : ' Well, and what if Euthyphro does prove to me that all the gods regarded the

death of the serf as unjust, how do I know anything more of the nature of piety and impiety? for granting that this action may be hateful to the gods, still these distinctions have no bearing on the definition of piety and impiety, for that which is hateful to the gods has been shown to be also pleasing and dear to them.' And therefore, Euthyphro, I do not ask you to prove this; I will suppose, if you like, that all the gods condemn and abominate such an action. But I will amend the definition so far as to say that what all the gods hate is impious, and what they love pious or holy; and what some of them love and others hate is both or neither. Shall this be our definition of piety and impiety?

*Euth.* Why not, Socrates?

*Soc.* Why not! certainly, as far as I am concerned, Euthyphro, there is no reason why not. But whether this admission will greatly assist you in the task of instructing me as you promised, is a matter for you to consider.

*Euth.* Yes, I should say that what all the gods love is pious and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious.

*Soc.* Ought we to enquire into the truth of this, Euthyphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? What do you say?

*Euth.* We should enquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of enquiry.

*Soc.* That, my good friend, we shall know better in a little while. The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is *is* holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.

*Euth.* I do not understand your meaning, Socrates.

*Soc.* I will endeavour to explain: we speak of carrying and we speak of being carried, of leading and being led, seeing and being seen. And here is a difference, the nature of which you understand.

*Euth.* I think that I understand.

*Soc.* And is not that which is beloved distinct from that which loves?

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* Well; and now tell me, is that which is carried in this state of carrying because it is carried, or for some other reason?

*Euth.* No ; that is the reason.

*Soc.* And the same is true of that which is led and of that which is seen ?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* And a thing is not seen because it is visible, but conversely, visible because it is seen ; nor is a thing led because it is in the state of being led, or carried because it is in the state of being carried, but the converse of this. And now I think, Euthyphro, that my meaning will be intelligible ; and my meaning is, that any state of action or passion implies previous action or passion. It does not become because it is becoming, but it is in a state of becoming because it becomes ; neither does it suffer because it is in a state of suffering, but it is in a state of suffering because it suffers. Do you admit that ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* Is not that which is loved in some state either of becoming or suffering ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And the same holds as in the previous instances ; the state of being loved follows the act of being loved, and not the act the state.

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And what do you say of piety, Euthyphro : is not piety, according to your definition, loved by all the gods ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* Because it is pious or holy, or for some other reason ?

*Euth.* No, that is the reason.

*Soc.* It is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved ?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And that which is in a state to be loved of the gods, and is dear to them, is in a state to be loved of them because it is loved of them ?

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* Then that which is loved of God, Euthyphro, is not holy, nor is that which is holy loved of God, as you affirm ; but they are two different things.

*Euth.* How do you mean, Socrates ?

*Soc.* I mean to say that the holy has been acknowledged by

us to be loved of God because it is holy, not to be holy because it is loved.

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* But that which is dear to the gods is dear to them because it is loved by them, not loved by them because it is dear to them.

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same as that which is dear to God, and that which is holy is loved as being holy, then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which is dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved by him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one (*θεοφιλὲς*) is of a kind to be loved because it is loved, and the other (*ὄσιον*) is loved because it is of a kind to be loved. Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence—the attribute of being loved by all the gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. And therefore, if you please, I will ask you not to hide your treasure, but to tell me once more what holiness or piety really is, whether dear to the gods or not (for that is a matter about which we will not quarrel). And what is impiety?

*Euth.* I really do not know, Socrates, how to say what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away.

*Soc.* Your words, Euthyphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor Daedalus; and if I were the sayer or propounder of them, you might say that this comes of my being his relation; and that this is the reason why my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed where they are placed. But now, since these notions are your own, you must find some other gibe, for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

*Euth.* Nay, Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but

you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.

*Soc.* Then I must be a greater than Daedalus; for whereas he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus, and the wealth of Tantalus, to be able to detain them and keep them fixed. But enough of this. As I perceive that you are indolent, I will myself endeavour to show you how you might instruct me in the nature of piety; and I hope that you will not grudge your labour. Tell me, then,—Is not that which is pious necessarily just?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And is, then, all which is just pious? or, is that which is pious all just, but that which is just only in part, and not all pious?

*Euth.* I do not understand you, Socrates.

*Soc.* And yet I know that you are as much wiser than I am, as you are younger. But, as I was saying, revered friend, the abundance of your wisdom makes you indolent. Please to exert yourself, for there is no real difficulty in understanding me. What I mean I may explain by an illustration of what I do not mean. The poet (Stasinus) sings—

‘Of Zeus, the author and creator of all these things,

You will not tell: for where there is fear there is also reverence.’

And I disagree with this poet. Shall I tell you in what I disagree?

*Euth.* By all means.

*Soc.* I should not say that where there is fear there is also reverence; for I am sure that many persons fear poverty and disease, and the like evils, but I do not perceive that they reverence the objects of their fear.

*Euth.* Very true.

