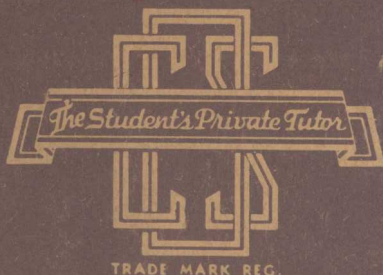


COLLEGE OUTLINE SERIES

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READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY

RANDALL • BUCHLER
and SHIRK



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COLLEGE OUTLINE SERIES

READINGS IN PHILOSOPHY

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PREFACE

This book of readings has been prepared especially for those who have not previously studied philosophy. The scope of its contents will, we hope, also make it serviceable to readers and courses of a more advanced status or in fields cognate to philosophy.

The choice of materials has been determined by criteria for individual selections and for the selections considered as a body. To justify inclusion of an individual selection, we felt that an affirmative answer should be given to each of the following questions: Does it make interesting reading for an inquiring layman? Is it digestible by such a reader after a reasonable degree of concentration on his part, and is it free from insuperable technical matter? Does it raise or reveal problems and excite philosophic thinking? With respect to the selections considered collectively, the questions asked were: Do they represent a sufficiently wide range of problems? Do they represent a sufficient diversity of historically important viewpoints? Do they represent the major branches of philosophic study?

It is necessary to emphasize that this volume is interested primarily in selections as such rather than in writers, in utility to the student rather than in deference to formal schools of thought, in philosophic suggestiveness rather than in homage to persons or ages. On the other hand, it is hardly necessary to emphasize that in consequence of its varied aims this collection could not possibly or desirably have been representative in all respects.

Apart from the occasional addition in editorial brackets of an explanatory synonym, a translation of a foreign phrase, or a note, we have avoided guides, commentaries, or introductions. Our aim in this respect has been not only to allow space for the maximum amount of material but to leave the selections absolutely free for independent interpretation by reader or teacher and for adaptation to special or limited uses.

Readers who seek systematic discussion of philosophic problems and viewpoints are referred to the volume *PHILOSOPHY: AN INTRODUCTION*, also published in the present series. That book and this one, we believe, achieve most when used together. But nothing stands in the way of their being used independently.

The titles of the selections are ours, except in the case of 1, 4, 14, 26, and 27.

We wish to thank Herbert W. Schneider, Ernest Nagel, James Gutmann, Benjamin N. Nelson, and Fred W. Householder, Jr., for the comments or suggestions they have offered.

TO THE READER

The best way to discover and achieve philosophic thinking is to come into direct and living contact with it. Each of the following selections deals with an issue which is of that basic, foundational character known as philosophical. It might be more accurate to say that in the discussion of its main problem each selection raises many others, which the reader who has developed the philosophic habit of thought gradually comes to discriminate. Often the same problem will turn up in more than one writer and a similar or a sharply contrasting viewpoint will emerge.

The reader will want to know what it is that he is *not* to expect in a book of this kind. To begin with, he is not to suppose that he will discover every possible problem of philosophy, every possible treatment of any one problem, or every possible school of thought. It is likely that almost any issue he meets either has been or could be approached from some other philosophic viewpoint. The searching, ever-critical character of philosophy makes this inevitable. In a book of this kind it is naturally most useful to be able to find out how different rather than how fundamentally similar philosophic theories and analyses and formulations can be. Further, it must not be supposed that any selection is a key to or a summary of its writer's entire thought. This may or may not be so; but a selection is best read for what it actually says or implies.

The reader *may* truthfully assume that he has before him an array containing many of the greatest names in the history of philosophy; that the issues here open to his experience are typical and multifarious; and that the reading of these selections requires no technical philosophic equipment. He may wonder why the selections are not listed in chronological order. The answer is that since this book does not aim primarily to exhibit the history of philosophy, such an order would be inappropriate and even misleading. The period of composition for each selection has been indicated. Every historical product reflects its time and circumstances, and a philosophy interprets and analyzes the age it knows. But philosophy is able also to transcend specific times and circumstances, and in recognition of this truth a chronological arrangement has been ignored.

If the reader further wonders why the selections are arranged in just the order that they are, the answer is that this order promised to be suggestive but that little harm can come from his adopting another more manageable or useful to him. A deliberate attempt has

been made to avoid a fixed and rigid pattern among the selections. They have been so chosen that many patterns can and should emerge. Philosophic problems, however different and unrelated they may seem, often have important bearing on one another. Sharply to segregate ideas or subjects would be to risk concealing this potential interrelation, the perception of which is one kind of fruitful philosophizing.

