

*Charmides, or On Temperance: A Peirastic Dialogue*¹

The Prologue (153a1–159a10)

We had arrived the previous evening from the camp at Potidaea and, having arrived after a long absence, I gladly headed for my regular haunts. And so it was that I went into the gymnasium of Taureas opposite the temple of Basile and came upon a great many people there, some of whom were actually unknown to me but most of whom I knew. And as soon as they saw me unexpectedly entering the wrestling-school, they greeted me from a distance from wherever each of them was. Chaerephon, however, acting like the madman that he is, jumped up from the middle of the crowd, ran towards me, and, taking hold of my hand, asked, ‘Socrates, how did you survive the battle?’. True, shortly before we came away, there had been a battle at Potidaea that the people here had only just got news of. – Just as you see me, I said in reply. – Well, he said, it has been announced here that the battle has been very severe and many of our acquaintance were killed in it. – In that case, I said, the report is fairly near the truth. – Were you actually present at the battle? he asked. – I was. – Then come and sit down here, he said, and tell us the full story, for we have not had a thorough and clear report as yet. And as he was speaking, he brought me over to a seat near Critias, son of Callaeschrus. So I sat down, greeted Critias and the others, and related in detail the news from the camp, whatever anyone asked about, with different men asking different things.

When we had enough of these things, I turned to questioning them about affairs at home, namely about philosophy, how it was doing at present, and about the young men, whether any among them had become distinguished for wisdom or beauty or both. And Critias, looking away towards the door and seeing some young men who were coming in railing at each other followed by another crowd of people behind them, said, ‘As

¹ The term ‘πειραστικός’ characterises dialogues purporting to test a given view or set of views. This is one of several different categories into which Plato’s dialogues have been classified.

for the beautiful youths, Socrates, I expect that you will get to know at once; for these who are coming in happen to be the entourage and lovers of the youth who, at least for the moment, is believed to be the most beautiful; and I imagine that he himself is already on his way and somewhere close by'. – Who is he, I enquired, and whose son is he? – You certainly know him, he said, but he was not yet of age before you left: Charmides, son of our uncle Glaucon and my own cousin. – By Zeus, of course I know him, I said. For he was not bad-looking even then, when he was still a child. But now, I would imagine, he has already become quite the young man! – You will know immediately, he [sc. Critias] said, both how much and in what way he [sc. Charmides] has grown. And as he was speaking these words, Charmides came in.

Now truly, my friend, I cannot measure anything. So far as beautiful youths are concerned I am merely a blank ruler. For, somehow, almost all youths who have just come of age appear to me beautiful. Indeed this is so, and especially on that occasion the youth appeared to me marvellous in stature and beauty. As for all the others, they were so astonished and confused when he entered that they seemed to me to be in love with him. Moreover, many more lovers were following in his train as well. Of course, this was not so surprising on the part of men like ourselves. However, I was also observing the boys and noticed that not a single one of them, even the youngest, was looking elsewhere but all gazed at him as if he were a statue.

Then Chaerephon called me and asked, Socrates, how does the youth seem to you? Does he not have a beautiful face? – Very much so, I replied. – And yet, he said, if he were willing to take his clothes off, it would seem to you that he has no face, so great is the beauty of his bodily form. All the other men too agreed with Chaerephon's claim. – By Hercules, I said, you make the man seem irresistible, if indeed he has in him one more advantage – a small one. – What? asked Critias. – If he happens to be beautiful with regard to his soul, I replied. But somehow he ought to be of such sort, Critias, since he belongs to your family. – Well, he [sc. Critias] said, he is very beautiful and good in this respect too. – Why then, I said, did we not strip that very part of him and view it first, before his bodily form? For, in any case, at his age, he surely will be willing to engage in dialogue. – Very much so, said Critias, since in fact he is a philosopher and also, as it seems to both himself and others, he is quite a poet. – That fine gift, I said, my dear Critias, exists in your family from a long time back and derives from your kinship with Solon. – But why haven't you called the young man here and shown him off to me? For even if he were still younger than he actually

is, there could be nothing shameful in talking with him when you are here, since you are both his guardian and his cousin. – You are right, he said, and we will call him. And turning at once to his servant he commanded, ‘Boy, call Charmides and tell him that I want to introduce him to a doctor with regard to the ailment that he told me this morning he was suffering from’. Then Critias turned to me and added: ‘You know, he has complained lately that he feels his head somewhat heavy when he gets up in the morning. Why should you not pretend to him that you know a remedy for his headache?’ – No reason why not, I replied, provided that he comes. – Oh, he will, said Critias.

This is exactly what happened. Indeed he did come, and he gave rise to much laughter. For each of us who were seated tried to make room for him by pushing hard at his neighbour so as to have him sitting next to oneself, with the result that the man sitting at one end of the bench was forced to get up, whereas the man sitting at the other end was tumbled off sideways. In the end, Charmides came and sat down between me and Critias.

By that time, my friend, I already began to feel perplexed, and the confidence that I had possessed earlier, because I had anticipated that it would be very easy to talk with him, was quite gone. And when Critias said that I was the person who knew the remedy, and he looked me straight in the eyes in an indescribable manner, and seemed ready to ask a question, and all the people in the gymnasium surged around us in a circle, then, my noble friend, I both saw what was inside his cloak and caught fire and was quite beside myself. And I thought that nobody was as wise in matters of love as Cydias, who, referring to a handsome boy and giving advice to someone else, said, ‘The fawn should beware lest, by coming before the lion, he should be seized as a portion of meat’. For I felt that I myself had been seized by such a creature.

Nonetheless, when he asked me if I knew the remedy for the headache, I somehow managed to answer that I did. – So, he said, what is it? – I replied that the remedy itself was a certain leaf, but that there was a charm or incantation to go with the remedy. And if one both sang the charm and used the remedy, the medicine would bring about perfect health. Without the charm, however, the leaf would be completely useless. – Then, he said, I shall take down the charm from you in writing. – Will you do it, I said, if you obtain my consent or even if you don’t? – He laughed and said, ‘if I do have your consent, Socrates’. – So be it, I said. And are you quite certain about my name? – Yes, if I am not mistaken, he replied. For there is much talk about you among the boys of my age, and I also remember you in the company of Critias here when I was a child.

