

Phaedo
by
Plato

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Phaedo

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Translated by Benjamin Jowett

INTRODUCTION

AFTER AN INTERVAL of some months or years, and at Phlius, a town of Peloponnesus, the tale of the last hours of Socrates is narrated to Echecrates and other Phliasians by Phaedo the 'beloved disciple.' The Dialogue necessarily takes the form of a narrative, because Socrates has to be described acting as well as speaking. The minutest particulars of the event are interesting to distant friends, and the narrator has an equal interest in them.

During the voyage of the sacred ship to and from Delos, which has occupied thirty days, the execution of Socrates has been deferred. (Compare *Xen. Mem.*) The time has been passed by him in conversation with a select company of disciples. But now the holy season is over, and the disciples meet earlier than usual in order that they may converse with Socrates for the last time. Those who were present, and those who might have been expected to be present, are mentioned by name. There are Simmias and Cebes (*Crito*), two disciples of Philolaus whom Socrates 'by his enchantments has attracted from Thebes' (*Mem.*), Crito the aged friend, the attendant of the prison, who is as good as a friend—these take part in the conversation. There are present also, Hermogenes, from whom Xenophon derived his information about the trial of Socrates (*Mem.*), the 'madman' Apollodorus (*Symp.*), Euclid and Terpsion from Megara (compare *Theaet.*), Ctesippus, Antisthenes, Menexenus, and some other less-known members of the Socratic circle, all of whom are silent auditors. Aristippus, Cleombrotus, and Plato are noted as absent. Almost as soon as the friends of Socrates enter the prison Xanthippe and her children are sent home

in the care of one of Crito's servants. Socrates himself has just been released from chains, and is led by this circumstance to make the natural remark that 'pleasure follows pain.' (Observe that Plato is preparing the way for his doctrine of the alternation of opposites.) 'Aesop would have represented them in a fable as a two-headed creature of the gods.' The mention of Aesop reminds Cebes of a question which had been asked by Evenus the poet (compare *Apol.*): 'Why Socrates, who was not a poet, while in prison had been putting Aesop into verse?'—'Because several times in his life he had been warned in dreams that he should practise music; and as he was about to die and was not certain of what was meant, he wished to fulfil the admonition in the letter as well as in the spirit, by writing verses as well as by cultivating philosophy. Tell this to Evenus; and say that I would have him follow me in death.' 'He is not at all the sort of man to comply with your request, Socrates.' 'Why, is he not a philosopher?' 'Yes.' 'Then he will be willing to die, although he will not take his own life, for that is held to be unlawful.'

Cebes asks why suicide is thought not to be right, if death is to be accounted a good? Well, (1) according to one expla-

nation, because man is a prisoner, who must not open the door of his prison and run away—this is the truth in a 'mystery.' Or (2) rather, because he is not his own property, but a possession of the gods, and has no right to make away with that which does not belong to him. But why, asks Cebes, if he is a possession of the gods, should he wish to die and leave them? For he is under their protection; and surely he cannot take better care of himself than they take of him. Simmias explains that Cebes is really referring to Socrates, whom they think too unmoved at the prospect of leaving the gods and his friends. Socrates answers that he is going to other gods who are wise and good, and perhaps to better friends; and he professes that he is ready to defend himself against the charge of Cebes. The company shall be his judges, and he hopes that he will be more successful in convincing them than he had been in convincing the court.

The philosopher desires death—which the wicked world will insinuate that he also deserves: and perhaps he does, but not in any sense which they are capable of understanding. Enough of them: the real question is, What is the nature of that death which he desires? Death is the separation of soul

and body—and the philosopher desires such a separation. He would like to be freed from the dominion of bodily pleasures and of the senses, which are always perturbing his mental vision. He wants to get rid of eyes and ears, and with the light of the mind only to behold the light of truth. All the evils and impurities and necessities of men come from the body. And death separates him from these corruptions, which in life he cannot wholly lay aside. Why then should he re-pine when the hour of separation arrives? Why, if he is dead while he lives, should he fear that other death, through which alone he can behold wisdom in her purity?

