



# AGORA

*great books, great ideas,  
great conversations*

## Natural Law - Part II Saturday, October 23, 2021

### Heraclitus Fragments

#### 1 **Fragment 1**

Though this Word (logos) is true evermore, yet men are as unable to understand it when they hear it for the first time as before they have heard it at all. For, though all things come to pass in accordance with this Word, men seem as if they had no experience of them, when they make trial of words and deeds such as I set forth, dividing each thing according to its kind and showing how it is what it is. But other men know not what they are doing when awake, even as they forget what they do in sleep.

#### **Fragment 2**

Though the logos is common, the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own.

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#### **Fragment 4**

If happiness consisted in the pleasures of the body, we should call oxen happy whenever they come across bitter vetch to eat.

#### 15 **Fragment 17**

The many do not take heed of such things as those they meet with, nor do they recognize them when they are taught, though they think they do.

#### **Fragment 23**

20 They would not have known the name of justice if these things were not.

#### **Fragment 27**

There awaits men when they die such things as they look not for nor dream of.

#### 25 **Fragment 28**

The most esteemed of them knows — holds fast to — fancies.  
Justice shall overtake the artificers of lies and the false witnesses.

**1 Fragment 29**

For even the best of them choose one thing above all others, immortal glory among mortals, while most of them are gluttoned like beasts.

**5 Fragment 32**

The wise is one only. It is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus.

**Fragment 34**

10 Hearing they do not understand, like the deaf. Of them does the saying bear witness: 'present, they are absent.'

**Fragment 35**

Men that love wisdom must be inquirers into very many things indeed.

**15 Fragment 40**

The learning of many things does not teach understanding; otherwise, it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hecataeus.

**Fragment 41**

20 Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things.

**Fragment 43**

Wantonness needs putting out, even more than a house on fire.

**25 Fragment 44**

The people must fight for its law as for its walls.

**Fragment 45**

30 Traveling on every path, you will not find the boundaries of soul by going — so deep is its measure.

**Fragment 47**

Let us not conjecture randomly about the most important things.

**Fragment 49**

35 One is ten thousand to me, if he be the best.

**Fragment 50**

It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word, and to confess that all things are one.

**40 Fragment 72**

Most are at odds with that with which they most constantly associate — the account which governs the universe — and ... what they meet with every day seems foreign to them.

**1 Fragment 73**

It is not meet to act and speak like men asleep.

**Fragment 77**

5 It is pleasure to souls to become moist.

**Fragment 85**

It is hard to fight with one's heart's desire. Whatever it wishes to get, it purchases at the cost of soul.

**10 Fragment 86**

(The wise man) is not known because of men's want of belief.

**Fragment 90**

All things are an exchange for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares.

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**Fragment 91**

[For, according to Heraclitus, it is not possible to step twice into the same river, nor is it possible to touch a mortal substance twice in so far as its state is concerned. But, thanks to the swiftness and speed of change,] it scatters <things> and brings <them> together again, [(or, rather, it brings together and lets go neither again nor later, but simultaneously)] it forms and dissolves, and it approaches and departs.

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**Fragment 95**

It is best to hide folly; but it is hard in times of relaxation, over our cups.

**25 Fragment 102**

To God all things are fair and good and right, but men hold some things wrong and some right.

**Fragment 103**

Concerning the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common.

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**Fragment 104**

For what thought or wisdom have they? They follow the poets and take the crowd as their teacher, knowing not that "the many are bad and few good."

**35 Fragment 107**

Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men who have barbarian souls.

**Fragment 108**

Of all whose discourses I have heard, there is not one who attains to understanding that wisdom is apart from all.

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1 **Fragment 110**

It is not better for men to get all they wish to get.

**Fragment 111**

5 It is sickness that makes health pleasant and good; hunger, plenty; weariness, rest.

**Fragment 112**

Self-control is the highest virtue, and wisdom is to speak truth and consciously to act according to nature.

10 **Fragment 113**

Thought is common to all.

**Fragment 114**

Those who speak with understanding must hold fast to what is common to all as a city holds fast to its law,  
15 and even more strongly. For all human laws are fed by the one divine law. It prevails as much as it will, and suffices for all things with something to spare.

**Fragment 116**

Recognizing oneself and being of a sound mind are for all men.  
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## Protagoras

A. "Concerning the gods I cannot know either that they exist or that they do not exist, or what form they might have, for there is much to prevent one's knowing: the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of man's life."  
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B. "Man is the measure of all things of things that are, that they are, of things are not, that they are not"

C. "My own opinion is more or less this: no wise man believes that anyone sins willingly or willingly perpetuates any base or evil act; they know very well that every base or evil action is committed involuntarily."  
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## Theaetetus (151d-186e)