– Well done, I said. For it means I shall speak to you more freely about the incantation and what its nature is, whereas just now I was perplexed as to how to indicate its power to you. For, Charmides, it is of such a nature that it cannot bring health only to the head, but, as perhaps you too have already heard the good doctors mention, when a patient comes to them with a pain in his eyes, they say something like this: that it is not possible for them to attempt to heal the eyes alone, but that it would be necessary that they treat the head along with them, if the condition of the eyes were going to be in good order too. Moreover, they say, it is utter folly to believe that one could ever cure the head on its own apart from the whole body. Following this principle, they apply regimens to the body in its entirety, trying to treat and heal the part together with the whole. Or have you not been aware of the fact that this is how they talk and how things are done? – Very much so, he said. – And do you believe that this principle is a good one and do you accept it? – More than anything, he said.

When I heard his approval, I regained my courage, my confidence gradually started to rise up again, and I began to feel rekindled. Thus, I said: – Such, then, Charmides, is the nature of this incantation [or charm]. I learnt it over there, on campaign, from one of the Thracian doctors of Zalmoxis, who are said even to aim at immortality. This Thracian said that the Greeks spoke well when they stated the doctrine that I have just mentioned. However, he said, Zalmoxis our king, who is a god, declares that, just as one should not attempt to treat the eyes without treating the head or to treat the head without treating the body, so one should not treat the body without treating the soul. In fact, he said this was even the reason why most diseases evaded treatment by the Greek doctors, namely that they neglected the whole that they should have attended to, since when this does not fare well it is impossible for the part to fare well. For all evils and goods for the body and for the entire human being, he said, spring from the soul and flow from it, just as they flow from the head to the eyes. Hence this [sc. the soul] is what one ought to treat first and foremost, if the condition of the head and that of the rest of the body are going to be good as well. And the soul, my good friend, he said, is treated by means of certain charms or incantations, and these incantations are beautiful [or fine] discourses. Temperance derives from such discourses and is engendered in the soul, and once it has been engendered and is present, one can easily supply health to the head and to the rest of the body as well. So, as he was teaching me both the remedy and the incantations, he said, ‘Let nobody persuade you to treat his own head with this remedy who has not first submitted his soul to be treated by you with the incantation’. For

at present, he said, this is the error besetting men, that certain doctors attempt to manage without each of the two – that is, without both temperance and bodily health. And he very strongly instructed me not to allow anyone to convince me that I should act in a different way, regardless of how wealthy, brave, or handsome that person might be. As for myself, therefore, I shall do as he bids, since I have sworn an oath to him and must obey him. And if you decide, in accordance with the stranger's instructions, to submit your soul to be charmed first by means of the Thracian's incantations, I shall apply the remedy to your head. Otherwise, my dear Charmides, we would be at a loss as to what to do to help you.

When Critias heard me saying this, he said: Socrates, if on account of his head Charmides will also be forced to improve his mind, then the malady of the head would turn out to have been for the young man a gift of Hermes [sc. an unexpected stroke of good luck]. But let me tell you that Charmides is believed to surpass his peers not only in bodily looks, but also in the very thing that you claim to have the incantation for – you say it is temperance, do you not? – I do indeed, I said. – Well then, you must know that he is believed to be by far the most temperate youth of the day, while, considering his age, in every other respect too he is second to none.

Of course, I said, it is only right, Charmides, that you should surpass the others in all such things. For I don't suppose that anyone else here could easily point to a case of two such Athenian families united together and likely to produce offspring more beautiful or nobler than those you have sprung from. For your father's family, the house of Critias son of Dropides, has been praised for us according to tradition by Anacreon, Solon, and many other poets for excelling in both beauty and virtue and everything else called happiness. Again, your mother's family is also praised in the same way. For it is said of your uncle Pylampes that no one in the entire continent² was believed to be superior in beauty or influence, whenever he came as an ambassador to the Great King or anyone else in the continent, and this whole side of the family is viewed as not in the least inferior to the other side. Since you have sprung from such ancestors, it seems likely that you will be first in all things. And indeed, dear son of Glaucon, you seem to me not to have fallen behind any of your ancestors in any respect with regard to your looks. But if, in addition, you have sufficiently grown in respect of temperance and those other qualities as your guardian here says, then, I said, dear Charmides, your mother gave birth to a blessed son. The situation is this: if

² Ast 1819–32 followed by Croiset 1921 and Sprague 1973 remove the phrase τῷ ἐν τῇ ἡπείρῳ in 158a5, while I follow the manuscript reading as does Lamb 1927.

temperance is already present in you, as Critias here asserts, and if you are sufficiently temperate, you would no longer have any need of the incantations of Zalmoxis or of Abaris the Hyperborean, but should be given the headache remedy itself straightaway. But if, on the other hand, you appear to be still lacking in them [sc. temperance and the other such qualities], you must have the incantations sung to you before you are given the drug. So, tell me yourself whether you agree with our friend here and declare that you already participate sufficiently in temperance, or whether you are deficient in it.

First, Charmides blushed at this and looked even more beautiful than before, for his modesty became his youth. Then, he replied in quite a dignified manner. He remarked that it would not be easy at present either to affirm or to deny what he was being asked. – For if, he went on, I deny being temperate, I shall both be doing something absurd in saying that about myself and be showing Critias here and, as he claims, many others who consider me temperate to be liars. If, on the other hand, I affirm that I am temperate and praise myself, perhaps this will appear offensive. So, I cannot decide what answer I should give you. – Charmides, I said, your answer seems to me reasonable. And I think, I continued, that we should examine in common whether or not you already have what I am enquiring about, to save you from being forced to say what you do not wish to say, and me, for my own part, from applying myself to medicine in a thoughtless manner. Thus, if it is agreeable to you, I am willing to pursue the question together with you, but otherwise let us leave it aside. – Nothing, he said, could be more agreeable. To this end, therefore, do proceed with the enquiry in whatever way you think is better.

The best method of enquiry into this matter, I said, seems to me to be the following. It is quite evident that, if temperance is present in you, you can express some belief about it. For if it really resides in you, wherever it resides, it must provide a sensation [or an awareness] from which you can hold a belief about it, namely what temperance is and what kind of thing it is. Do you not think so? – Yes, I do, he replied. – And since you know how to speak Greek, I said, you could also, I suppose, express it, saying what it appears to you to be. – Perhaps, he said. – So, in order that we may guess whether it is in you or not, tell me, I said, what you declare temperance to be according to your own belief.

