

THE SHIP FROM DELOS

Act 1: Spokesman For The God

Act 2: The Ship From Delos

Based on *The Apology, Crito, And Phaedo*
By Plato Of Athens

Passages Selected And Edited
By Bancroft Of Little Current

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Many passages of Plato are eliminated,
but all lines, with slight editing, are in the
order that Plato wrote them. Substance
is scrupulously maintained. A few words
not written by Plato are underlined.

Characters In Order Of Appearance:

Socrates

Meletus

Plato—no lines.

Echecrates

Phaedo

Crito

Jailer

Antisthenes—no lines.

Xantippe—one line.

Socrates' son—no lines.

7 John 7: The world cannot hate you;
but me it hateth,
because I testify of it
that the works thereof
are evil.

7 John 18: He that speaketh of himself
seeketh his own glory;
but he that seeketh his glory
that sent him,
the same is true,
and no unrighteousness
is in him.

ACT 1

Spokesman For The God

Scene 1

Court at Athens, 399 B.C. Stage is bare except for a divan or chair. Audience is the jury. The trial procedure is as follows. Litigants represent themselves without counsel. Prosecution speaks first. The jury is 501 citizens. There is no judge. It renders its verdict by majority vote as soon as defendant has completed his defense. If the verdict is guilty, plaintiff proposes one penalty, the defendant another. The jury chooses. SOCRATES is seated. MELETUS is finishing the prosecution.

MELETUS: (*He is standing.*) ...And that is why Anytus, Lycon, and I brought these charges against him. Do not be deceived by his skill as an orator, fellow citizens. He is cunning—as you know. Subversive enemies of democracy always are. He will try to convince you that disrespect for the gods and corruption of our youth are not what they obviously are. Do not forget his contempt for the opinions of both ordinary people and our leading citizens. Remember that the welfare of Athens requires a conviction, and show your contempt for Socrates by the speed with which you find him guilty. (He exits contemptuously.)

SOCRATES: (*He rises, comes forward slowly.*) I do not know what effect my accusers have had upon you, gentlemen, but for my part I was almost carried away by them; their arguments were so convincing. On the other hand, scarcely a word of what they said was true. I was quite astonished when Meletus told you just now that you must be careful not to let me deceive you—the implication being that I am a skillful speaker. It was very brazen of him to say that without a blush, since he must know that he will soon be effectively refuted when it becomes obvious that I have not the slightest skill as a speaker. Unless, of course, by a skillful speaker, he means one who speaks the truth. If that is what he means, I would agree that I am an orator.

Let us go back to the beginning and consider what has made me so unpopular and encouraged Meletus draw up this indictment. What do my critics say in attacking my character? I shall state their claims as though they, and not Meletus and his two friends, were my accusers here. "Socrates, "they say, "is guilty of

criminal meddling, in that he inquires into things below the earth and in the sky, and makes the weaker argument defeat the stronger, and teaches others to follow his example." It runs something like that.

I have gained this reputation, gentlemen, from nothing more or less than a kind of wisdom. What kind of wisdom do I mean? Human wisdom, I suppose.

I call as witness to my wisdom—such as it is—the god at Delphi.

Please remember that my object is to explain how the attacks on me began. When I heard what the oracle said, I said to myself, "What does the god mean? Why does he not use plain language? I am only too conscious that I have no claim to wisdom, great or small. So what can he mean by asserting that I am the wisest man in the world? He cannot be telling a lie; that would not be right for him."

After puzzling about it for some time, I set myself with considerable reluctance to check the truth of what he said in the following way. I talked to a man with a great reputation for wisdom because I thought that I would be able to disprove the oracle and say to my divine authority, "You said that I was the wisest of men, but here is a man who is wiser than I am."

I talked with this person extensively—I won't mention his name; he was one of our politicians. Through conversation with him, I realized that although in many people's opinions, and especially his own, he appeared to be wise, in fact he was not. When I tried to show him that he only thought he was wise and was not really wise, he and others present resented my efforts. As I walked away, I thought to myself, "I am certainly wiser than this man. Very likely neither of us can boast of any knowledge. But he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite aware of my ignorance. So it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent: I do not think that I know what I do not know."

