

Echecrates, Phaedo

Echecrates: You yourself, Phaedo — were you present with Socrates on that day when he drank the potion in the prison, or did you hear from somebody else?

Phaedo: I myself, Echecrates.

Echecrates: Well, so what is it the man said before his death? And how did he meet his end? It'd be a pleasure for me to hear. For none of our fellow citizens from Phlia even visits Athens at all nowadays, nor has any stranger arrived from there in a long time who could report anything sure to us about it — except, of course, that he drank the potion and died — but as for the rest, he was able to tell us nothing.

Phaedo: Then you didn't even find out about the way the trial went?¹

Echecrates: Yes, somebody did report that to us, and we kept wondering why, when the trial took place so long before, he apparently died so much later. So why was that, Phaedo?

Phaedo: A bit of chance came to his aid, Echecrates. For by chance the prow of the vessel that the Athenians send to Delos was crowned on the day before the trial.

Echecrates: Now what vessel's that?

Phaedo: This, as the Athenians say, is the vessel in which Theseus once went off leading those Twice Seven to Crete, and both saved them and himself was saved.² So, it is said, the Athenians at that time made a vow to Apollo that if they were saved, an embassy

57A

B

58A

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¹ Presentations of Socrates' trial for impiety and corruption of the young are to be found in Plato's *Apology* and Xenophon's work of the same name.

² For the significance of this myth, see Introduction, pp. 2-3. For the myth itself, see Plutarch's "Life of Theseus."

would be dispatched to Delos every year — which always and still now, from that year and every year, they send to the god.³ Now once they've begun the embassy, it's their custom to keep the city pure during that time and to execute no one publicly until the vessel has arrived in Delos and come back here. And sometimes that takes a long time, when by chance the winds keep them back. The beginning of the embassy is the moment when the priest of Apollo crowns the prow of the vessel. And this happened by chance, as I say, on the day before the trial took place. For this reason Socrates spent a long time in prison, the time between the trial and his death.

Echecrates: Well, what were the circumstances of the death itself, Phaedo? What things were said and done? And which of the man's companions were present with him? Or did the officials not allow them to be present, so that he met his end bereft of friends?

Phaedo: Not at all, but some were present, in fact many.

Echecrates: Well, put your heart into giving us as sure a report as you can about all these things, unless you happen not to be at leisure.

Phaedo: But I am at leisure, and I'll try to go through it for you. For to remember Socrates is ever the most pleasant of all things — at least for me — whether I myself do the speaking or listen to somebody else.

Echecrates: But, Phaedo, you'll certainly have for listeners others who are just like you. So try to go through everything as precisely as you can.

Phaedo: For my part, wondrous were the things I experienced when I was present. For no pity overcame me, even though I was present at the death of a man who was my companion. For the man appeared to me to be happy. Echecrates, both in his manner and his words, so fearlessly and nobly did he meet his end; so that it came home to me that that fellow wasn't going to Hades without divine warrant, but would, if anybody ever did, do well when he arrived There. For these reasons no pity at all overcame me, as would have seemed likely for one in the presence of sorrow. Nor again, was there pleasure in our being engaged as usual in philosophy — for our speech was in fact of this sort. Instead, as I realized deep down that very soon that man was about to

59A

³ Delos is an island in the Aegean Sea that contains a sanctuary of Apollo. Theseus is said to have stopped there for a dance of celebration on the way back from Crete.

meet his end, a simply absurd feeling was present in me, an unusual blend, blended together from pleasure and from pain too. And all who were present were pretty much in this condition, sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, and one of us especially — Apollodoros. I suppose you know the man and the way he is.

Echecrates: Why, of course.

Phaedo: Well then, that fellow was utterly in this condition, and I myself was shaken up along with the others.

Echecrates: And who, Phaedo, happened to be present?

Phaedo: Among the locals, this Apollodoros was present, and also Critobulus and his father, and then there was Hermogenes and Epigenes and Aeschines and Antisthenes; Ctessipus the Paeonian was also there and Menexenus and some other locals. But Plato was sick, I think.

Echecrates: And were there any strangers present?

Phaedo: Yes, Simmias the Theban and Cebes and Phaedonides and, from Megara, Euclides and Terpsion.

Echecrates: What about this: Were Aristippus and Cleombrotus present?

Phaedo: Oh, no, they were said to be in Aegina.

Echecrates: Was anyone else present?

Phaedo: I think these were pretty much the ones who were present.

Echecrates: Well then, what do you say were the arguments?

Phaedo: I'll try to go through everything for you from the beginning. All throughout the days that preceded, I and the others had been in the habit of visiting Socrates, after gathering at dawn at the court in which the trial too had taken place — it was close to the prison. Each day we used to wait around, passing the time with one another, until the prison would open; for it didn't open early. And when it would open, we used to go in to be with Socrates and would mostly spend the whole day with him. Now on that day in particular we gathered even earlier. For on the day before, when we came out of the prison in the evening, we found out that the vessel had arrived from Delos. So we passed the word to each other to come as early as possible to the usual place. And so we came, and the same doorkeeper who usually answered came out to us and told us to wait around, and not to go in until he himself told us to. "For the Eleven," he said, "are releasing

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Socrates from his bonds and giving the word that he is to meet his end on this day."⁴ We hadn't waited for a long time when he came and told us to go in. So we went in and caught Socrates just freed from his bonds and Xanthippe — you know her — holding his little boy and seated beside him. Now when Xanthippe saw us, she cried out and then said just the sort of thing women usually say: "Socrates, now's the last time your companions will talk to you and you to them!" And Socrates gave Crito a look and said: "Crito, have somebody take her home."

60A

B So some of Crito's people took that woman away, wailing and beating her breast, while Socrates sat up on the bed, bent his leg and gave it a good rub with his hand. And as he was rubbing it, he said: "How absurd a thing this seems to be, gentlemen, which human beings call 'pleasant!' How wondrously related it is by nature to its seeming contrary — the Painful — in that they're not both willing to be present with a human being at the same time; but if somebody chases the one and catches it, he's pretty much compelled always to catch the other one too, just as if the pair of them — although they're two — were fastened by one head! And it seems to me," he said, "that if Aesop had noticed this, he would've composed a story, telling how the god wanted to reconcile them in their war with each other, but when he wasn't able to do that, he fastened their heads together at the same point, and for that reason, when the one's present with somebody, its other follows along later. That's just how it seems in my own case too: After the Aching was in my leg from the bond, here comes the Pleasant, appearing to follow right after it."

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Then Cebes broke in. "By Zeus, Socrates," he said, "you did well to remind me! In fact, some others have already been asking me about the poems you've made — the accounts of Aesop and the hymn to Apollo that you set to verse. And just the other day Euenus was asking what in the world you had in mind in making these verses after you came here, when before this you never made any at all.⁵ So if you care about my being able to answer Euenus the next time he asks me — and I know for sure that he will ask — tell me what I should say."