Charmides' First Definition of *Sôphrosynê*: Temperance Is a Kind of Quietness (159b1–160d4)

At first he was hesitant and not very willing to answer. But presently he said that it seemed to him that temperance is doing everything in an orderly and

quiet manner – walking in the streets, and talking, and doing everything else in a similar way. ‘So’, he said, ‘it seems to me that, in a word, what you are asking about is a sort of quietness or calmness’. – I wonder whether you are right. In any case, they do say, Charmides, that those who are quiet are temperate. So let us see if there is anything in it. Tell me, isn’t temperance among the beautiful or admirable things? – Yes indeed, he said. – Well, when you are at the writing-master’s, which is the most admirable way to write the same letters, quickly or quietly? – Quickly. – What about reading? Is it most admirable to read quickly or slowly? – Quickly. – And of course it is not far more admirable to play the cithara quickly and to wrestle nimbly than to do so quietly and slowly? – Yes, it is. – What about boxing alone or in combination with other forms of fighting? Doesn’t the same thing hold true? – Certainly. – And in the cases of running and leaping and all the other activities of the body, aren’t the ones effected nimbly and quickly believed to be admirable, but those effected with considerable effort and sluggishly deemed shameful? – Apparently so. – Then it appears to us, I said, that at least so far as the body is concerned, it is not the more quiet but the quickest and nimblest that is the most admirable. Is this not the case? – Very much so. – Temperance, however, was something admirable. – Yes. – Then, since temperance is admirable, at least insofar as the body is concerned, it is not quietness but quickness that would be the most admirable thing. – So it seems, he said. – What about this? I continued. Is it more admirable to have facility or difficulty in learning? – Facility. – And is it true, I said, that facility in learning amounts to learning quickly, whereas difficulty in learning is learning quietly and slowly? – Yes. – And when one is teaching someone else, is it not more admirable to teach him with quickness and intensity rather than quietly and slowly? – It is. – What about this too? Is it more admirable to recollect and remember quietly and slowly or in a quick and concentrated manner? – In a quick and concentrated manner, he said. – And isn’t readiness of mind a kind of nimbleness of the soul, not quietness? – True. – Moreover, is it not the case that to understand what is said, whether at the writing-master’s or the cithara-master’s or anywhere else, is most admirable not when it is achieved as quietly as possible but when it is achieved as quickly as possible? – Yes. – Besides, when it comes to the soul’s investigations and deliberations, I would suppose that it is not the quietest thinker and the one who deliberates and discovers with difficulty that seems worthy of praise, but the one who does this in the easiest and quickest manner. – Just so, he said. – Then, Charmides, I said, in everything that concerns both our soul and our body, activities

occurring with quickness and nimbleness appear more admirable than those effected with slowness and quietness. – It seems so, he replied. Therefore, so far as this argument goes at least, temperance would not be a kind of quietness, nor would the temperate life be quiet, since the temperate life must be an admirable life. For there are really these two alternatives: either in no case did the quiet actions in life appear to us to be more admirable than the quick and forceful ones or in very few cases this happened. Or if, my friend, of the more admirable actions the quiet ones turn out to be just as many as the vigorous and quick ones, not even so would temperance be acting quietly more than acting vigorously and quickly, neither in walking nor in talking nor in anything else. Nor would the quiet life be more temperate than its opposite, since in our argument we made the hypothesis that temperance is an admirable thing but we have concluded that quick actions are no less admirable than quiet ones. – What you say, Socrates, he replied, seems to me correct.

Charmides' Second Definition: Temperance Is a Sense of Shame
(160d5–161b4)

– So, Charmides, I said, this time pay closer attention, turn away (from other things) to look into yourself,³ think about what kind of person temperance by its presence makes you, and what sort of thing temperance would have to be in order to make you that kind of person, and taking all this into account tell me, well and bravely, what it appears to you to be. And he, after holding back a little and after thinking things through to himself very manfully, said: ‘Well, it seems to me that temperance makes a person feel ashamed or bashful, and that temperance is the same as a sense of shame. – But, I retorted, did you not agree a little while ago that temperance is admirable? – I certainly did, he answered. – Is it not also the case that the temperate are good men? – Yes. – And could anything be good that does not make people good? – Of course not. – Hence, temperance is not only admirable but also good. – So at least it seems to me. – But then, I said, don’t you believe that Homer speaks correctly, when he says that ‘a sense of shame is no good companion for a man in need? – I do believe so, he replied. – So, as it seems, a sense of shame is both not good and good. – Apparently. – Temperance, however, is just good, if it makes good those in whom it is present and doesn’t make them bad. – It certainly seems to me that things stand exactly as you say. – It follows, then, that

³ At 160d6, I keep the ms. reading ἀπειμβλέψας instead of Burnet’s ἐμβλέψας.

temperance could not be a sense of shame, if it is in fact good, while a sense of shame is no more good than bad. – Well, Socrates, he said, I do think that this is correctly stated.

Charmides Abandons the ‘Best Method’: The Third Definition – Temperance Is ‘Doing One’s Own’ (161b4–162b11)

Consider, however, the following view about temperance to judge whether you like it. For I just remembered something that I once heard someone say, that temperance might be doing one’s own. So I should like you to examine whether you think that the person who said this is right.

– You scoundrel, I said, you have heard this from Critias here or some other wise man! – Apparently, said Critias, he heard it from someone else. For he certainly hasn’t heard it from me. – But Socrates, said Charmides, what difference does it make whom I heard it from? – None, I replied. For, in any case, we ought to consider not who said it, but whether or not the claim is true. – Now you are speaking correctly, he said. – Yes, by god, I retorted. But I would be amazed if we are also going to discover the truth of the matter. For it seems to be a sort of riddle.

– For what reason? he asked. – Because, I replied, I presume that the person who said that temperance is ‘doing one’s own’ did not mean these words exactly as he spoke them. Or do you believe that the writing-master does nothing when he writes or reads? – Of course I believe that he does something, he answered. – And do you think that the writing-master writes and reads only his own name or teaches you boys to write and read only your own names? Or rather did you write the names of your enemies no less than your own names and the names of your friends? – Just as much. – In doing so, were you meddling in other people’s own affairs, then, and being intemperate? – Not at all. – And yet you were not really doing your own things, if writing and reading are really doing something. – Well, they really are. – Besides, my friend, I presume that treating patients, building houses, weaving clothes, and producing any product whatsoever that is the work of any art are cases of doing something. – They certainly are. – Well then, do you think that a city would be well governed by this law that orders that each person should weave and wash their own cloak and make their own shoes, flask scraper, and everything else according to the same principle that one should not touch other people’s things but make and do one’s own things for oneself? – I don’t think so, he replied. – Nonetheless, I said, if a city were to be governed temperately, it would be governed

well. – Of course, he said. – Then, I said, temperance would not be ‘doing one’s own’ in those kinds of cases or in that way. – It seems that it would not.

