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SOCRATES, THE PREDECESSOR OF CHRIST.

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It is the sentiment of a noted modern philosopher that to comprehend perfectly a drop of water, its ultimate atoms, its attractions, repulsions, all its hidden powers of operation, would demand a knowledge of the entire universe. Tennyson has expressed a similar thought when he says:—

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower — but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

If such breadth of knowledge be required to analyze thoroughly a drop of water or a tiny blossom, it must be preëminently essential in the study of a human being, such a personality especially as Socrates, that we fix our eyes not exclusively upon the individual, but consider as well the age in which he lived and the people with whom he was interwoven, the circumstances by which he was fenced in and the problems with which he was called to struggle.

To this it may be objected that Socrates was an eccentric man and far from being a type of the men of his time; that for this reason his characteristics must be studied in and by themselves. Such a conclusion would be erroneous. The fact is this old philosopher was an uncommonly perfect product of

the thought of his day. Most of his contemporaries were the mere slaves, nay the flexible tools, of fashion and sophistry. Socrates, it is said, was directed in all things, in all times and places, by sound reason. Careful examination confirms the opinion that even his oddities were the outcome of philosophizings too deep, 'tis true, for the comprehension of the multitude. Alcibiades testifies that Socrates was a Silenus only "superficially," that "to those who looked deeper his soul was a shrine of most excellent, beautiful, even worshipful divinities." The Delphic oracle had made response: "Sophocles is wise, Euripides wiser, but of all men Socrates is the wisest." In our own day Mr. Mill declares, "Socrates was the wisest of the wise Greeks." Cicero testified that "Socrates brought philosophy down from heaven"; and Xenophon assures us that Socrates "never wronged any one," "never preferred the agreeable to the good," "always had the sanction of the gods," and was in very deed "the best and happiest man possible." And Plato, who occupies the master's seat among the philosophers of all ages, whom, it is said, but one man in a century fully comprehends, whom usage has called "the divine Plato"; what was his estimate of Socrates?

The last ten years of Socrates's life Plato spent at his side as a student; when Socrates was condemned to death, Plato headed the list of those who offered to pay his ransom. Subsequently Plato founded the Academy in order to expound Socratic doctrines. The Academy became the center of the learning of the day. It was thronged not only with the men and women of Athens, but with scholars and statesmen from other lands. Kings sent on their constitutions and laws that Plato might rewrite them. The story of the Academy became transcendent. And did Plato arrogate this glory to himself? Did not he, the son of a noble family, ignore the weather-

browned, barefooted old Socrates? Nay, nay; his nobility was too truly noble. History records few finer examples of gratitude than that shown by Plato. Plato preferred to represent himself as teaching what Socrates taught; and in his written "Dialogues," he has handed down to us his philosophy, as if it were coming from the mouth of his old master.

It has been common in the past to look upon these dialogues as essentially Platonic, to regard Plato's ascription of them to Socrates as a matter of policy which made the Academy popular, at most to be construed as a handsome compliment to his martyred teacher. Modern students, however, carry the credit back to Socrates, regard Plato as the beloved disciple, one who by reason of his warm devotion and superb intellect won from his master many a truth too profound or too lofty for the common mind. Indeed, it was the choice of Plato to represent himself as a product of Socratic instruction. Nor did he fail to transmit the scepter of his power. Demosthenes, the prince of orators, was Plato's pupil. Aristotle, the father of Logic, studied with Plato twenty years. Aristotle, called to the court of Philip of Macedon, taught Philip's son Alexander. But for Aristotle, mayhap Alexander had never been "great." After a thorough course, Alexander came to the throne when but twenty years of age. His magnificent power displayed itself at once. Victory followed victory. Nation after nation was subdued; and in twelve years, he but two and thirty, the whole world lay at his feet. The same year Alexander died, lamenting there were not other lands to conquer. Such was the power of the intellectual sons of Socrates.

Socrates was born five hundred years before Christ was crucified, more precisely, 470 years before the Christian era. It was the year in which Pericles began his reign; and the age of Pericles is familiarly called the culminating era of

Grecian civilization. About this time, the sun of human reason seemed to reach its zenith. Mental power of the highest type flourished in many directions. No ruler was ever master of his position more emphatically than Pericles. Twenty-three centuries have failed to produce a sculptor to take the palm from Phidias. Who has written history better than Thucydides? As writers of tragedy, Æschylus, whom our Macaulay sought to imitate, Euripides, Sophocles, have the first rank. Demosthenes holds the throne as the king among orators. Plato is still the prince of philosophers. Aristotle founded logic essentially where it stands to-day. As a conqueror Alexander remains unconquered. Aspasia was in many respects the most gifted and brilliant of women. And Xantippe still surpasses in the art of conversation. The Augustan age at Rome, the age of the Medici in Italy, the Elizabethan age in England, the eighteenth century in France, the present century in Germany, have none of them enjoyed a sky studded by so many brilliant stars. And this was the era in which Socrates led the thinking.