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ripens, if the god is gracious to them, they all make astonishing progress; and this in the opinion of others as well as in their own. It is quite dear that they never learned anything from me; the many fine discoveries to which they cling are of their own making. But to me and the god they owe their delivery. And the proof of my words is, that many of them in their ignorance, either in their self-conceit despising me, or falling under the influence of others, have gone away too soon; and have not only lost the children of whom I had previously delivered them by an ill bringing up, but have stifled whatever else they had in them by evil communications, being fonder of lies and shams than of the truth; and they have at last ended by seeing themselves, as others see them, to be great fools. Aristeides, the son of Lysimachus, is one of them, and there are many others. The truants often return to me, and beg that I would consort with them again—they are ready to go to me on their knees—and then, if my familiar allows, which is not always the case, I receive them, and they begin to grow again. Dire are the pangs which my art is able to arouse and to allay in those who consort with me, just like the pangs of women in childbirth; night and day they are full of perplexity and travail which is even worse than that of the women. So much for them. And there are others, Theaetetus, who come to me apparently having nothing in them; and as I know that they have no need of my art, I coax them into marrying some one, and by the grace of God I can generally tell who is likely to do them good. Many of them I have given away to Prodicus, and many to other inspired sages. I tell you this long story, friend Theaetetus, because I suspect, as indeed you seem to think yourself, that you are in labour—great with some conception. Come then to me, who am a midwife's son and myself a midwife, and do your best to answer the questions which I will ask you. And if I abstract and expose your first-born, because I discover upon inspection that the conception which you have formed is a vain shadow, do not quarrel with me on that account, as the manner of women is when their first children are taken from them. For I have actually known some who were ready to bite me when I deprived them of a darling folly; they did not perceive that I acted from goodwill, not knowing that no god is the enemy of man—that was not within the range of their ideas; neither am I their enemy in all this, but it would be wrong for me to admit falsehood, or to stifle the truth. Once more, then, Theaetetus, I repeat my old question, 'What is knowledge?'—and do not say that you cannot tell; but quit yourself like a man, and by the help of God you will be able to tell.

THEAETETUS: At any rate, Socrates, after such an exhortation I should be ashamed of not trying to do my best. Now he who knows perceives what he knows, and, as far as I can see at present, knowledge is perception.

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 SOCRATES: Bravely said, boy; that is the way in which you should express your opinion. And now, let us examine together this conception of yours, and see whether it is a true birth or a mere wind-egg:—You say that knowledge is perception?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

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 SOCRATES: Well, you have delivered yourself of a very important doctrine about knowledge; it is indeed the opinion of Protagoras, who has another way of expressing it. Man, he says, is the measure of all things, of the existence of things that are, and of the non-existence of things that are not:—You have read him?

THEAETETUS: O yes, again and again.

- 1           SOCRATES: Does he not say that things are to you such as they appear to you, and to me such as they appear to me, and that you and I are men?
- THEAETETUS: Yes, he says so.
- SOCRATES: A wise man is not likely to talk nonsense. Let us try to understand him: the same wind is blowing, and yet one of us may be cold and the other not, or one may be slightly and the other very cold?
- 5           THEAETETUS: Quite true.
- SOCRATES: Now is the wind, regarded not in relation to us but absolutely, cold or not; or are we to say, with Protagoras, that the wind is cold to him who is cold, and not to him who is not?
- THEAETETUS: I suppose the last.
- 10          SOCRATES: Then it must appear so to each of them?
- THEAETETUS: Yes.
- SOCRATES: And 'appears to him' means the same as 'he perceives.'
- THEAETETUS: True.
- SOCRATES: Then appearing and perceiving coincide in the case of hot and cold, and in similar instances; for things appear, or may be supposed to be, to each one such as he perceives them?
- 15          THEAETETUS: Yes.
- SOCRATES: Then perception is always of existence, and being the same as knowledge is unerring?
- THEAETETUS: Clearly.
- 20          SOCRATES: In the name of the Graces, what an almighty wise man Protagoras must have been! He spoke these things in a parable to the common herd, like you and me, but told the truth, 'his Truth,' (In allusion to a book of Protagoras' which bore this title.) in secret to his own disciples.
- THEAETETUS: What do you mean, Socrates?
- SOCRATES: I am about to speak of a high argument, in which all things are said to be relative; you cannot rightly call anything by any name, such as great or small, heavy or light, for the great will be small and the heavy light—there is no single thing or quality, but out of motion and change and admixture all things are becoming relatively to one another, which 'becoming' is by us incorrectly called being, but is really becoming, for nothing ever is, but all things are becoming. Summon all philosophers—Protagoras, Heracleitus, Empedocles, and the rest of them, one after another, and with the exception of Parmenides they will agree with you in this. Summon the great masters of either kind of poetry—Epicharmus, the prince of Comedy, and Homer of Tragedy; when the latter sings of
- 25           'Ocean whence sprang the gods, and mother Tethys,'
- does he not mean that all things are the offspring, of flux and motion?
- 30          THEAETETUS: I think so.
- SOCRATES: And who could take up arms against such a great army having Homer for its general, and not appear ridiculous? (Compare Cratylus.)
- THEAETETUS: Who indeed, Socrates?
- SOCRATES: Yes, Theaetetus; and there are plenty of other proofs which will show that motion is the source of what is called being and becoming, and inactivity of not-being and destruction; for fire and warmth, which are supposed to be the parent and guardian of all other things, are born of movement and of friction, which is a kind of motion;—is not this the origin of fire?
- 40          THEAETETUS: It is.