Then I spoke to a man with an even greater reputation for wisdom. I reached the same conclusion and again incurred the resentment of the man himself and many others.

I spoke similarly to one person after another. I realized with distress that I was making myself unpopular, but I was compelled to put my religious duty first. Since I was trying to learn the meaning of the oracle, I was bound to speak to everyone who had a reputation for knowledge. And, gentlemen—I shall be frank with you—my impression was, as continued my investigation at the god's command, that the people with the greatest reputations were almost entirely deficient, while others who were thought to be their inferiors were much better qualified in ordinary intelligence.

So I made myself spokesman for the oracle, and asked myself whether or not I would rather be as I was or be like the people that I had spoken to. I replied through myself to the oracle that it was best for me to continue as I was.

The effect of these investigations of mine, gentlemen, has been to arouse against me a great deal of bitter and persistent hostility. This is because whenever I succeed in disproving an other person's claim to wisdom on a given subject, the bystanders think that I presume to know everything about that subject myself. The truth is that real wisdom is the property of God. I think that the oracle was not referring literally to Socrates but merely used me as an example as if to say, "The wisest of men is he who realizes, like Socrates, that in regard to wisdom he is really worthless."

Now let us consider the actual indictment. It reads something like this: "Socrates is guilty of corrupting the minds of the young and of believing in deities of his own invention instead of the gods recognized by the State."

(He looks at the place where Meletus exited.) I invite you to tell us, Meletus, in what sense you make out that I corrupt the minds of the young. Surely the terms of your indictment make it clear that you accuse me of teaching them to believe in new deities instead of the gods recognized by the State. Is that what I teach? With demoralizing effect?

MELETUS: *(He enters.)* That is exactly what I claim.

SOCRATES: Then I ask you, Meletus, in the name of these same gods, to explain yourself more clearly to the jury and to me because I cannot make out what your point is. Do I teach people to believe in some of our official gods, but also in gods which are not recognized by the State; or do you claim that I teach people to believe in no gods at all?

MELETUS: We say that you do not believe in any gods.

SOCRATES: You surprise me, Meletus. Do you suggest that I do not believe that the sun and the moon are gods, as is the general belief of all mankind?

MELETUS: He does not, gentlemen of the jury, since he says that the sun is a stone and the moon a mass of earth.

SOCRATES: Do you imagine that you are prosecuting Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, my dear Meletus? Have you so poor an opinion of these gentlemen that you assume them to be so illiterate as not to know that his writings are full of theories like these? Do you seriously suggest that it is from me that the young get these ideas, when they can buy them in the market place for a drachma and have the laugh on Socrates if he claims them for his own?

MELETUS: (*He exits stiffly.*)

SOCRATES: It does not require much defense to clear myself of these accusations. What I have said already is enough. But you know the truth of what I said before, that I have aroused much bitter hostility, and this is what will bring about my destruction if anything does. Not Meletus or Anytus. The slander and jealousy of many people have been fatal to many other innocent men, and will continue to be so. Someone may say, "Aren't you afraid, Socrates, of acting in a way which puts you in danger of the death penalty?" My answer to him is this: You are mistaken, my friend, if you think that a man who is worth anything spends his time weighing up the prospects of life and death. He should only consider one thing in whatever he does—whether or not he is acting rightly or wrongly, like a good man or a bad one.

The truth, gentlemen, is that where a man has once taken up his stand, either because it seems best to him or in obedience to his orders, he is bound to remain there and submit himself to the danger of death or anything else, rather than dishonor.

When the officers who commanded me assigned me to duty at Potidea, Amphipolis, and Delium during battle, I remained at my post like everybody else and faced death. Since the time that God, as I believe and assume, assigned me to the duty of leading a philosophic life—examining myself and others, I have remained on duty at my post in spite of death or any other danger. Were I to act otherwise, I might really with justice be summoned into court for not believing in the gods and disobeying the oracle, and being afraid of death, and thinking that I am wise when I am not. Let me tell you, gentlemen—to be afraid of death is only another form of thinking that one knows what one does not know.

I am your very grateful and devoted servant, but I owe a greater obedience to God than to you. So long as I draw breath and have my faculties, I shall never stop practicing philosophy and exhorting you and searching for the truth for you and every body else that I meet.

