

THE
REPUBLIC
OF
PLATO

EDITED WITH CRITICAL NOTES
COMMENTARY AND APPENDICES

BY

JAMES ADAM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY D. A. REES

INTRODUCTION & BOOKS I-V

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VOLUME I
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TO
THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT ALEXANDER NEIL
I GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE
THIS BOOK

*εἰς ἐκεῖνον τὸν βίον, ὅταν αὖθις γενόμενοι τοῖς τοιούτοις
ἐντύχωμεν λόγοις.*

ἐν οὐρανῷ ἵσως παρὰδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλόμενῳ ὁπᾶν καὶ
ὄψῳντι ἕαυτον κατοικίσειν.

PREFACE.

THE *Republic* of Plato touches on so many problems of human life and thought, and appeals to so many diverse types of mind and character, that an editor cannot pretend to have exhausted its significance by means of a commentary. In one sense of the term, indeed, there can never be a definitive or final interpretation of the *Republic*: for the *Republic* is one of those few works of genius which have a perennial interest and value for the human race; and in every successive generation those in whom man's inborn passion for ideals is not quenched, will claim the right to interpret the fountain-head of idealism for themselves, in the light of their own experience and needs. But in another sense of the word, every commentator on the *Republic* believes in the possibility of a final and assured interpretation, and it is this belief which is at once the justification and the solace of his labours. Without desiring in any way to supersede that personal apprehension of Platonism through which alone it has power to cleanse and reanimate the individual soul, we cannot too strongly insist that certain particular images and conceptions, to the exclusion of others, were present in the mind of Plato as he wrote. These images, and these conceptions, it is the duty and province of an editor to elucidate, in the first instance, by a patient and laborious study of Plato's style and diction, divesting himself, as far as may be, of every personal prejudice and predilection. The sentiment should then be expounded and explained, wherever possible, by reference to other passages in the *Republic* and the rest of Plato's writings, and afterwards from other Greek authors, particularly those who wrote before or during the lifetime of Plato. The lines of Goethe,

Wer den Dichter will verstehen
Muss in Dichters Lande gehen,

apply with peculiar force to the study of the *Republic*, a dialogue which more than any other work of Plato abounds in allusions

both implicit and explicit to the history, poetry, art, religion and philosophy of ancient Greece. By such a method of exegesis, provided it is securely based on a careful analysis of the language, we may hope to disentangle in some degree the different threads which are united in Plato's thought, and thus contribute something towards an objective and impersonal interpretation of the *Republic*, as in itself one of the greatest literary and philosophical monuments of any age, and not merely a treasure-house of arguments in support of any school of thought or dogma.

I have done what in me lies to make an edition of the *Republic* in accordance with these principles. Although it has sometimes appeared necessary, for the better exposition of Plato's meaning, to compare or contrast the doctrine, of the *Republic* with the views of later writers on philosophy, any systematic attempt to trace the connexion between Platonism and modern political, religious, or philosophical theory is foreign to the scope of this edition. I am far from underestimating the interest and importance of such an enquiry: no intellectual exercise that I know of is more stimulating or suggestive: but it is unfortunately fraught with danger for anyone whose object is merely to interpret Plato's meaning faithfully and without bias. The history of Platonic criticism from Proclus to the present time has shewn that it is difficult for a commentator who is constantly looking for parallels in contemporary thought to maintain the degree of intellectual detachment which the study of Plato's idealism demands; and although it is true that the genius of Plato outsoars the limits of time and place, the best preparation for following its flight is to make ourselves co-heirs with him in his intellectual heritage, and transport ourselves as far as possible into the atmosphere in which he lived. The influence of Plato on succeeding thinkers from Aristotle down to the present day is a subject of extraordinary range and fascination, but it belongs to the history, rather than to the interpretation, of Platonism. If ever that history is fully told, we shall begin to understand the greatness of the debt we owe to Plato, not only in philosophy, but also in religion. In the meantime we can only rejoice that Platonism is still a living force in both: *ἔτι ἥλιος ἐπὶ τοῖς ὄρεσι καὶ οὐπω δέδυκεν.*

One of the most toilsome duties which an editor of the *Republic* has to face is that of reading and digesting the

enormous mass of critical and exegetical literature to which the dialogue, particularly during the last century, has given rise. I have endeavoured to discharge this duty, so far as opportunity allowed; and if the labour has sometimes proved tedious and unremunerative, it is none the less true that in some instances the perusal of obscure and half-forgotten pamphlets and articles has furnished the key to what I believe to be the true interpretation. In many other cases, where the thesis which a writer seeks to prove is demonstrably false, the evidence which he accumulates in its support has served to illustrate and enforce a truer and more temperate view. But in spite of all the learning and ingenuity which have been expended on the *Republic* during recent years, there still remain a large number of passages of which no satisfactory explanation has hitherto been offered, and a still larger number which have been only imperfectly and partially explained. I have submitted all these passages to a fresh examination, partly in the Notes and partly in the Appendices, and although I cannot hope to have placed them all beyond the pale of controversy, I have spared no amount of time and labour to discover the truth, and in many cases I have been able to arrive at views which will, I hope, command the assent of others as well as myself. Wherever I have consciously borrowed anything of importance from previous commentators and writers, I have made acknowledgement in the notes; but a word of special gratitude is due to Schneider, to whom I am more indebted than to any other single commentator on the *Republic*. Since I began my task, the long-expected edition of the *Republic* by Jowett and Campbell has made its appearance, and I have found their scholarly and lucid commentary of service even in those places where it has seemed to me inadequate or inconclusive. Professor Burnet's text of the *Republic* was not available until the larger part of this edition had been printed off, but I have been able to make some use of his work in the later books.

I have to thank a number of friends for assistance rendered in various ways, and above all my former teacher, Dr Henry Jackson, of Trinity College, who has read through all the proofs and contributed many corrections and suggestions. Mr Archer-Hind, of Trinity College, and Mr P. Giles, of Emmanuel College, have also helped me with their criticisms on some portions of the work. To Professor J. Cook Wilson, of New College, Oxford,