Besides, the philosopher has notions of good and evil unlike those of other men. For they are courageous because they are afraid of greater dangers, and temperate because they desire greater pleasures. But he disdains this balancing of pleasures and pains, which is the exchange of commerce and not of virtue. All the virtues, including wisdom, are regarded by him only as purifications of the soul. And this was the meaning of the founders of the mysteries when they said, ‘Many are the wand-bearers but few are the mystics.’ (Compare Matt. xxii.: ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’) And

in the hope that he is one of these mystics, Socrates is now departing. This is his answer to any one who charges him with indifference at the prospect of leaving the gods and his friends.

Still, a fear is expressed that the soul upon leaving the body may vanish away like smoke or air. Socrates in answer appeals first of all to the old Orphic tradition that the souls of the dead are in the world below, and that the living come from them. This he attempts to found on a philosophical assumption that all opposites—e.g. less, greater; weaker, stronger; sleeping, waking; life, death—are generated out of each other. Nor can the process of generation be only a passage from living to dying, for then all would end in death. The perpetual sleeper (Endymion) would be no longer distinguished from the rest of mankind. The circle of nature is not complete unless the living come from the dead as well as pass to them.

The Platonic doctrine of reminiscence is then adduced as a confirmation of the pre-existence of the soul. Some proofs of this doctrine are demanded. One proof given is the same as that of the Meno, and is derived from the latent knowl-

edge of mathematics, which may be elicited from an unlearned person when a diagram is presented to him. Again, there is a power of association, which from seeing Simmias may remember Cebes, or from seeing a picture of Simmias may remember Simmias. The lyre may recall the player of the lyre, and equal pieces of wood or stone may be associated with the higher notion of absolute equality. But here observe that material equalities fall short of the conception of absolute equality with which they are compared, and which is the measure of them. And the measure or standard must be prior to that which is measured, the idea of equality prior to the visible equals. And if prior to them, then prior also to the perceptions of the senses which recall them, and therefore either given before birth or at birth. But all men have not this knowledge, nor have any without a process of reminiscence; which is a proof that it is not innate or given at birth, unless indeed it was given and taken away at the same instant. But if not given to men in birth, it must have been given before birth—this is the only alternative which remains. And if we had ideas in a former state, then our souls must have existed and must have had intelligence in a former state.

The pre-existence of the soul stands or falls with the doctrine of ideas.

It is objected by Simmias and Cebes that these arguments only prove a former and not a future existence. Socrates answers this objection by recalling the previous argument, in which he had shown that the living come from the dead. But the fear that the soul at departing may vanish into air (especially if there is a wind blowing at the time) has not yet been charmed away. He proceeds: When we fear that the soul will vanish away, let us ask ourselves what is that which we suppose to be liable to dissolution? Is it the simple or the compound, the unchanging or the changing, the invisible idea or the visible object of sense? Clearly the latter and not the former; and therefore not the soul, which in her own pure thought is unchangeable, and only when using the senses descends into the region of change. Again, the soul commands, the body serves: in this respect too the soul is akin to the divine, and the body to the mortal. And in every point of view the soul is the image of divinity and immortality, and the body of the human and mortal. And whereas the body is liable to speedy dissolution, the soul is almost if not

quite indissoluble. (Compare *Tim.*) Yet even the body may be preserved for ages by the embalmer's art: how unlikely, then, that the soul will perish and be dissipated into air while on her way to the good and wise God! She has been gathered into herself, holding aloof from the body, and practising death all her life long, and she is now finally released from the errors and follies and passions of men, and for ever dwells in the company of the gods.