- 1           SOCRATES: And the race of animals is generated in the same way?  
           THEAETETUS: Certainly.
- SOCRATES: And is not the bodily habit spoiled by rest and idleness, but preserved for a long time by motion and exercise?
- 5           THEAETETUS: True.
- SOCRATES: And what of the mental habit? Is not the soul informed, and improved, and preserved by study and attention, which are motions; but when at rest, which in the soul only means want of attention and study, is uninformed, and speedily forgets whatever she has learned?
- THEAETETUS: True.
- 10          SOCRATES: Then motion is a good, and rest an evil, to the soul as well as to the body?
- THEAETETUS: Clearly.
- SOCRATES: I may add, that breathless calm, stillness and the like waste and impair, while wind and storm preserve; and the palmary argument of all, which I strongly urge, is the golden chain in Homer, by which he means the sun, thereby indicating that so long as the sun and the heavens go round in their orbits, all things human and divine are and are preserved, but if they were chained up and their motions ceased, then all things would be destroyed, and, as the saying is, turned upside down.
- 15          THEAETETUS: I believe, Socrates, that you have truly explained his meaning.
- 20          SOCRATES: Then now apply his doctrine to perception, my good friend, and first of all to vision; that which you call white colour is not in your eyes, and is not a distinct thing which exists out of them. And you must not assign any place to it: for if it had position it would be, and be at rest, and there would be no process of becoming.
- THEAETETUS: Then what is colour?
- 25          SOCRATES: Let us carry the principle which has just been affirmed, that nothing is self-existent, and then we shall see that white, black, and every other colour, arises out of the eye meeting the appropriate motion, and that what we call a colour is in each case neither the active nor the passive element, but something which passes between them, and is peculiar to each percipient; are you quite certain that the several colours appear to a dog or to any animal whatever as they appear to you?
- 30          THEAETETUS: Far from it.
- SOCRATES: Or that anything appears the same to you as to another man? Are you so profoundly convinced of this? Rather would it not be true that it never appears exactly the same to you, because you are never exactly the same?
- 35          THEAETETUS: The latter.
- SOCRATES: And if that with which I compare myself in size, or which I apprehend by touch, were great or white or hot, it could not become different by mere contact with another unless it actually changed; nor again, if the comparing or apprehending subject were great or white or hot, could this, when unchanged from within, become changed by any approximation or affection of any other thing. The fact is that in our ordinary way of speaking we allow ourselves to be driven into most ridiculous and wonderful contradictions, as Protagoras and all who take his line of argument would remark.
- 40          THEAETETUS: How? and of what sort do you mean?

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 SOCRATES: A little instance will sufficiently explain my meaning: Here are six dice, which are more by a half when compared with four, and fewer by a half than twelve—they are more and also fewer. How can you or any one maintain the contrary?

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 THEAETETUS: Very true.

SOCRATES: Well, then, suppose that Protagoras or some one asks whether anything can become greater or more if not by increasing, how would you answer him, Theaetetus?

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 THEAETETUS: I should say 'No,' Socrates, if I were to speak my mind in reference to this last question, and if I were not afraid of contradicting my former answer.

SOCRATES: Capital! excellent! spoken like an oracle, my boy! And if you reply 'Yes,' there will be a case for Euripides; for our tongue will be unconvinced, but not our mind. (In allusion to the well-known line of Euripides, Hippol.: e gloss omomoch e de thren anomotos.)

THEAETETUS: Very true.

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 SOCRATES: The thoroughbred Sophists, who know all that can be known about the mind, and argue only out of the superfluity of their wits, would have had a regular sparring-match over this, and would have knocked their arguments together finely. But you and I, who have no professional aims, only desire to see what is the mutual relation of these principles,— whether they are consistent with each or not.

THEAETETUS: Yes, that would be my desire.

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 SOCRATES: And mine too. But since this is our feeling, and there is plenty of time, why should we not calmly and patiently review our own thoughts, and thoroughly examine and see what these appearances in us really are? If I am not mistaken, they will be described by us as follows:—first, that nothing can become greater or less, either in number or magnitude, while remaining equal to itself—you would agree?

25  
 THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Secondly, that without addition or subtraction there is no increase or diminution of anything, but only equality.

THEAETETUS: Quite true.

SOCRATES: Thirdly, that what was not before cannot be afterwards, without becoming and having become.

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 THEAETETUS: Yes, truly.

