



# Apology

Plato

Translated by Thomas Taylor

## Introduction

The elevation and greatness of mind for which Socrates was so justly celebrated by antiquity, are perhaps no where so conspicuously displayed as in this his Apology. In a situation in which death itself was presented to his view, he neither deviates from the most rigid veracity, nor has recourse to any of those abject arts, by which in similar circumstances pity is generally solicited and punishment sometimes averted. His whole discourse, indeed, is full of simplicity and noble grandeur, and is the energetic language of conscious innocence and offended worth.

The causes that occasioned this Apology were as follow: – Aristophanes, at the instigation of Melitus, undertook, in his comedy of The Clouds, to ridicule the venerable character of Socrates, on the stage; and the way being once open to calumny and defamation, the fickle and licentious populace paid no reverence to the philosopher, whom they had before regarded as a being of a superior order. When this had succeeded, Melitus stood forth to criminate him, together with Anytus and Lycon; and the philosopher was summoned before the tribunal of the Five Hundred. He was accused of making innovations in the religion of his country, and corrupting the youth. But as both these accusations must have been obviously false to an unprejudiced tribunal, the accusers relied for the success of their cause on perjured witnesses, and the envy of the judges, whose ignorance would readily yield to misrepresentation, and be influenced and guided by false eloquence and fraudulent arts. That the personal enemies indeed of Socrates, vile characters, to whom his wisdom and his virtue were equally offensive, should have accused him of making innovations in the religion of Greece, is by no means surprising; but that very many of modern times should have believed that this accusation was founded in truth, and that he endeavoured to subvert the doctrine of polytheism, is a circumstance which by the truly learned reader must be ranked among the greatest eccentricities of modern wit. For to such a one it will most clearly appear from this very Apology, that Socrates was accused of impiety for asserting that he was connected in a very transcendant degree with a presiding daemon, to whose direction he confidently submitted the conduct of his life. For the accusation of Melitus, that he introduced other novel daemoniacal natures, can admit of no other construction. Besides, in the course of this Apology he asserts, in the most unequivocal and solemn manner, his belief in polytheism; and this is

indubitably confirmed in many places by Plato, the most genuine of his disciples, and the most faithful recorder of his doctrines. The testimony of Xenophon too on this point is no less weighty than decisive. "I have often wondered," says that historian and philosopher, "by what arguments the Athenians who condemned Socrates persuaded the city that he was worthy of death. For, in the first place, how could they prove that he did not believe in the Gods in which the city believed? since it was evident that he often sacrificed at home, and often on the common altars of the city. It was also not unapparent that he employed divination. For a report was circulated, that signals were given to Socrates, according to his own assertion, by a daemonic power; whence they especially appear to me to have accused him of introducing new daemonic natures. He however introduced nothing new, nor any thing different from the opinion of those who, believing in divination, make use of auguries and oracles, symbols and sacrifices. For these do not apprehend that either birds, or things which occur, know what is advantageous to the diviners; but they are of opinion that the Gods thus signify to them what is beneficial; and he also thought the same. Again, in another place, he observes as follows: "Socrates thought that the Gods take care of men not in such a way as the multitude conceive. For they think that the Gods know some things, but do not know others. But Socrates thought that the Gods know all things, as well things said and done, as those deliberated in silence. That they are also everywhere present, and signify to men concerning all human affairs. I wonder, therefore, how the Athenians could ever be persuaded that Socrates was not of a sound mind respecting the Gods, as he never said or did any thing impious concerning them. But all his sayings and all his actions pertaining to the Gods were such as any one by saying and doing would be thought to be most pious." And lastly, in another place he observes, "That it was evident that Socrates worshipped the Gods the most of all men."

After such unequivocal testimony, no other reason can be assigned for that strange position of the moderns, that Socrates ridiculed the religion of his country, than a profound ignorance of one of the most important tenets of the heathen religion, and which may also be considered as ranking among the first of the most magnificent, scientific, and divine conceptions of the human mind. The tenet I allude to is this, that the essential, which is the most perfect energy of deity, is deific; and that his first and immediate progeny must as necessarily be Gods, that is, beings transcendentally similar to himself, and possessing those

characteristics secondarily which he possesses primarily, as heat is the immediate offspring of fire, and coldness of snow. From being unacquainted with this mighty truth, which is coeval with the universe itself, modern theologians and sophists have dared to defame the religion of Greece, and, by offering violence to the sacred pages of antiquity, have made the great Socrates himself become the patron of their own shallow and distorted conceptions. But to return to the Apology.

Lysias, one of the most celebrated orators of the age, composed an oration, in a laboured and pathetic style, which he offered to Socrates to be pronounced as his defence in the presence of his judges. Socrates however refused it, observing, that a philosopher ought to be conspicuous for magnanimity and firmness of soul. Hence, in his Apology, he paid no attention to the splendour of diction, but trusted wholly to the intrinsic dignity of his sentiments. He contented himself with speaking to his judges as he used to do in common discourse, and with proposing questions to his accusers. Hence his defence was entirely the spontaneous effusions of his genius; simple and plain, yet nervous and dignified.

Several persons who assisted in the court upon this occasion, besides Plato, drew up the Apology of Socrates. Among the rest Xenophon compiled one from the relation of Hermogenes the son of Hipponicus, for he himself was not then at Athens. None of them are extant, however, but those of Plato and Xenophon. And of these, the first is in every respect worthy the greatest disciple of Socrates; but the other presents us with an imperfect copy, because composed by a disciple that was absent. This imperfect copy, however, sufficiently proves that the substance of this Apology is accurate, how much soever it may have been amended by passing through such a hand as that of Plato.

## The Apology of Socrates

I know not, O Athenians, how you may be affected by my accusers: I indeed have through them almost forgotten myself, so persuasively have they spoken; though, as I may say, they have not asserted any thing which is true. But among the multitude of their false assertions I am most surprised at this, in which they say that you ought to beware of being deceived by me, as if I were an eloquent speaker. For that they should not be ashamed of asserting that which will be immediately confuted by me in reality, since in the present instance I shall appear to you to be by no means eloquent, – this seems to me to be the consummation of impudence; unless they call him eloquent who speaks the truth. For, if they assert this, I shall indeed acknowledge myself to be a rhetorician, though not according to their conceptions. They have not then, as I said, asserted any thing which is true; but from me you will hear all the truth. Not, by Jupiter, O Athenians, that you will hear from me a discourse splendidly decorated with nouns and verbs, and adorned in other respects, like the harangues of these men; but you will hear me speaking in such language as may casually present itself. For I am confident that what I say will be just, nor let any one of you expect it will be otherwise: for it does not become one of my age to come before you like a lad with a studied discourse. And, indeed, I very much request and beseech you, O Athenians, that if you should hear me apologizing in the same terms and modes of expression which I am accustomed to use in the Forum, on the Exchange and public Banks, and in other places, where many of you have heard me, – that you will neither wonder nor be disturbed on this account; for the case is as follows: – I now for the first time come before this tribunal, though I am more than seventy years old; and consequently I am a stranger to the mode of speaking which is here adopted. As, therefore, if I were in reality a foreigner, you would pardon me for using the language and the manner in which I had been educated, so now I request you, and this justly, as it appears to me, to suffer the mode of my diction, whether it be better or worse, and to attend to this, whether I speak what is just or not: for this is the virtue of a judge, as that of an orator is to speak the truth.