I have never enjoyed what I do and have never been paid for my services. Though they shamelessly accuse me of all sorts of crimes, one thing that my accusers have not had the impudence even to allege is that I ever received a fee from anyone. I have not. My poverty is a convincing witness. It is my poverty that prevents me from entering public life. A very good thing, too, because if I had tried to engage in politics, I would long ago have lost my life without doing any good for you or myself. Please, don't be offended if I tell you this truth: No man on earth who conscientiously opposes either you or any other organized democracy and prevents many wrongs and illegalities in the state to which he belongs can possibly escape with his life. If he intends to survive even for a short time, the

true champion of justice must necessarily confine himself to private life and leave politics alone.

When the oligarchy came into power, the Thirty Commissioners summoned me and four others to the Round Chamber and ordered us to fetch Leon of Salamis from his home for execution. This was one of many instances when they issued such orders. Their object was to implicate as many people as possible in their wickedness. I refused. I made it clear by my actions, not by words, that death did not matter to me at all but that what meant everything to me was that I should do nothing wrong or wicked. Strong as it was, that government did not frighten me into doing something wrong. When we came out of the Round Chamber, the other four went off to Salamis and arrested Leon. I went home. I would probably have been put to death then if the government had not fallen soon afterwards. Many people can testify to the truth of these statements.

Now, why do many people enjoy being in my company? It is because they enjoy hearing me examine those who think that they are wise when they are not—an experience which can be very amusing.

If it were true that I have corrupted the young all these years, would not some of my victims who have grown up have discovered that I gave them bad advice when they were young and surely now be coming forward to denounce and punish me? If they did not want to do so themselves, would not their families—fathers, brothers, near relatives—be doing so if their own flesh and blood had suffered harm from me? A great many of such relatives are in this court.

On the contrary, gentlemen, they are all prepared to help me, the evil genius and corrupter of their nearest and dearest relatives, according to Meletus and Anytus. My actual victims might want to help me because of my corrupting influence over them. But their uncorrupted relatives of mature age? What other reason can they have for helping me other than the right and proper one, which is that they know Meletus is lying and that I speak the truth?

You have now heard the substance of my defense. It may be that some of you remember other defendants in other trials upon matters which are far less serious and are annoyed because I have not demeaned myself and made pitiful appeals with floods of tears and produced infant children, and cousins, and friends, to excite maximum sympathy.

In the words of Homer, I am not sprung from an oak or from a rock. Rather from human parents, and I have relatives, yes, and sons, gentlemen, three of them, one almost grown up and the other two, only children. But I am not going to produce them here and beseech you to acquit me. If I tried to persuade you by such entreaties to go against your solemn oath, I should be teaching you contempt for religion. By my very defense, I would be accusing myself of having no religious belief. But that is very far from the truth. I have a more sincere belief

than any of my accusers. I leave it to you and to God to judge me as it shall be best for me and for you.

Scene 2

Same place, ten minutes later. SOCRATES is seated.

MELETUS: (*He enters, faces audience.*) The verdict is, "Guilty." I propose death. (*He exits.*)

SOCRATES: (*He rises, advances.*) We have so little time for discussion. If it were your practice, as in other nations, to give not one day but several to the hearing of capital trials, I think that I might have convinced you. Under present conditions it is not easy to dispose of grave allegations in a short period of time.

I do not know whether or not the penalty proposed by Meletus is a good thing or a bad thing. Please don't expect me to choose something which I know to be bad by way of counter-proposal. Imprisonment? Why should I spend my days in prison, in subjection to periodically appointed officers of the law? A fine with imprisonment until it is paid? In my case the effect would be just the same. I have no money to pay a fine. Shall I suggest banishment? You might accept that suggestion.

If I had money, I would suggest a fine that I could afford because that would not do me any harm. But I can't because I have none. Unless you care to fix the penalty at what I could pay. I could probably afford a hundred drachmae. I suggest a fine of that amount.

PLATO: (*He enters, rushes to Socrates, says something inaudible, and exits.*)

SOCRATES: One moment, gentleman. Young Plato just told me that he, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus want me to propose three thousand drachmae on their security. Very well. I agree to this sum. You can rely on these men for its payment.