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 SOCRATES: These three axioms, if I am not mistaken, are fighting with one another in our minds in the case of the dice, or, again, in such a case as this—if I were to say that I, who am of a certain height and taller than you, may within a year, without gaining or losing in height, be not so tall—not that I should have lost, but that you would have increased. In such a case, I am afterwards what I once was not, and yet I have not become; for I could not have become without becoming, neither could I have become less without losing somewhat of my height; and I could give you ten thousand examples of similar contradictions, if we admit them at all. I believe that you follow me, Theaetetus; for I suspect that you have thought of these questions before now.

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 THEAETETUS: Yes, Socrates, and I am amazed when I think of them; by the Gods I am! and I want to know what on earth they mean; and there are times when my head quite swims with the contemplation of them.

1           SOCRATES: I see, my dear Theaetetus, that Theodorus had a true insight  
into your nature when he said that you were a philosopher, for wonder is the  
feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder. He was not a bad  
5           genealogist who said that Iris (the messenger of heaven) is the child of Thaumias  
(wonder). But do you begin to see what is the explanation of this perplexity on  
the hypothesis which we attribute to Protagoras?

          THEAETETUS: Not as yet.

          SOCRATES: Then you will be obliged to me if I help you to unearth the  
hidden 'truth' of a famous man or school.

          THEAETETUS: To be sure, I shall be very much obliged.

10          SOCRATES: Take a look round, then, and see that none of the uninitiated  
are listening. Now by the uninitiated I mean the people who believe in nothing  
but what they can grasp in their hands, and who will not allow that action or  
generation or anything invisible can have real existence.

          THEAETETUS: Yes, indeed, Socrates, they are very hard and impenetrable  
mortals.

15          SOCRATES: Yes, my boy, outer barbarians. Far more ingenious are the  
brethren whose mysteries I am about to reveal to you. Their first principle is,  
that all is motion, and upon this all the affections of which we were just now  
speaking are supposed to depend: there is nothing but motion, which has two  
forms, one active and the other passive, both in endless number; and out of  
the union and friction of them there is generated a progeny endless in number,  
20          having two forms, sense and the object of sense, which are ever breaking forth  
and coming to the birth at the same moment. The senses are variously named  
hearing, seeing, smelling; there is the sense of heat, cold, pleasure, pain, desire,  
fear, and many more which have names, as well as innumerable others which  
are without them; each has its kindred object,—each variety of colour has a  
corresponding variety of sight, and so with sound and hearing, and with the  
rest of the senses and the objects akin to them. Do you see, Theaetetus, the  
25          bearings of this tale on the preceding argument?

          THEAETETUS: Indeed I do not.

          SOCRATES: Then attend, and I will try to finish the story. The purport is  
that all these things are in motion, as I was saying, and that this motion is of  
two kinds, a slower and a quicker; and the slower elements have their motions in  
the same place and with reference to things near them, and so they beget; but  
30          what is begotten is swifter, for it is carried to fro, and moves from place to place.  
Apply this to sense:—When the eye and the appropriate object meet together  
and give birth to whiteness and the sensation connatural with it, which could  
not have been given by either of them going elsewhere, then, while the sight  
is flowing from the eye, whiteness proceeds from the object which combines in  
producing the colour; and so the eye is fulfilled with sight, and really sees, and  
35          becomes, not sight, but a seeing eye; and the object which combined to form  
the colour is fulfilled with whiteness, and becomes not whiteness but a white  
thing, whether wood or stone or whatever the object may be which happens to  
be coloured white. And this is true of all sensible objects, hard, warm, and the  
like, which are similarly to be regarded, as I was saying before, not as having  
any absolute existence, but as being all of them of whatever kind generated by  
40          motion in their intercourse with one another; for of the agent and patient, as  
existing in separation, no trustworthy conception, as they say, can be formed,  
for the agent has no existence until united with the patient, and the patient

1 has no existence until united with the agent; and that which by uniting with  
 something becomes an agent, by meeting with some other thing is converted  
 into a patient. And from all these considerations, as I said at first, there arises  
 a general reflection, that there is no one self-existent thing, but everything is  
 5 becoming and in relation; and being must be altogether abolished, although  
 from habit and ignorance we are compelled even in this discussion to retain the  
 use of the term. But great philosophers tell us that we are not to allow either  
 the word 'something,' or 'belonging to something,' or 'to me,' or 'this,' or 'that,'  
 or any other detaining name to be used, in the language of nature all things  
 are being created and destroyed, coming into being and passing into new forms;  
 10 nor can any name fix or detain them; he who attempts to fix them is easily  
 refuted. And this should be the way of speaking, not only of particulars but of  
 aggregates; such aggregates as are expressed in the word 'man,' or 'stone,' or  
 any name of an animal or of a class. O Theaetetus, are not these speculations  
 sweet as honey? And do you not like the taste of them in the mouth?

15 THEAETETUS: I do not know what to say, Socrates; for, indeed, I cannot  
 make out whether you are giving your own opinion or only wanting to draw me  
 out.