– So, it seems that the person who claimed that temperance is doing one’s own was riddling, as I was saying a moment ago. For he couldn’t have been as simple-minded as that. Or was it some idiot that you heard claiming this, Charmides? – Not at all, he said, for he seemed very wise indeed. – Then, in view of the difficulty to understand what doing one’s own can mean, it seems to me virtually certain that he was challenging you with a riddle. – Perhaps, he said. – Well, what could it mean ‘to do one’s own’? Can you say? – By Zeus, he exclaimed, I really have no idea. But it may well be that not even the man who said it had the least idea of what he meant. And as he was saying this, he laughed a little and looked away towards Critias.

Enter Critias: The Third Definition Revisited –Temperance Is the Doing or Making of Good Things (162c1–164d3)

Well, it was clear that, for some time, Critias had been both anguished and desirous to distinguish himself in the eyes of Charmides and the present company, and having barely contained himself until then, at that point he became unable to do so. For I believe that what I had supposed was entirely true, namely that Charmides had heard this answer concerning temperance from Critias. And because Charmides did not want to explain the answer himself but wanted Critias to, he was trying to stir him up and insinuated that he [sc. Critias] had been refuted. Of course, Critias did not tolerate this, but seemed to me to get angry at Charmides as a poet gets angry at an actor who performs his verses badly on stage. So, he stared hard at Charmides and said: ‘do you really think, Charmides, that, if you don’t know what was the meaning of the man who claimed that temperance is “to do own’s own”, he did not know it either?’ – But my dear Critias, I said, given Charmides’ age, his ignorance is no surprise at all. You, on the other hand, can reasonably be expected to know, both because of your age and because of your studies. Thus, if you agree that temperance is what our friend here says it is and you are taking over the argument, I would feel much greater pleasure in examining together with you whether this assertion is true or not. – Indeed, he said, I do agree and am taking it over.

– You do well to do so, I said.

– Tell me, do you also agree about what I was asking just now, namely that all craftsmen make something? – Indeed. – So, do they seem to you to

make only their own things or also other people's things? – Other people's things as well. – So, are they being temperate, even though they do not make only their own things? – Why, he said, what is there to prevent that? – Nothing for me at least, I replied; but see whether it may not prevent him who, having posited that temperance is doing one's own, then goes on to say that nothing prevents those who do other people's own from being temperate as well.

– Pray, he said, have I agreed to this, that those who do other people's things are temperate, or⁴ was my agreement about those who make things?⁵ – Tell me, I said, don't you call making and doing one and the same? – Certainly not, he replied. Nor do I call working and making the same either. For this I learned from Hesiod, who said, 'Work is no disgrace'. Do you suppose, then, that if he called such works as you were mentioning just now workings and doings, he would have claimed that no disgrace is attached to the shoe-maker or the pickle-seller or the pimp? Of course, Socrates, this is unthinkable. Rather he held, I surmise, that making is something different from doing and working, and that while something made can occasionally become a disgrace, when its production does not involve what is fine, work can never be shameful. For things made in a good and beneficial manner he called works, and such makings he called both workings and doings. Indeed, we should suppose him also to have declared that only things of this sort are our own proper concerns, whereas all harmful things are other people's concerns. Hence we should conclude that both Hesiod and every other sensible person call temperate the man who does his own.

– Ah, Critias, I said, as soon as you began to talk I pretty much grasped your meaning, namely that the things that are proper to oneself or one's own you called good and the makings of good things you called doings. For in fact I have heard Prodicus drawing countless distinctions concerning names. Well, you have my permission to assign to each thing any name you please. Only make clear whenever you say a name what you are applying the name to. So begin now all over again and give a clearer definition.

Do you claim that the doing or making, or whatever else you want to call it, of good things is temperance? – Yes, I do, he said. – Then, it is not the person who does evil actions but the person who does good actions that is temperate, right? – Don't you <yourself> think so, my excellent friend? he said. – Leave that aside, I replied. For let's not yet examine what I think, but what you are saying now. – All right then, he said. I claim that the

⁴ 163a11 ἦ T εἰ Burnet. ⁵ I am supplying a question mark at 163a12.

person who is not making good things but bad things is not temperate, whereas the person who is making good things and not bad things is temperate. For I give you as a straightforward definition of temperance the doing of good things. – Perhaps there is no reason why your claim should not be true. But, I continued, I am surprised that you believe people who are being temperate do not know that they are being temperate. – But I don't believe that, he said. – Didn't you say a little while ago, I said, that nothing prevents the craftsmen from being temperate when they make other people's things as well [as their own]? – I did say it, he answered. But what of it? – Nothing. Tell me, however, whether you think that some doctor, when he makes someone healthy, makes something beneficial both for himself and for the person whom he heals. – I do think that. – And the person who does this does what he ought? – Yes. – Is not the person who does what he ought temperate? – Certainly he is. – Well, and does the doctor necessarily know when his cure is beneficial and when it is not? What is more, does every craftsman necessarily know when he will benefit from the work that he is doing and when he won't? – Perhaps not. – So, sometimes, I said, the doctor may have acted beneficially or harmfully but fail to know himself in respect of how he has acted. And yet, according to your account, in acting beneficially he has acted temperately. Or is this not what you said? – It is. – Then, it seems, on some occasions the doctor acts beneficially and thereby acts temperately and is temperate, but nonetheless is ignorant of himself, namely of the fact that he is being temperate.

– But Socrates, he said, that could never happen. But if you think that this is in any way a necessary consequence deriving from the things I previously agreed, I would certainly prefer to withdraw some of them and I would not be ashamed to declare that I have spoken incorrectly, rather than ever agree that a person who is ignorant of himself is temperate.

Critias' Speech: Temperance Is Knowing Oneself (164d4–165c4)

As a matter of fact, I am almost ready to assert that this very thing, to know oneself, is temperance, and I am of the same mind as the person who put up an inscription to that effect at Delphi. For it seems to me that this inscription has been put up for the following purpose, to serve as a greeting from the god to those who enter the temple instead of the usual 'Be Joyful', since this greeting, 'Be Joyful', is not right, nor should people use it to exhort one another, but rather they should use the greeting 'Be Temperate'. Thus, the god addresses those entering the temple in a manner different in some respects from that in which men address each

other, and it is with that thought in mind, I believe, that the person who put up the inscription did so. And it is alleged that he [sc. the god] says to every man who enters the temple nothing other than 'Be Temperate'. However, he says it in a more enigmatic manner, as a prophet would. For while 'Know Thyself' and 'Be Temperate' are one and the same, as the inscription and I assert, perhaps one might think that they are different – an error that, I believe, has been committed by the dedicators of the later inscriptions, i.e. 'Nothing too much' and 'A rash pledge and, immediately, perdition'. For they supposed that 'Know Thyself' was a piece of advice, not the god's greeting to those who were entering.⁶ And so, in order that their own dedications too would no less contain pieces of useful advice, they inscribed these words and put them up in the temple. The purpose for which I say all this, Socrates, is the following: I concede to you everything that was debated beforehand. For concerning them perhaps you said something more correct than I did, but, in any case, nothing we said was really clear. However, I am now ready to give you an argument for this, if you don't agree that temperance is to know oneself.