Socrates was born in Athens. At that time Athens was as large as our Boston or Edinburgh. And when these cities arrogate the name "modern Athens" their claim has at least a quantitative basis. Athens was the center of Greek culture, and has often been called the University of Greece. Perhaps the best evidence we can have of the refinement of the people of Athens is the fact that amid all the boasted supremacy of our modern civilization the Greek language and literature hold their position as producers of the best culture our higher schools and colleges afford. Indeed, by some strangely happy providence the gospel of him who was the light of the world has come down to us in this most perfect language. The

Athenians were surrounded by conditions well calculated to perfect the finer elements of character. Attica possessed an atmosphere clear and bracing; a sky of glowing brightness canopied her hills and dales. From her mountain tops was always visible westward and southward and eastward the broad and billowy sea; lovely islands picturesque with sailing ships, and the shore lined with "temples, palaces, and piles stupendous." While her rugged heights developed a rugged valor which made it war indeed when Greek meets Greek; at the same time the balmy softness of her breezes from the sea toned down that harsher element to exceeding fineness; if the Greeks were valorous, still more were they susceptible. No people was ever more appreciative of lines of beauty, of tones of eloquence. And this æsthetic quality molded even their persons; for fine thoughts tend ever to produce fine faces. Lord Byron bears witness that after twenty-three centuries of hardship you may find among the maids of Athens, here and there, a face that wears the impress of classic nobleness in the far-distant past.

Of course Art flourished in Athens. All the youth were taught music and eloquence. Painters and poets abounded. The Athenian taste, highest and finest, found expression in sculpture, architecture, and the drama. Statues, it is said, were found in every house; while a wealth of marble almost incomprehensible adorned the public buildings. The Academy, the central park of Athens, lying just outside the city on the banks of the Cephisus, was ornamented not only with grove and walk, but with palatial buildings, including fountains, bowers, porches, and statuary.

Above the center of the city 450 feet rose the Acropolis; its buildings, stored with choice sculptures, were themselves models of architecture. The Propylæa, constructed wholly of

white marble, in the rays of the setting sun resembled a queen enthroned, crowned with a snowy crown. The temple of Theseus, of Pentelic marble, was gorgeous with statues, and casts of its bas-reliefs have still to-day an unrivaled celebrity.

But perhaps the most remarkable and vast in architecture was the temple of Jupiter Olympus. Aristotle considered it as wonderful as the Pyramids of Egypt; and no one could deny that in artistic grandeur it far surpassed them. Some conception of it may be formed from the twelve columns still standing, each sixty feet in height — lofty orators from the hoary centuries — twelve apostles, not of a salvation, celestial, eternal, but proclaiming rather that the highest triumphs of human genius, though founded on granite and finished in gold, earth's noblest art, her proudest culture and learning, are doomed to dust and decay, to be scattered like autumn leaves adown the coming centuries.

The Greeks believed that the highest culture involved the perfecting of those susceptibilities which make the highest demands — involve two worlds.

We sometimes hear men boasting that they have culture without religion. If so, they had Christian mothers and the power of a Christian community which they well may thank. When Plato taught that men reach immortality only by the attainment of divine ideas, he but stated more clearly what Sophocles had said before:—

"True piety alone defies the grave."

The Greek mind, sensitive to everything beautiful, afforded an admirable field for the blossoming and fruit-bearing of religious culture. Frankness and candor might be called national qualities. Carus says, "Simplicity of heart was the prevailing characteristic." The sense of honor was unusually

strong. The high-mindedness which led to valiant deeds in war was often the precursor of self-destruction in common life. A Greek would rather die than live dishonored. Emerita, the Spartan, illustrates the nobility of the Grecian mothers.

> "Seven sons Emerita, at duty's call,
> Sent forth to fight;
> One grave received them all.
> She shed no tear, but shouted, Victory!
> Sparta, I bore them but to die for thee."

It was proverbial for a Greek son to say:—

> "I cannot err if I obey my father."

With a fine, keen moral sense the portals of the heart stood open to religious impression, and with an æsthetic culture personifying winds and waves, there was a natural readiness to people earth and air with living forms. They recognized gods of the world above and of the world below — gods of the sun, of the earth, of the sea, of the air, of the winds, of the rivers, of the fountains, of the groves — gods of justice, of law, of discord, of terror, of panic; goddesses of wisdom, of science, of love, of marriage, of blindness, of fury and of the rainbow; gods also of time, of death, of sleep, of destiny, of dreams; gods of war, of fire, of force, of strength, of wine, of music, of night and of morning. These were attended by an immense retinue of muses, graces, nymphs, and demons; so that a personal agency was recognized in almost every power of nature, certainly in every form of moral influence. The Greek meets a god or goddess, by the fountain, in the grove, in the breeze, in the storm, in the rainbow, and everywhere worships. As in the days of Paul he was very greatly given to the worship of the gods. Observe now the errors into which this wonderful people fell and the difficulties which they could not surmount.

First, the Greeks could not regard their gods as perfect. Aside from inconsistencies of conduct the gods could not be construed as dispensers of exact justice. Even the Olympian Zeno, greatest and best, the friend of the poor and needy, still looks down upon uncounted sorrows resting upon the children of men.