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E "Then tell him the truth, Cebes," he said, "that I didn't make these verses because I wanted to rival that fellow, or his poems,

⁴ The Eleven were the officials in charge of prisons and executions.

⁵ Euenus, who was visiting Athens from Paros at the time of Socrates' trial, was both a sophist, that is, a paid teacher of virtue, and a poet. He is mentioned by Socrates in the *Apology* (20B).

in artistry — I knew *that* wouldn't be easy — but to test what certain dreams of mine might be saying and to acquit myself of any impiety, just in case they might be repeatedly commanding me to make this music. Here's how they went: The same dream visited me often in my past life, appearing sometimes in one aspect and sometimes in another but always saying the same thing. 'Socrates,' it said, 'make music and work at it!' Now at least in former times, I assumed that it was exhorting me and urging me on repeatedly to the very thing I was doing, and that just as people encourage runners, the dream kept urging me on to do what I was doing — to make music — since philosophy, in my view, is the greatest music and that's just what I was doing. But now, once the trial had taken place and while the festival of the god prevented me from dying, it seemed that if the dream had indeed often ordered me to make this popular music, I shouldn't disobey but should make it; for it seemed safer not to go away before acquitting myself of any impiety by making poems and obeying the dream. So first I made a poem to the god whose day of sacrifice was at hand. And taking note that a poet, if he's to be a poet, has to make stories, not arguments, and that I myself was not a storyteller, therefore after the god I turned to the stories of Aesop, the ones I had at hand and knew — which ever I chanced on first — and made them into poetry. So tell Euenus this, Cebes, and bid him farewell, and tell him, if he's soundminded, to follow me as quickly as possible. I'm going away, as it seems, today — for the Athenians so order it."

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And Simmias said, "How can you exhort Euenus in this way, Socrates? By now I've met the man often. It's pretty certain, from what I've perceived, that he won't be willing to be persuaded by you in any way whatsoever."

"What!" said he. "Isn't Euenus a philosopher?"

"To me at least he seems to be one," said Simmias.

"Well then, Euenus and everybody who takes a worthy part in this business will be willing to take my advice. Though perhaps he won't do violence to himself — they say it isn't lawful." And with these words, he put his feet down on the earth and for the rest of the time conversed sitting in this way.

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Then Cebes asked him, "What are you saying, Socrates: It isn't lawful for him to do violence to himself, but the philosopher should be willing to follow after somebody who's dying?"

"What, Cebes! Haven't both you and Simmias heard about

such things, you who've spent time with Philolaus?"

"At any rate, nothing sure, Socrates."

"Now certainly I too speak of them only from hearsay. What I happen to have heard, however, I don't begrudge telling. For perhaps it's especially fitting for somebody who's about to emigrate to that place to examine and also to tell stories about the emigration. There — what sort of thing we think it is. For what else would one do in the time until the setting of the sun?"

"On whatever grounds, then, do they say that it's not lawful for somebody to kill himself, Socrates? For I've already heard Philolaus too, when he was staying among us, say what you said just now, and I've heard it from some others as well: 'One must not do this.' But I've never heard anything sure about these things from anyone."

"But you should take heart," he said, "— maybe you'll hear something. And yet, it will perhaps appear wondrous to you, if this case alone among all the others is simple — if it never turns out for humankind, as it does in other cases, that sometimes and for some men it's better to be dead than alive, and in the case of these human beings for whom it's better to be dead, perhaps it appears wondrous to you that it isn't pious for them to do themselves good, but instead they must wait around for another benefactor."

And Cebeus, with a gentle laugh, said, "Doan Zeus knowet!," speaking in his own dialect.

"For it would seem," said Socrates, "to be unaccountable if put this way. And yet just maybe it does have an account. The account that's given about these things in the Mysteries — that we humans are in a sort of garrison and one is bound not to release oneself from it nor to run off — appears to me to be a grand one and not easy to make out. And yet this, at any rate, seems to me to be well put, Cebeus: The gods care for us, and we humans are one of the gods' possessions. Or doesn't it seem so to you?"

"To me it does," said Cebeus.

"Now if one of your possessions were to kill itself, when you didn't signal that you wished it to die," he said, "wouldn't you be harsh with it, and if you had some means of punishing it, wouldn't you?"

"Of course," he said.

"Well then, perhaps in this way it's not unaccountable that a

man's bound not to kill himself before god sends some necessity — like the one that's now upon us."

"At least that appears likely," said Cebeus. "And yet, what you were saying just now, that the philosophers would be ready and willing to die, seems like an absurdity, Socrates — if in fact what we were now saying is reasonable, that god is our caretaker and we are his possessions. For it's not reasonable for the most thoughtful men not to make a fuss when they leave behind this position of service, in which the very best overseers there are, the gods, watch over them. For at least the thoughtful man does not, I suppose, imagine that he'll take better care of himself once he's become free. But a mindless human being would perhaps imagine that one must flee from one's master. He wouldn't reason that one must not flee from one's master — at least a good one — but all the more remain with him, and hence he'd flee irrationally. But the mindful man would, I suppose, always desire to be with somebody better than himself. And yet, put this way, the contrary of what was said just now is likely — that it's fitting for the thoughtful to make a fuss when they die and for the thoughtless to rejoice."

When Socrates heard this, it seemed to me he was pleased with Cebeus' down-to-business manner. And he glanced at us and said, "Boy, that Cebeus is always tracking down some argument or other and isn't at all willing to be persuaded right off by what anybody says!"

And Simmias said, "Well, Socrates, right now I myself also think there's something to what Cebeus is saying. For why would men who are truly wise want to flee from masters who are their betters and readily get free of them? And I think Cebeus is aiming his argument at you, because you're so ready to abandon us and the gods, who, as you yourself agree, are good rulers."

"What you say is just," he said, "for I think what you're both saying is that I should make my defense against these charges, just as in the law court."

"Certainly," said Simmias.

"Well then," said he, "I'd better try to give a more persuasive defense before you than I did before my judges. For if I didn't think, Simmias and Cebeus," he said, "that I was going to come, first of all, among other gods who are wise and good, and secondly among human beings who've met their end and are better than those here, I would've done injustice not to make a fuss about

death. But as it is now, know well that I hope to arrive among good men. I wouldn't altogether insist on this; nevertheless, if there were any such thing I would insist on, know that it'd be this — that I was going to come among gods who are completely good masters. So for these reasons, not only am I not making a fuss, but I have high hopes that there's something for those who've met their end, and just as it's been said of old, something far better for the good than for the bad."

"So then, Socrates," said Simmias, "are you of a mind to go off and keep this thought to yourself, or would you give us a share of it too? To me at least this good surely seems to be a common one that belongs to us as well; and at the same time it will be your defense — if, that is, you persuade us by what you say."