But the soul which is polluted and engrossed by the corporeal, and has no eye except that of the senses, and is weighed down by the bodily appetites, cannot attain to this abstraction. In her fear of the world below she lingers about the sepulchre, loath to leave the body which she loved, a ghostly apparition, saturated with sense, and therefore visible. At length entering into some animal of a nature congenial to her former life of sensuality or violence, she takes the form of an ass, a wolf or a kite. And of these earthly souls the happiest are those who have practised virtue without philosophy; they are allowed to pass into gentle and social natures, such as bees and ants. (Compare *Republic*, *Meno.*) But only the philosopher who departs pure is permitted to

enter the company of the gods. (Compare *Phaedrus.*) This is the reason why he abstains from fleshly lusts, and not because he fears loss or disgrace, which is the motive of other men. He too has been a captive, and the willing agent of his own captivity. But philosophy has spoken to him, and he has heard her voice; she has gently entreated him, and brought him out of the 'miry clay,' and purged away the mists of passion and the illusions of sense which envelope him; his soul has escaped from the influence of pleasures and pains, which are like nails fastening her to the body. To that prison-house she will not return; and therefore she abstains from bodily pleasures—not from a desire of having more or greater ones, but because she knows that only when calm and free from the dominion of the body can she behold the light of truth.

Simmius and Cebes remain in doubt; but they are unwilling to raise objections at such a time. Socrates wonders at their reluctance. Let them regard him rather as the swan, who, having sung the praises of Apollo all his life long, sings at his death more lustily than ever. Simmius acknowledges that there is cowardice in not probing truth to the bottom.

‘And if truth divine and inspired is not to be had, then let a man take the best of human notions, and upon this frail bark let him sail through life.’ He proceeds to state his difficulty: It has been argued that the soul is invisible and incorporeal, and therefore immortal, and prior to the body. But is not the soul acknowledged to be a harmony, and has she not the same relation to the body, as the harmony—which like her is invisible—has to the lyre? And yet the harmony does not survive the lyre. Cebes has also an objection, which like Simmias he expresses in a figure. He is willing to admit that the soul is more lasting than the body. But the more lasting nature of the soul does not prove her immortality; for after having worn out many bodies in a single life, and many more in successive births and deaths, she may at last perish, or, as Socrates afterwards restates the objection, the very act of birth may be the beginning of her death, and her last body may survive her, just as the coat of an old weaver is left behind him after he is dead, although a man is more lasting than his coat. And he who would prove the immortality of the soul, must prove not only that the soul outlives one or many bodies, but that she outlives them all.

The audience, like the chorus in a play, for a moment interpret the feelings of the actors; there is a temporary depression, and then the enquiry is resumed. It is a melancholy reflection that arguments, like men, are apt to be deceivers; and those who have been often deceived become distrustful both of arguments and of friends. But this unfortunate experience should not make us either haters of men or haters of arguments. The want of health and truth is not in the argument, but in ourselves. Socrates, who is about to die, is sensible of his own weakness; he desires to be impartial, but he cannot help feeling that he has too great an interest in the truth of the argument. And therefore he would have his friends examine and refute him, if they think that he is in error.

At his request Simmias and Cebes repeat their objections. They do not go to the length of denying the pre-existence of ideas. Simmias is of opinion that the soul is a harmony of the body. But the admission of the pre-existence of ideas, and therefore of the soul, is at variance with this. (Compare a parallel difficulty in *Theaet.*) For a harmony is an effect, whereas the soul is not an effect, but a cause; a harmony

follows, but the soul leads; a harmony admits of degrees, and the soul has no degrees. Again, upon the supposition that the soul is a harmony, why is one soul better than another? Are they more or less harmonized, or is there one harmony within another? But the soul does not admit of degrees, and cannot therefore be more or less harmonized. Further, the soul is often engaged in resisting the affections of the body, as Homer describes Odysseus 'rebuking his heart.' Could he have written this under the idea that the soul is a harmony of the body? Nay rather, are we not contradicting Homer and ourselves in affirming anything of the sort?