While some of their writers would seem to anticipate a final working out of actual justice, and one theologian says, "The mills of the gods grind late, but grind to powder," and Æschylus emphasizes the sentiment, "Blood for blood and blow for blow; thou shalt reap as thou didst sow"; nevertheless, the general teaching is brought out by Sophocles where one of his heroes exclaims, "The gods bear the name of fathers yet can view his pangs unmoved"; and again, "War never sweeps away the vile and worthless but destroys the good."

While the Greeks acknowledge that all human success is from their gods, they never could resolve the mystery of divine justice. The gods were feared, perhaps revered, but never truly loved.

Let us observe as well the Greek idea of prayer. The Christian prays everywhere, because God hears everywhere, exists everywhere. But the Greeks deemed no god omnipresent. Even Love, regarded more and more as the possessor of surpassing attributes, even Love is obliged to seek the top of Mount Ida to witness the battle on the Trojan plains.

How, then, could the Greeks pray? Primarily only when a god was present. As the idea of prayer became clearer and its power more manifest, prayers themselves became personified. Prayers were messengers which conveyed to the deity addressed the suppliant's petition. These messengers were called Litæ. Persons who habitually prayed were ac-

companied by these Litæ, ever ready to carry the burden of the heart to its deity.

The Greeks had great faith in prayer. Even at their games they would offer petitions to their divinities. Ajax is beaten by Ulysses because the latter offers to Athena a prayer in his heart. During the defense of Thebes, Eteocles was asked whether they could not save the city by prayer. He replied: "Pray indeed, but look well to the fortifications." We find a still deeper query in the famous reply of Ajax to his father. As Ajax starts for Troy the father says, "Seek, my son, in fight to conquer, but still, conquer through the gods." To this Ajax replies: "Father, with heavenly aid, a coward's hand may grasp the prize of victory." Thus the puzzles grew.

Further, the Greeks had not only imperfect ideas of the gods, but of themselves. They did not comprehend the operations of their own moral sense. The word "conscience" was unknown. How did they escape its recognition? The Greeks had consciences of course, consciences tender, consciences powerful. But how did they construe them? We must consider a moment the nature of the Greek drama.

It will be remembered that the old Greek theology was taught by the poets. In this way it eventually came upon the stage. When the Greek drama was perfected, it was a lofty spectacular presentation of the moral and religious thinking of the day. Æschylus and Sophocles were tragic poets, it is true, but equally were they the great theologians of Greece. The supreme object of their dramas, such as Prometheus and Agamemnon and Antigone, is to teach the mysteries of the divine government. Now these dramas were so constructed that the chorus represented the power of the conscience. This chorus was composed either of aged men whose snowy locks made them types of moral wisdom, or it was a group of

young and modest maidens whose voice and look represent the finest and purest ethical susceptibility. In this way the dramatic part was a substitute for what is now known to exist in the mind itself. Still less did the Greeks recognize the pangs of remorse as dwelling in their own breasts. These were the work of the furies, of demons dispensing divine justice.

Here we ascertain the Greek idea of depravity. If the Greeks had failed to comprehend conscience as in the mind, as little had they discovered that the malignity of human character is caused by a perversion within and not by an evil deity without.

The Greeks are not alone in this failure to discern their own perverted nature. Other nations show the same incompetency. It is one of the results of the situation to prevent men from comprehending it. My old teacher of theology, a hoary-headed philosopher, told us that each year he came before his class with a lower estimate of his fellow men. Does not the secret of the success of Christianity lie in the fact that its view of human nature covers the case?

How then did the Greeks account for the results of human depravity? They were credited to an evil deity who corresponded to the Biblical Satan, with this striking difference, however, that the Greek devil is a female. Her name is Ate and she is a fallen daughter of Jupiter himself. She was the goddess of folly and moral blindness. Whatever in the Greek bore the stamp of sin, wickedness, deviltry, depravity, was conveniently ascribed to the influence of Ate. Thus the Greek heart was thought to be incorrupt and the Greek conscience consistently put on the stage. The Greek prayer con-

tains no confession of ill desert; submission to the gods is expedient rather than due.

Of course this position involves the people in another series of puzzles. These bring various philosophizings. One tradition declared that Mercury, being sent by Jove, put invisible spectacles on mortals, so made that evil should seem good and folly wisdom, and that all the race of men still wear them. Such was one explanation. We have no nearer approach to a dawning of the truth in Pre-Socratic literature than the famous reply of Philoctetes.

One exclaims, "All must be ill when man the bias of his soul forsakes and does a deed unseemly"— but, "It is love, yes love, supreme controller of the land, love this hath willed and I but do his will." To this Philoctetes answers, "Thou dost tax the gods with lies to gloss thine own dissembling guile."

As a matter of course the philosophy of the Greeks grew up with their civilization. From the earliest times they had sought an object or principle which would explain the world. Most commonly they regarded Oceanus (the ocean) as the father of all terrestrial things. Oceanus, rising up in clouds, impregnated the earth (Tethys) with drops of rain. Mother earth then brings forth plants and animals, and father ocean with water sustains them.

Subsequently the air (Æther) was called the ultimate principle of things. Air was the breath of life. From air came dews and showers, as well as lightnings and fire. Hence air is the all-producer. Fire, water, air, earth, were thus construed as ultimate, some regarding all the four as equally primitive and eternal. But the Ionics could not agree that any visible element was the principle by which nature could be explained. This led Anaximander to claim that there existed

an original invisible something which possesses a power to produce either heat or cold, growth or decay, life or death.