In the first place, therefore, O Athenian, it is just that I should answer the first false accusations of me, and my first accusers, and afterwards the latter accusations, and the latter accusers. For many have been accusers of me to you for many years, and who have asserted nothing true, of whom I am more afraid

than of Anytus and his accomplices, though these indeed are powerful in persuading; but those are still more so, who having been conversant with many of you from infancy, have persuaded you, and accused me falsely. For they have said, that there is one Socrates, a wise man, studious of things on high, and exploring every thing under the earth, and who also can make the worse to be the better argument. These men, O Athenians, who spread this report are my dire accusers. For those who hear it think that such as investigate these things do not believe that there are Gods. In the next place, these accusers are numerous, and have accused me for a long time. They also said these things to you in that age in which you would most readily believe them, some of you being boys and lads; and they accused me quietly, no one speaking in my defence. But that which is most irrational of all is this, that neither is it possible to know and tell their names, except some one of them should be a comic poet. Such however as have persuaded you by employing envy and calumny, together with those who being persuaded themselves have persuaded others, – with respect to all these, the method to be adopted is most dubious. For it is not possible to call them to account here before you, nor to confute any one of them; but it is necessary, as if fighting with shadows, to make my defence and refutation without any to answer me. Consider, therefore, as I have said, that my accusers are twofold, some having accused me lately, and others formerly; and think that it is necessary I should answer the latter of these first; for you also have heard these my accusers, and much more than you have those by whom I have been recently accused. Be it so. I must defend myself then, O Athenians, and endeavour in this so short a space of time to remove from you the calumny which you have so long entertained. I wish, therefore, that this my defence may effect something better both for you and me, and that it may contribute to some more important end. I think however that it will be attended with difficulty, and I am not entirely ignorant what the difficulty is. At the same time let this terminate as Divinity pleases. It is my business to obey the law, and to make my apology.

Let us repeat, therefore, from the beginning what the accusation was, the source of that calumny in which Melitus confiding brought this charge against me. Be it so. What then do my accusers say? For their accusation must be formally recited as if given upon oath. It is this: Socrates acts wickedly, and with criminal curiosity investigates things under the earth, and in the heavens. He also makes the worse to be the better argument; and he teaches these things to

others. Such is the accusation: for things of this kind you also have yourselves seen in the comedy of Aristophanes: for there one Socrates is carried about, who affirms that he walks upon the air, and idly asserts many other trifles of this nature; of which things however I neither know much nor little. Nor do I say this as despising such a science, if there be any one wise about things of this kind, lest Melitus should charge me with this as a new crime, but because, O Athenians, I have no such knowledge. I adduce many of you as witnesses of this, and I call upon such of you as have at any time heard me discoursing, and there are many such among you, to teach and declare to each other, if you have ever heard me speak much or little about things of this kind. And from this you may know that other things also, which the multitude assert of me, are all of them of a similar nature: for no one of them is true. For neither if you have heard any one assert that I attempt to teach men, and that I make money by so doing, – neither is this true. This indeed appears to me to be a beautiful thing, if some one is able to instruct men, like Gorgias the Leontine, Prodicus the Cean, and Hippias the Elean. For each of these, in the several cities which he visits, has the power of persuading the young men, who are permitted to apply themselves to such of their own countrymen as they please without any charge, to adhere to them only, and to give them money and thanks besides for their instruction. There is also another wise man, a Parian, who I hear has arrived hither. For it happened that I once met with a man who spends more money on the sophists than all others, – I mean Callias the son of Hipponicus. I therefore asked him, for he has two sons, O Callias, said I, if your two sons were two colts or calves, should we not have some one to take care of them, who would be paid for so doing, and who would make them beautiful, and the possessors of such good qualities as belong to their nature? But now, since your sons are men, what master do you intend to have for them? Who is there that is scientifically knowing in human and political virtue of this kind? For I think that you have considered this, since you have sons. Is there such a one, said I, or not? There certainly is, he replied. Who is he? said I. And whence is he? And for how much money does he teach? It is Evenus the Parian, said he, Socrates, and he teaches for five minae (15l.). And I indeed have considered Evenus as blessed, if he in reality possesses this art, and so elegantly teaches. I, therefore, should also glory and think highly of myself, if I had a scientific knowledge of these things; but this, O Athenians, is certainly not the case.

Perhaps, however, some one may reply: But Socrates, what have you done then? Whence have these calumnies against you arisen? For unless you had more curiously employed yourself than others, and had done something different from the multitude, so great a rumour would never have been raised against you. Tell us, therefore, what it is, that we may not pass an unadvised sentence against you. He who says these things appears to me to speak justly, and I will endeavour to show you what that is which has occasioned me this appellation and calumny. Hear, therefore; and though perhaps I shall appear to some of you to jest, yet be well assured that I shall tell you all the truth. For I, O Athenians, have acquired this name through nothing else than a certain wisdom. For of what kind is this wisdom? Perhaps it is human wisdom. For this in reality I appear to possess. Those indeed who I just now mentioned possessed perhaps more than human wisdom, which I know not how to denominate: for I have no knowledge of it. And whoever says that I have, speaks falsely, and asserts this to calumniate me. But, O Athenians, be not disturbed if I appear to speak somewhat magnificently of myself. For this which I say is not my own assertion, but I shall refer it to one who is considered by you as worthy of belief. For I shall adduce to you the Delphic Deity himself as a testimony of my wisdom, if I have any, and of the quality it possesses. You certainly then know Chaerepho: he was my associate from a youth, was familiar with most of you, and accompanied you in and returned with you from your exile. You know, therefore, what kind of a man Chaerepho was, and how eager in all his undertakings. He then, coming to Delphi, had the boldness to consult the oracle about this particular. Be not, as I said, O Athenians, disturbed: for he asked if there was any one more wise than I am. The Pythian priestess, therefore, answered that there was not any one more wise. His brother can testify to you the truth of these things; for Chaerepho himself is dead.