The goddess Harmonia, as Socrates playfully terms the argument of Simmias, has been happily disposed of; and now an answer has to be given to the Theban Cadmus. Socrates recapitulates the argument of Cebes, which, as he remarks, involves the whole question of natural growth or causation; about this he proposes to narrate his own mental experience. When he was young he had puzzled himself with physics: he had enquired into the growth and decay of animals, and the origin of thought, until at last he began to doubt the self-evident fact that growth is the result of eating

and drinking; and so he arrived at the conclusion that he was not meant for such enquiries. Nor was he less perplexed with notions of comparison and number. At first he had imagined himself to understand differences of greater and less, and to know that ten is two more than eight, and the like. But now those very notions appeared to him to contain a contradiction. For how can one be divided into two? Or two be compounded into one? These are difficulties which Socrates cannot answer. Of generation and destruction he knows nothing. But he has a confused notion of another method in which matters of this sort are to be investigated. (Compare *Republic*; *Charm.*)

Then he heard some one reading out of a book of Anaxagoras, that mind is the cause of all things. And he said to himself: If mind is the cause of all things, surely mind must dispose them all for the best. The new teacher will show me this 'order of the best' in man and nature. How great had been his hopes and how great his disappointment! For he found that his new friend was anything but consistent in his use of mind as a cause, and that he soon introduced winds, waters, and other eccentric notions. (Com-

pare *Arist. Metaph.*) It was as if a person had said that Socrates is sitting here because he is made up of bones and muscles, instead of telling the true reason—that he is here because the Athenians have thought good to sentence him to death, and he has thought good to await his sentence. Had his bones and muscles been left by him to their own ideas of right, they would long ago have taken themselves off. But surely there is a great confusion of the cause and condition in all this. And this confusion also leads people into all sorts of erroneous theories about the position and motions of the earth. None of them know how much stronger than any Atlas is the power of the best. But this ‘best’ is still undiscovered; and in enquiring after the cause, we can only hope to attain the second best.

Now there is a danger in the contemplation of the nature of things, as there is a danger in looking at the sun during an eclipse, unless the precaution is taken of looking only at the image reflected in the water, or in a glass. (Compare *Laws; Republic.*) ‘I was afraid,’ says Socrates, ‘that I might injure the eye of the soul. I thought that I had better return to the old and safe method of ideas. Though I do not mean to say

that he who contemplates existence through the medium of ideas sees only through a glass darkly, any more than he who contemplates actual effects.’

If the existence of ideas is granted to him, Socrates is of opinion that he will then have no difficulty in proving the immortality of the soul. He will only ask for a further admission:—that beauty is the cause of the beautiful, greatness the cause of the great, smallness of the small, and so on of other things. This is a safe and simple answer, which escapes the contradictions of greater and less (greater by reason of that which is smaller!), of addition and subtraction, and the other difficulties of relation. These subtleties he is for leaving to wiser heads than his own; he prefers to test ideas by the consistency of their consequences, and, if asked to give an account of them, goes back to some higher idea or hypothesis which appears to him to be the best, until at last he arrives at a resting-place. (*Republic; Phil.*)

The doctrine of ideas, which has long ago received the assent of the Socratic circle, is now affirmed by the Phliasian auditor to command the assent of any man of sense. The narrative is continued; Socrates is desirous of explaining how

opposite ideas may appear to co-exist but do not really co-exist in the same thing or person. For example, Simmias may be said to have greatness and also smallness, because he is greater than Socrates and less than Phaedo. And yet Simmias is not really great and also small, but only when compared to Phaedo and Socrates. I use the illustration, says Socrates, because I want to show you not only that ideal opposites exclude one another, but also the opposites in us. I, for example, having the attribute of smallness remain small, and cannot become great: the smallness which is in me drives out greatness.