Following the Ionics came Pythagoras, who taught that numbers were ultimate elements in nature; that heat and cold are productive of growth or decay only when they conform to certain measures or numbers. A certain measure of heat makes plants grow; a certain other measure makes them die. A certain measure of food produces health; a certain other measure produces sickness. Thus numbers were made the interpreters of all the operations of nature as well as the regulators of human conduct.

After Pythagoras came Xenophanes and Parmenides. They claim that behind all the phenomena of nature there is something stable, unchanging, which they call pure being. This abiding being was of course invisible. All that is visible is an illusion, and destitute of any abiding element.

This school is followed by Heraclitus, who declares that we perceive nothing that is abiding. We see only a changing, a becoming. According to Heraclitus everything is in a perpetual stream, and all that we see is the passing of the current. Subsequently arose the Atomists. They declare that there are abiding elements in all external objects. These elements are atoms, themselves invisible, but, when combined in groups, they form what we call things, visible and tangible. Here the question arose, What makes the atoms group themselves, form objects in all their harmonious relations? To this the Atomists replied, It is chance that makes the atoms combine.

But men could not be satisfied with chance as the explanation of all the marvels of nature. Hereupon follows Anaxagoras, who declares that there is a "nous" or intelligence

which arranges the ultimate elements. A designing principle is inherent in nature.

The teachings of Anaxagoras were the first to arouse the Athenians to the study of Philosophy. His ideas spread, we may say, like wildfire. Athens was captivated with the discovery that thought rules. For if, said the Athenians, there is intelligence in nature, it must be that thinking, that mind, rules in man. Hence the conclusion that each individual has in himself the opinion, the standard, by which he is to be ruled.

And now arose the class of teachers called the Sophists. As the name indicates, they were wise men who went about Athens teaching this new Philosophy. Protagoras taught that, inasmuch as people differ in their opinions, each individual must be guided by what seems true for him at the moment. What seems right for one is not law for another; each man therefore is his own law. There is no standard even of morality. And so each individual was left to the guidance, not to say caprice, of his own sensations. And what results? An asserted disagreement of the senses leads at once to the distrust of the senses. If the multitude cannot longer claim the guidance of the good ship "common sense" to which their frail barks were lashed, how can they trust themselves to pilot for themselves? The announcement of the freedom of the multitude at once made the multitude the slaves of the men who declared them free; and the Athenian men and women in the streets and markets were restless to know what they are to think and what they are to do.

The Sophists reap a luxurious harvest. By their own confession each possesses all attainable truth. If a citizen confesses his lack he has only to present a handsome fee; Mr.

Sophist gives him with liberal hand "all the treasures of wisdom." What the Sophist might lack in actual knowledge is supplied by logic such as we now term sophistry.

The influence of the Sophists was greatly assisted by the democratic atmosphere of Athens. Democratic ideas were born and brought up on Athenian soil. In the earliest times Athens was of course the capital of a kingdom. She treasures the names of sixteen kings. Then comes a rule of archons chosen for life; next a dynasty of archons ruling each ten years. These are succeeded by the long line, each holding office but twelve months. At first the archon was chosen by vote of the nobles only; but the election came gradually into the hands of all citizens, the authority of the archon diminishing as the vote becomes general.

About 600 B.C. Solon was archon. He has been called the founder of democracy. He reconstructed the whole system of government, establishing the legislative, judicial, and executive departments of state where they stand to-day. When we name our legislators Solons, we only perpetuate the fame of the man who, more than any other, has constructed our political establishment. In fine, the Athenian senate was composed of five hundred members, divided into ten divisions, its president holding office but a single day. More and more central authority became dispersed, political power dissipated among the multitude.

There is no more striking proof of decentralization, of the perfection of democracy, than the fact that Pericles ruled without holding any office. He was not a king, nor an emperor, nor a president, nor even an archon. This most successful of statesmen who led Athens to the summit of her glory was only a private citizen. He held the noblest kingship of all, a throne in the mind and heart.

On such a throne Pericles ruled forty years; but the soil which could produce a Pericles, "the full ripe corn in the ear," was alas! equally adapted to the growth of the noxious weeds of Athenian independence, the pretentious Sophists. Their influence was immense. Sham learning and superciliousness had the field. No laws, customs, relations, were too sacred for their ridicule and destruction. Disinterested virtue is declared to be folly. The civil laws are condemned as contrary to the laws of nature. Moderation and temperance are stigmatized as enemies of pleasure. Behold a democracy whose very independence was working out its ruin, and you behold the situation when Socrates took the field.