*Soc.* But where reverence is, there is fear; for he who has a feeling of reverence and shame about the commission of any action, fears and is afraid of an ill reputation.

*Euth.* No doubt.

*Soc.* Then we are wrong in saying that where there is fear there is also reverence; and we should say, where there is

reverence there is also fear. But there is not always reverence where there is fear; for fear is a more extended notion, and reverence is a part of fear, just as the odd is a part of number, and number is a more extended notion than the odd. I suppose that you follow me now?

*Euth.* Quite well.

*Soc.* That was the sort of question which I meant to raise when asking whether the just is the pious, or the pious the just; and whether there may not be justice where there is not always piety; for justice is the more extended notion of which piety is only a part. Do you agree in that?

*Euth.* Yes; that, I think, is correct.

*Soc.* Then, now, if piety is a part of justice, I suppose that we should enquire what part? If you had pursued the enquiry in the previous cases; for instance, if you had asked me what is an even number, and what part of number the even is, I should have had no difficulty in replying, a number which represents a figure having two equal sides. Do you agree?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* In like manner, I want you to tell me what part of justice is piety or holiness, that I may be able to tell Meletus not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety or holiness, and their opposites.

*Euth.* Piety or holiness, Socrates, appears to me to be that part of justice which attends to the gods, as there is the other part of justice which attends to men.

*Soc.* That is good, Euthyphro; yet still there is a little point<sup>13</sup> about which I should like to have further information, What is the meaning of 'attention'? For attention can hardly be used in the same sense when applied to the gods as when applied to other things. For instance, horses are said to require attention, and not every person is able to attend to them, but only a person skilled in horsemanship. Is not that true?

*Euth.* Quite true.

*Soc.* I should suppose that the art of horsemanship is the art of attending to horses?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* Nor is every one qualified to attend to dogs, but only the huntsman?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* And I should also conceive that the art of the huntsman is the art of attending to dogs?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* As the art of the oxherd is the art of attending to oxen?

*Euth.* Very true.

*Soc.* And as holiness or piety is the art of attending to the gods?—that would be your meaning, Euthyphro?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And is not attention always designed for the good or benefit of that to which the attention is given? As in the case of horses, you may observe that when attended to by the horseman's art they are benefited and improved, are they not?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* As the dogs are benefited by the huntsman's art, and the oxen by the art of the oxherd, and all other things are tended or attended for their good and not for their hurt?

*Euth.* Certainly, not for their hurt.

*Soc.* But for their good?

*Euth.* Of course.

*Soc.* And does piety or holiness, which has been defined as the art of attending to the gods, benefit or improve them? Would you say that when you do a holy act you make any of the gods better?

*Euth.* No, no; that is certainly not my meaning.

*Soc.* Indeed, Euthyphro, I did not suppose that this was your meaning; far otherwise. And I asked you the nature of the attention, because I thought that you could not mean this.

*Euth.* You do me justice, Socrates; for that is not my meaning.

*Soc.* Good: but I must still ask what is this attention to the gods which is called piety?

*Euth.* It is such, Socrates, as servants show to their masters.

*Soc.* I understand—a sort of ministration to the gods.

*Euth.* Exactly.

*Soc.* Medicine is also a sort of ministration or service, tending to the attainment of some object—would you not say health?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* Again, there is an art which ministers to the ship-builder with a view to the attainment of some result?

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates, with a view to the building of a ship.

*Soc.* As there is an art which ministers to the house-builder with a view to the building of a house?

*Euth.* Yes.

*Soc.* And now tell me, my good friend, about the art which ministers to the gods: what work does that help to accomplish? For you must surely know if, as you say, you are of all men living the one who is best instructed in religion.

*Euth.* And that is true, Socrates.

*Soc.* Tell me then, oh tell me—what is that fair work which the gods do by the help of us as their ministers?

*Euth.* Many and fair, Socrates, are the works which they do.

*Soc.* Why, my friend, and so are those of a general. But the chief of them is easily told. Would you not say that victory in war is the chief of them?

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* Many and fair, too, are the works of the husbandman, if I am not mistaken; but his chief work is the production of food from the earth?

*Euth.* Exactly.

*Soc.* And of the many and fair things which the gods do, which is the chief and principal one?

*Euth.* I have told you already, Socrates, that to learn all these things accurately will be very tiresome. Let me simply say that piety is learning how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. That is piety, which is the salvation of families and states, just as the impious, which is displeasing to the gods, is their ruin and destruction.

*Soc.* I think that you could have answered in much fewer words the chief question which I asked, Euthyphro, if you had chosen. But I see plainly that you are not disposed to instruct me: else why, when we reached the point, did you turn aside? Had you only answered me I should have learned of you by this time the nature of piety. Now, as the asker of a question

is necessarily dependent on the answerer, whither he leads I must follow; and can only ask again, what is the pious, and what is piety? Do you mean that they are a sort of science of praying and sacrificing?

*Euth.* Yes, I do.

*Soc.* And sacrificing is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?

*Euth.* Yes, Socrates.

*Soc.* Upon this view, then, piety is a science of asking and giving?