"That's just what I'll try to do," he said. "But first let's look into what Crito here wants. Seems to me he's been wanting to say something for a long time now."

"What else but this, Socrates," said Crito, "that for a long time now the fellow who's to give you the potion has been telling me that I should warn you to converse as little as possible? He says people who do a lot of conversing get all heated up and that one mustn't interfere in any such way with the potion. He says if that does happen, sometimes those who do this sort of thing must be compelled to drink it twice and even three times."

And Socrates said, "Let him be! Just have him prepare his potion and be ready to give it twice and, if he must, even three times."

"I pretty much knew you'd say that," said Crito, "but he's been giving me trouble for a long time now."

"Let him be!" he said. "But now I want to render my account to you my judges, to tell you why it appears reasonable to me that a man who's genuinely spent his life in philosophy is confident when he's about to die and has high hopes that when he's met his end, he'll win the greatest goods. There, just how all this could be so, Simmias and Cebes, I shall try to tell you."

"Others are apt to be unaware that those who happen to have gotten in touch with philosophy in the right way devote themselves to nothing else but dying and being dead. Now if this is true, surely it would be absurd if they put their heart into nothing but this all their life, and then, when it comes, they make a fuss about the very thing to which they had long given both their hearts and their devotion."

And Simmias said with a laugh, "By Zeus, Socrates, right now I'm not much for laughing, but you did make me laugh! For I think that the many, if they heard this very thing, would be of the opinion that you spoke all too well about those who philosophize. And the people back home would entirely agree with them that those who philosophize are genuinely ripe for death, and indeed they're not unaware that they deserve this plight."

"And they'd be speaking the truth, Simmias, except of course about their not being unaware. For they're unaware of this: in what way those who truly are philosophers are ripe for death and in what way they are worthy of death and of what sort of death. Let us then," he said, "talk amongst ourselves and bid those others farewell. Do we consider that there's such a thing as death?"

"Of course," said Simmias, breaking in.

"And is it anything but the freeing of the soul from the body? And is this what it means to have died: for the body to have become separate, once it's freed from the soul and is itself all by itself, and for the soul to be separate, once she's freed from the body and is herself all by herself? Death couldn't be anything other than this — could it?"

"No, just that," he said.

"Now, my good man, see if your opinion is just the same as mine. For I think we'll know more about what we're looking into by beginning with this: Does it appear to you that being serious about the so-called pleasures, such as those of food and drink, goes with being a philosophical man?"

"Least of all, Socrates," said Simmias.

"And what about the pleasures of love-making?"

"No way."

"And what about any other servings of the body? Does such a man seem to you to regard any of them as worthy of honor? For instance, there's the attainment of diverse cloaks and sandals and the other, body-related beautifications. Does he seem to you to honor them? Or does he hold them in dishonor, except insofar as there's an urgent necessity for him to have his share of them?"

"Seems to me he holds them in dishonor," he said, "at least the one who's truly a philosopher."

"All in all, doesn't it seem to you," he said, "that the business of such a man is not with the body; instead, he stands apart from it and keeps turned toward the soul as much as he can?"

"Seems so to me."

65A "First then, in such matters, isn't the philosopher clearly beyond other human beings in releasing the soul from communion with the body as much as possible?"

"Apparently."

"And certainly, Simmias, most human beings are of the opinion that the man for whom none of these things is pleasant and who doesn't have a share of them doesn't deserve to live. In fact, the man who thinks nothing of the pleasures that come through the body is pretty much headed for death."

"What you say is certainly true."

B "And what about the very attainment of thoughtfulness? Is the body an impediment or not when somebody takes it along as a companion in his search? Here's the sort of thing I mean. Do sight and hearing possess any truth for human beings, or is it the case that we neither hear nor see anything precise — the sort of thing even the poets are always babbling about to us? And yet, if among the bodily senses seeing and hearing are neither precise nor clear, the rest scarcely are, for, I suppose, these are all inferior. Or don't they seem so to you?"

"Certainly," he said.

"So when," said he, "does the soul get in touch with truth? For when she attempts to look at something along with the body, it's clear that then she's deceived by it."

C "What you say is true."

"Then isn't it in her act of reasoning, if anywhere, that something of the things that *are* becomes very clear to her?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose the soul reasons most beautifully when none of these things gives her pain — neither hearing nor sight, nor grief nor any pleasure — when instead, bidding farewell to the body, she comes to be herself all by herself as much as possible and when, doing everything she can to avoid communing with or even being in touch with the body, she strives for what is."

"That's so."

D "Then here too, doesn't the soul of the philosopher especially hold the body in dishonor and flee it and seek to become a soul herself all by herself?"

"Apparently."

"And what about this sort of thing, Simmias: Do we claim that there is some Just Itself — or no such thing?"

"We do claim it, by Zeus!"

"And also some Beautiful and Good?"

"Why, certainly."

"Well, ever see anything of that sort with your eyes?"

"In no way," said he.

"But did you lay hold of them by any other sense that comes through the body? And I'm speaking about the Being of all such things, about Bigness and Health and Strength and, in a word, all the rest — whatever each happens to be. Is what's truest about them beheld through the body? Or does it work this way: He among us who best prepares himself to think through most precisely each thing he investigates — that man would come closest to recognizing each thing?"

"Certainly."

"Then wouldn't that man do this most purely who approaches each thing as far as possible with thought itself, and who neither puts any sight into his thinking nor drags in any other sense along with his reasoning; but instead, using unadulterated thought itself all by itself, he attempts to hunt down each of the beings that's unadulterated and itself all by itself, and once he's freed himself as far as possible from eyes and ears and, so to speak, from his whole body, because it shakes the soul up and doesn't let her attain truth and thoughtfulness when the body communes with her — isn't this the man, Simmias, if anyone, who will hit upon what *is*?"

"Extraordinary how truly you speak, Socrates!" said Simmias.