Consider then on what account I assert these things: for I am going to inform you whence this calumny against me arose. When, therefore, I had heard this answer of the oracle, I thus considered with myself, What does the God say? and what does he obscurely signify? For I am not conscious to myself that I am wise, either in a great or in a small degree. What then does he mean in saying that I am most wise? For he does not lie, since this is not lawful to him. And for a long time, indeed, I was dubious what he could mean. Afterwards with considerable difficulty I betook myself to the following mode of investigating his meaning. I went to one of those who appear to be wise men, that here if any

where I might confute the prediction, and evince to the oracle that this man was more wise than I. Surveying, therefore, this man, (for there is no occasion to mention his name, but he was a politician;) while I beheld him and discoursed with him, it so happened, O Athenians, that this man appeared to me to be wise in the opinion of many other men, and especially in his own, but that he was not so. And afterwards I endeavoured to show him that he fancied himself to be wise, but was not. Hence I became odious to him, and also to many others that were present. Departing, therefore, I reasoned with myself that I was wiser than this man. For it appears that neither of us knows any thing beautiful or good: but he indeed not knowing, thinks that he knows something; but I, as I do not know any thing, neither do I think that I know. Hence in this trifling particular I appear to be wiser than him, because I do not think that I know things which I do not know. After this I went to another of those who appeared to be wiser than him; and of him also I formed the same opinion. Hence also I became odious to him and many others.

Afterwards however I went to others, suspecting and grieving and fearing that I should make enemies. At the same time however it appeared to me to be necessary to pay the greatest attention to the oracle of the God, and that, considering what could be its meaning, I should go to all that appeared to possess any knowledge. And by the dog, O Athenians, (for it is necessary to tell you the truth,) that which happened to me was as follows. Those that were most celebrated for their wisdom appeared to me to be most remote from it; but others who were considered as far inferior to them possessed more of intellect. But it is necessary to relate to you my wandering, and the labours as it were which I endured, that the oracle might become to me unconfuted. For after the politicians I went to the poets both tragic and dithyrambic, and also others, expecting that I should here immediately find myself to be less wise than these. Taking up, therefore, some of their poems which appeared to me to be the most elaborately written, I asked them what was their meaning, that at the same time I might learn something from them. I am ashamed indeed, O Athenians, to tell you the truth; but at the same time it must be told. For, as I may say, all that were present would have spoken better about the things which they had composed. I discovered this, therefore, in a short time concerning the poets, that they did not effect by wisdom that which they did, but by a certain genius and from enthusiastic energy, like prophets and those that utter oracles. For these also say many and beautiful things, but they understand nothing of

what they say. Poets, therefore, appeared to me to be affected in a similar manner. And at the same time I perceived that they considered themselves, on account of their poetry, to be the wisest of men in other things, in which they were not so. I departed, therefore, also from them, thinking that I surpassed them by the very same thing in which I surpassed the politicians.

In the last place, therefore, I went to the artificers. For I was conscious to myself that I knew nothing, as I may say, but that these men possessed knowledge, because I had found them acquainted with many and beautiful things. And in this indeed I was not deceived; for they knew things which I did not, and in this they were wiser than I. But, O Athenians, good artificers also appeared to me to have the same fault as the poets. For each, in consequence of performing well in his art, thought that he was also most wise in other things, and those the greatest. And this their error obscured that very wisdom which they did possess. I therefore asked myself in behalf of the oracle, whether I would choose to be as I am, possessing no part either of their wisdom or ignorance, or to have both which they possess. I answered, therefore, for myself and for the oracle, that it was advantageous for me to be as I am.

From this my investigation, O Athenians, many enmities were excited against me, and such as were most grievous and weighty, so that many calumnies were produced from them; and hence I obtained the appellation of the wise man. For those that hear me think that I am wise in these things, the ignorance of which I confute in others. It appears however, O Athenians, that Divinity is wise in reality, and that in this oracle he says this, that human wisdom is but of little, or indeed of no worth; and it seems that he used my name, making me an example, as if he had said, He, O men, is the wisest among you, who, like Socrates, knows that he is in reality of no worth with respect to wisdom. These things, therefore, going about, I even now inquire and explore in obedience to the God, both among citizens and strangers, if any one of them appears to me to be wise; and when I find he is not, giving assistance to the God, I demonstrate that he is not wise. And in consequence of this employment I have no leisure worth mentioning either for public or private transactions; but I am in great poverty through my religious cultivation of the God.

Besides, the youth that spontaneously follow me, who especially abound in leisure, as being the sons of the most wealthy, rejoice on hearing men confuted by me; and often imitating me, they afterwards endeavour to make trial of

others. In which attempt I think they find a numerous multitude of men who fancy that they know something, but who know little or nothing. Hence, therefore, those who are tried by them are angry with me, and not with them, and say that there is one Socrates a most wicked person, and who corrupts the youth. And when some one asks them what he does, and what he teaches, they have nothing to say, but are ignorant. That they may not however appear to be dubious, they assert things which may be readily adduced against all that philosophize, as, that he explores things on high and under the earth, that he does not think there are Gods, and that he makes the worse to be the better reason. For I think they are not willing to speak the truth, that they clearly pretend to be knowing, but know nothing. Hence, as it appears to me, being ambitious and vehement and numerous, and speaking in an elegant and persuasive manner about me, they fill your ears, both before and now calumniating in the extreme. Among these, Melitus, Anytus, and Lycon, have attacked me; Melitus indeed being my enemy on account of the poets; but Anytus on account of the artificers and politicians; and Lycon on account of the orators. So that, as I said in the beginning, I should wonder if I could remove such an abundant calumny from your minds in so short a time. These things, O Athenians, are true; and I thus speak, neither concealing nor subtracting any thing from you, either great or small; though I nearly know that I shall make enemies by what I have said. This however is an argument that I speak the truth, that this is the calumny which is raised against me, and that the causes of it are these. And whether now or hereafter you investigate these things, you will find them to be as I have said. Concerning the particulars, therefore, which my first accusers urged against me, let this be a sufficient apology to you.

In the next place, I shall endeavour to reply to Melitus, that good man and lover of his country, as he says, and also to my latter accusers. For again, as being different from the former accusers, let us take the oath of these men for calumny. The accusation then is as follows: Socrates, it says, acts unjustly, corrupting the youth; and not believing in those Gods in which the city believes, he introduces other novel daemoniacal natures. Such then is the accusation; of which let us examine every part. It says, therefore, that I act unjustly by corrupting the youth. But I, O Athenians, say that Melitus acts unjustly, because he intentionally trifles, rashly bringing men into danger, and pretending to be studious and solicitous about things which were never the objects of his care. But that this is the case I will endeavour to show you.