Scene 3

Same place ten minutes later. SOCRATES is seated.

MELETUS: (*He enters.*) The verdict is, "Death." (*He exits.*)

SOCRATES: (*He rises, advances.*) I refused to address you in the way which would have given you most pleasure. You wanted to hear me weep and wail, do and say all sorts of things which I regard as unworthy of myself but which you are accustomed to hear from other defendants. I did not think that I ought to stoop to servility because I am in danger. I do not regret the way in which I presented my case. I would rather die as a result of this kind of defense than live as a result of the other kind. In a court of law, just as in warfare, a man should not use his wits to escape death by dishonorable means. In battle it is often obvious that he could escape being killed by surrendering and throwing himself upon the mercy of his pursuers. In every kind of danger there are dishonorable devices for avoiding death. The difficulty is not to escape death but to escape doing wrong, which is far more fleet of foot. In this case, I, the slow old man, have been overtaken by the slower of the two, but my accusers, who are clever and quick, have been overtaken by the faster, by iniquity. When I leave this court, I shall go away condemned by you to death. They will go away convicted by Truth herself of depravity and wickedness.

When my sons grow up, gentlemen, if you think that they are putting money or anything else before goodness, take your revenge by plaguing them as I plagued you. If they admire themselves, you must scold them, just as I scolded you, for neglecting the important things and thinking that they are good for something if they are good for nothing. If you do this, I shall have had justice at your hands—both myself and my children.

Now it is time to go. I to die and you to live. Which of us has the happier prospect is known only to God.

ACT 2
The Ship From Delos

Scene 1

A street in Phlius two months after the trial. Stage can be bare. ECHECRATES and PHAEDO.

ECHECRATES: Were you there with Socrates, Phaedo, when he was executed? Or did you hear about it from somebody else?

PHAEDO: I was there myself, Echebrates.

ECHECRATES: What did the Master say before he died, and how did he meet his end? I would very much like to know. Nobody in Phlius goes to Athens very often these days. It is a long time since we had a visitor from there who could give us any information. Except that he was executed by drinking hemlock. Nobody could tell us much more than that.

PHAEDO: Then, you haven't heard anything about the trial itself.

ECHECRATES: We have. Someone told us about it. We were surprised because a long time passed between the end of the trial and the execution. Do you know the reason for that?

PHAEDO: There was a fortunate occurrence. On the day before the trial began, they finished decorating the stern of the ship that Athens sends to Delos.

ECHECRATES: I do not understand. What ship?

PHAEDO: The Athenians say that it is the same ship in which Theseus sailed to Crete with seven youths and seven maidens and saved their lives and his from the minotaur. According to legend, the Athenians vowed to Apollo that if the lives of those young people were spared, the ship would sail to Delos every year. They keep the vow. Under Athenian law, as soon as the mission begins, the city must be kept pure, and no executions can take place until the ship has reached Delos and returned. The trip can be very long if the winds are not favorable. It begins as

soon as the priest of Apollo has put garlands of flowers on the stern of the ship. As I said, this happened on the day before the trial. The trip took a long time this year. That is why such a long time passed between the time of the trial and the execution.

ECHECRATES: Please continue, Phaedo.

*(Scene 5 through Scene 7 take place earlier.
Scene 8 returns to this conversation.)*

Scene 2

State prison at Athens, about three weeks after the trial. Dawn. SOCRATES is asleep on a divan or chair. CRITO is seated on a chair nearby.

CRITO: *(He rises quietly, looks at Socrates, reveals the distress that he, Crito, suffers.)*

SOCRATES: *(He stirs, opens his eyes.)* Here already, Crito? It must be very early.

CRITO: It is.

SOCRATES: What time is it?

CRITO: Dawn is breaking.

SOCRATES: It's a wonder that the jailer lets you in so early.

CRITO: He expects me at all hours by now. Besides, he is under a small obligation to me.

SOCRATES: Have you been here long?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then, why didn't you wake me, instead of sitting here so quietly?