- Critias, I said, you treat me as though I claimed to know the things that I ask about, and as though I shall agree with you if only I want to. But this is not so. Rather, you see, I always enquire together with you into whatever claim is put forward, because I myself do not know. Thus, it will be after considering the matter that I am willing to state whether or not I agree. So, please hold back until I have done so. – Do consider then, he said. – I am doing so, I replied.

Socrates and Critias Debate the *Technê* Analogy: From 'Knowing Oneself' to 'the Knowledge of Itself' (165c4–166e3)

For if in fact temperance is knowing something, then it is obvious that it would be a sort of knowledge or science and, moreover, a science of something. Or not? – Indeed it is, he replied, of oneself. – And isn't medicine the science of health? – Very much so. – So, I said, if you asked me what use medicine is to us, being the science of health, and what work it achieves, I would answer that it achieves no small benefit. For it produces health, a fine work for us, if you are willing to accept as much. – I am. – And likewise, if you asked me what work is achieved by housebuilding, since it is the science of how to build, I would say houses. And the same holds for the other arts as well. Therefore you too, on behalf of temperance,

⁶ I delete *ἐνεκεν*, following Cobet.

since you claim that it is a science of oneself, should be able to tell us the answer, if asked, 'Critias, given that temperance is the science of oneself, what fine work worthy of the name does it achieve for us? Come, do tell us'.

– But Socrates, he said, you are not conducting the enquiry in the right manner. For this science is not like the other sciences, nor indeed are the other sciences like each other. Yet you are conducting the investigation as if they were alike. For tell me, he said, what is the work of the art of calculation or the art of geometry, comparable to the way a house is the work of the art of building, or a coat is the work of the art of weaving, or many other such works are those of many arts that one might be able to point to? Can you, in your turn, point out to me some work of that kind in those (two) cases? But you cannot.

– What you say is true, I replied. But what I can point out to you is what thing, different from the science itself, each of these sciences is *of*.⁷ For instance, the science of calculation is presumably the science of the even and the odd, how they are quantitatively related to themselves and to each other. Is that right? – Of course, he said. – The odd and the even being different from the art of calculation itself? – How could they not be? – And again, the art of weighing is concerned with weighing heavier and lighter weight, and the heavy and the light are different from the art of weighing itself. Do you agree? – I do. – Tell me, then, what is that of which temperance is a science and which is different from temperance itself?

– There it is, Socrates, he said. You have reached the real issue of the investigation, namely in what respect temperance differs from all the other sciences. But you are trying to find some similarity between it and them and that is not how things stand. Rather, while all the others are sciences of something other than themselves and not of themselves, this one alone is the science both of all the other sciences and of itself [*epistêmê autê heautês*]. And these matters are far from having escaped your attention. In fact, I believe that you are doing precisely what you just said that you were not doing. For you are trying to refute me, abandoning the topic that the argument is about. – If my chief effort is to refute you, I said, how can you possibly think that I do it for any other reason than that for the sake of which I would also investigate what I am saying, i.e. the fear of inadvertently supposing at any time that I knew something while I didn't know it? And so this is what I am now doing: I am examining the argument first and foremost for my own sake, but perhaps also for the sake of my other companions. Or do you not think that the discovery of the nature of

⁷ Emphasis added here and everywhere else in the translation.

each being is a common good for almost all humans? – Indeed I do, Socrates, he replied. – Be brave then, I said, my dear friend, and answer the question put to you according to what seems to you to be the case, without caring whether it is Critias or Socrates who is being cross-examined. Rather focus your attention on the argument and examine what the outcome will be of its being cross-examined. – Fine, I shall do so. For I think that what you say makes sense.

**Critias' Final Definition: Temperance Is 'the Science of Itself
and the Other Sciences' or 'the Science of Science'
(166e4–167a8) – The Third Offering to Zeus (167a9–c8)**

– So tell me, I said, what you mean with regard to temperance. – I mean, he said, that it alone of all of the sciences is a science of both itself and the other sciences. – Then, I said, if indeed it is a science of science or knowledge of knowledge, will it not be knowledge of non-science or ignorance as well? – Very much so, he said. – So, the temperate man alone will know himself and will be able to examine thoroughly what he really knows and what he does not know, and will be capable of judging others in the same way, namely as to what someone knows and thinks he knows in cases in which he does know and again what someone thinks he knows but in fact does not know, and no one else will be capable of that. And so this is what being temperate and temperance and knowing oneself are, namely to know what one knows and what one does not know. Is that what you are saying? – Indeed, he replied.

– Once more then, I said, as a third offering to the Saviour, let us investigate as if from the beginning, first, whether or not this thing is possible, namely to know of what one knows and does not know that one knows and does not know it; and second, however possible this may be, what would be the benefit to us of knowing it. – True, he said, we must examine this.

– Come then, Critias, I said, see if you can show yourself more resourceful than I am about it. For I myself am perplexed. Shall I tell you exactly how I am perplexed? – By all means, do so. – Well, I said, assuming that what you said just now is the case, wouldn't the whole thing amount to this, namely that there is one science which is not of any other thing but only science of itself and the other sciences, and moreover that this same science is also a science of the absence of science as well? – Very much so. – Then look what a strange thing we are trying to say, my friend. For if you

consider this very same thing in other cases, you will surely come to think, as I do, that it is impossible. – How so and in what cases? – These ones.

Can There Be an *Epistêmê* of Itself? The Argument from Relatives (167c8–169c2)

Reflect on whether it seems to you that there is some sight which is not of the things that the other sights are of, but is a sight of itself and of the other sights and likewise of the absence of sight [literally: non-sights] and which, although it is sight, sees no colour but rather sees itself and the other sights. Do you think there is such a sight? – No, by Zeus, I certainly do not. – What about some hearing which hears no sound, but does hear itself and the other hearings and non-hearings? – There isn't such a thing either. – Consider now all the senses taken together, whether it seems to you that there is a sense which is of senses and of itself while perceiving none of the things that the other senses perceive. – No, it does not seem so.

– Well then, does there seem to you to be some desire which is not desire of any pleasure, but of itself and the other desires? – No, indeed. – Nor again, it seems to me, a will or rational wish which does not will any good, but wills itself and the other wills? – No, there isn't. – And would you say that there is a kind of love of that sort, one that is actually love of nothing beautiful but of itself and the other loves? – No, he replied, I certainly wouldn't. – And have you ever conceived of a fear which fears itself and the other fears, but fears no fearsome thing? – No, I have not, he said. – Or a belief or opinion which is a belief of beliefs and of itself, but does not believe any one of the things that the other beliefs believe? – Of course not.