Tell me then, O Melitus, whether you consider it as a thing of the greatest consequence, for the youth to become the best of men? – I do. – Come, then, do you therefore tell them what will make them better? For it is evident that you know, since it is the object of your care. For, having found me to be a corrupter of youth, as you say, you have brought me hither, and are my accuser; but come, inform me who it is that makes them better, and signify it to this assembly. Do you see, O Melitus, that you are silent, and have not any thing to say? Though, does it not appear to you to be shameful, and a sufficient argument of what I say, that this is not the object of your attention? But tell me, O good man, who it is that makes them better. – The laws. – I do not, however, ask this, O best of men, but what man it is that first knows this very thing, the laws. – These men, Socrates, are the judges. – How do you say, Melitus? Do they know how to instruct the youth, and to make them better? – Especially so. – But whether do all of them know how? or do some of them know, and others not? – All of them. – You speak well, by Juno, and adduce a great abundance of those that benefit. But what? Can these auditors also make the youth better, or not? – These also. – And what of the senators? – The senators also can effect this. – But, O Melitus, do some of those that harangue the people in an assembly corrupt the more juvenile; or do all these make them better? – All these. – All the Athenians therefore, as it seems, make them to be worthy and good, except me, but I alone corrupt them. Do you say so? – These very things I strenuously assert. – You charge me with a very great infelicity. But answer me: Does this also appear to you to be the case respecting horses, viz. that all men can make them better, but that there is only one person that corrupts them? or does the perfect contrary of this take place, so that it is one person who can make them better, or, at least, that those possessed of equestrian skill are very few; but the multitude, if they meddle with and make use of horses, corrupt them? Is not this the case, O Melitus, both with respect to horses and all other animals? It certainly is so, whether you and Anytus say so, or not. For a great felicity would take place concerning youth if only one person corrupted, and the rest benefited them. However, you have sufficiently shown, O Melitus, that you never bestowed any care upon youth; and you clearly evince your negligence, and that you pay no attention to the particulars for which you accuse me.

Further still, tell me, by Jupiter, O Melitus, whether it is better to dwell in good or in bad polities? Answer, my friend: for I ask you nothing difficult. Do not

the depraved always procure some evil to those that continually reside near them; and do not the good procure some good? – Entirely so. – Is there then any one who wishes to be injured by his associates, rather than to be benefited? Answer, O good man: for the law orders you to answer. Is there any one who wishes to be injured? – There is not. – Come then, whether do you bring me hither, as one that corrupts the youth, and makes them depraved willingly, or as one who does this unwillingly? – I say that you do it willingly. – But what, O Melitus, is it possible that you, who are so much younger than I am, should well know that the depraved always procure some evil to those that are most near to them, and the good some good; but that I should have arrived at such ignorance as not to know that, if I make any one of my associates depraved, I shall be in danger of receiving some evil from him; and that I, therefore, do this so great an evil willingly, as you say? I cannot be persuaded by you, O Melitus, as to these things, nor do I think that any other man would: but either I do not corrupt the youth, or I corrupt them unwillingly. So that you speak falsely in both assertions. But if I unwillingly corrupt them, the law does not order me to be brought hither for such-like involuntary offences, but that I should be taken and privately taught and admonished. For it is evident that, if I am taught better, I shall cease doing that which I unwillingly do. But you, indeed, have avoided me, and have not been willing to associate with and instruct me; but you have brought me hither, where the law orders those who require punishment, and not discipline, to be brought. Wherefore, O Athenians, this now is manifest which I have said, that Melitus never paid the smallest attention to this affair.

At the same time, however, tell us, O Melitus, how you say I corrupt the youth. Or is it not evident, from your written accusation, that I teach them not to believe in the Gods in which the city believes, but in other new divine powers? Do you not say that, teaching these things, I corrupt the youth? – Perfectly so: I strenuously assert these things. – By those very Gods, therefore, Melitus, of whom we are now speaking, speak in a still clearer manner both to me and to these men. For I cannot learn whether you say that I teach them to think that there are not certain Gods, (though I myself believe that there are Gods, for I am by no means an atheist, nor in this respect do I act unjustly,) not, indeed, such as the city believes in, but others, and that this it is for which you accuse me, that I introduce other Gods; or whether you altogether say that I do not believe there are Gods, and that I teach this doctrine also to others. – I say this,

that you do not believe that there are Gods. – O wonderful Melitus, why do you thus speak? Do I then think, unlike the rest of mankind, that the sun and moon are not Gods? – He does not, by Jupiter, O judges: for he says that the sun is a stone, and that the moon is earth. – O friend Melitus, you think that you accuse Anaxagoras; and you so despise these judges, and think them to be so illiterate, as not to know that the books of Anaxagoras the Clazomenian are full of these assertions. Besides, would the youth learn those things from me, which they might buy for a drachma at most in the orchestra, and thus might deride Socrates if he pretended they were his own, especially since they are likewise so absurd. But, by Jupiter, do I then appear to you to think that there is no God? – None whatever, by Jupiter. – What you say, O Melitus, is incredible, and, as it appears to me, is so even to yourself. Indeed, O Athenians, this man appears to me to be perfectly insolent and intemperate in his speech, and to have in reality written this accusation, impelled by a certain insolence, wantonness, and youthfulness. For he seems, as it were, to have composed an enigma in order to try me, and to have said to himself, Will the wise Socrates know that I am jesting, and speaking contrary to myself? Or shall I deceive him, together with the other hearers? For he appears to me to contradict himself in his accusation, as if he had said, Socrates is impious in not believing that there are Gods, but believing that there are Gods. And this, indeed, must be the assertion of one in jest.

But let us jointly consider, O Athenians, how he appears to me to have asserted these things. And do you, O Melitus, answer us, and, as I requested you at first, be mindful not to disturb me if I discourse after my usual manner. Is there then any man, O Melitus, who thinks that there are human affairs, but does not think that there are men? Pray answer me, and do not make so much noise. And is there any one who does not think that there are horses, but yet thinks that there are equestrian affairs? or who does not think that there are pipers, but yet that there are things pertaining to pipers? There is not, O best of men. For I will speak for you, since you are not willing to answer yourself. But answer also to this: Is there any one who thinks that there are daemoniacal affairs, but yet does not think that there are daemons? – There is not. – How averse you are to speak! so that you scarcely answer, compelled by these things. Do you not, therefore, say that I believe in and teach things daemoniacal, whether they are new or old? But indeed you acknowledge that I believe in things daemoniacal, and to this you have sworn in your accusation. If then I believe in daemoniacal

affairs, there is an abundant necessity that I should also believe in the existence of daemons. Is it not so? – It is. – For I suppose you to assent, since you do not answer. But with respect to daemons, do we not think either that they are Gods, or the sons of Gods? Will you acknowledge this or not? – Entirely so. – If, therefore, I believe that there daemons as you say, if daemons are certain Gods, will it not be as I say, that you speak enigmatically and in jest, since you assert that I do not think there are Gods, and yet again think that there are, since I believe in daemons? But if daemons are certain spurious sons of the Gods, either from Nymphs, or from certain others, of whom they are said to be the offspring, what man can believe that there are sons of the Gods, and yet that there are no Gods? For this would be just as absurd, as if some one should think that there are colts and mules, but should not think that there are horses and asses. However, O Melitus, it cannot be otherwise but that you have written this accusation, either to try me, or because there was not any crime of which you could truly accuse me. For it is impossible that you should persuade any man who has the smallest degree of intellect, that one and the same person can believe that there are daemoniacal and divine affairs, and yet that there are neither daemons, nor Gods, nor heroes. That I am not, therefore, impious, O Athenians, according to the accusation of Melitus, does not appear to me to require a long apology; but what I have said is sufficient.