CRITO: I would not do such a thing, Socrates. I only wish that I were not so sleepless and distressed myself. I am amazed at you. How comfortably you were sleeping. I did not wake you because I wanted you to go on being comfortable. I have often felt that you are fortunate to have your calm disposition. I feel that way more than ever now as I see how placid you are in your present misfortune and how easily you put up with it.

SOCRATES: Really, Crito! It would hardly be suitable for a man my age to resent having to die.

CRITO: Other men just as old as you have been involved in such misfortunes. Their age has not kept them from resentment.

SOCRATES: All very true. But tell me why you have come so early.

CRITO: I bring bad news. You may not think so, but it will be very hard for me and your other friends to bear it. Me most of all.

SOCRATES: What news? Has the ship come back from Delos—the ship that ends my reprieve when it arrives?

CRITO: Not yet. But soon. Some men from Sunium say that it left there. Very soon you will have to end your life, Socrates.

SOCRATES: It will be for the best if the gods will it so.

CRITO: Look here, Socrates. It is not too late to take my advice. And escape. Your death means a double calamity for me. I will lose a friend whom I can never replace, and many people who don't know us will think that I deserted you when I could have saved you if I had been willing to spend the money. What could be more shameful than to be known for thinking more of money than of a friend? Nobody will believe that it was you who refused to leave here although we tried our best to persuade you to escape.

SOCRATES: My dear Crito, why should we pay attention to what most people think? People who are really reasonable, who have more claim to be considered, will believe the facts as they are.

CRITO: You can see for yourself that you must pay attention to popular opinion. Your situation is quite enough to show that the capacity of ordinary people for causing trouble has no limit if they decide that they don't like you.

SOCRATES: I wish that ordinary people did have an unlimited capacity for doing harm. Then they might have an unlimited power for doing good—which would be a splendid thing. They have neither. They cannot make a man wise or stupid. They act at random.

CRITO: Have it your way, if you like, but tell me this: Are you worrying about me and our friends and thinking that if you escape, we will be betrayed by informers for helping you escape and have to forfeit our property or pay a huge fine or in-

cur more severe punishment? If you have any such idea, you can dismiss it entirely. We are entitled to take any risk we choose in saving you. Take my advice and be reasonable.

SOCRATES: What you say is very much on my mind and a great deal more.

CRITO: Then, don't let it worry you. I know people who are willing to rescue you and get you out of the country for a moderate sum. You must realize how cheap informers are to buy off. We won't need much money on their account. I think that you have enough of my money to take care of yourself. And you don't need to worry about me. There are foreign gentlemen in Athens now who are willing to spend their money.

I appeal to you, Socrates, on every ground. Please don't be unreasonable. Take my advice.

SOCRATES: My dear Crito! I appreciate your warm feelings very much. The stronger they are, the harder they will be to deal with.

Well then, how shall we consider the issue most reasonably?

I would like to know if we are still satisfied that the most important thing is not to live, but to live well?

CRITO: Why, yes.

SOCRATES: And that to live well is the same thing as living honorably or rightly?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: And that to do wrong is in every sense bad and dishonorable for the person who does it? Is that our view, or not?

CRITO: Yes, it is.

SOCRATES: Then, in no circumstances should one do wrong.

CRITO: That is correct.

SOCRATES: In that case, one must not even do wrong when one is wronged.

CRITO: Apparently not.

SOCRATES: Ought one to do injuries or not?

CRITO: Surely not, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Now, tell me this: Is it right to do an injury in retaliation, as most people believe, or not?

CRITO: No, never.

SOCRATES: Because there is no difference between injuring people and wronging them.

CRITO: Exactly.

SOCRATES: Here is my next point or, rather, question. Ought one to fulfill all one's agreements, provided that they are right, or break them?

CRITO: One ought to fulfill them.

SOCRATES: Then, if we leave this place without first persuading the state to let us go, are we or are we not doing an injury, and doing it in a quarter where it is least justifiable? Are we or are we not abiding by our just agreements?

CRITO: I cannot answer your question. I am not clear in my mind.