Socrates was the son of Sophroniscus and Phænarete. While in his youth his father made him a successful marble cutter, his mother, a noble-minded woman according to his own declaration, seems to have given him the sound foundations for his mental and moral power. In outward appearance Socrates was indeed without "comeliness," a veritable "root out of dry ground." If Jesus of Nazareth was exclusively a type of excellence eternal and invisible, Socrates, even in his physique, seemed the heaven-ordained antithesis of the pompous Sophist. His features were homely, his eyes protruding, his nostrils wide, his neck was short, his shoulders heavy, his abdomen liberal. Add to these a plain dress, bare feet, and latterly a bald head, and you have the picture of the world's greatest moral philosopher. Everything for reality, nothing for display. His appearance seemed to harmonize well with his mission. If a young man laughed at his looks, he would at once ask, What is the nose for? If it is flat, is it not out of the line of vision? and if my nostrils are wide, is it not that I may catch odors more readily? and are not my

eyes placed further forward that I may be able to see the better in all directions? My dress is plain and my feet are bare; but does not this allow me to give my mind to higher things? and does not the wearing of shoes deform a man's walk so that he treads as if with the hoofs of a horse and not with the easy grace of a son of the gods? So all-convincing were his reasonings that the best minds yielded him homage. He was welcomed into the refined society of Athens, and the sons of nobles gladly lingered at his side.

Socrates was called a Sophist because he went about the streets teaching wherever he found occasion. If, however, for this reason he was classed with the Sophists, in other respects he was their vehement opposer. The Sophists prided themselves in their eloquence. Socrates by way of contrast took the opposite extreme. His language was as plain as his garb. He seemed to choose the most homely phrases and figures of speech in order to belittle the high-floating, rhetorical nonsense of the day. While the Sophists would reproach the religious traditions, swearing by Jove and Hercules and everything sacred, Socrates would imitate them, swearing by the goose and by the dog. He opposed the sensational poets, and from him came Plato's recommendation that all poetry be submitted to competent judges; indeed, that certain kinds be prohibited without reserve.

Speaking of poetry brings us to the poetic side of the Socratic life, namely, Mrs. Socrates and his and her matrimonial felicities. Xantippe does not by any means enjoy an enviable reputation. Antisthenes, in asking Socrates how he came to marry Xantippe, says: "She is the worst woman of all that exist, nay, I believe, of all that ever have existed or ever will exist." Socrates replies: "I have married this woman being firmly convinced that in case I should be able to endure

her I shall be able to endure all other persons"; and he adds: "Those who wish to be best skilled in horsemanship select the most spirited horses, and when they are able to manage them they are sure never to be discomposed on the backs of steeds less restive." "I would have a wise man contented with his lot, even with a shrew; for, though he cannot make her better, he may, you see, make himself better by her means."

When a certain young philosopher, in discussion with Socrates, burst into a violent passion, Socrates said: "You are debtor to Xantippe, good sir, that I bear so well your flying in my face."

We unfortunately know but little of Xantippe's side of the case. That her railings were without ground is scarcely to be inferred. When, for instance, the eldest son came to his father pleading that he could not endure his mother's harsh temper, Socrates assures him that mothers are our greatest benefactors — they have no evil intent — only best wishes and are deserving of reverence. Now, says Socrates, do not consider the harshness, but look intently, and you will always see a reason in the storm. It is related that on one occasion Socrates delivered a discourse on matrimony. In it he so convincingly argued the excellences of the married state that every bachelor present resolved to wed at the first opportunity, while all the husbands immediately took horses and galloped home to their spouses.

Xantippe seems to have been in some sense the "cross" which made the captain of Moral Philosophy perfect "through suffering." It is doubtless strange that an age which produced the highest moral power should also produce a Xantippe. Perhaps the very genius of Socrates developed Xantippe's talent. Are not girls sure to tease an honest straightforward fellow? The Son of God walking the earth made

the very demons speak. Although Socrates had the best of teachers, — among them Zeno, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras, — spent forty years in his preparation, and mastered all available sources of human knowledge, it was his uniform habit to claim to be ignorant. In this respect he was the antipodes of the Sophists. They pretended to know and teach everything. Socrates had the advantage, not to say satisfaction, of pleading ignorance, of beginning by questions. With shrewd and searching interrogations he would dissect the assumed wisdom of his antagonist, and bring him to confession that he only fancied himself wise when he was not wise. Socrates insisted that he himself was wise in but one particular, namely, the knowledge of his own ignorance.

From the standpoint of this negative wisdom, beginning by the destruction of merely fancied attainments, Socrates proceeded to ascertain what we do truly know. He first turns to Anaxagoras, who had furnished the seed-thought for the Sophists, namely, that there is an intelligence or design in nature. Socrates questioned him. Anaxagoras, says he, people tell me that you have found that there is an intelligence in Nature. Yes, said Anaxagoras, I hold that there is. Then, said Socrates, you claim that there is a reason in the things that are around us? I do, replied Anaxagoras. So, continued Socrates, you find in things the reason why they are better as they are than they would be, if they were different?

Anaxagoras answered that he could not say that. Then, said Socrates, you do not find the reason for things in the things themselves. Anaxagoras was obliged to confess that external objects do not communicate to us the ground of their existence. Well, said Socrates, if the universe refuses to give an answer, perhaps there is something we must think.

Socrates now proceeds to raise farther questions. If, for instance, we should see a man of ordinary stature who, supposing that he was twelve feet high, should bow his head in passing through a door eight feet high, for fear of breaking his skull, would not people call him insane? And would it not be the part of wisdom to assist that man to get a correct measure of his body? Undoubtedly. If now we find a man playing the Sophist as if his knowledge were twelve feet high when in truth it is only four feet, would it not be our duty to aid that man in getting a correct measure of his mind?