– Nonetheless, we apparently do assert, do we not, that there is a science of this kind, which is not a science of any object of learning, but a science of itself and the other sciences. – Indeed, we do. – And would it not be something strange if it really exists? Let us not yet declare that it doesn't, but consider further whether it does. – Quite right.

– Now, consider the following. This science is a science *of something*, and it has a power such as to be *of something*, is that not so? – Indeed. – For we say that the greater too has a certain power such as to be greater *than something*, right? – Quite so. – Namely, than something smaller, if it is going to be greater. – Necessarily. – So if we were to find something greater which is greater than both the greater [things] and than itself but not greater than any one of the [things] that the other greater [things] are greater than, then, if indeed it were greater than itself, that very property would also necessarily belong to it somehow, namely it would also be

smaller than itself. Or is it not so? – It is absolutely necessary, Socrates, he said. – And also, if there is a double of both the other doubles and itself, then of course it would be double of itself and the other doubles by being half. For there presumably isn't a double of anything other than of half. – True. – And if something is more than itself it will also be less, if heavier than lighter, if older than younger, and likewise for all the other cases. Whatever has its own power directed towards itself, won't it also have that special nature towards which its power was directed? I mean something like this: hearing, for instance, we say, is hearing of nothing but sound, is it not? – Yes. – So, if it is going to hear itself, it will hear itself as having sound; for there is no other way that it could hear. – Most necessarily. – And I suppose sight too, my excellent friend, if it really is going to see itself, must itself have some colour; for sight will never see anything colourless. – Certainly not.

– Then do you see, Critias, that, of the cases that we have gone through, some of them appear to us to be entirely impossible, while others utterly defy belief as to whether they could ever have their own power directed towards themselves? For, on the one hand, in the cases of magnitudes and multitudes and the like this seems entirely impossible. Or not? – Very much so. – On the other hand again, hearing and sight, and moreover motion moving itself and heat burning itself and all other such cases, may arouse disbelief in some people, but perhaps not in others.

What is needed in fact, my friend, is some great man who will draw this division in a satisfactory manner regarding every aspect: whether no being is naturally constituted so as to have its own power directed towards itself but [only] towards something other than itself,⁸ or whether some beings are so constituted whereas others are not; and again, if there are beings which have it towards themselves, whether or not they include the science which we claim to be temperance. For my own part, I do not believe that I am myself able to draw this division. And therefore, neither am I in a position to affirm with confidence whether it is possible that this obtains, namely that there is a science of science, nor, supposing that it is perfectly possible, do I accept that this is temperance before I have examined whether or not something would benefit us in virtue of being of such a sort – for, in fact, I have the intuition that temperance is something beneficial and good. You therefore, son of Callaeschrus – since you contend that temperance is this very thing, the science of science and moreover of the absence of science – first, prove that this thing I was just

⁸ πλὴν ἐπιστήμης secl. Schleiermacher.

mentioning is possible;⁹ and second, in addition to being possible, that it is also beneficial. And then perhaps you would satisfy me as well that you are speaking correctly about what temperance is.

The Argument from Benefit (169c3–175a8)

Stage 1 (169c3–170a4)

And when Critias heard these things and saw that I was puzzled, he appeared to me to be compelled by my own state of puzzlement to be besieged and captured by puzzlement himself too, just as those who see people yawning in front of them have the very same sensation induced in them. And since he used regularly to make a good impression, he felt ashamed before the company, and did not want to concede to me that he was unable to go through the divisions that I was challenging him to draw, and made a vague comment which concealed his puzzlement. And so, in order for our argument to go forward, I said: ‘alternatively, Critias, if it seems to you a good idea, let us for now make the following concession, that there may possibly be a science of science, but we shall investigate whether or not this is so some other time. Come then, consider: assuming that this science is perfectly possible, why or how does it make it any more possible for one to know what one knows and what one doesn’t? For this is exactly what we said is to know oneself or be temperate. Did we not?’ – Very much so, he said. And indeed, Socrates, this must surely follow. For if someone has a knowledge or science which knows itself, he himself would be of the same kind as that which he has. Just as whenever someone has swiftness, he is swift, and whenever someone has beauty, he is beautiful, and whenever someone has knowledge, he is knowing, so whenever someone has knowledge that is of itself, he will then, surely, be knowledgeable of himself. – I do not dispute this point, I said, namely that when someone has the very thing which knows itself, he will know himself. However, what sort of necessity is there for the person who has it [sc. that which knows itself] to know *what* he knows and *what* he does not know? – Because, Socrates, this knowledge is the same as the other. – Perhaps, I said. But I am afraid I am always in a similar condition. For I still do not understand how knowing *what* one knows and doesn’t is the same [as that other knowledge].

⁹ ἀποδείξαι σε secl. Heindorf.

Stage 2 (170a5–171c10)

– How do you mean? he asked. – I mean this, I said. Supposing that perhaps there is a science of science, will it really be able to distinguish anything more than that, namely that of two things, the one is science but the other is not? – No, just that much. – Then, is the science or lack of science of health the same thing as the science or lack of science of justice? – Certainly not. – Rather, I think, the one is the science of medicine, the other is the science of politics, and the science we are talking about is of nothing but science. – It must be so. – And if a person does not have additional knowledge of health and justice but knows only knowledge because he has knowledge of only that thing, namely *that* [*hoti*] he knows something and that he has some knowledge, he would also probably know that he has some knowledge both about himself and about others. Isn't that so? – Yes. – But how will he know *what* [*ho ti*] he knows by virtue of that knowledge? For he knows, of course, health by virtue of medicine and not of temperance, harmony by virtue of music and not of temperance, building by virtue of the art of building and not of temperance, and the same holds for all cases. Or not? – It seems so. – But if temperance is indeed a science only of sciences, how will [the temperate person] know that he knows health or that he knows building? – He won't know it in any way.

– Hence, the person who is ignorant of this [sc. health or building] will not know *what* he knows but only *that* he knows. – It seems so. – Therefore, being temperate and temperance would not be this, i.e. knowing *what* one knows and *what* one doesn't know, but, it seems, knowing only *that* one knows and *that* one doesn't know. – Maybe. – And so such a person will not be able to examine another man claiming to know something as to whether he does or doesn't know *what* he claims to know. But, as it seems, he will know only this much, *that* he has some science; however, temperance will not make him know *what* that science is *of*. – Apparently not. – Consequently, he will not be able either to distinguish from the real doctor the person who pretends to be a doctor without being one, or any other knowledgeable expert from a non-expert.

