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Quotes by Plato

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Plato (ca. May 21? 427 BC ca. 347 BC) was an immensely influential classical Greek philosopher, student of Socrates, teacher of Aristotle, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Academy in Athens.

He who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden.

- Plato

Old age has a great sense of calm and freedom. When the passions have relaxed their hold and have escaped, not from one master, but from many.

- Plato

Whatever deceives men seems to produce a magical enchantment.

- Plato

Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequal alike.

- Plato

These, then, will be some of the features of democracy... it will be, in all likelihood, an

agreeable, lawless, parti-colored commonwealth, dealing with all alike on a footing of equality, whether they be really equal or not.

- Plato

Dictatorship naturally arises out of democracy, and the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery out of the most extreme liberty.

- Plato

Is it not also true that no physician, in so far as he is a physician, considers or enjoins what is for the physician's interest, but that all seek the good of their patients? For we have agreed that a physician strictly so called, is a ruler of bodies, and not a maker of money, have we not?

- Plato

The most important part of education is proper training in the nursery.

- Plato

Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind.

- Plato

Let us describe the education of our men. What then is the education to be? Perhaps we could hardly find a better than that which the experience of the past has already discovered, which consists, I believe, in gymnastic, for the body, and music for the mind.

- Plato

There must always remain something that is antagonistic to good.

- Plato

Excess generally causes reaction, and produces a change in the opposite direction, whether it be in the seasons, or in individuals, or in governments.

- Plato

We are twice armed if we fight with faith.

- Plato

We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light.

- Plato

Hereditary honors are a noble and a splendid treasure to descendants.

- Plato

In the world of knowledge, the essential Form of Good is the limit of our inquiries, and can barely be perceived; but, when perceived, we cannot help concluding that it is in every case the source of all that is bright and beautiful --in the visible world giving birth to light and its master, and in the intellectual world dispensing, immediately and with full authority, truth and reason --and that whosoever would act wisely, either in private or in public, must

set this Form of Good before his eyes.

- Plato

The punishment which the wise suffer who refuse to take part in the government, is to live under the government of worse men.

- Plato

Those who intend on becoming great should love neither themselves or their own things, but only what is just, whether it happens to be done by themselves or others.

- Plato

Attention to health is life greatest hindrance.

- Plato

We ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy, just, and wise.

- Plato

Honesty is for the most part less profitable than dishonesty.

- Plato

Man is a two-legged animal without feathers.

- Plato

Man is a being in search of meaning.

- Plato

Even the gods love jokes.

- Plato

I have good hope that there is something after death.

- Plato

Knowledge becomes evil if the aim be not virtuous.

- Plato

Ignorance of all things is an evil neither terrible nor excessive, nor yet the greatest of all; but great cleverness and much learning, if they be accompanied by a bad training, are a much greater misfortune.

- Plato

All learning has an emotional base.

- Plato

To the rulers of the state then, if to any, it belongs of right to use falsehood, to deceive

either enemies or their own citizens, for the good of the state: and no one else may meddle with this privilege.

- Plato

He best keeps from anger who remembers that God is always looking upon him.

- Plato

At the touch of love, everyone becomes a poet.

- Plato

Love is a serious mental disease.

- Plato

Love is the joy of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the Gods.

- Plato

They do certainly give very strange, and newfangled, names to diseases.

- Plato

There are three classes of men; lovers of wisdom, lovers of honor, and lovers of gain.

- Plato

Music is the movement of sound to reach the soul for the education of its virtue.

- Plato

For the introduction of a new kind of music must be shunned as imperiling the whole state; since styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions.

- Plato

States are as the men, they grow out of human characters.

- Plato

Opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance.

- Plato

Let parents bequeath to their children not riches, but the spirit of reverence.

- Plato

Philosophy is an elegant thing, if anyone modestly meddles with it; but if they are conversant with it more than is becoming, it corrupts them.

- Plato

The beginning is the most important part of the work.

- Plato

Pleasure is the greatest incentive to evil.

- Plato

Poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.

- Plato

It is clear to everyone that astronomy at all events compels the soul to look upwards, and draws it from the things of this world to the other.

- Plato

There are few people so stubborn in their atheism who when danger is pressing in will not acknowledge the divine power.