20 SOCRATES: You forget, my friend, that I neither know, nor profess to  
 know, anything of these matters; you are the person who is in labour, I am the  
 barren midwife; and this is why I soothe you, and offer you one good thing after  
 another, that you may taste them. And I hope that I may at last help to bring  
 your own opinion into the light of day: when this has been accomplished, then  
 we will determine whether what you have brought forth is only a wind-egg or a  
 real and genuine birth. Therefore, keep up your spirits, and answer like a man  
 what you think.

THEAETETUS: Ask me.

25 SOCRATES: Then once more: Is it your opinion that nothing is but what  
 becomes?—the good and the noble, as well as all the other things which we were  
 just now mentioning?

THEAETETUS: When I hear you discoursing in this style, I think that there  
 is a great deal in what you say, and I am very ready to assent.

30 SOCRATES: Let us not leave the argument unfinished, then; for there still  
 remains to be considered an objection which may be raised about dreams and  
 diseases, in particular about madness, and the various illusions of hearing and  
 sight, or of other senses. For you know that in all these cases the esse-percipi  
 theory appears to be unmistakably refuted, since in dreams and illusions we  
 certainly have false perceptions; and far from saying that everything is which  
 appears, we should rather say that nothing is which appears.

THEAETETUS: Very true, Socrates.

35 SOCRATES: But then, my boy, how can any one contend that knowledge is  
 perception, or that to every man what appears is?

THEAETETUS: I am afraid to say, Socrates, that I have nothing to answer,  
 because you rebuked me just now for making this excuse; but I certainly cannot  
 undertake to argue that madmen or dreamers think truly, when they imagine,  
 some of them that they are gods, and others that they can fly, and are flying in  
 their sleep.

40 SOCRATES: Do you see another question which can be raised about these  
 phenomena, notably about dreaming and waking?

THEAETETUS: What question?

1           SOCRATES: A question which I think that you must often have heard persons ask:—How can you determine whether at this moment we are sleeping, and all our thoughts are a dream; or whether we are awake, and talking to one another in the waking state?

5           THEAETETUS: Indeed, Socrates, I do not know how to prove the one any more than the other, for in both cases the facts precisely correspond;—and there is no difficulty in supposing that during all this discussion we have been talking to one another in a dream; and when in a dream we seem to be narrating dreams, the resemblance of the two states is quite astonishing.

          SOCRATES: You see, then, that a doubt about the reality of sense is easily raised, since there may even be a doubt whether we are awake or in a dream. And as our time is equally divided between sleeping and waking, in either sphere of existence the soul contends that the thoughts which are present to our minds at the time are true; and during one half of our lives we affirm the truth of the one, and, during the other half, of the other; and are equally confident of both.

          THEAETETUS: Most true.

15          SOCRATES: And may not the same be said of madness and other disorders? the difference is only that the times are not equal.

          THEAETETUS: Certainly.

          SOCRATES: And is truth or falsehood to be determined by duration of time?

          THEAETETUS: That would be in many ways ridiculous.

20          SOCRATES: But can you certainly determine by any other means which of these opinions is true?

          THEAETETUS: I do not think that I can.

          SOCRATES: Listen, then, to a statement of the other side of the argument, which is made by the champions of appearance. They would say, as I imagine—Can that which is wholly other than something, have the same quality as that from which it differs? and observe, Theaetetus, that the word 'other' means not 'partially,' but 'wholly other.'

25          THEAETETUS: Certainly, putting the question as you do, that which is wholly other cannot either potentially or in any other way be the same.

          SOCRATES: And must therefore be admitted to be unlike?

          THEAETETUS: True.

          SOCRATES: If, then, anything happens to become like or unlike itself or another, when it becomes like we call it the same—when unlike, other?

30          THEAETETUS: Certainly.

          SOCRATES: Were we not saying that there are agents many and infinite, and patients many and infinite?

          THEAETETUS: Yes.

          SOCRATES: And also that different combinations will produce results which are not the same, but different?

35          THEAETETUS: Certainly.

          SOCRATES: Let us take you and me, or anything as an example:—There is Socrates in health, and Socrates sick—Are they like or unlike?

          THEAETETUS: You mean to compare Socrates in health as a whole, and Socrates in sickness as a whole?

          SOCRATES: Exactly; that is my meaning.

40          THEAETETUS: I answer, they are unlike.

          SOCRATES: And if unlike, they are other?

1 THEAETETUS: Certainly.  
 SOCRATES: And would you not say the same of Socrates sleeping and waking, or in any of the states which we were mentioning?  
 THEAETETUS: I should.

5 SOCRATES: All agents have a different patient in Socrates, accordingly as he is well or ill.  
 THEAETETUS: Of course.  
 SOCRATES: And I who am the patient, and that which is the agent, will produce something different in each of the two cases?  
 THEAETETUS: Certainly.

10 SOCRATES: The wine which I drink when I am in health, appears sweet and pleasant to me?  
 THEAETETUS: True.  
 SOCRATES: For, as has been already acknowledged, the patient and agent meet together and produce sweetness and a perception of sweetness, which are in simultaneous motion, and the perception which comes from the patient makes the tongue percipient, and the quality of sweetness which arises out of and is moving about the wine, makes the wine both to be and to appear sweet to the healthy tongue.