In this manner Socrates gains the motto "Know thyself." He would reach reliable intelligence by studying the mind, its measures; how it attains correct conclusions, and demands what must be true. Aristophanes makes Socrates say:—

> **"I should have never made discoveries**
> **Of heavenly things, unless I'd searched my mind.**
> **If from below I'd sought for things above**
> **I should have never found them; for the earth**
> **Draws to itself perforce the mental moisture."**

Here Socrates declared the principle so well enounced by Quarles:—

> **"Man is man's A. B. C.; there's none that can**
> **Read God aright unless he first spell man."**

He set himself to the solution of the question, What is correct knowledge? He proved that the understanding, in reaching conclusions, passes through the particular to the general; that the particular is only understood when it has been carried up and classified; that impressions, fancies, opinions, imaginations, are not knowledge. They are truth only when they stand the test of general principles. Then, the impression becomes perception, the fancy reality, the imagination reason.

Here Socrates takes issue with the Sophists. They say that a man, as a man, is the measure, or estimator, of all things. Socrates proves that only the thinking man, the thought in man, has the correct measure of things. Such a man alone possesses the criterion of truth. Knowledge is not in sensation, but in reflection.

From this position Socrates proceeds to elaborate the true logical method. Having solved the problem of the mind's mode of reaching authentic truth, he made it his life work to seek and to disseminate real knowledge, to break up the prevailing, destructive sophistry. In a word, it was his highest aim to instruct the youth. For, said he, give me the young men and I'll rebuild the state.

But the teaching of Socrates was as remarkable in matter as in method. He held that knowledge and virtue were so related that to possess true knowledge, is to be virtuous. Observe that knowledge here includes truth moral and religious as well as discipline. This position must be further explained by the Socratic declaration that external investigations do not necessarily improve us; that the study of stones and trees has in itself no tendency to make men do right. It rather gives them a conceit of wisdom where there can be no true wisdom; for external objects do not display to us the ultimate ground of their existence. Under this principle Socrates classes also the delusive effect of possessing external objects; for instance, apparel and money. The possession of gay apparel or of much gold impairs our reason and leads us to estimate those things as worthy which are not worthy. In fine, says Socrates, "He that needs the fewest things approaches nearest the gods. Happiness is found only in virtue. The man who strives for happiness in garments or horses or fields thinks he is wise when he is not wise."

Socrates was as much devoted to religion as to logic; indeed, he was preëminently a religious man. There was an individual, well known in Athens, by the name of Aristodemus. This little man, we are informed, never worshiped the gods, but rather made sport of those who did so. Observe history says he was a little man.

One day Socrates had a conversation with him. After presenting a number of arguments to prove the reasonableness of a belief in the gods, Socrates goes on to ask:—

"Do you imagine that the gods would have implanted in all human breasts the feeling that they are able to do us good or evil, if they did not possess this power, or that men constantly being deceived by this notion would not, by this time, have discovered the delusion?

"Have you not observed, also, that the wisest nations and the most stable governments are those which are the most religious, and that individual men are most inclined to piety at a time when their reason is strongest and their passions most under control?"

And he adds:—

"As therefore among men we make best trial of the affection and gratitude of our neighbor by showing him kindness and make discovery of his wisdom by consulting him in our distress, behave thou, O Aristodemus, in like manner toward the gods, and if thou wouldst know by experience their wisdom and their love, render thyself deserving of some of those divine secrets which may not be penetrated by man and are imparted to those alone who consult, who adore and who obey the Deity."

Here Socrates expresses his profound faith in prayer; indeed, he was a man greatly given to this duty. While a soldier in the campaign at Potidæa, on one occasion, he went out to pray at sunrise and continued standing and praying during the whole of the day and the whole of the night, and returned to his quarters with the next rising of the sun. He doubtless comprehended fully the wickedness and temptations of soldier life, and, like Jacob of old, would not desist without a

blessing. His ideas of the nature of prayer seem to have been very deeply reasoned. To the question, whether we should pray for what we are ourselves able to secure, he answers: "It is impiety to try to ascertain from the gods what can be reached by the human intellect." "Those who pray for what is within their own power are as insane as those who claim the all-sufficiency of human reason." On one occasion he offered the following: "O all in all, and ye other gods, grant me first to be good within. Grant me ever to esteem the wise man as the one alone wealthy; and as for gold, may I possess as much of it as I may know to use wisely."

Plato gives us a remarkable dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades on the purpose of prayer. The latter wishes Socrates to teach him what he may pray for. Socrates first recommends this form: "O Jove, gives us those things which are good for us, whether they are such things as we pray for or do not pray for; and remove from us those things which are hurtful, though they are such things as we pray for." He then assures Alcibiades that his prayers will only be acceptable when he practices his duty toward gods and men, and recommends the Lacedemonian petition, the prayer that, "the gods grant them all good things so long as they are virtuous." He then tells Alcibiades that he must study the relations of men to the gods in order to pray well. But who is to instruct us? said Alcibiades. Socrates replied: "We are in need of such a teacher and lawgiver as shall remove the darkness and disclose the mysteries of prayer." Socrates did not claim himself to be that divine teacher. He frankly confessed his ignorance of the time when this teacher would come. It is to be marked, Socrates never claimed to prophesy; but here he clearly declared the demand for, the hope for, a teacher who should bring the needed light.