B "Therefore it's a necessity," he said, "that for all these reasons the true-born philosophers would be won over to some such opinion as this and so would say something like the following to one another: 'It looks like there's a shortcut that brings us to this conclusion — that as long as we have the body accompanying the argument in our investigation, and our soul is smushed together with this sort of evil, we'll never, ever sufficiently attain what we desire. And this, we affirm, is the truth. For the body deprives us of leisure on thousands of occasions through the necessity for food. And what's more, when it comes down with certain diseases, these get in the way of our hunt for what *is*. And it fills us up with erotic loves and with desires and terrors and all

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manner of images and lots of nonsense, so that because of the body it becomes truly and genuinely impossible, as the saying goes, for us to be thoughtful about anything at all *ever!* After all, nothing other than the body and its desires produce wars and factions and battles; for all wars come about for the sake of getting money, and we're compelled to get money for the sake of the body, to whose service we're enslaved. And so, on account of this — the body — and for all these reasons, we have no leisure for philosophy. And the worst of it all is that if a bit of leisure does come along for us and we get away from the body and turn to investigating something, the body constantly turns up again and makes noise and trouble in our searchings and drives us crazy, so that because of it we're incapable of seeing the truth — and this is where it's really pointed out to us that if we're ever going to know anything purely, we've got to free ourselves from the body and behold things themselves with the soul herself. And then, as it seems, the thoughtfulness we desire and whose lovers we claim to be will be ours — when we've met our end and, as the argument shows, not while we're alive. For if it isn't possible to recognize anything at all purely when in company with the body, one of two things must follow. Either there's nowhere to attain knowing, or else it's only for those who've met their end — for then the soul will be herself all by herself separate from the body — but not before. And in the time we're alive here's how we'll come closest, it seems, to knowing: if as much as possible we in no way consort with the body or commune with it — unless it's an absolute necessity — or fill ourselves up with its nature, but purify ourselves from it until the god himself shall release us. And when, in this way, we are pure and free of the thoughtlessness of the body, we shall, as is likely, be in the company of things that are pure as well and, through our own selves, shall recognize everything unadulterated — and this, no doubt, is the True. For it isn't at all lawful that the not-pure should touch the pure. That's the sort of thing, Simmias, all who rightly love learning will, I think, necessarily say to each other and hold as an opinion. Or doesn't it seem so to you?"

"More than anything, Socrates."

"Then," said Socrates, "if these things are true, my comrade, there's great hope that when I arrive at the end of my journey, There — if indeed anywhere — I shall sufficiently attain what our constant business in our bygone life has been for. And that's why the emigration which has now been imposed on me is be-

gun in good hope, and so it is for any other man who considers that his thinking has been prepared by being, as it were, purified."

"Certainly," said Simmias.

"And purification — doesn't it turn out to be this, as was said way back in the argument: Isn't it separating the soul from the body as much as possible and habituating her to gather and collect herself all by herself out of all the sites of the body and to dwell as much as possible, both in the present and in the time to come, alone by herself, released from out of the body just as from bonds?"

"Certainly," he said.

"Isn't this what goes by the name of death — the release and separation of soul from body?"

"Altogether so," said he.

"And releasing her, as we claim, is what those and only those who philosophize rightly are always putting their heart into most of all, and this very thing is the care of the philosophers: the release and separation of soul from body. Isn't it?"

"Apparently."

"Then wouldn't it be laughable, as I was saying in the beginning, for a man who'd been preparing himself in life to live as close as possible to being dead to make a fuss when death finally came to him?"

"Why, certainly it's laughable."

"In fact, Simmias," he said, "those who philosophize rightly make dying their care, and of human beings to them least of all is being dead terrifying. And look at it on these grounds: If they'd been at odds with the body in every way and desire to keep the soul herself all by herself, wouldn't it be great unreason if they were terrified and made a fuss when this happened, and weren't pleased to go There, where there was hope for those who'd arrived to get what they've been in love with throughout life — and they were in love with thoughtfulness — and to be free of the company of that with which they'd been at odds? Again, many people have been willing to pursue their human loves to Hades when they've died — their boyfriends, wives and sons — led by the hope that they'll see and be together. There with those they desired. Then will the man who's genuinely in love with thoughtfulness and who's taken a firm hold of this same hope that no-

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68A

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where else but in Hades will he encounter it in a manner worth speaking of, make a fuss about dying and not be pleased to go there? We must suppose this is so, my comrade, whenever somebody's a genuine philosopher. For this will definitely be his opinion: He'll encounter thoughtfulness purely nowhere but there. If this is how things stand, wouldn't it be great unreason, as I was just saying, if such a man should be terrified at death?"

"Very great, by Zeus!" said he.

C "Then," he said, "this is sufficient proof for you that any man you see making a fuss at the prospect of dying was not a lover of wisdom but a lover of the body. And I suppose this same man turns out to be a lover of money and a lover of honor, of either one of them or of both."

"It's certainly as you say," he said.

"Then isn't it the case, Simmias, that what goes by the name of courage especially befits those in this condition?"

"In every way," he said.

"Then also, the moderation that even the many name moderation — not being all aflutter about desires but making little of them and being orderly — doesn't that befit these men alone, men who especially make little of the body and live their lives in philosophy?"

D "It's a necessity," he said.

"For if you're willing," said he, "to take note of the courage as well as the moderation of other men, it'll seem to you to be absurd."

"How so, Socrates?"

"You know," said he, "that all other men regard death as among the great evils?"

"Very much so," he said.

"Then don't the courageous among them, whenever they face death, face it through terror at greater evils?"

"That's so."

"Therefore all but the philosophers are courageous by fearing and by fear. And yet it's certainly unreasonable for somebody to be courageous by fear and cowardice."

E "Certainly."

"And what about the orderly ones among them? Aren't they affected in this same way — they're moderate by a sort of self-

indulgence? To be sure, we say this is impossible, but nevertheless what characterizes this simple-minded moderation turns out for them to be like that. For since they're terrified of being robbed of some pleasures and yet desire them, they keep away from some through being mastered by others. And yet they call being ruled by pleasures self-indulgence. Nevertheless, as it turns out, they master some pleasures only because they're mastered by other pleasures. And this is similar to what I was saying just now, that they've been, after a fashion, moderated by self-indulgence."

"So it seems."

"Bless you, Simmias, maybe this isn't the right way of making exchanges for virtue, by exchanging pleasures for pleasures and pains for pains and terror for terror and the greater for the less, as if they were coins; but maybe this alone is the right coin for virtue, the coin for which all things must be exchanged — thoughtfulness. Maybe this is the genuine coin for which and with which all things must be bought and sold; and maybe courage and moderation and justice and true virtue as a whole *are* only when accompanied by thoughtfulness, regardless of whether pleasures and terrors and all other such things are added or subtracted.

B But when such things are separated from thoughtfulness and are exchanged one for the other, maybe such virtue isn't anything but a kind of shadow-painting and is genuinely suited only for slaves and has nothing in it either healthy or true; but maybe the true and genuine virtue is a sort of purification from all these things, and maybe moderation and justice and courage and thoughtfulness itself are nothing but a kind of purifier. And it looks as if these people who instituted our mystic rites weren't a bunch of bunglers but spoke with a genuine hidden meaning when they said long ago that whoever arrives in Hades ignorant of the mysteries and uninitiated will lie in Muck, but that he who arrives There purified and initiated will dwell with gods. For as they say about the mysteries: 'Many the wand-bearers, but the celebrants few.' And these celebrants are in my opinion none other than those who've philosophized rightly. Now I too, as one of them, have left nothing undone in my life that was in my power, but have put my heart into becoming one of them in every way. But whether I've put my heart into it rightly and whether we've accomplished anything, we shall know for sure, as it seems to me, only when we've gone There — I in just a little while, if god is willing. So then, Simmias and Cebes," he said, "that's my defense of why it's reasonable for me to leave you and the masters

I've got here without taking it hard or making a fuss: because I believe that There too, no less than here, I shall meet up with good masters and good comrades as well. If I've been at all more persuasive to you in my defense than I was to the Athenian judges, it would be well."