As to what I before observed, that there is a great enmity towards me among the vulgar, you may be well assured that it is true. And this it is which will condemn me, if I should happen to be condemned, viz. the hatred and envy of the multitude, and not Melitus, nor Anytus; which indeed has also happened to many others, and those good men, and will I think again happen in futurity. For there is no reason to expect that it will terminate in me. Perhaps, however, some one will say, Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have applied yourself to a study, through which you are now in danger of being put to death? To this person I shall justly reply, That you do not speak well, O man, if you think that life or death ought to be regarded by the man who is capable of being useful though but in a small degree; and that he ought not to consider this alone when he acts, whether he acts justly, or unjustly, and like a good or a bad man. For those demigods that died at Troy would, according to your reasoning, be vile characters, as well others as the son of Thetis, who so much despised the danger of death when compared with disgraceful conduct, that when his mother, who was a goddess, on his desiring to kill Hector, thus I think addressed him – My

son, if you revenge the slaughter of your friend Patroclus, and kill Hector, you will yourself die, for said she, death awaits you as soon as Hector expires: – Notwithstanding this, he considered the danger of death as a trifle, and much more dreaded living basely, and not revenging his friends. For he says, May I immediately die, when I have inflicted just punishment on him who has acted unjustly, and not stay here an object of ridicule, by the crooked ships, and a burden to the ground? Do you think that he was solicitous about death and danger? For this, O Athenians, is in reality the case: wherever any one ranks himself, thinking it to be the best for him, or wherever he is ranked by the ruler, there as it appears to me he ought to abide, and encounter danger, neither paying attention to death nor to any thing else before that which is base.

I therefore, O Athenians, should have acted in a dire manner, if, when those rulers which you had placed over me had assigned me a rank at Potidea, at Amphipolis, and at Delium, I should then have remained where they stationed me, like any other person, and should have encountered the danger of death; but that, when Divinity has ordered, as I think and apprehend, that I ought to live philosophizing, and exploring myself and others, I should here through fear of death or any other thing desert my rank. For this would be dire: and then in reality any one might justly bring me to a court of judicature, and accuse me of not believing in the Gods, in consequence of not obeying the oracle, fearing death, and thinking myself to be wise when I am not. For to dread death, O Athenians, is nothing else than to appear to be wise, without being so: since it is for a man to appear to know that which he does not know. For no one knows but that death may be to man the greatest of goods; but they dread it, as if they well knew that it is the greatest of evils. And how is it possible that this should not be a most disgraceful ignorance, I mean for a man to suspect that he has a knowledge of that of which he is ignorant? But I, O Athenians, differ perhaps in this from the multitude of men; and if I should say that I am wiser than some one in any thing, it would be in this, that not having a sufficient knowledge of the things in Hades, I also think that I have not this knowledge. But I know that to act unjustly, and to be disobedient to one more excellent, whether God or man, is evil and base. I shall never, therefore, fear and avoid things which for aught I know may be good, before those evils which I know to be evils. So that neither if you should now dismiss me, (being unpersuaded by Anytus, who said that either I ought not to have been brought hither at first, or that, when brought hither, it was impossible not to put me to death, telling you

that if I escaped, all your sons studying what Socrates had taught them would be corrupted,) if besides these things you should say to me, O Socrates, we now indeed shall not be persuaded by Anytus, but we shall dismiss you, though on this condition, that afterwards you no longer busy yourself with this investigation, nor philosophise, and if hereafter you are detected in so doing, you shall die, – if, as I said, you should dismiss me on these terms, I should thus address you: O Athenians, I honour and love you: but I obey Divinity rather than you; and as long as I breathe and am able, I shall not cease to philosophise, and to exhort and indicate to any one of you I may happen to meet, such things as the following, after my usual manner. O best of men, since you are an Athenian, of a city the greatest and the most celebrated for wisdom and strength, are you not ashamed of being attentive to the means of acquiring riches, glory and honour, in great abundance, but to bestow no care nor any consideration upon prudence and truth, nor how your soul may subsist in the most excellent condition? And if any one of you should contend with me, and say that these things are the objects of his care, I should not immediately dismiss him, nor depart, but I should interrogate, explore, and reason with him. And if he should not appear to me to possess virtue, and yet pretend to the possession of it, I should reprove him as one who but little esteems things of the greatest worth, but considers things of a vile and abject nature as of great importance. In this manner I should act by any one I might happen to meet, whether younger or older, a stranger or a citizen; but rather to citizens, because ye are more allied to me. For be well assured that Divinity commands me thus to act. And I think that a greater good never happened to you in the city, than this my obedience to the will of Divinity. For I go about doing nothing else than persuading both the younger and older among you, neither to pay attention to the body, nor to riches, nor any thing else prior to the soul; nor to be so much concerned for any thing, as how the soul may subsist in the most excellent condition. I also say that virtue is not produced from riches, but riches from virtue, as likewise all other human goods, both privately and publicly. If, therefore, asserting these things, I corrupt the youth, these things will be noxious; but if any one says that I assert other things than these, he says nothing. In addition to this I shall say, O Athenians, that whether you are persuaded by Anytus or not, and whether you dismiss me or not, I shall not act otherwise, even though I should die often.

Be not disturbed, O Athenians, but patiently hear what I shall request of you; for I think it will be advantageous for you to hear. For I am about to mention certain other things to you, at which perhaps you will be clamorous; though let this on no account take place. Be well assured then, if you put me to death, being such a man as I say I am, you will not injure me more than yourselves. For neither Melitus nor Anytus injures me; for neither can they. Indeed, I think it is not lawful for a better to be injured by a worse man. He may indeed perhaps condemn me to death, or exile, or disgrace; and he or some other may consider these as mighty evils. I however do not think so; but, in my opinion, it is much more an evil to act as he now acts, who endeavours to put a man to death unjustly. Now, therefore, O Athenians, it is far from my intention to defend myself, (as some one may think,) but I thus speak for your sake, lest in condemning me you should sin against the gift of Divinity. For, if you should put me to death, you will not easily find such another (though the comparison is ridiculous) whom Divinity has united to this city as to a great and generous horse, but sluggish through his magnitude, and requiring to be excited by a certain fly. In like manner Divinity appears to have united such a one as I am to the city, that I might not cease exciting, persuading and reproving each of you, and every where sitting among you through the whole day. Such another man, therefore, will not easily arise among you. And if you will be persuaded by me, you will spare me. Perhaps, however, you, being indignant, like those who are awakened from sleep, will repulse me, and, being persuaded by Anytus, will inconsiderately put me to death. Should this be the case, you will pass the rest of your time in sleep, unless Divinity should send some other person to take care of you. But that I am such a one as I have said, one imparted to this city by Divinity, you may understand from hence. For my conduct does not appear to be human, in neglecting every thing pertaining to myself and my private affairs for so many years, and always attending to your concerns, addressing each of you separately, like a father, or an elder brother, and persuading you to the study of virtue. And if indeed I had obtained any emolument from this conduct, and receiving a recompense had exhorted you to these things, there might be some reason for asserting that I acted like other men; but now behold, even my accusers themselves, who have so shamelessly calumniated me in every thing else, have not been so impudent as to charge me with this, or to bring witnesses to prove that I ever either demanded or solicited a reward. And that I speak the truth, my poverty I think affords a sufficient testimony.