SOCRATES: Look at it this way. Suppose that while we were preparing to escape, the Laws and Constitution of Athens were to come and confront us and ask this question: "What are you proposing to do, Socrates? Can you deny that by contemplating an escape, you intend, so far as you have the power, to destroy us, the Laws, and the whole State as well? Do you think that a city can continue to exist and not be turned upside down if the legal judgments that it renders have no force but are nullified and destroyed by private persons?" How shall we answer this question, Crito?

Then, suppose the Laws say, "Was there provision for this in the agreement between you and us, Socrates? Or did you undertake to abide by whatever judgments the State pronounced?" If we express surprise at such a question, they would probably say, "Never mind our language, Socrates. Answer our question. After all, you are accustomed to the method of question and answer. Come now.

What charge do you bring against us and the State that you try to destroy us? Did we not give you life? Was it not through us that your father married your mother and begot you? Tell us, have you any complaint against those of us Laws that deal with marriage?" "No, none," I would say. "Well, have you any against the Laws which deal with raising children and their education, such as you had? Are you grateful for those of us Laws which required your father to give you a cultural education and physical education?" "Yes," I would say. "Very good. Then, have you forgotten that compared with your mother and father and all the rest of your ancestors your country is something far more precious, more venerable, more sacred, and held in greater honor both among the gods and among all reasonable men? Do you not realize that you are even more bound to respect and placate the honor of your country than your father's anger? Both in war and in the law courts and everywhere else you must do whatever your city and your country command, or else persuade it to do otherwise in accordance with universal justice. Violence is a sin against your parents and is a far greater sin against your country."

What shall we say to this, Crito? Is what the Laws say true?

CRITO: Yes, I think so.

SOCRATES: "Consider, then, Socrates," the laws would probably continue, "are we or are we not speaking the truth when we say that you have undertaken in deed, if not in words, to live your life as a citizen in obedience to us?" What are we to say to that, Crito? Are we not bound to admit it?

CRITO: We cannot help it, Socrates.

SOCRATES: "Is it a fact, then," they would say, "that you are breaking covenants and undertakings made with us, which you made under no duress or misunderstanding and had more than ample time to contemplate? You had seventy years in which you could have left the country if you were not satisfied with us or felt that our agreements were unfair. Incidentally, you will confirm the opinion of the jurors who tried you that they gave a correct verdict. A destroyer of laws might well have a destructive influence upon young and foolish human beings. And will no one comment on the fact that an old man of your age, with probably only a short time left to live, should dare to cling so greedily to life at the price of violating the most stringent laws? It seems clear that if you do this thing, neither you nor any of your friends will be the better for it or be more upright or have a cleaner conscience in this world or the next."

That, my dear friend Crito, is what I seem to hear them saying, and the sound of their arguments rings so loudly in my head that I cannot hear the other side. I warn you that, as my opinion stands at present, it will be useless to urge a different view. However, if you think that you will do good by it, say what you like.

CRITO: No, Socrates, I have nothing to say.

SOCRATES: Then, give it up, Crito, and let us follow this course, since God points out the way.

Scene 3

Same place, mid-afternoon, next day. PHAEDO, CRITO, XANTIPPE, ANTISTHENES, and a young SON of Socrates.

JAILER: *(He enters.)* The commissioners are taking off Socrates' chains and warning him that he is to die today. *(He exits.)*

JAILER and SOCRATES: *(After several seconds, they enter. JAILER leads SOCRATES to divan where he sits upright.)*

JAILER: *(He exits.)*

XANTIPPE: Oh, Socrates, this is the last time that you and your friends will be able to talk together! *(She begins to weep.)*

SOCRATES: Somebody had better send her home. *(He kisses her and his son.)*

XANTIPPE, HER SON, and ANTISTHENES: *(He leads her and her son off stage and shortly returns while SOCRATES speaks.)*

SOCRATES: *(He massages his leg.)* What a queer thing it is—this sensation which is usually called pleasure. It is remarkable how closely it is connected with its conventional opposite, pain. I had pain in my leg from the fetter. Now I feel the pleasure that follows pain. *(He smiles.)* And ready for dialogue.

Scene 4

Same place, an hour later. SOCRATES, CRITO, PHAEDO, ANTISTHENES.