15 THEAETETUS: Certainly; that has been already acknowledged.  
 SOCRATES: But when I am sick, the wine really acts upon another and a different person?  
 THEAETETUS: Yes.

20 SOCRATES: The combination of the draught of wine, and the Socrates who is sick, produces quite another result; which is the sensation of bitterness in the tongue, and the motion and creation of bitterness in and about the wine, which becomes not bitterness but something bitter; as I myself become not perception but percipient?  
 THEAETETUS: True.

25 SOCRATES: There is no other object of which I shall ever have the same perception, for another object would give another perception, and would make the percipient other and different; nor can that object which affects me, meeting another subject, produce the same, or become similar, for that too would produce another result from another subject, and become different.  
 THEAETETUS: True.

30 SOCRATES: Neither can I by myself, have this sensation, nor the object by itself, this quality.  
 THEAETETUS: Certainly not.  
 SOCRATES: When I perceive I must become percipient of something—there can be no such thing as perceiving and perceiving nothing; the object, whether it become sweet, bitter, or of any other quality, must have relation to a percipient; nothing can become sweet which is sweet to no one.

35 THEAETETUS: Certainly not.  
 SOCRATES: Then the inference is, that we (the agent and patient) are or become in relation to one another; there is a law which binds us one to the other, but not to any other existence, nor each of us to himself; and therefore we can only be bound to one another; so that whether a person says that a thing is or becomes, he must say that it is or becomes to or of or in relation to something else; but he must not say or allow any one else to say that anything is or becomes absolutely:—such is our conclusion.

40

1 THEAETETUS: Very true, Socrates.  
 SOCRATES: Then, if that which acts upon me has relation to me and to no other, I and no other am the percipient of it?  
 THEAETETUS: Of course.  
 5 SOCRATES: Then my perception is true to me, being inseparable from my own being; and, as Protagoras says, to myself I am judge of what is and what is not to me.  
 THEAETETUS: I suppose so.  
 SOCRATES: How then, if I never err, and if my mind never trips in the conception of being or becoming, can I fail of knowing that which I perceive?  
 10 THEAETETUS: You cannot.  
 SOCRATES: Then you were quite right in affirming that knowledge is only perception; and the meaning turns out to be the same, whether with Homer and Heracleitus, and all that company, you say that all is motion and flux, or with the great sage Protagoras, that man is the measure of all things; or with Theaetetus, that, given these premises, perception is knowledge. Am I not right, Theaetetus, and is not this your new-born child, of which I have delivered you?  
 15 What say you?  
 THEAETETUS: I cannot but agree, Socrates.  
 SOCRATES: Then this is the child, however he may turn out, which you and I have with difficulty brought into the world. And now that he is born, we must run round the hearth with him, and see whether he is worth rearing, or is only a wind-egg and a sham. Is he to be reared in any case, and not exposed?  
 20 or will you bear to see him rejected, and not get into a passion if I take away your first-born?  
 THEODORUS: Theaetetus will not be angry, for he is very good-natured. But tell me, Socrates, in heaven's name, is this, after all, not the truth?  
 SOCRATES: You, Theodorus, are a lover of theories, and now you innocently fancy that I am a bag full of them, and can easily pull one out which will overthrow its predecessor. But you do not see that in reality none of these theories come from me; they all come from him who talks with me. I only know just enough to extract them from the wisdom of another, and to receive them in a spirit of fairness. And now I shall say nothing myself, but shall endeavour to elicit something from our young friend.  
 25 THEODORUS: Do as you say, Socrates; you are quite right.  
 SOCRATES: Shall I tell you, Theodorus, what amazes me in your acquaintance Protagoras?  
 THEODORUS: What is it?  
 SOCRATES: I am charmed with his doctrine, that what appears is to each one, but I wonder that he did not begin his book on Truth with a declaration that a pig or a dog-faced baboon, or some other yet stranger monster which has sensation, is the measure of all things; then he might have shown a magnificent contempt for our opinion of him by informing us at the outset that while we were reverencing him like a God for his wisdom he was no better than a tadpole, not to speak of his fellow-men—would not this have produced an overpowering effect? For if truth is only sensation, and no man can discern another's feelings better than he, or has any superior right to determine whether his opinion is true or false, but each, as we have several times repeated, is to himself the sole judge, and everything that he judges is true and right, why, my friend, should Protagoras be preferred to the place of wisdom and instruction, and deserve to  
 35  
 40

1 be well paid, and we poor ignoramus have to go to him, if each one is the  
 measure of his own wisdom? Must he not be talking 'ad captandum' in all this?  
 I say nothing of the ridiculous predicament in which my own midwifery and  
 the whole art of dialectic is placed; for the attempt to supervise or refute the  
 5 notions or opinions of others would be a tedious and enormous piece of folly, if  
 to each man his own are right; and this must be the case if Protagoras' Truth  
 is the real truth, and the philosopher is not merely amusing himself by giving  
 oracles out of the shrine of his book.