Perhaps, therefore, it may appear absurd, that, going about and involving myself in a multiplicity of affairs, I should privately advise these things, but that I should never dare to come to your convention, and consult for the city. The cause of this is that which you have often heard me every where asserting, viz. because a certain divine and daemoniacal voice is present with me, which also Melitus in his accusation derided. This voice attended me from a child; and, when it is present, always dissuades me from what I intended to do, but never incites me. This it is which opposed my engaging in political affairs; and to me its opposition appears to be all-beautiful. For be well assured, O Athenians, if I had formerly attempted to transact political affairs, I should have perished long before this, and should neither have benefited you in any respect, nor myself. And be not indignant with me for speaking the truth. For it is not possible that any man can be safe, who sincerely opposes either you, or any other multitude, and who prevents many unjust and illegal actions from taking place in the city; but it is necessary that he who in reality contends for the just, if he wishes even but for a little time to be safe, should live privately and not engage in public affairs.

I will present you with mighty proofs of these things, not words, which you honour, but deeds. Hear then the circumstances which have happened to me, that you may know that I shall not yield to any one contrary to what is becoming, through dread of death; though at the same time by not yielding I shall perish. For I, O Athenians, never bore the office of magistrate in the city, but I have been a senator: and it happened that our Antiochean tribe governed, when you thought proper to condemn the ten generals collectively, for not taking up the bodies of those that perished in the naval battle; and in so doing acted illegally, as afterwards appeared to all of you. At that time I alone of the Prytaneans opposed you, that you might not act contrary to the laws, and my suffrage was contrary to yours. When the orators also were ready to point me out and condemn me, and you likewise were exhorting and vociferating to the same end, I thought that I ought rather to encounter danger with law and justice, than adhere to you, not establishing what is just, through fear of bonds or death. And these things indeed happened while the city was yet a democracy; but when it became an oligarchy, the Thirty sent for me and four others to the Tholus, and ordered us to bring Leon the Salaminian from Salamis, in order to be put to death; for by these orders they meant to involve many others in guilt. Then indeed I, not in words but in deeds, showed them, if the assertion is not

too rustic, that I made no account of death; but that all my attention was directed to this, that I might do nothing unjust or unholy. For that dominion of the Thirty, though so strong, did not terrify me into the perpetration of any unjust action. But when we departed from the Tholus, the four indeed went to Salamis, and brought with them Leon; but I returned home. And perhaps for this I should have been put to death, if that government had not been rapidly dissolved. These things many of you can testify.

Do you think, therefore, that I could have lived for so many years, if I had engaged in public affairs, and had acted in a manner becoming a good man, giving assistance to justice, and doing this in the most eminent degree? Far otherwise, O Athenians: for neither could any other man. But I, through the whole of my life, if I do any thing publicly, shall appear to be such a man; and being the same privately, I shall never grant any thing to any one contrary to justice, neither to any other, nor to any one of these whom my calumniators say are my disciples. I however was never the preceptor of any one; but I never repulsed either the young or the old that were desirous of hearing me speak after my usual manner. Nor do I discourse when I receive money, but refrain from speaking when I do not receive any; but I similarly offer myself to be interrogated by the rich and the poor: and if any one is willing to answer, he hears what I have to say. Of these too, whether any one becomes good or not, I cannot justly be said to be the cause, because I never either promised or taught them any discipline. But if any one says that he has ever learnt or heard any thing from me privately which all others have not, be well assured that he does not speak the truth.

Why therefore some have delighted to associate with me for a long time ye have heard, O Athenians. I have told you all the truth, that men are delighted on hearing those interrogated who think themselves to be wise, but who are not: for this is not unpleasant. But, as I say, I am ordered to do this by Divinity, by oracles, by dreams, and by every mode by which any other divine destiny ever commanded any thing to be done by man. These things, O Athenians, are true, and might easily be confuted if they were not. For if, with respect to the youth, I corrupt some, and have corrupted others, it is fit, if any of them have become old, that, knowing I gave them bad advice when they were young, they should now rise up, accuse and take vengeance on me; but if they themselves are unwilling to do this, that their fathers, or brothers, or others of their kindred,

should now call to mind and avenge the evil which their relatives suffered from me. But in short many of them are here present, whom I see: – In the first place, Crito, who is of the same age and city that I am, and who is the father of this Critobulus; in the next place, Lysanias the Sphecian, the father of this Aeschines; and further still, Antipho the Cephisian, the father of Epigenes. There are also others whose brothers are in this assembly, viz. Nicostratus the son of Zotidas, and the brother of Theodotus. And Theodotus indeed is dead, and so has no occasion for his brother's assistance. Paralus also is here, the son of Demodochus, of whom Theages was the brother; likewise Adimantus the son of Aristo, the brother of whom is this Plato; and Aeantidorus, of whom Apollodorus is the brother. I could also mention many others, some one of whom Melitus, especially in his oration, ought to have adduced as a witness. If however he then forgot to do so, let him now produce him, for he has my consent; and if he has any thing of this kind to disclose, let him declare it. However, you will find the very contrary of this to be the case, and that all these are ready to assist me who have corrupted and injured their kindred, as Melitus and Anytus say. It might indeed perhaps be reasonable to suppose that those whom I have corrupted would assist me; but what other reason can the relatives of these have, who are not corrupted, and who are now advanced in age, for giving me assistance, except that which is right and just? For they know that Melitus lies, and that I speak the truth. Be it so then, O Athenians: and these indeed, and perhaps other such-like particulars, are what I have to urge in my defence.