Socrates struggled hard with the problem of depravity. Without the assistance of revelation it is even more difficult to comprehend the depravity of the heart within than the attraction of gravitation without. At this time the question was fairly open. Perhaps the finest illustration of the growth and persistency of the question is found in the history of Cyrus the Great. Cyrus had heard Araspas, a young nobleman, delivering an address in which he maintained that a mind truly virtuous was incapable of entertaining an unlawful passion. Cyrus determined to give the matter a trial and placed the young man where he was very greatly tempted, and he yielded. Cyrus called him and informed him of his previous speech. The young man exclaimed in tears: "O Cyrus, I am convinced that I have two souls. If I had one soul it could not at the same time pant after virtue and vice, wish and abhor the same thing. When the good soul rules, I undertake noble and virtuous actions, but when the bad soul predominates I am forced to do evil."

Socrates endeavored to explain this evil soul as only a darkness which knowledge would dispel. This position became more and more unsatisfactory. When, for instance, he was asked whether all the difference between a coward and a brave man, is knowledge, he replied: "I am obliged to say so." He seemed to make progress when he declared that a want of civility was a personal deformity; but when he finds that even a vicious man may be devout, he turns the matter over to Plato as a problem he could not solve. Plato pronounced the source of evil the body, the good springing from the reason. Aristotle subjected the puzzle to a psychological examination and demonstrated that what we call depravity is inherent in the human mind. Socrates could only say that our nature evidently had two sides, confess his inability to explain the

situation and his need of light which he thought in some way would be given. Aristotle, indeed, found the location of the depravity in the mind, but he met as much difficulty as Socrates in attempting to discover a complete remedy.

At this point we reach what has been called the "dæmon" of Socrates. Socrates claimed that in his own case whenever he could not trust his judgment he was attended by a divine voice which checked him when about to pursue a wrong course. Although this voice did not give him positive instruction it afforded him a negative guidance by warning him. This voice was not considered a real person. It was rather, we should say, the utterance of a finely trained conscience, and also, without doubt, the voicings of the Spirit of God, which, although imperfectly apprehended, speaks in the devout heart of every righteous man.

Still, although this voice always directed Socrates in his conduct, it failed to inform him of matters that his soul was burning to know.

He could not answer such questions as these: Is the soul undeniably immortal? Is there a future life? What is the nature of its rewards and penalties? — making justice complete where here it is incomplete. Do the gods need our sacrifices? Shall there not come a divine guide who shall show us these things?

While Socrates confessed that he had no adequate knowledge of these highest matters, he showed a remarkable consistency in the use of such light as he possessed. He regarded the religious services of his country with profound reverence. He was a devoted worshiper at the shrines of the gods. And if in any respect we think him superstitious, to sacrifice and pray to the gods of the Greeks, there is much evidence that

he esteemed the many divinities as phases or persons of one central deity, the Theos of his loftiest thinking; that with this omnipotent divinity all comprehensible deities work in harmony. There is evidence that from Socrates came the demand for an "unknown God."

Admitting his own incompetency, he felt his need of a teacher who could speak with authority. His soul evidently thirsted for complete consolation. The Greeks, therefore, standing at the summit of human attainment, bear unmistakable proof that, without a revelation, possessed by so many "restless longings after immortality," human reason can only wait and long and trust, and trust and long and wait. As the poet has it,—

> "We all must patient stand,—
> Like statues on appointed pedestals;
> And with far-straining eyes and hands up-cast
> And feet half raised, declare our painful state;
> Yearning for wings to reach the fields of truth,
> Mourning for wisdom, panting to be free."

Allow me to conclude these lessons from Socrates with a few words on his condemnation and death.

When Socrates had reached the age of seventy, after having taught the Athenians for thirty years, he was ignominiously sentenced to drink hemlock by the highest court in Athens, and thirty days thereafter, at the setting of the sun, he drained the cup of human legislation, bowed his head and sank to rest.

The causes of his condemnation were mainly political. The whole influence of the Sophists had tended to poison the atmosphere. Socrates saw that the salvation of the city demanded a hand-to-hand combat with the rising evils, and his opposition was outspoken. Philosophy required him to be guided not by opinions, but by principles. According to Soc-

rates the voice of the people is not necessarily the voice of God. Why, said he, "Here is Anytus a tanner; he acknowledges that he does not know how to make laws and administer justice. Now suppose we had forty men who know nothing thoroughly but tanning hides, can you multiply nothing by forty and secure wisdom that can regulate courts and armies? If we vote that an ass is a horse, have we thereby added anything to the ass?"

He thus became a pronounced opponent of the existing democratic administration. Although he served one term as senator and distinguished himself by thwarting the popular vote, he subsequently declined to take part in political life, saying, "An honest man who zealously resists the multitude and prevents unlawful actions must of necessity become a victim of his honesty."