*Euth.* You understand me capitally, Socrates.

*Soc.* Yes, my friend; the reason is that I am a votary of your science, and give my mind to it, and therefore nothing which you say will be thrown away upon me. Please then to tell me, what is the nature of this service to the gods? Do you mean that we prefer requests and give gifts to them?

*Euth.* Yes, I do.

*Soc.* Is not the right way of asking to ask of them what we want?

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And the right way of giving is to give to them in return what they want of us. There would be no meaning in an art which gives to any one that which he does not want.

*Euth.* Very true, Socrates.

*Soc.* Then piety, Euthyphro, is an art which gods and men have of doing business with one another?

*Euth.* That is an expression which you may use, if you like.

*Soc.* But I have no particular liking for anything but the truth. I wish, however, that you would tell me what benefit accrues to the gods from our gifts. There is no doubt about  
15 what they give to us; for there is no good thing which they do not give; but how we can give any good thing to them in return is far from being equally clear. If they give everything and we give nothing, that must be an affair of business in which we have very greatly the advantage of them.

*Euth.* And do you imagine, Socrates, that any benefit accrues to the gods from what they receive of us?

*Soc.* But if not, Euthyphro, what sort of gifts do we confer upon the gods?

*Euth.* What should we confer upon them, but tributes of honour; and, as I was just now saying, what is grateful to them?

*Soc.* Piety, then, is grateful to the gods, but not beneficial or dear to them?

*Euth.* I should say that nothing could be dearer.

*Soc.* Then once more the assertion is repeated that piety is dear to the gods?

*Euth.* Certainly.

*Soc.* And when you say this, can you wonder at your words not standing firm, but walking away? Will you accuse me of being the Daedalus who makes them walk away, not perceiving that there is another and far greater artist than Daedalus who makes them go round in a circle, and that is yourself; for the argument, as you will perceive, comes round to the same point. I think that you must remember our saying that the holy or pious was not the same as that which is loved of the gods. Do you remember that?

*Euth.* I do.

*Soc.* And are you not saying that what is loved of the gods is holy, but this is the same as what is dear to them—do you see that?

*Euth.* True.

*Soc.* Then either we were wrong in our former assertion; or, if we were right then, we are wrong now.

*Euth.* I suppose that is the case.

*Soc.* Then we must begin again and ask, What is piety? That is an enquiry which I shall never be weary of pursuing as far as in me lies; and I entreat you not to scorn me, but to apply your mind to the utmost, and tell me the truth. For, if any man knows, you are he; and therefore I shall detain you, like Proteus, until you tell. For if you had not certainly known the nature of piety and impiety, I am confident that you would never, on behalf of a serf, have charged your aged father with murder. You would not have run such a risk of doing wrong in the sight of the gods, and you would have had too much respect for the opinions of men. I am sure, therefore, that you

know the nature of piety and impiety. Speak out then, my dear Euthyphro, and do not hide your knowledge.

*Euth.* Another time, Socrates; for I am in a hurry, and must go now.

*Soc.* Alas! my companion, and will you leave me in despair? I was hoping that you would instruct me in the nature of piety and impiety, so that I might have cleared myself of Meletus and his indictment. Then I might have proved to him that  
16 I had been converted by Euthyphro, and had done with rash innovations and speculations, in which I had indulged through ignorance, and was about to lead a better life.



that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am  
 38 serious; and if I say again that the greatest good of man  
 is daily to converse about virtue, and all that concerning which  
 you hear me examining myself and others, and that the life  
 which is unexamined is not worth living, you are still less likely  
 to believe me. And yet what I say is indeed true, although a  
 thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Moreover, I  
 have not been accustomed to think that I deserve any punishment.  
 Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was  
 able to pay, and have been none the worse. But you see that I  
 have none, and I can only ask you to proportion the fine to my  
 means. However, I think that I could afford a mina, and  
 therefore I propose that penalty: Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and  
 Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minae, and  
 they will be the sureties. Well, then, say thirty minae, let that  
 be the penalty; and for that sum they will be ample security  
 to you.

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for  
 the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the  
 city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for  
 they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they  
 want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your  
 desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I  
 am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far  
 from death. I am speaking now only to those of you who  
 have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to  
 say to them: You think that I was convicted because I had no  
 words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal—I  
 mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid.  
 Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of  
 words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence  
 or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to  
 address you, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and  
 doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear  
 from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I  
 thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common

or mean when in danger : nor do I now repent of the manner of my defence, and I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death ; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not in avoiding death, but in avoiding unrighteousness ; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death, and they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong ; and I must abide by my award—let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you ; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose : far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now ; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained : and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken ; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable ; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about this thing which has happened, while the

magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then awhile, for we may as well talk with one  
40 another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the familiar oracle within me has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either as I was leaving my house and going out in the morning, or when I was going up into this court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching this matter has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this? I will tell you. I regard this as a great proof that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by the sight of dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death is like this, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the

dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old, who have suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in that; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions; assuredly not. For besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that to die and be released was better for me; and therefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really

nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if  
42 you do this, I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.