- Plato

The heaviest penalty for deciding to engage in politics is to be ruled by someone inferior to yourself.

- Plato

In politics we presume that everyone who knows how to get votes knows how to administer a city or a state. When we are ill... we do not ask for the handsomest physician, or the most eloquent one.

- Plato

All things will be produced in superior quantity and quality, and with greater ease, when each man works at a single occupation, in accordance with his natural gifts, and at the right moment, without meddling with anything else.

- Plato

When the mind is thinking it is talking to itself.

- Plato

Whenever a person strives, by the help of dialectic, to start in pursuit of every reality by a simple process of reason, independent of all sensuous information -- never flinching, until by an act of the pure intelligence he has grasped the real nature of good -- he arrives at the very end of the intellectual world.

- Plato

The excessive increase of anything causes a reaction in the opposite direction.

- Plato

Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men.

- Plato

For just as poets love their own works, and fathers their own children, in the same way those who have created a fortune value their money, not merely for its uses, like other persons, but because it is their own production. This makes them moreover disagreeable companions, because they will praise nothing but riches.

- Plato

No trace of slavery ought to mix with the studies of the freeborn man. No study, pursued under compulsion, remains rooted in the memory.

- Plato

If the study of all these sciences which we have enumerated, should ever bring us to their mutual association and relationship, and teach us the nature of the ties which bind them together, I believe that the diligent treatment of them will forward the objects which we have in view, and that the labor, which otherwise would be fruitless, will be well bestowed.

- Plato

I have hardly ever known a mathematician who was capable of reasoning.

- Plato

Science is nothing but perception.

- Plato

In particular I may mention Sophocles the poet, who was once asked in my presence, How do you feel about love, Sophocles? are you still capable of it? to which he replied, Hush! if you please: to my great delight I have escaped from it, and feel as if I had escaped from a frantic and savage master. I thought then, as I do now, that he spoke wisely. For unquestionably old age brings us profound repose and freedom from this and other passions.

- Plato

Let nobody speak mischief of anybody.

- Plato

We ought to esteem it of the greatest importance that the fictions which children first hear should be adapted in the most perfect manner to the promotion of virtue.

- Plato

The democratic youth lives along day by day, gratifying the desire that occurs to him, at one time drinking and listening to the flute, at another downing water and reducing, now practicing gymnastic, and again idling and neglecting everything; and sometimes spending his time as though he were occupied in philosophy.

- Plato

Too much attention to health is a hindrance to learning, to invention, and to studies of any kind, for we are always feeling suspicious shootings and swimmings in our heads, and we are prone to blame studies from them.

- Plato

Beauty of style and harmony and grace and good rhythm depends on simplicity.

- Plato

When men speak ill of thee, live so as nobody may believe them.

- Plato

No one ever teaches well who wants to teach, or governs well who wants to govern.

- Plato

Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.

- Plato

Thinking is the talking of the soul with itself.

- Plato

Truth is its own reward.

- Plato

They deem him their worst enemy who tells them the truth.

- Plato

The people always have some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness. This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears he is a protector.

- Plato

Self conquest is the greatest of victories.

- Plato

The most virtuous are those who content themselves with being virtuous without seeking to appear so.

- Plato

Wealth is well known to be a great comforter.

- Plato

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.

- Plato

The wisest have the most authority.

- Plato

Wisdom alone is the science of others sciences.

- Plato

Nothing in the affairs of men is worthy of great anxiety.

- Plato

A well begun is half ended.

- Plato

Any city however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich. These are at war with one another.

- Plato

I exhort you also to take part in the great combat, which is the combat of life, and greater than every other earthly conflict.

- Plato

The first and the best victory is to conquer self.

- Plato

He who commits injustice is ever made more wretched than he who suffers it.

- Plato

Know one knows whether death, which people fear to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good.

- Plato

Must not all things at the last be swallowed up in death?

- Plato

The penalty good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men.

- Plato

That makes me think, my friend, as I have often done before, how natural it is that those who have spent a long time in the study of philosophy appear ridiculous when they enter the courts of law as speakers. Those who have knocked about in courts and the like from their youth up seem to me, when compared with those who have been brought up in philosophy and similar pursuits, to be as slaves in breeding compared with freemen.

- Plato

"There will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world, or till those we now call kings and rulers really and truly become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands".

- Plato



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