Perhaps, however, some one among you will be indignant on recollecting that he, when engaged in a much less contest than this, suppliantly implored the judges with many tears; that he also brought his children hither, that by these he might especially excite compassion, together with many others of his relatives and friends: but I do none of these things, though, as it may appear, I am brought to extreme danger. Perhaps, therefore, some one thus thinking may become more hostile towards me, and, being enraged with these very particulars, may give his vote with anger. If then any one of you is thus affected, I do not think it by any means right; but if he should be, I shall appear to myself to speak equitably to such a one by saying that I also, O best of men, have certain relatives. For, as Homer says, I am not sprung from an oak, nor from a rock, but from men. So that I also, O Athenians, have relations, and three sons; one now a lad; but the other two, boys: I have not however brought

any one of them hither, that I might supplicate you on that account to acquit me. Why is it then that I do none of these things? It is not, O Athenians, because I am contumacious, nor is it in contempt of you. And as to my fearing or not fearing death, that is another question. But it does not appear to me to be consistent either with my own glory or yours, or that of the whole city, that I should do any thing of this kind at my age, and with the reputation I have acquired, whether true or false. For it is admitted that Socrates surpasses in something the multitude of mankind. If, therefore, those among you who appear to excel either in wisdom, in fortitude, or any other virtue, should act in such a manner as I have seen some when they have been judged, it would be shameful: for these, appearing indeed to be something, have conducted themselves in a wonderful manner, thinking they should suffer something dreadful by dying, as if they would be immortal if you did not put them to death. These men, as it appears to me, would so disgrace the city, that any stranger might apprehend that such of the Athenians as excel in virtue, and who are promoted to the magistracy and other honours in preference to the rest, do not in any respect surpass women. For these things, O Athenians, ought not to be done by us who have gained some degree of reputation, nor should you suffer us to do them, if we were willing; but you should show that you will much sooner condemn him who introduces these lamentable dramas, and who thus makes the city ridiculous, than him who quietly expects your decision.

But exclusive of glory, O Athenians, neither does it appear to me to be just for a judge to be entreated, or to acquit any one in consequence of being supplicated; but in my opinion he ought to teach and persuade. For a judge does not sit for the purpose of showing favour, but that he may judge what is just: and he takes an oath that he will not show favour to any, but that he will judge according to the laws. Hence it is neither fit that we should accustom you, nor that you should be accustomed to swear: for in so doing neither of us will act piously. Do not, therefore, think, O Athenians, that I ought to act in such a manner towards you as I should neither conceive to be beautiful, nor just, nor holy; and especially, by Jupiter, since I am accused of impiety by this Melitus. For it clearly follows, that if I should persuade you, and, though you have taken an oath, force you to be favourable, I might then indeed teach that you do not think there are Gods; and in reality, while making my defence, I should accuse myself as not believing in the Gods. This however is far from being the case: for I believe that there are Gods more than any one of my accusers; and I refer it to

you and to Divinity to judge concerning me such things as will be best both for me and you. [After Socrates had thus spoken, votes were taken by the judges, and he was condemned by a majority of three voices. His speech after his condemnation commences in the paragraph immediately following.]

That I should not, therefore, O Athenians, be indignant with you because you have condemned me, there are many reasons, and among others this, that it has not happened to me contrary to my expectation; but I much rather wonder that there should have been so great a number of votes on both sides. For I did not think that I should have wanted such a few additional votes for my acquittal. But now, as it seems, if there had been only three more votes, I should have escaped condemnation. Indeed, as it appears to me, I now have escaped Melitus; and I have not only escaped him, but it is perfectly evident that unless Anytus and Lyco had risen to accuse me, he had lost his thousand drachmas, since he had not the fifth part of the votes on his side.

Melitus then thinks that I deserve death. Be it so. But what punishment, O Athenians, shall I assign to myself? Is it not evident that it will be such a one as I deserve? What then do I deserve to suffer or to pay, for not having during my life concealed what I have learned, but neglected all that the multitude esteem, riches, domestic concerns, military command, authority in public assemblies, and other magistracies? for having avoided the conspiracies and seditions which have happened in the city, thinking that I was in reality a more worthy character than to depend on these things for my safety? I have not, therefore, applied myself to those pursuits, by which I could neither benefit you nor myself; but my whole endeavour has been to benefit every individual in the greatest degree; striving to persuade each of you, that he should pay no attention to any of his concerns, prior to that care of himself by which he may become a most worthy and wise man; that he should not attend to the affairs of the city prior to the city itself; and that attention should be paid to other things in a similar manner. What then, being such a man, do I deserve to suffer? A certain good, O Athenians, if in reality you honour me according to my desert; and this such a good as it is proper for me to receive. What then is the good which is adapted to a poor man who is a benefactor, and who requires leisure that he may exhort you to virtue? There is not any thing more adapted, O Athenians, than that such a man should be supported at the public expense in the Prytaneum; and this much more than if some one of you had been

victorious in the Olympic games with horses, or in the two or four-yoked car. For such a one makes you appear to be happy, but I cause you to be so: and he is not in want of support, but I am. If, therefore, it is necessary that I should be honoured according to what is justly my desert, I should be honoured with this support in the Prytaneum.

Perhaps, therefore, in saying these things, I shall appear to you to speak in the same manner as when I reprobated lamentations and supplications. A thing of this kind, however, O Athenians, is not the case, but rather the following. I am determined not to injure any man willingly; though I shall not persuade you of this, because the time in which we can discourse with each other is but short. For if there was the same law with you as with others, that in cases of death the judicial process should not continue for one day only but for many, I think I should be able to persuade you. But now it is not easy in a short time to dissolve great calumnies. Being however determined to injure no one, I shall be very far from injuring myself, and of pronouncing against myself that I am worthy of evil and punishment. What then? Fearing lest I should suffer that which Melitus thinks I deserve, which I say I know not whether it is good or evil, that I may avoid this, shall I choose that which I well know to be evil, and think that I deserve this? Whether then shall I choose bonds? But why is it necessary that I should live in prison, in perpetual subjection to the eleven magistrates? Shall I pay a fine then, and remain in bonds till it is discharged? But this is what I just now said: for I have not money to pay it. Shall I then choose exile? For perhaps I shall be thought worthy of this. I should however, O Athenians, be a great lover of life, if I were so absurd as not to be able to infer that if you, being my fellow citizens, could not endure my habits and discourses, which have become to you so burthensome and odious, that you now seek to be liberated from them, it is not likely that others would easily bear them. It is far otherwise, O Athenians. My life would be beautiful indeed were I at this advanced age to live in exile, changing and being driven from one city to another. For I well know that, wherever I may go, the youth will hear me when I discourse, in the same manner as they do here. And if I should repel them, they also would expel me, persuading the more elderly to this effect. But if I should not repel them, the fathers and kindred of these would banish me on account of these very young men themselves.

Perhaps however some one will say, Can you not, Socrates, live in exile silently and quietly? But it is the most difficult of all things to persuade some among you, that this cannot take place. For if I say that in so doing I should disobey Divinity, and that on this account it is impossible for me to live a life of leisure and quiet, you would not believe me, in consequence of supposing that I spoke ironically. And if, again, I should say that this is the greatest good to man, to discourse every day concerning virtue, and other things which you have heard me discussing, exploring both myself and others; and if I should also assert that an uninvestigating life is to be rejected by man, much less, were I thus to speak, would you believe me. These things however, O Athenians, are as I say; but it is not easy to persuade you that they are so. And at the same time I am not accustomed to think myself deserving of any ill. Indeed, if I were rich, I would amerce myself in such a sum as I might be able to pay; but now I am not in a condition to do this, unless you would allow the fine to be proportioned to what I am able to pay. For thus perhaps I might be able to pay a mina of silver (3l.). But Plato here, O Athenians, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, exhort me to pay thirty minae, (90l.) for which they will be answerable. I amerce myself, therefore, in thirty minae; and these will be my securities for the payment.