Now when Socrates had said all this, Cebes broke in and said: "Socrates, the rest seems to me to have been beautifully put, but what you said about the soul induces a lot of distrust in human beings. They fear that the soul, once she's free of the body, is no longer anywhere and is destroyed and perishes on that very day when a human being dies; and that as soon as she's free of the body and departs, then, scattered like breath or smoke, she goes fluttering off and is no longer anywhere. Of course, if she should be somewhere, herself all by herself, collected together and freed from those evils you went through just now, there'd be a great hope — a beautiful hope — that what you say, Socrates, is true. But this point — that the soul is when the human being dies and holds onto both some power and thoughtfulness — probably stands in need of more than a little persuasive talk and assurance."

"What you say is true, Cebes," said Socrates, "but now what should we do? Or do you want us to tell a more thorough story about these things to see whether what we're saying is likely or not?"

"For my part," said Cebes, "it'd be a pleasure to hear whatever opinion you have about them."

"I can't imagine then," said Socrates, "that anyone hearing us now, even if he were a comic poet, would say that I jabber and make speeches about matters that aren't my business.⁶ So if you're of this opinion, we should investigate the matter thoroughly."

"And let's investigate it in some such way as this: Either the souls of human beings who've met their end are in Hades or they're not. Now there's a certain ancient account, one that we hold in memory, that souls *are* There having arrived from here, and that they arrive here again and come to be from the dead. And if this is so, and the living come to be again out of those who've died, could anything else be the case but that our souls *are* There? If they weren't somewhere, they couldn't come to be

⁶ Socrates turns up in Aristophanes' comedy *The Clouds* as the proprietor of a "thinkery," where, suspended in a basket, he teaches his pupils to worship clouds and to make the worse arguments seem the better. Socrates had alluded to this play in his trial in the *Apology*.

again; and it'd be sufficient proof that this is so, if it should in fact become clear that the living come to be from nowhere else but from the dead. But if this isn't so, we'd need another account."

"Certainly," said Cebes.

"Now if you want to understand this more easily, don't look only to human beings," said he, "but also to all animals and plants. And in sum, let's take a look at all things that have a becoming — whether they all, as contraries, come to be from anywhere else but from their contraries, at least those that happen to have some such contrary; for example, what's beautiful is contrary to what's ugly, I suppose, and what's just to what's unjust, and surely thousands of other things are like that. So let's investigate whether it's necessary for whatever has some contrary to come to be from nowhere else but from its own contrary. For example, whenever something comes to be bigger, isn't it a necessity that it become bigger later from something that was littler before?"

"Yes."

"And also if something comes to be littler, won't it come to be littler later from something that was bigger before?"

"That's so," he said.

"And further, the weaker comes from the stronger, and the quicker from the slower?"

"Of course."

"What about this: If something comes to be worse, doesn't it come from what's better, and if more just, from what's more unjust?"

"Certainly."

"Well then," he said, "do we have the matter well enough in hand: All contrary things come to be in this way — from contraries?"

"Of course."

"And again, what about this: Aren't there, in the case of all contraries, since they come in pairs, something like two becoming between them, from one to the other, and, again, from the other back to the first — between a bigger and a littler thing isn't there growth and decay, and so we call the one 'growing' and the other 'decaying'?"

"Yes," he said.

"And separating and combining and cooling and heating and

likewise everything else — even if here and there we don't make use of names — isn't it in fact everywhere necessary that they come to be from one another and that there's a becoming from each member of the pair to the other?"

"Certainly," said he.

C "Well then," he said, "is there some contrary to being alive, as being asleep is to being awake?"

"Certainly," he said.

"What?"

"Being dead," he said.

"Then don't these come to be from one another, if in fact they are contraries; and because they are two, aren't there two becoming between them?"

"Why, of course."

"Well then," Socrates said, "I'll tell you one of the yoked pairs that I was speaking about just now — both it and its becoming — and you'll tell me the other. I say there's being asleep and being awake, and that being awake comes to be from being asleep and being asleep from being awake, and the becoming that go with these two are falling asleep and waking up. Is that sufficient for you," he said, "or not?"

"Certainly."

"Now you," he said, "speak to me in just this way about life and death. Don't you say that being dead is contrary to being alive?"

"I do."

"And they come to be from one another?"

"Yes."

"Then what's the thing that comes to be from the living thing?"

"The dead thing," he said.

"And what," said he, "from the dead one?"

"It's necessary to agree," he said, "the living thing."

"Therefore, Cebes, living things — living people too — come to be from the dead?"

E "Apparently," he said.

"Therefore," he said, "our souls are in Hades."

"It seems so."

"And doesn't one of the two becoming for these things happen to be a sure thing? For I take it dying is sure, isn't it?"

"Certainly," he said.

"What'll we do?" said he. "Shall we fail to give it the corresponding becoming that's contrary to it, and will nature instead be lame in this respect? Or is it necessary to give to dying some contrary becoming?"

"Entirely necessary, I suppose," he said.

"What is it?"

"Returning to life."

"Therefore," said he, "if in fact there is such a thing as returning to life, wouldn't this coming to be — this returning to life — be from the dead and into the living?"

72A

"Of course."

"So in this way too, we agree that the living have come to be from the dead no less than the dead from the living. And since this was the case, I suppose it seemed to be sufficient proof that it's necessary for the souls of the dead to be somewhere, whence they come to be again."

"Seems to me, Socrates," he said, "that it's necessarily so, given what we've agreed on."

"Then look at it this way, Cebes," he said, "and you'll see we did no injustice when we so agreed, as it seems to me. For if things that come to be didn't always make a return, each to its corresponding other, just as if they were going in a circle, but if instead becoming were a kind of straight line that proceeded only from one end to the directly opposite end and didn't bend back again towards its other or make any bend at all — do you know that all things would end up being in the same shape and would be affected in the same way and would stop coming to be?"

"What do you mean?" he said.

"It isn't at all hard," said he, "to take note of what I mean. For example, if there were falling asleep but no waking up again to correspond to and come to be from sleep, you know that all things would end up making nonsense of Endymion.⁷ He'd make a poor showing, since all other things would be affected the same way he was — they'd all be asleep! And if all things were combined and not separated out, then the saying of Anaxagoras — 'All

C

⁷ Endymion was an unusually beautiful boy, beloved by the moon and allowed to sleep forever.

things together' — would quickly have come about. And in the same way, my dear Cebes, if all things that partake of living were to die, and, when they died, the dead were to stay in that shape and not return to life, then wouldn't there be a great necessity for all things to end up dead and for nothing at all to be alive? For if the living were to come to be from anything other than the dead and the living were to die, what trick would there be to prevent all things from being utterly spent in death?"