One of the company here remarked that this was inconsistent with the old assertion that opposites generated opposites. But that, replies Socrates, was affirmed, not of opposite ideas either in us or in nature, but of opposition in the concrete—not of life and death, but of individuals living and dying. When this objection has been removed, Socrates proceeds: This doctrine of the mutual exclusion of opposites is not only true of the opposites themselves, but of things which are inseparable from them. For example, cold and heat are opposed; and fire, which is inseparable from heat, cannot co-exist with cold, or snow, which is inseparable from cold, with heat. Again,

the number three excludes the number four, because three is an odd number and four is an even number, and the odd is opposed to the even. Thus we are able to proceed a step beyond ‘the safe and simple answer.’ We may say, not only that the odd excludes the even, but that the number three, which participates in oddness, excludes the even. And in like manner, not only does life exclude death, but the soul, of which life is the inseparable attribute, also excludes death. And that of which life is the inseparable attribute is by the force of the terms imperishable. If the odd principle were imperishable, then the number three would not perish but remove, on the approach of the even principle. But the immortal is imperishable; and therefore the soul on the approach of death does not perish but removes.

Thus all objections appear to be finally silenced. And now the application has to be made: If the soul is immortal, ‘what manner of persons ought we to be?’ having regard not only to time but to eternity. For death is not the end of all, and the wicked is not released from his evil by death; but every one carries with him into the world below that which he is or has become, and that only.

For after death the soul is carried away to judgment, and when she has received her punishment returns to earth in the course of ages. The wise soul is conscious of her situation, and follows the attendant angel who guides her through the windings of the world below; but the impure soul wanders hither and thither without companion or guide, and is carried at last to her own place, as the pure soul is also carried away to hers. 'In order that you may understand this, I must first describe to you the nature and conformation of the earth.'

Now the whole earth is a globe placed in the centre of the heavens, and is maintained there by the perfection of balance. That which we call the earth is only one of many small hollows, wherein collect the mists and waters and the thick lower air; but the true earth is above, and is in a finer and subtler element. And if, like birds, we could fly to the surface of the air, in the same manner that fishes come to the top of the sea, then we should behold the true earth and the true heaven and the true stars. Our earth is everywhere corrupted and corroded; and even the land which is fairer than the sea, for that is a mere chaos or waste of water and mud and sand, has nothing to show in comparison of the other

world. But the heavenly earth is of divers colours, sparkling with jewels brighter than gold and whiter than any snow, having flowers and fruits innumerable. And the inhabitants dwell some on the shore of the sea of air, others in 'islets of the blest,' and they hold converse with the gods, and behold the sun, moon and stars as they truly are, and their other blessedness is of a piece with this.

The hollows on the surface of the globe vary in size and shape from that which we inhabit: but all are connected by passages and perforations in the interior of the earth. And there is one huge chasm or opening called Tartarus, into which streams of fire and water and liquid mud are ever flowing; of these small portions find their way to the surface and form seas and rivers and volcanoes. There is a perpetual inhalation and exhalation of the air rising and falling as the waters pass into the depths of the earth and return again, in their course forming lakes and rivers, but never descending below the centre of the earth; for on either side the rivers flowing either way are stopped by a precipice. These rivers are many and mighty, and there are four principal ones, Oceanus, Acheron, Pyriphlegethon, and Cocytus. Oceanus

is the river which encircles the earth; Acheron takes an opposite direction, and after flowing under the earth through desert places, at last reaches the Acherusian lake,—this is the river at which the souls of the dead await their return to earth. Pyriphlegethon is a stream of fire, which coils round the earth and flows into the depths of Tartarus. The fourth river, Cocytus, is that which is called by the poets the Stygian river, and passes into and forms the lake Styx, from the waters of which it gains new and strange powers. This river, too, falls into Tartarus.

The dead are first of all judged according to their deeds, and those who are incurable are thrust into Tartarus, from which they never come out. Those who have only committed venial sins are first purified of them, and then rewarded for the good which they have done. Those who have committed crimes, great indeed, but not unpardonable, are thrust into Tartarus, but are cast forth at the end of a year by way of Pyriphlegethon or Cocytus, and these carry them as far as the Acherusian lake, where they call upon their victims to let them come out of the rivers into the lake. And if they prevail, then they are let out and their sufferings cease: if

not, they are borne unceasingly into Tartarus and back again, until they at last obtain mercy. The pure souls also receive their reward, and have their abode in the upper earth, and a select few in still fairer ‘mansions.’