Now, O Athenians, your impatience and precipitancy will draw upon you a great reproach, and give occasion to those who are so disposed, to revile the city for having put that wise man Socrates to death. For those who are willing to reproach you will call me a wise man, though I am not. If, therefore, you had waited but for a short time, this very thing, my death, would have happened to you spontaneously. For behold my age, that it is far advanced in life, and is near to death. But I do not say this to all of you, but to those only who have condemned me to die. This also I say to them: Perhaps you think, O Athenians, that I was condemned through the want of such language, by which I might have persuaded you, if I had thought it requisite, to say and do any thing, so that I might escape punishment. Far otherwise: for I am condemned through want indeed, yet not of words, but of audacity and impudence, and because I was unwilling to say such things to you as you would have been much gratified in hearing, I at the same time weeping and lamenting, and doing and saying many other things unworthy of me, as I say, but such as you are accustomed to hear and see in others. But neither then did I think it was necessary, for the sake of avoiding danger, to do any thing illiberal, nor do I

now repent that I have thus defended myself; but I should much rather choose to die, after having made this apology, than to live after that manner. For neither in a judicial process, nor in battle, is it proper that I or any other should devise how he may by any means avoid death; since in battle it is frequently evident that a man might easily avoid death by throwing away his arms, and suppliantly converting himself to his pursuers. There are also many other devices in other dangers, by which he who dares to do and say any thing may escape death. To fly from death however, O Athenians, is not difficult, but it is much more difficult to fly from depravity; for it runs swifter than death. And now I indeed, as being slow and old, am caught by the slower; but my accusers, as being skilful and swift, are caught by the swifter of these two, improbity. Now too, I indeed depart, condemned by you to death; but they being condemned by truth, depart to depravity and injustice. And I acquiesce in this decision, and they also. Perhaps, therefore, it is necessary that these things should subsist in this manner, and I think they subsist properly.

In the next place, I desire to predict to you who have condemned me, what will be your fate. For I am now in that situation in which men especially prophesy, viz. when they are about to die. For I say, that you, my murderers, will immediately after my death be punished, by dying in a manner, by Jupiter, much more severe than I shall. For now you have done this, thinking you should be liberated from the necessity of giving an account of your life. The very contrary however, as I say, will happen to you: for many will be your accusers, whom I have restrained, though you did not perceive it. These too will be more troublesome, because they are younger, and will be more indignant against you. For, if you think that by putting men to death you will restrain others from upbraiding you that you do not live well, you are much mistaken; since this mode of liberation is neither sufficiently efficacious nor becoming. But this is the most beautiful and the most easy mode, not to disturb others, but to act in such a manner that you may be most excellent characters. And thus much I prophesy to those of you who condemned me.

But to you who have acquitted me by your decision, I would willingly speak concerning this affair during the time that the magistrates are at leisure, and before I am brought to the place where it is necessary I should die. Attend to me, therefore, O Athenians, during that time. For nothing hinders our conversing with each other, as long as we are permitted so to do; since I wish to demonstrate to you, as friends, the meaning of that which has just now

happened to me. To me then, O my judges (and in calling you judges I rightly denominate you,) a certain wonderful circumstance has happened. For the prophetic voice of the daemon, which opposed me in the most trifling affairs, if I was about to act in any thing improperly, prior to this, I was continually accustomed to hear; but now, though these things have happened to me which you see, and which some one would think to be the extremity of evils, yet neither when I departed from home in the morning was the signal of the God adverse to me, nor when I ascended hither to the place of judgment, nor when I was about to speak, – though at other times it frequently restrained me in the midst of speaking. But now, in this affair, it has never been adverse to me, either in word or deed. I will now, therefore, tell you what I apprehend to be the cause of this. For this thing which has happened appears to me to be good; nor do those of us apprehend rightly who think death to be an evil; of which this appears to me to be a great argument, that the accustomed signal would have opposed me, unless I had been about to do something good.

After this manner too we may conceive that there is abundant hope that death is good. For to die is one of two things. For it is either to be as it were nothing, and to be deprived of all sensation; or, as it is said, it is a certain mutation and migration of the soul from this to another place. And whether no sensation remains, but death is like sleep when unattended with any dreams, in this case death will be a gain. For, if any one compares such a night as this, in which he so profoundly sleeps as not even to see a dream, with the other nights and days of his life, and should declare how many he had passed better and more pleasantly than this night, I think that not only a private man, but even the great king himself, would find so small a number that they might be easily counted. If, therefore, death is a thing of this kind, I say it is a gain: for thus the whole of future time appears to be nothing more than one night. But if again death is a migration from hence to another place, and the assertion is true that all the dead are there, what greater good, O my judges, can there be than this? For if some one arriving at Hades, being liberated from these who pretend to be judges, should find those who are true judges, and who are said to judge there, viz. Minos and Rhadamanthus, Aeacus, and Triptolemus, and such others of the demigods as lived justly, would this be a vile journey? At what rate would you not purchase a conference with Orpheus and Musaeus, with Hesiod and Homer? I indeed should be willing to die often, if these things are true. For to me the association will be admirable, when I shall meet with Palamedes, and

Ajax the son of Telamon, and any other of the ancients who died through an unjust decision. The comparing my case with theirs will, I think, be no unpleasing employment to me. But the greatest pleasure will consist in passing my time there, as I have done here, in interrogating and exploring who among them is wise, and who fancies himself to be but is not so. What, O my judges, would not any one give for a conference with him who led that mighty army against Troy, or with Ulysses, or Sisyphus, or ten thousand others, both men and women, that might be mentioned? For to converse and associate with these would be an inestimable felicity. For I should not be capitally condemned on this account by those that dwell there; since they are in other respects more happy than those that live here, and are for the rest of time immortal, if the assertions respecting these things are true.

You, therefore, O my judges, ought to entertain good hopes with respect to death, and to be firmly persuaded of this one thing, that to a good man nothing is evil, neither while living nor when dead, and that his concerns are never neglected by the Gods. Nor is my present condition the effect of chance; but this is evident to me, that now to die, and be liberated from the affairs of life, is better for me. On this account the accustomed signal did not in this affair oppose me. Nor am I very indignant with those that accused and condemned me, though their intention in so doing was to injure me; and for this they deserve to be blamed. Thus much however I request of them: that you will punish my sons when they grow up, if they cause you the same molestation that I have; and if they shall appear to you to pay more attention to riches or any thing else than to virtue, and shall think themselves to be something when they are nothing, that you will reprobate them as I do you, as neglecting the care of things to which they ought to attend, and conceiving themselves to be of some consequence when they are of no worth. If ye do these things, your conduct both towards me and my sons will be just. But it is now time to depart hence, – for me indeed to die, but for you to live. Which of us however will arrive at a better thing, is perfectly immanifest except to Divinity.