Let us consider the matter from a different starting point. If the temperate man or anyone else is going to discriminate between the person who is truly a doctor and the one who is not, won't he behave as follows? Surely, he will not discuss with him about medicine – for, as we have said, the doctor has knowledge of nothing other than health and disease. Isn't that so? – It is. – But he knows nothing of science; instead we have assigned that to temperance alone. – Yes. – Therefore, the medical man knows nothing

of medicine either, since medicine is in fact a science. – True. – Thus, the temperate man will know that the doctor possesses a certain science. But when he has to test which one it is, will he consider anything other than what things it is a science of? Or is it not the case that each science is defined not merely as a science but also as a particular one,¹⁰ by virtue of this, namely its being of certain specific objects? – Surely it is. – And medicine was defined as being different from the other sciences by virtue of the fact that it was the science of health and disease, right?¹¹ – Yes. – So, mustn't anyone wishing to enquire into medicine enquire into what domain medicine is found in? For he would presumably not enquire into domains external to these in which it is not found. – Of course not. – Hence it is in the domain of health and disease that the person who enquires in the correct manner will enquire into the doctor *qua* doctor. – It seems so. – Won't he enquire as to whether, in things either thus said or thus done, what is said is said truly and what is done is done correctly? – Necessarily. – Now, could a person pursue either of these lines of enquiry without the art of medicine? – Surely not. – Nor, it seems, could anyone else, except a doctor, nor indeed could the temperate man. For otherwise he would have to be a doctor in addition to his temperance. – That is true.

– Hence it is very probable that, if temperance is only a science of science and of the lack of science, it will not be able to distinguish either a doctor who knows the subjects pertaining to his art from a man who does not know them but pretends or believes that he does, or any other expert of those knowledgeable in anything at all, except for the one who happens to have the same art as the temperate man himself, as is the case with all other specialists as well. – So it seems, he said.

Stage 3 (171d1–172c3)

– What benefit then, Critias, I asked, may we still derive from temperance, if it is of such kind? For if, as we supposed from the beginning, the temperate person knew *what* he knew and *what* he did not know, *that* he knows the former but *that* he does not know the latter, and if he were able to recognise another man who has found himself in this same condition, we agree that it would be greatly to our benefit to be temperate. For we would live our life free of error, both we ourselves¹² who would have

¹⁰ I change τῆς, the interrogative printed by Burnet at 171a6, to the indefinite pronoun τῆς.

¹¹ I end the Greek sentence at 171a9 with a question mark, where Burnet has a full stop.

¹² I preserve the ms. reading καὶ deleted by Heindorf.

temperance and all the others who would be governed by us. For neither would we ourselves try to do *what* we did not know, but rather would find those who do know and would hand the matter over to them, nor would we allow the other people governed by us to do anything different from *what* they would be bound to do correctly; and this would be what they would have knowledge or science of.¹³ In just this way, then, a house administered by temperance would be well administered, a state would be well ruled, and the same holds for everything else governed by temperance. For, with error removed and correctness leading, it is necessary that the people who are in such condition will act in their every action in a fine and good manner, and that those who do act well will be happy. Did we not, Critias, speak of temperance in that manner, I said, when we were saying what a great good it was to know both what one knows and does not know? – Very much so, he replied. – But now you see, I said, that such a science has appeared nowhere. – I do, he said.

– And so, said I, it may be that the science that we now find to be temperance, namely to know science and the lack of science, has this good attached to it: the person who possesses it will learn more easily whatever else he learns and will perceive everything more clearly, since, in addition to every particular thing that he learns, he also has science in view. And moreover, he will test others more reliably about whatever subjects he also has learnt himself, whereas those who test without having this advantage will do so in a weaker and worse manner. Are these perhaps, my friend, the sorts of benefit that we shall derive from temperance, and are we picturing something greater, and asking for it to be something greater than it really is? – Perhaps, he replied, this may be so.

Stage 4 (172c4–173d7)

– Perhaps, I said. But also, perhaps, we were enquiring about nothing of value. My evidence is that certain strange things seem to me true of temperance, if it is such a thing. For let us examine the matter, if you wish, conceding that it is possible to know knowledge or science and, moreover, let us not withdraw but grant that temperance is what we said from the beginning it is, to know both *what* one knows and *what* one does not know. And having granted all this, let us yet better investigate whether something, if it is of that sort, will also be of benefit to us. For what we were saying just now, that if temperance

¹³ I put a full stop after εἶχον.

were such a thing, it would be a great good as our guide in the administration of both the household and city, we have not, I think, done well to agree to, Critias.

– How so? he asked. – Because, I answered, we conceded easily that it is a great good for men if each one of us did *what* he knew but delegated to other people, namely the experts, what he did not expertly know. – And were we not right to concede this? he asked. – I think not, I said. – You’re really talking nonsense Socrates, he said. – Yes, I said, by the Dog, I too have the same impression. And, indeed, it is precisely in view of that that I said just now that certain conclusions strike me as strange and that I feared that we were not conducting the investigation in the right way. For, in truth, even if temperance is very much the sort of thing we said it is, it does not seem at all clear to me that it achieves something good for us. – How do you mean? he asked. Tell us, so that we too can know what you mean. – I think I am talking nonsense, I said. But all the same, it is necessary to examine what appears before one’s eyes and not let it idly go by, if one has even a little care for oneself. – Well said, he responded.

– Listen then, I said, to my dream, whether it has come through the gate of horn or through the gate of ivory. For supposing that temperance were as we now define it and completely governed us, absolutely everything would be done according to the sciences, and neither would anyone deceive us by claiming to be a navigator when he was not, or a doctor, or a general, nor would anyone else remain undetected if he pretended to know what he did not know. And from things being that way nothing else could result for us than that our bodies would be healthier than they are now, and that we would be safe when facing the dangers of sea-travel and war, and that all our vessels or utensils and clothes and footwear and all other things would be expertly made for us because we would use true craftsmen. And moreover, if you would like, let us concede that divination is the science of what is to be in the future, and that temperance, which oversees it, will turn away charlatans and establish for us the true diviners as prophets of what is to be. I do admit that, if mankind were organised in that way, it would act and live scientifically. For temperance, being on guard, would not allow the lack of science to burst in and take part in our deeds. But that by acting scientifically we would also do well and be happy, this, my dear Critias, we cannot know as yet. – However, he retorted, if you discredit acting scientifically, you will not easily find some other goal of acting well.