Devoting himself to the instruction of the youth, he declared: "He who prepares many to serve the state well is of more value than if he resisted political corruption as an individual." He would build up a democracy that would save the nation. Socrates was, then, practically aristocratic from the very nature of the case. While he had strong support among the nobility, the sophistic, corrupt, democratic influence was armed against him.

The first desperate effort to kill the influence of Socrates was made by Aristophanes. Aristophanes was a writer of comedies. Indeed, in this respect he has world-wide renown. He writes a Comedy called the "Clouds" in which Socrates is the leading character. The "clouds" were personified as the ideas of Socrates — cloudy of course. Socrates himself was set off in the most ludicrous style. All his peculiarities were exaggerated unrelentingly.

Aristophanes compassed heaven and earth for material, and

finally brought the man who was shaking the foundations of Athens with his call for rectitude and right reason, upon the stage at the annual festival, in a theater where 30,000 of the best people in the city were assembled.

Socrates himself was present. Ælian tells us that he walked calmly forward to the front, and there, in view of the assembled multitude, he stood, that they might compare him with the ridiculous impersonation, and judge for themselves of the justice of this heaven-defying insult to a righteous man, the friend of truth, of Athens, and of humanity.

Ay, it was too much. Socrates was too strong. His presence crushed the power of that comedy and scattered the influence of the intrigue which would overwhelm him. Aristophanes failed, and for a quarter century Socrates walked up and down Athens unmolested.

But as he grew in favor with the best and wisest, the popular political hate was recruiting for a fresh attack. Finally, when arrangements were perfected for a packed court, charges were preferred, and a demand was made that Socrates be condemned to death.

Pettifoggers adapted to the work brought forward the case, charging that Socrates corrupted the youth, rejected the national deities, and introduced new deities of his own.

Socrates employed no lawyer, no artifice. Lycias wrote him a regular defense, but he declined to use it, or to attempt a formal argument. He stood up before the jury and said, "My whole life forms a defense against the present accusation." He pronounced the charges against him false in every particular, especially the claim that he was corrupting the youth. He was teaching the young men to be good citizens, to lead noble lives, and to strive that their souls be as well clothed as their bodies; and this, said he,

"I shall continue to do as long as I live and breathe; I cannot do otherwise, though I should die a hundred times."

Indeed, he added,

"It would be very strange if I, who as a soldier have faced death at Delium and Potidæa and Amphipolis, should now from fear of death swerve from my duty." "For to fear death, O Athenians, is in fact nothing else than to seem to be wise when a man is not wise; for it is to seem to have a knowledge of things which a man does not possess. For no man really knows whether death may not be to mortal men of all blessings perhaps the greatest; and yet they do fear it, as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils."

"Be not surprised, O men of Athens, when I tell you plainly that if you put me to death, being what I am and doing what I do, you will not hurt me so much as you hurt yourselves; for it is not in the nature of things that a better man should receive essential harm from a worse one."

"Nay, O men of Athens, rather how glorious shall death be, if indeed it bring us to the company of heroes and martyrs who have lived according to justice and truth, and to talk with Palamedes and Ajax and others who like me have suffered because of the iniquity of their judges."

"But [said Socrates in conclusion] it is time that we go, I to death and you to the concerns of life and which of us hath the better part is known only to the gods."

Socrates had the opportunity to choose a fine or other penalty instead of death. This he refused to do, as it would involve a recognition of guilt. As a consequence the death sentence was passed by a small majority.

He was placed in jail, in iron fetters. Here he was visited by his friends and pupils and held inspiring conversations — especially on death and immortality. During this confinement, Crito, a wealthy citizen and friend, completed arrangements by which Socrates might make his escape; but the great preacher of righteousness resented the proposition with his whole heart. As he spoke to Crito the laws appeared to stand like divine persons in his presence. They seemed to possess resistless eloquence. Thus he concludes: "The voice of these

expostulations rings in my ears. They can hear no other arguments. This way the god leads."

When the hour arrived for the fatal cup, he sent away the lamenting women and children — even Xantippe was inconsolable.

The officer as he brought in the hemlock wept and said, "Socrates, such nobility and gentleness as you have shown in custody, I never saw in another. Charge this not to me; farewell." "Fare thee too well, my noble fellow," said Socrates. All but Socrates wept. Some wept aloud. Socrates showed no malice in his actions or in his words. He prayed as he drank the fatal bowl. Without a murmur he stretched himself upon his couch. Bidding his friends remember the offering to the god, his spirit departed just as the evening sunlight, wavering, gleaming, departed from the summit of Mount Olympus.

Deep darkness gathered over Athens. She waned and toppled and crumbled and fell. In the battle of opinion against principle, opinion had triumphed.

The martyred Socrates still speaketh. National perpetuity is a moral question. Our inventions, our telegraphs, our engines, our smoke, may only blind our eyes. For, though

> 'Earth is filled with heaven,
> And every flaming bush on fire with God,
> Yet only he who sees takes off his shoes.'

We have studied carefully the evolution of the zenith of civilization. Socrates was the brightest star. But Socrates had to give his life for the truth. Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the cross. Nevertheless, the sun is brightening the sky. God's truth is marching on.