D

"Seems to me not a single one, Socrates," said Cebes, "but in my opinion what you say is altogether true."

"Most definitely so, Cebes, as it seems to me," he said, "and we're not deceived in agreeing to these very things: There genuinely is a returning to life, the living come to be from the dead, and the souls of the dead *are*."

E

"And besides, Socrates," Cebes rejoined, "this also goes along with that other argument you're in the habit of making often, which — if it's true — says that our learning happens to be nothing other than recollection; and according to this argument, I suppose it's necessary that we've learned at some previous time what we now recollect. But this is impossible if our soul was not somewhere before being born in this human form here. So in this way too the soul seems to be something deathless."

73A

"But Cebes," Simmias rejoined, "what were the demonstrations for this? Remind me — I can't remember very well at present."

"There's one argument," said Cebes, "a most beautiful one: When human beings are questioned, if somebody questions them well, they themselves tell everything as it is, although, if knowledge and a right account didn't happen to be within them, they wouldn't have been able to do this. Further, you get the surest indication that this is so when you direct them to mathematical diagrams or something else of that sort."⁸

B

"And if you're not persuaded by that, Simmias," said Socrates, "see if you don't come to the same opinion when you look at it in this way. You distrust — don't you — the claim that what's called learning is recollection?"

"It's not that I'm distrustful," said he, Simmias. "But I need," he said, "to undergo the very thing the account's about — recollecting. Though from what Cebes tried to say, I've already pretty

⁸ In the *Menō* (82B ff.) Socrates questions a slave boy with the help of such a diagram and gets him to discover mathematical truths within himself.

nearly remembered and am persuaded. Still, I'd now like to hear how *you* were trying to put it."

C

"I was going to put it in this way," said he. "We agree, I suppose, that if anybody is to recollect anything, he must have knowledge of it at some time before."

"Of course," he said.

"Then do we also agree on this, that whenever knowledge comes to be present in this way, there's recollection? What way do I mean? This: Whenever somebody who's either seen or heard something — or has grasped it by some other sense — not only recognizes that thing but also takes note of another, the knowledge of which isn't the same but different, don't we justly say that he recollects that of which he grasped the notion?"

D

"What do you mean?"

"Something like this: Knowledge of a human being and of a lyre are different, I suppose."

"Why, of course."

"Don't you know, then, that lovers, when they see a lyre or cloak or anything else that their boyfriend was in the habit of using, are affected in this way: They recognize the lyre and they grasp in thought the form of the boy whose lyre it was? And that's recollection. Just so, somebody who's seen Simmias often recollects Cebes. And there'd be a thousand such cases."

"A thousand, indeed, by Zeus!" said Simmias.

"Now isn't that sort of thing," said he, "a kind of recollection? Especially when somebody undergoes this concerning things which, from time and inattention, he'd already forgotten?"

"Certainly," he said.

"What about this?" said he. "Is it possible for somebody who's seen a sketched horse or a sketched lyre to recollect a human being, and who's seen Simmias sketched to recollect Cebes?"

"Of course."

"Then isn't it possible for somebody who's seen Simmias sketched to recollect Simmias himself?"

74A

"It's certainly possible," he said.

"Then doesn't it follow from all this that recollection stems from similar things and also stems from dissimilar?"

"It follows."

"But at least whenever somebody's recollecting something

from similar things, isn't it necessary for him to undergo this as well: to note whether or not, with respect to similarity, this thing somehow falls short of what he's recollected?"

"It's necessary," he said.

"Consider, then," said he, "if it's like this: We claim, I suppose, that there's some 'equal.' I don't mean stick equal to stick or stone to stone or anything else like that, but something other, beyond all these things — the Equal Itself. Shall we claim that this is something, or nothing at all?"

B "By Zeus," said Simmias, "we certainly shall claim it, wondrously so!"

"And do we have knowledge of it, the Equal that is?"

"Of course," he said.

"And we grasped the knowledge of it from — where? Isn't it from the things we were talking about just now: We've seen sticks or stones or some other things that are equal, and from these we've noticed the Equal Itself, although it's other than these? Or doesn't it appear to you to be other? Look at the matter in this way: Isn't it the case that equal stones and sticks, while being the same, sometimes appear equal from one point of view and from another not?"

"Certainly."

C "What about this: Is it possible that the Equals Themselves at times appeared to you to be unequals or Equality to be Inequality?"

"Never ever, Socrates."

"Therefore," said he, "these equals and the Equal Itself aren't the same."

"No way, as it appears to me, Socrates."

"And yet," he said, "it's nevertheless from these equals, although they're other than *that* Equal, that you've noted and grasped the knowledge of it?"

"What you say," he said, "is most true."

"And isn't it either similar or dissimilar to them?"

"Of course."

D "But that makes no difference," said he. "So long as, after you see one thing and from this sight you note something else, whether similar or dissimilar — that," he said, "must necessarily have been recollection."

"Certainly."

"What about this?" said he. "Do we undergo some such thing as this concerning equals among sticks and the other equals we were talking about just now: Do they appear to us to be equals in just the same way as the Equal Itself, the equal that is? Or do they fall somewhat short of being the sort of thing the Equal is — or not at all?"

"They fall short by a lot," he said.

"Then do we agree to this: Whenever somebody who's seen something notes, 'What I'm now seeing wants to be of the same sort as something else among the things that *are*; yet it falls short and isn't able to be that sort of thing but is inferior,' then mustn't the man who notes this necessarily have had occasion to see beforehand that thing he says it's like but falls short of?"

"Necessarily."

"Well then, have we too undergone some such thing with respect to equals and the Equal Itself, or not?"

"Altogether so."

"Then it's necessary that we saw the Equal before that time when we first saw equals and noted: 'All these things are striving to be like the Equal but fall short of it.'"

"That's so."

"But surely we also agree on this: We haven't gotten the notion of it from somewhere else, nor is it even possible to get the notion of it except from seeing or touching or some other of the senses. And I say all these senses are the same thing."

"The same, Socrates, at least with respect to what the argument wants to make clear."

B "So then, it's from the senses that we must get the notion that all the objects in these sensations both strive after the Equal that is and fall short of it. Is that what we're saying?"

"Just that."

"Therefore, before we began to see and hear and use the other senses, I suppose we must have had occasion to grasp the knowledge of the Equal Itself, the equal that is, if we were ever to refer. There the equals that came from our senses and to think that all such things are putting their heart into being the sort of thing the Equal is but are inferior to it."

"That's necessary, from we said before, Socrates."

"Weren't we both seeing and hearing and having the other

senses right from the moment we were born?"

"Of course."

C "But, we declare, we must have grasped the knowledge of the Equal before all this?"

"Yes."

"Therefore, as it seems, it's necessary that we grasped it before we were born."