Stage 5 (173d8–175a8)

– Instruct me, then, about one more small detail, I said. You mean acting scientifically or knowledgeably in respect of what? Of cutting the leather for shoe-making? – By Zeus, certainly not. – Of the working of brass? – Not at all. – Of wool, or of wood, or of any other such thing? – Of course not. – Therefore, I said, we are no longer abiding by the claim that he who lives scientifically is happy. For although these experts live scientifically, you do not acknowledge that they are happy, but rather you seem to me to demarcate the happy person as someone who lives scientifically in respect of certain things. Perhaps you mean the man I was just referring to, namely the one who knows everything that is to be, the seer. Do you mean him or someone else? – Well, he replied, both him and someone else. Whom? I asked. Is it the sort of person who might know, in addition to what is to be, both everything that has been and everything that now is and might be ignorant of nothing? Let us assume that there is such a person. I won't say, I imagine, that there is anyone alive that knows more than he does. – Certainly not.

– There is still one more thing I desire to know in addition: which one of the sciences makes him happy? Or do all of them do so in the same way? – Not at all in the same way, he said. – But what sort of science makes him supremely happy? The science by which he knows one of the things that are or have been or will be in the future? Is it perhaps the science by which he knows how to play draughts? – What are you talking about! he said. Draughts indeed!

– What about the science by which he knows how to calculate? – Not in the least. – Well, is it the one by which he knows what is healthy? – More so, he said. – But that one which I mean makes him happy most of all, said I, is the science by which he knows what kind of thing? – That, he replied, by which he knows good and evil.

– You wretch! I said. All this time you have been dragging me around in a circle, while you were concealing the fact that what made a person do well and be happy was not living scientifically, not even if this were science of all the other sciences together, but only if it were science of this one science alone, namely the science concerning good and evil. Because, Critias, if you choose to remove this science from the set of other sciences, will medicine any the less produce health, or cobbling shoes, or weaving clothes? Or will the art of navigation any the less prevent passengers from dying at sea, or the military art from dying in war? – No less at all, he said. – However, my

dear Critias, if this science [sc. the science of good and evil] is lacking, the good and beneficial execution of each of these tasks will be gone out of our reach. – This is true. – And this science, it seems, is not temperance but a science whose function is to benefit us. For it is not a science of the sciences and the lack of the sciences, but of good and evil, so that, if this is beneficial, temperance would be something else for us.¹⁴

– But why, he said, should it [sc. the science of science] not be beneficial? For if temperance is above all a science of the sciences and presides too over the other sciences, then, in virtue of ruling over this one, i.e. the science of the good, surely it would benefit us.

– And, I replied, would this science, and not medicine, also make people healthy? Moreover, would it be the one to bring about the works of the other arts, and the other arts not have each its own work? Or have we not been protesting for some time that it is only a science of science and the lack of science, but of nothing else? Is that not so? – Indeed, it appears to be. – So, it will not be a producer of health? – No, it will not. – For health is the object of another art, is it not? – Yes, of another. – Therefore, my friend, it [sc. the science of science] will not be a producer of benefit either. For, again, we just now attributed this function to another art, did we not? – Very much so. – In what way, then, will temperance be beneficial since it is not the producer of any benefit? – In no way at all, Socrates, it seems.

The Epilogue: Philosophical Conclusions and Dramatic Closure (175a9–176d5)

Pulling Strings Together (175a9–d5)

– Do you see, then, Critias, that my earlier fears were reasonable and that I was rightly accusing myself of failing to bring under scrutiny anything worthwhile about temperance? For if I had been of any use for conducting a good search, it wouldn't have been the case that what is agreed to be the finest of all things would somehow have appeared to us to be of no benefit. And now, you see, we are vanquished on all fronts, and are unable to discover to which one of the things there are the lawgiver attached this name, temperance. Nonetheless we have made many concessions which were not forced upon us by the argument. For, as a matter of fact, we conceded that there is a science of science, even though the argument

¹⁴ Following Burnet I excise ἡ ὠφελίμη present in B and T.

neither allowed nor asserted that there is. Again, although the argument did not allow this, we conceded in our favour that the temperate man knows through this science the functions of the other sciences as well, so that we would find him knowledgeable both of knowing *what* things he knows *that* he knows them and of knowing *what* things he does not know *that* he doesn't know them. And we granted this in the most bountiful manner, without examining the impossibility of somehow knowing things that one doesn't know in any way at all; for the concession we agreed on amounts to saying that one knows about them that one doesn't know them. And yet, as I think, this might appear more irrational than anything. However, although the enquiry has shown us to be so soft and lacking in rigour, it cannot do any better in finding the truth, but derided it [sc. the truth] to such an extent that the very thing which, by agreeing with each other and by moulding it together, we earlier posited to be temperance the enquiry has with the utmost contempt shown to be useless.

Socrates' Last Address to Charmides (175d5–176a5)

So far as I am concerned, I am not so upset. However, I said, I am very upset indeed on your own account, if it turns out that, although you have an appearance like yours and moreover are perfectly temperate in your soul, you will draw no profit from this temperance nor will it by its presence in any way benefit you in your life. And I feel still more upset on account of the charm which I learnt from the Thracian, if I have taken so much trouble to learn it while it has no worth at all. As a matter of fact, I really do not think that this is the case. Rather, I am a bad enquirer. For temperance is surely a great good and, if you do possess it, you are blessed. So, see whether you have it and stand in no need of the charm. For if you have it, I would rather advise you to consider me to be a fool unable to investigate anything whatsoever by means of argument, but yourself to be as happy as you are temperate.

The Final Scene (176a6–d5)

Then Charmides retorted: 'by Zeus, Socrates, I really do not know whether I have temperance or whether I don't. For how could I know something regarding which, as you yourself say, not even you and Critias are able to discover what on earth it is? However, I do not entirely believe you, and I think, Socrates, that I am much in need of the charm. And, so far as I am

concerned, there is no obstacle to my being charmed by you for as many days as it takes, until you say that it is enough'.

– Well, Charmides, said Critias, it will be proof for me that you are temperate if you do this: if you turn yourself over to Socrates to be charmed and do not leave his side much or little. – Be sure, he said, that I shall follow him and shall not leave his side. For I would be doing something bad if I didn't obey you, my guardian, and if I did not do what you order. – Indeed, he said, I do so order. – I shall do it, then, he said, beginning this very day. – You two, I said, what are you planning to do? – Nothing, Charmides replied, we have already made a plan. – Will you use force then, I said, and won't you give me preliminary hearing? – Be sure that I shall use force, he answered, since this man here gives the command. Consider again what you will do about this. – But there is nothing left to consider, I said. For when you attempt any operation and use force, no human being will be able to oppose you. – Well then, he replied, do not oppose me either. – Very well, I said, I shall not.