One who succeeds in understanding another's thought will not be content with swallowing it bodily. The reader of philosophy is himself, perforce, a philosopher, and in so far, a critic. The strongest of thinkers is not exempt from criticism of one kind or another; and at the same time, any worth-while thinker of whatever persuasion can offer something of value. The better the critic the better and larger his imagination. It is much more difficult to weigh and understand than to admonish.

There is no royal road to any of the intellectual disciplines, and certainly not to philosophy. The chances are that even when free of unduly technical elements a piece of philosophic thought will make difficult reading. The selections in this book vary in difficulty, but all of them require sustained attention. On the other hand, it is not wise to become discouraged if passages or ideas prove obstinate. Reflection has ways of ironing itself out or of discovering the means to that end. And it is unlikely that the student will be content with a single reading of any selection.

Once conversant with the philosophic temper, the student's urge is to put his own intellectual convictions in better order. Faced with different ways of thinking, different answers to problems, and different ways of viewing the universe, his complaint may be that he is now "confused" where once he was not. Perhaps it is small comfort to him to be told that this is a sign of progress and that his uncertainties have arisen precisely because his previous ideas have not stood up. The ancients were fond of saying that philosophy begins in wonder. Having opinions, cherishing convictions is a requirement of sanity. But pitfalls threaten the philosophic attitude: seeking immediate answers, taking refuge in easy dogmas, worshipping finality for its own sake. The reader who has no fear of ideas, or of the doubts they can engender, will heed Plato's advice, simply to follow the argument wherever it may lead.

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PART ONE

Emphasis on

PHILOSOPHIC CRITICISM, DEFINITION,
AND ANALYSIS

1

EUTHYPHRO *

by

PLATO

(B.C. 427-347)

Euthyphro. Why have you left the Lyceum, Socrates? and what are you doing in the porch of the King Archon? Surely you can not be engaged in an action before the king, as I am.

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

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

Soc. Certainly not.

Euth. Then some one else has been prosecuting you?

Soc. Yes.

Euth. And who is he?

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

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

Soc. What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am anything but a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the state is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of virtue in youth; he is a good husbandman, and takes care of the shoots first, and clears away us who are the destroyers of them. That is the first step; he will afterwards attend to the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be a very great public benefactor.

* [The complete dialogue, translated by Benjamin Jowett (1871).]

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

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

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

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

Euth. I have no desire to try conclusions with them about this.

Soc. I dare say that you don't make yourself common, and are not apt to impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid that the Athenians know this; and therefore, as I was saying, if the Athenians would only laugh at me as you say that they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

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

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

Euth. I am pursuer.

Soc. Of whom?

Euth. You will think me mad when I tell you whom I am pursuing.

Soc. Why, has the fugitive wings?

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

Soc. Who is he?

Euth. My father.

Soc. Your father! good heavens, you don't mean that?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And of what is he accused?

Euth. Murder, Socrates.

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

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

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

Euth. I am amused, Socrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself by proceeding against him. The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer is under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him. Now the man who is dead was a poor dependent of mine who worked for us as a field laborer at Naxos, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic servants and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, and then sent to Athens to ask of a diviner what he should do with him. Meantime he had no care or thought of him, being under the impression that he was a murderer; and that even if he did die there would be no great harm. And this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he did not kill him, and if he did, the dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious who prosecutes a father. That shows, Socrates, how little they know of the opinions of the gods about piety and impiety.

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

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

Soc. Rare friend! I think that I can not do better than be your

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

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and if he attempts to indict me I am mistaken if I don't find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me.

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

Euth. To be sure, Socrates.

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

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

Soc. May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged

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

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

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

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

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

Euth. And that is true, Socrates.

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

Euth. There are.

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

Euth. I remember.

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

Euth. I will tell you, if you like.

Soc. I should very much like.

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

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

Euth. Of course.

Soc. Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That

thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious. Was not that said?

Euth. Yes, that was said.

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

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

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

Euth. Yes, that was said.

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

Euth. True.

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

Euth. That is true.

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

Euth. To be sure.

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

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

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

Euth. They are.

Soc. They have differences of opinion, as you say, about good and evil, just and unjust, honorable and dishonorable: there would have been no quarrels among them, if there had been no such differences—would there now?

Euth. You are quite right.

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

Euth. Very true.

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

Euth. Yes, that is true.

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

Euth. True.

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

Euth. That, I suppose, is true.

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

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

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

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

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

Euth. No; they do not.

Soc. Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not venture to argue that the guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not?

Euth. Yes.

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

Euth. True.

Soc. And the gods are in the same case, if as you imply they quarrel about just and unjust, and some of them say that they wrong one another, and others of them deny this. For surely neither God nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of evil is not to be punished:—you don't mean to tell me that?

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

Soc. But they join issue about particulars; and this applies not only to men but to the gods; if they dispute at all they dispute about