

remain unaffected by mortal disease even at the point of death. But they do not remain unaffected by a disease of the brain. His strongest point is perhaps the unbroken continuance of conscious identity notwithstanding the change of our bodily frame by the flux of its component particles, and in spite of sleep and fits of insensibility. But the flux of particles or the suspension of consciousness by sleep or a fainting fit is a different thing from total dissolution, such as takes place when the body lies mouldering in the grave. Besides, the phenomenon is common to us with brutes; and the objection that this or any other of Butler's arguments would apply as well to brutes as to man is not to be evaded by calling it invidious. The great thinker would perhaps have seen this more clearly had he lived in the Darwinian age and been disenchanted of his belief in the special breathing of a soul into man. He is so far from our present point of view as to think that dreams are products of the mind acting apart from the bodily sense.

Of the two great thinkers of antiquity, Plato believed intensely in a future life, for which this present life was but a training, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. His arguments, put into the mouth of Socrates, who is about to die, come to us in the most persuasive guise. But they are entangled with the fanciful tenets of pre-existence, of knowledge as reminiscences from a previous state, and of the real existence of abstract ideas. They are based on the erroneous conception of the soul as an entity distinct from the body and imprisoned in it, so that, at least in the case of one who has kept his soul pure and healthy by philosophy and asceticism, death would be emancipation. The soul, Plato thinks, cannot be affected by diseases of the body, but only by its own diseases, ignorance and vice. An evidence of more weight practically than any of the metaphysical arguments adduced by the disciple of Socrates, is the death of Socrates itself, which, like the Christian martyrdoms, implies a strong and rooted faith in the future reward of loyalty to truth and virtue. The same faith is expressed by Plato in the Republic. To him, amid the licence of Athenian democracy in its hour of decay, as to the Christian amid the demoralization of the Roman Empire, the world seemed evil; and he found support for righteousness in the conviction that, though the righteous man might suffer obloquy, persecution, and even a painful and shameful death in this life, it would be well for him in the sum of things. If there is a soul of the universe, and if it holds communion in any way with the soul of man, such a belief would seem likely to be at least no mere hallucination.