THEODORUS: He was a friend of mine, Socrates, as you were saying, and  
 therefore I cannot have him refuted by my lips, nor can I oppose you when I  
 10 agree with you; please, then, to take Theaetetus again; he seemed to answer  
 very nicely.

SOCRATES: If you were to go into a Lacedaemonian palestra, Theodorus,  
 would you have a right to look on at the naked wrestlers, some of them making  
 a poor figure, if you did not strip and give them an opportunity of judging of  
 your own person?

THEODORUS: Why not, Socrates, if they would allow me, as I think you  
 15 will, in consideration of my age and stiffness; let some more supple youth try a  
 fall with you, and do not drag me into the gymnasium.

SOCRATES: Your will is my will, Theodorus, as the proverbial philosophers  
 say, and therefore I will return to the sage Theaetetus: Tell me, Theaetetus, in  
 reference to what I was saying, are you not lost in wonder, like myself, when  
 20 you find that all of a sudden you are raised to the level of the wisest of men, or  
 indeed of the gods?—for you would assume the measure of Protagoras to apply  
 to the gods as well as men?

THEAETETUS: Certainly I should, and I confess to you that I am lost in  
 wonder. At first hearing, I was quite satisfied with the doctrine, that whatever  
 appears is to each one, but now the face of things has changed.

SOCRATES: Why, my dear boy, you are young, and therefore your ear is  
 25 quickly caught and your mind influenced by popular arguments. Protagoras,  
 or some one speaking on his behalf, will doubtless say in reply,—Good people,  
 young and old, you meet and harangue, and bring in the gods, whose existence  
 or non-existence I banish from writing and speech, or you talk about the reason  
 of man being degraded to the level of the brutes, which is a telling argument  
 with the multitude, but not one word of proof or demonstration do you offer.  
 30 All is probability with you, and yet surely you and Theodorus had better re-  
 flect whether you are disposed to admit of probability and figures of speech in  
 matters of such importance. He or any other mathematician who argued from  
 probabilities and likelihoods in geometry, would not be worth an ace.

THEAETETUS: But neither you nor we, Socrates, would be satisfied with  
 such arguments.

SOCRATES: Then you and Theodorus mean to say that we must look at  
 35 the matter in some other way?

THEAETETUS: Yes, in quite another way.

SOCRATES: And the way will be to ask whether perception is or is not the  
 same as knowledge; for this was the real point of our argument, and with a view  
 to this we raised (did we not?) those many strange questions.

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

40 SOCRATES: Shall we say that we know every thing which we see and hear?  
 for example, shall we say that not having learned, we do not hear the language

1 of foreigners when they speak to us? or shall we say that we not only hear, but know what they are saying? Or again, if we see letters which we do not understand, shall we say that we do not see them? or shall we aver that, seeing them, we must know them?

5 THEAETETUS: We shall say, Socrates, that we know what we actually see and hear of them—that is to say, we see and know the figure and colour of the letters, and we hear and know the elevation or depression of the sound of them; but we do not perceive by sight and hearing, or know, that which grammarians and interpreters teach about them.

10 SOCRATES: Capital, Theaetetus; and about this there shall be no dispute, because I want you to grow; but there is another difficulty coming, which you will also have to repulse.

THEAETETUS: What is it?

15 SOCRATES: Some one will say, Can a man who has ever known anything, and still has and preserves a memory of that which he knows, not know that which he remembers at the time when he remembers? I have, I fear, a tedious way of putting a simple question, which is only, whether a man who has learned, and remembers, can fail to know?

THEAETETUS: Impossible, Socrates; the supposition is monstrous.

SOCRATES: Am I talking nonsense, then? Think: is not seeing perceiving, and is not sight perception?

THEAETETUS: True.

20 SOCRATES: And if our recent definition holds, every man knows that which he has seen?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And you would admit that there is such a thing as memory?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

25 SOCRATES: And is memory of something or of nothing?

THEAETETUS: Of something, surely.

SOCRATES: Of things learned and perceived, that is?

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Often a man remembers that which he has seen?

THEAETETUS: True.

30 SOCRATES: And if he closed his eyes, would he forget?

THEAETETUS: Who, Socrates, would dare to say so?

SOCRATES: But we must say so, if the previous argument is to be maintained.

THEAETETUS: What do you mean? I am not quite sure that I understand you, though I have a strong suspicion that you are right.

35 SOCRATES: As thus: he who sees knows, as we say, that which he sees; for perception and sight and knowledge are admitted to be the same.

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: But he who saw, and has knowledge of that which he saw, remembers, when he closes his eyes, that which he no longer sees.

THEAETETUS: True.

40 SOCRATES: And seeing is knowing, and therefore not-seeing is not-knowing?

THEAETETUS: Very true.

1           SOCRATES: Then the inference is, that a man may have attained the knowledge of something, which he may remember and yet not know, because he does not see; and this has been affirmed by us to be a monstrous supposition.

