A ONE-PAGE SHEET

The Republic

Plato

C. 380 BC · BENJAMIN JOWETT, 1892

Justice in city and soul

Plato looks for justice first in a city, then in a single person. In both, justice is each part doing its own proper work, with reason in command, not a bargain struck by the strongest.

Reason, spirit, appetite

He divides the soul into reason, spirit, and appetite. A just life is their right order: reason rules, spirit supports it, and appetite is trained, not simply indulged or crushed.

The cave

Most people, in the famous image, sit chained in a den and take shadows for what is real. Education is a painful turning of the soul toward the light, not a stuffing of the memory with opinions.

> *"Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils,—nor the human race, as I believe,—and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day."*

BOOK V · BENJAMIN JOWETT, 1892

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Poets under

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What a Christian reader should weigh

In order to found his just city, Plato allows a "noble lie," loosens ordinary family bonds among the guardians, and is ready to expel the poets. He is searching for a true fiction and put the city above the household. Scripture does not treat a lie as a tool of founding, and it honors father, mother, and child. Read the argument honestly; the church.