"So it seems."

"Then isn't this the case: If we grasped it and were born having it, we had knowledge both before we were born and right at the moment we were born, not only of the Equal and the Greater and the Less but also of all such things? For our present argument isn't about the Equal any more than it's about the Beautiful Itself and the Good Itself and the Just and the Holy and, as I say, about all those things upon which we set the seal 'that which is, in the questions we ask as well as in the answers we give; so we must necessarily have grasped the various knowledges of all these things before we were born.'"

"That's so."

"And if in fact, after grasping these things, we didn't on each occasion forget them, then we're necessarily always born knowing them and know them throughout our life, since knowing is just this: when somebody who's grasped knowledge of something holds onto it and hasn't utterly lost it. Or don't we say that forgetting is just this, Simmias: the shedding of knowledge?"

E "That's entirely so, Socrates," he said.

"But I suppose if, having grasped knowledge before we were born, we lost it utterly when we were born, but later by use of our senses we grasp again the various knowledges we once had before — then wouldn't what we call 'learning' be the grasping again of our old familiar knowledge? And I suppose we'd speak rightly if we called this 'recollecting?'"

"Of course."

76A "For surely this appeared possible: A person senses something either by seeing or by hearing it or by grasping it with some other sense and — starting from this thing — notes some other he'd forgotten and which the sensed thing approaches, whether it's dissimilar or similar. So that, as I said, one or the other of two things holds. Either we were all born having knowledge of these things and have knowledge of them throughout our life; or we

know later, and those of whom we say 'they learn' do nothing but recollect, and learning would be recollection."

"That's exactly how it is, Socrates."

B "Then which do you choose, Simmias: Are we born already having knowledge, or do we recollect later things the knowledge of which we'd grasped before?"

"I can't choose at present, Socrates."

"Well now, surely you can choose between these, and have some sort of opinion about it: Can a man who has knowledge give an account of what he has knowledge of, or not?"

"There's a great necessity for this, Socrates," he said.

"And do all people seem to you to be able to give an account of those things we were talking about just now?"

"I sure wish they could," said Simmias. "But what I'm terrified of more than anything is that tomorrow at this time there'll no longer be anybody among human beings worthy of the task."

"Then, Simmias, I take it all people don't seem to you to have knowledge of these things?" he said.

"Not in the least."

"Then they recollect what they once learned?"

"That's a necessity."

"And our souls grasped the knowledge of these things — when? Surely not from the time we were born as human beings."

"Surely not."

"Therefore, it was before."

"Yes."

"Therefore, Simmias, our souls *were* earlier too, before they were in human form, and they were separate from bodies and had thoughtfulness."

"Unless, Socrates, we grasp these various knowledges as we are born — that time's still left."

D "Well, my comrade — but at what other time do we lose them? For we aren't born having them, as we agreed just now. Or do we lose them at the very time we also grasp them? Or can you suggest some other time?"

"Not at all, Socrates — I was unaware that I wasn't making sense."

"Then is this our situation, Simmias?" he said. "If what we're

E forever babbling about *is* — some Beautiful as well as some Good and all such Being — and if we refer to this Being everything that comes from the senses, since we've discovered that it was present before and was ours, and if we liken the things of sense to that Being, then just as surely as these beings *are*, so also our soul *is*, even before we were born. And if they *are not*, then wouldn't this account we've given be beside the point? Is this our situation, and is there an equal necessity that these things *be* and that our souls *were* even before we were born, and if the former *are not*, then the latter *were not*?"

77A "Extraordinary, Socrates!" said Simmias, "There seems to me to be the same necessity, and the account is taking refuge in a beautiful conclusion: Our soul *is* before we were born, just as surely as the Being you spoke of just now. For my part, I've got nothing as lucid to me as this: All such things, Beautiful and Good and all the rest you were talking about just now, *are* as much as anything can be. And to me at any rate this point seems to have been sufficiently demonstrated."

"And to Cebeas as well?" said Socrates. "For Cebeas must be persuaded, too."

B "He's sufficiently persuaded — I think," said Simmias, "although he's the mightiest of men when it comes to distrusting arguments. But I imagine he hasn't failed to be persuaded that our soul *was* before we were born. And yet, Socrates," he said, "it doesn't seem, even to me myself, to have been demonstrated that when we die, the soul will still *be*. Instead, what Cebeas was just talking about, the fear of the many, still threatens: When the human being dies, his soul is scattered, and this is the end of her being. For what keeps her from being born and being put together from somewhere or other and *being* before she arrives in a human body, and then, once she's arrived and is freed from the body, from reaching her end and being destroyed?"

C "Well put, Simmias," said Cebeas. "For it appears that half, as it were, of what's needed has been demonstrated, namely, that our soul *was* before we were born. But it needs to be further demonstrated that when we die, our soul *will be* no less than she *was* before we were born — if the demonstration is to have an end."

D "It's been demonstrated even now, Simmias and Cebeas," said Socrates, "if you're willing to put this argument together with the one we agreed on before this: Every living thing comes to be from what's dead. For if the soul *is* beforehand as well, and if it's necessary for her, when she enters into life and is born, to come

E to be from nowhere else than death and being dead, how is it not necessary for her to *be*, even when she's died, since she must be born again? Hence the very thing you were talking about just now has been demonstrated. All the same, it seems to me it would please you and Simmias to busy yourselves with the argument some more, and besides, you have the fear of children — that in truth the wind will blow the soul away and scatter her in all directions as she departs from the body, especially whenever somebody happens to die, not in a calm, but in some great gust of wind."

And Cebeas, with a laugh, said, "Try to persuade us as if we were afraid. Or rather, not as if *we* were afraid — perhaps even in us there's some child present who's terrified by such things. So let's try to persuade him not to fear death as if it were a hobgoblin."

"What you should do," said Socrates, "is to sing him incantations each day until you sing away his fears."

78A "Then where, Socrates," he said, "are we to get hold of a good singer of such incantations, since you," he said, "are abandoning us?"

"There's a lot of Greece, Cebeas," he said. "I suppose there are good men in it — and there are many races of foreigners too.⁹ You must ransack them all in search of such a singer, sparing neither money nor toil, since there isn't anything more necessary on which you might spend your money. And you must search for him in company with one another, too, for perhaps you wouldn't easily find anyone more able to do this than yourselves."

B "Then that's what we'll do," said Cebeas. "But let's go back to where we abandoned the argument, if that gives you pleasure."

"It definitely gives me pleasure, how could it not?"

"Beautifully put," he said.

"Then mustn't we ask ourselves something like the following?" said Socrates. "What sort of thing is apt to suffer this affection — being scattered — and what sort of thing do we fear might suffer this? And what sort of thing is not apt to suffer it? And after this, must we not in turn investigate whether soul is of the one sort or the other, and from this whether we must be confident or fear for our soul?"