SOCRATES: *(He is completing a long dialogue about the immortality of the soul.)*
...There is one way, then, in which a man can be free from all anxiety about the fate of his soul: By abandoning bodily pleasures and adornments, as foreign to his purpose and likely to do more harm than good, devoting himself to the pleasures of acquiring knowledge, and decking his soul, not with borrowed beauty but with self control and goodness and courage, and liberality, and truth. *(He pauses.)*

It is about time that I drink the poison.

CRITO: Socrates! Have you any directions for the others or myself about your children or anything else? What can we do to please you best?

SOCRATES: Nothing new, Crito. Just what I am always telling you. If you look after yourselves, whatever you do will please me and mine and you, too, even if you don't agree with me now. On the other hand, if you neglect yourselves and fail to follow the line of life as I have laid it down both now and in the past, however fervently you agree with me now, it will do no good at all.

CRITO: We shall try our best to do as you say.

JAILER: *(He enters despondently.)* I know, Socrates, that you will not be angry with me and curse me, like many others, when I carry out my orders and bring you the poison and tell you to drink. You are the noblest and gentlest and bravest of all the men that have ever come here. I am sure that you are not angry with me, but with them, because you know who are responsible. I have come to say, goodbye. Try to bear what must be as easily as you can. *(He cannot suppress some tears and exits as Socrates speaks.)*

SOCRATES: Goodbye to you, too. We will do as you say...What a charming person! All the time that I have been here he has visited me, and sometimes had discussions with me. He has shown me great kindness. How generous of him to shed tears for me! But come, Crito, let us do as he says. Someone had better bring in the poison if it is ready. If not, ask him to prepare it.

CRITO: The sun is still upon the mountains. It has not gone down yet. In other cases, people have dinner and enjoy wine and the company of those they love long after they receive the warning and drink the poison late at night. There is no need to hurry. There is still plenty of time.

SOCRATES: I should gain nothing by drinking the poison a little later. I would only make myself ridiculous in my own eyes if I cling to life and hug it when it has no more to offer. Come, do as I say and don't make difficulties.

CRITO: *(He assents silently, exits to fetch JAILER and poison.)*

SOCRATES and the OTHERS: *(They are silent.)*

CRITO and JAILER: *(They enter. JAILER has the cup. He hands it to SOCRATES who accepts it cheerfully.)*

SOCRATES: Well, my good fellow, you understand these things. What should I do?

JAILER: Drink it, and then walk about until you feel a weight in your legs. Then lie back. It will act of its own accord.

SOCRATES: What do you say about pouring a libation from this drink? Is that permitted?

JAILER: We only prepare enough for a normal dose, Socrates.

SOCRATES: I see. But I suppose I am allowed, or rather bound, to pray the gods that my removal from this world to the other may be prosperous. That is my prayer, then. I hope that it may be granted. *(He drains the cup.)*

OTHERS: *(They struggle to control themselves.)*

SOCRATES: Really, my friends! What a way to behave! My main reason for sending [them] away Xantippe and my son was to prevent this sort of behavior. I am told that one should make one's end in a tranquil frame of mind. Calm yourselves and try to be brave.

OTHERS: *(They try to control themselves more successfully.)*

SOCRATES: (*He walks about.*) My legs are heavy. (*He sits, lies back, helped by the OTHERS.*)

JAILER: (*He feels SOCRATES' legs, feet.*) Do you feel that?

SOCRATES: No.

JAILER: (*To OTHERS.*) When it reaches the heart, Socrates will be gone.

SOCRATES: Crito, we ought to offer a small sacrifice to Asclepius, the god of healing. See to it, and don't forget.

CRITO: It will be done. Is there anything else that we can do for you?

SOCRATES: (*He is motionless, does not reply.*)

Scene 5

Same time, place as Scene 4 (Phlius). ECHECRATES, PHAEDO.

PHAEDO: Socrates made no reply. Soon he stirred, but his eyes were fixed. When Crito saw this, he closed the eyes and mouth.

Such, Echebrates,
was the end of our friend,
who was,
we may fairly say,
of all those whom we knew in our time,
the most decent,
and also the bravest,
and the wisest.

VOICE OF XANTIPPE (*After a pause, if this play is performed after **Go To Him, Antisthenes***): If I lose him, what I will miss most of all is those moments when his pleasure was so much mine.