Socrates is not prepared to insist on the literal accuracy of this description, but he is confident that something of the kind is true. He who has sought after the pleasures of knowledge and rejected the pleasures of the body, has reason to be of good hope at the approach of death; whose voice is already speaking to him, and who will one day be heard calling all men.

The hour has come at which he must drink the poison, and not much remains to be done. How shall they bury him? That is a question which he refuses to entertain, for they are burying, not him, but his dead body. His friends had once been sureties that he would remain, and they shall now be sureties that he has run away. Yet he would not die without the customary ceremonies of washing and burial. Shall he make a libation of the poison? In the spirit he will, but not in the letter. One request he utters in the very act of death, which has been a puzzle to after ages. With a sort of

irony he remembers that a trifling religious duty is still unfulfilled, just as above he desires before he departs to compose a few verses in order to satisfy a scruple about a dream—unless, indeed, we suppose him to mean, that he was now restored to health, and made the customary offering to Asclepius in token of his recovery.

1. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul has sunk deep into the heart of the human race; and men are apt to rebel against any examination of the nature or grounds of their belief. They do not like to acknowledge that this, as well as the other 'eternal ideas; of man, has a history in time, which may be traced in Greek poetry or philosophy, and also in the Hebrew Scriptures. They convert feeling into reasoning, and throw a network of dialectics over that which is really a deeply-rooted instinct. In the same temper which Socrates reproves in himself they are disposed to think that even fallacies will do no harm, for they will die with them, and while they live they will gain by the delusion. And when they consider the numberless bad arguments which have been pressed into the service of theology, they say, like the companions of

Socrates, 'What argument can we ever trust again?' But there is a better and higher spirit to be gathered from the *Phaedo*, as well as from the other writings of Plato, which says that first principles should be most constantly reviewed (*Phaedo* and *Crat.*), and that the highest subjects demand of us the greatest accuracy (*Republic*); also that we must not become misologists because arguments are apt to be deceivers.

2. In former ages there was a customary rather than a reasoned belief in the immortality of the soul. It was based on the authority of the Church, on the necessity of such a belief to morality and the order of society, on the evidence of an historical fact, and also on analogies and figures of speech which filled up the void or gave an expression in words to a cherished instinct. The mass of mankind went on their way busy with the affairs of this life, hardly stopping to think about another. But in our own day the question has been reopened, and it is doubtful whether the belief which in the first ages of Christianity was the strongest motive of action can survive the conflict with a scientific age in which the rules of evidence are stricter and the mind has become more

sensitive to criticism. It has faded into the distance by a natural process as it was removed further and further from the historical fact on which it has been supposed to rest. Arguments derived from material things such as the seed and the ear of corn or transitions in the life of animals from one state of being to another (the chrysalis and the butterfly) are not 'in pari materia' with arguments from the visible to the invisible, and are therefore felt to be no longer applicable. The evidence to the historical fact seems to be weaker than was once supposed: it is not consistent with itself, and is based upon documents which are of unknown origin. The immortality of man must be proved by other arguments than these if it is again to become a living belief. We must ask ourselves afresh why we still maintain it, and seek to discover a foundation for it in the nature of God and in the first principles of morality.

3. At the outset of the discussion we may clear away a confusion. We certainly do not mean by the immortality of the soul the immortality of fame, which whether worth having or not can only be ascribed to a very select class of the whole race of

mankind, and even the interest in these few is comparatively short-lived. To have been a benefactor to the world, whether in a higher or a lower sphere of life and thought, is a great thing; to have the reputation of being one, when men have passed out of the sphere of earthly praise or blame, is hardly worthy of consideration. The memory of a great man, so far from being immortal, is really limited to his own generation:—so long as his friends or his disciples are alive, so long as his books continue to be read, so long as his political or military successes fill a page in the history of his country. The praises which are bestowed upon him at his death hardly last longer than the flowers which are strewed upon his coffin or the 'immortelles' which are laid upon his tomb. Literature makes the most of its heroes, but the true man is well aware that far from enjoying an immortality of fame, in a generation or two, or even in a much shorter time, he will be forgotten and the world will get on without him.