⁹ The Greek word for foreigners is *barbaroi*. It refers to people whose speech has a mangled sound to Greek ears: "bar bar bar."

"What you say is true," he said.

C "Now is what has been composed and is composite by nature apt to suffer this: to be divided up in just the way it was composed? And if anything turns out to be non-composite, isn't it alone, if anything, apt *not* to suffer this?"

"Seems to me to be that way," said Cebes.

"Then aren't those very things that are always self-same and keep to the same condition most likely to be non-composites; and aren't those that vary from one moment to another and are never in the self-same condition likely to be composites?"

"So it seems to me."

D "Then let's go," he said, "to the very things we were talking about in the earlier argument. Does Being Itself — whose being we give an account of in our questioning and answering — always keep to the self-same condition, or does it vary from one moment to another? The Equal Itself, the Beautiful Itself, each thing itself that *is* — in short, that which *is* — do these ever admit of any sort of change whatsoever? Or does each thing that *is*, being of single form when taken itself all by itself, always keep to the self-same condition and never ever in any way whatsoever admit of any alteration at all?"

"It's necessarily in the self-same condition, Socrates," said Cebes.

E "But what about the many beautiful things, such as human beings or horses or cloaks or any other such things of that sort, or equal things or anything else having the same names as those other things we mentioned? Do they keep to the self-same condition? Or, in complete contrast to those other things, are they, so to speak, never in any way self-same, either in relation to themselves or to each other?"

"That's how it is," said Cebes. "These in turn never keep to the same condition."

79A "Now isn't it the case that you could touch and see and sense these by other senses, while it's not possible to grasp those things that always keep to the same condition other than by the reckoning of thought, since such things are unseen and not visible?"

"What you say is altogether true," he said.

"Let us then posit, if you want to," he said, "two forms of the things that *are* — the Visible and the Unseen."

"Let us posit them," he said.

"And posit that the Unseen always keeps to the self-same condition, while the Visible is never in the self-same condition?"

"Let us posit that as well," he said.

B "Come then," said he, "is something of ourselves body and something else soul?"

"Nothing but," said he.

"Then to which form do we say the body would be more similar and akin?"

"This much is clear to everybody," he said, "that it's to the Visible."

"And what about the soul? Is she a visible or an unseen thing?"

"Unseen, at least by human beings, Socrates," he said.

"But surely we meant 'visible' and 'not visible' in relation to the nature of human beings, or do you think otherwise?"

"In relation to the nature of humans."

"Then what do we say about soul: Is she a visible or an invisible thing?"

"Not visible."

"Then she's unseen?"

"Yes."

"Therefore soul is a thing more similar to the Unseen than is body, and body more similar to the Visible."

"That's entirely necessary, Socrates."

"Now haven't we also been saying from way back that the soul, whenever she makes use of the body for investigating something, whether through seeing or through hearing or through any other sense (for that's what investigating through the body is — investigating something through sensing), then she's dragged by the body into things that never keep to the self-same condition, and she herself wanders and is shaken up and gets dizzy, just as if she were drunk, because she's had contact with such things?"

"Of course."

D "But whenever, herself by herself, she investigates, she goes off There, to what's pure and *is* always and is deathless and keeps to the same condition, and since she's akin to this, continually comes to be with it — whenever, that is, she's come to be herself all by herself and this is possible for her — and then she's stopped

her wandering and, around those things, always keeps to the self-same condition, because she's had contact with such things; and this state of hers has been called thoughtfulness — isn't all this so?"

"What you say is altogether beautiful and true, Socrates."

E "So again, to which form does the soul seem to you to be more similar and akin, given what was said both before and now?"

"Everyone, it seems to me, even the slowest learner," said he, "must concede from this way of arguing that the soul is wholly and altogether more similar to what keeps to the same condition rather than to what doesn't."

"And what of the body?"

"It's similar to the other form."

80A "Now see it in this way too: Whenever soul and body are in the same place, nature ordains the body to be a slave and to be ruled and the soul to rule and be master. Again, given this, which of the two seems to you to be similar to the divine and which to the deathbound? Or doesn't the divine seem to you to be of a nature to rule and govern and the deathbound to be ruled and be a slave?"

"Seems that way to me."

"Then which of the two is the soul like?"

"It's clear, Socrates, that the soul is like the divine and the body like the deathbound."

B "Now consider, Cebes," he said, "whether these things follow for us from all that's been said: Soul is most similar to what's divine and deathless and intelligible and single-formed and indissoluble and always keeps to the self-same condition with itself. Body, in its turn, is most similar to what's human and deathbound and many-formed and unintelligible and dissoluble and never keeps to the self-same condition with itself. Can we say anything against this, my dear Cebes, to show that this conclusion doesn't hold?"

"We can't."

"Well then, since this is how things stand, isn't body apt to be dissolved quickly and soul in turn apt to be altogether indissoluble, or something close to this?"

C "Why, of course."

"You note, then," he said, "that whenever the human being

dies, his visible part, lying in the visible realm, the body — which we call a corpse and which is apt to dissolve and fall apart and be dispersed — doesn't undergo any of these things right off but lasts for a rather long time, indeed for a very long time whenever somebody meets his end with his body in fine shape and at a fine time of year. For the body, when it's dried out and embalmed the way people are embalmed in Egypt, remains nearly whole for a remarkably long time. And when it rots, some parts of the body — the bones and sinews and all such things — are still, so to speak, deathless. Isn't all this so?"

"Yes."

"And therefore the soul, that unseen thing that goes off to another region like herself, a region noble and pure and unseen — to the true Hades, the good and thoughtful god, where (god willing!) my soul too must soon go — will this soul of ours, being this sort of thing and having such a nature, be blown every which way and perish straightaway after she's freed from the body, as the many say? Far from it, my dear Cebes, and Simmias too! Much rather is this the case: If she's set free pure, dragging along with her nothing of the body, because she was in no way willing to commune with it in life but fled it and gathered herself into herself, because she was always making this her care, which is nothing else but rightly philosophizing and exercising a ready care to be genuinely dead ... or wouldn't this be the care of death?"

"Altogether so."

"Then being in this condition, doesn't she go off to what's similar to her, to the Unseen — the divine and deathless and thoughtful — and once she arrives There, isn't it her lot to be happy, since she's been freed from wandering and mindlessness and terrors and savage loves and other human evils and, as is said of the initiates, truly spends the rest of time in the company of gods? Shall we say that, Cebes, or something else?"

"That, by Zeus!" said Cebes.

B "But I imagine that if she's freed from the body defiled and impure, because she was always having intercourse with the body and servicing it and loving it and being bewitched by it and its desires and pleasures to the point that nothing else seemed true to her but what's body-like (which one can touch and see and drink and eat and use for the pleasures of love-making), and because she was in the habit of hating and trembling at and fleeing what's shadowy to the eyes and unseen but is intelligible and