4. Modern philosophy is perplexed at this whole question, which is sometimes fairly given up and handed over to the realm of faith. The perplexity should not be forgotten by us

when we attempt to submit the *Phaedo* of Plato to the requirements of logic. For what idea can we form of the soul when separated from the body? Or how can the soul be united with the body and still be independent? Is the soul related to the body as the ideal to the real, or as the whole to the parts, or as the subject to the object, or as the cause to the effect, or as the end to the means? Shall we say with Aristotle, that the soul is the entelechy or form of an organized living body? or with Plato, that she has a life of her own? Is the Pythagorean image of the harmony, or that of the monad, the truer expression? Is the soul related to the body as sight to the eye, or as the boatman to his boat? (Arist. *de Anim.*) And in another state of being is the soul to be conceived of as vanishing into infinity, hardly possessing an existence which she can call her own, as in the pantheistic system of Spinoza: or as an individual informing another body and entering into new relations, but retaining her own character? (Compare *Gorgias*.) Or is the opposition of soul and body a mere illusion, and the true self neither soul nor body, but the union of the two in the 'I' which is above them? And is death the assertion of this individuality in the higher nature, and the

falling away into nothingness of the lower? Or are we vainly attempting to pass the boundaries of human thought? The body and the soul seem to be inseparable, not only in fact, but in our conceptions of them; and any philosophy which too closely unites them, or too widely separates them, either in this life or in another, disturbs the balance of human nature. No thinker has perfectly adjusted them, or been entirely consistent with himself in describing their relation to one another. Nor can we wonder that Plato in the infancy of human thought should have confused mythology and philosophy, or have mistaken verbal arguments for real ones.

5. Again, believing in the immortality of the soul, we must still ask the question of Socrates, 'What is that which we suppose to be immortal?' Is it the personal and individual element in us, or the spiritual and universal? Is it the principle of knowledge or of goodness, or the union of the two? Is it the mere force of life which is determined to be, or the consciousness of self which cannot be got rid of, or the fire of genius which refuses to be extinguished? Or is there a hidden being which is allied to the Author of all existence,

who is because he is perfect, and to whom our ideas of perfection give us a title to belong? Whatever answer is given by us to these questions, there still remains the necessity of allowing the permanence of evil, if not for ever, at any rate for a time, in order that the wicked 'may not have too good a bargain.' For the annihilation of evil at death, or the eternal duration of it, seem to involve equal difficulties in the moral government of the universe. Sometimes we are led by our feelings, rather than by our reason, to think of the good and wise only as existing in another life. Why should the mean, the weak, the idiot, the infant, the herd of men who have never in any proper sense the use of reason, reappear with blinking eyes in the light of another world? But our second thought is that the hope of humanity is a common one, and that all or none will be partakers of immortality. Reason does not allow us to suppose that we have any greater claims than others, and experience may often reveal to us unexpected flashes of the higher nature in those whom we had despised. Why should the wicked suffer any more than ourselves? had we been placed in their circumstances should we have been any better than they? The worst of men are objects of pity rather than of anger to the

philanthropist; must they not be equally such to divine benevolence? Even more than the good they have need of another life; not that they may be punished, but that they may be educated. These are a few of the reflections which arise in our minds when we attempt to assign any form to our conceptions of a future state.

There are some other questions which are disturbing to us because we have no answer to them. What is to become of the animals in a future state? Have we not seen dogs more faithful and intelligent than men, and men who are more stupid and brutal than any animals? Does their life cease at death, or is there some 'better thing reserved' also for them? They may be said to have a shadow or imitation of morality, and imperfect moral claims upon the benevolence of man and upon the justice of God. We cannot think of the least or lowest of them, the insect, the bird, the inhabitants of the sea or the desert, as having any place in a future world, and if not all, why should those who are specially attached to man be deemed worthy of any exceptional privilege? When we reason about such a subject, almost at once we degenerate into nonsense. It is a passing thought which has no real

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