          THEAETETUS: Most true.

5           SOCRATES: Thus, then, the assertion that knowledge and perception are one, involves a manifest impossibility?

          THEAETETUS: Yes.

          SOCRATES: Then they must be distinguished?

          THEAETETUS: I suppose that they must.

10          SOCRATES: Once more we shall have to begin, and ask 'What is knowledge?' and yet, Theaetetus, what are we going to do?

          THEAETETUS: About what?

          SOCRATES: Like a good-for-nothing cock, without having won the victory, we walk away from the argument and crow.

          THEAETETUS: How do you mean?

15          SOCRATES: After the manner of disputers (*Lys.*; *Phaedo*; *Republic*), we were satisfied with mere verbal consistency, and were well pleased if in this way we could gain an advantage. Although professing not to be mere Eristics, but philosophers, I suspect that we have unconsciously fallen into the error of that ingenious class of persons.

          THEAETETUS: I do not as yet understand you.

20          SOCRATES: Then I will try to explain myself: just now we asked the question, whether a man who had learned and remembered could fail to know, and we showed that a person who had seen might remember when he had his eyes shut and could not see, and then he would at the same time remember and not know. But this was an impossibility. And so the Protagorean fable came to nought, and yours also, who maintained that knowledge is the same as perception.

          THEAETETUS: True.

25          SOCRATES: And yet, my friend, I rather suspect that the result would have been different if Protagoras, who was the father of the first of the two brats, had been alive; he would have had a great deal to say on their behalf. But he is dead, and we insult over his orphan child; and even the guardians whom he left, and of whom our friend Theodorus is one, are unwilling to give any help, and therefore I suppose that I must take up his cause myself, and see justice done?

          THEODORUS: Not I, Socrates, but rather Callias, the son of Hipponicus, is guardian of his orphans. I was too soon diverted from the abstractions of dialectic to geometry. Nevertheless, I shall be grateful to you if you assist him.

35          SOCRATES: Very good, Theodorus; you shall see how I will come to the rescue. If a person does not attend to the meaning of terms as they are commonly used in argument, he may be involved even in greater paradoxes than these. Shall I explain this matter to you or to Theaetetus?

          THEODORUS: To both of us, and let the younger answer; he will incur less disgrace if he is discomfited.

40          SOCRATES: Then now let me ask the awful question, which is this:—Can a man know and also not know that which he knows?

          THEODORUS: How shall we answer, Theaetetus?

          THEAETETUS: He cannot, I should say.

1           SOCRATES: He can, if you maintain that seeing is knowing. When you are imprisoned in a well, as the saying is, and the self-assured adversary closes one of your eyes with his hand, and asks whether you can see his cloak with the eye which he has closed, how will you answer the inevitable man?

5           THEAETETUS: I should answer, 'Not with that eye but with the other.'

          SOCRATES: Then you see and do not see the same thing at the same time.

          THEAETETUS: Yes, in a certain sense.

          SOCRATES: None of that, he will reply; I do not ask or bid you answer in what sense you know, but only whether you know that which you do not know. You have been proved to see that which you do not see; and you have already admitted that seeing is knowing, and that not-seeing is not-knowing: I leave you to draw the inference.

          THEAETETUS: Yes; the inference is the contradictory of my assertion.

          SOCRATES: Yes, my marvel, and there might have been yet worse things in store for you, if an opponent had gone on to ask whether you can have a sharp and also a dull knowledge, and whether you can know near, but not at a distance, or know the same thing with more or less intensity, and so on without end. Such questions might have been put to you by a light-armed mercenary, who argued for pay. He would have lain in wait for you, and when you took up the position, that sense is knowledge, he would have made an assault upon hearing, smelling, and the other senses;—he would have shown you no mercy; and while you were lost in envy and admiration of his wisdom, he would have got you into his net, out of which you would not have escaped until you had come to an understanding about the sum to be paid for your release. Well, you ask, and how will Protagoras reinforce his position? Shall I answer for him?

          THEAETETUS: By all means.

          SOCRATES: He will repeat all those things which we have been urging on his behalf, and then he will close with us in disdain, and say:—The worthy Socrates asked a little boy, whether the same man could remember and not know the same thing, and the boy said No, because he was frightened, and could not see what was coming, and then Socrates made fun of poor me. The truth is, O slatternly Socrates, that when you ask questions about any assertion of mine, and the person asked is found tripping, if he has answered as I should have answered, then I am refuted, but if he answers something else, then he is refuted and not I. For do you really suppose that any one would admit the memory which a man has of an impression which has passed away to be the same with that which he experienced at the time? Assuredly not. Or would he hesitate to acknowledge that the same man may know and not know the same thing? Or, if he is afraid of making this admission, would he ever grant that one who has become unlike is the same as before he became unlike? Or would he admit that a man is one at all, and not rather many and infinite as the changes which take place in him? I speak by the card in order to avoid entanglements of words. But, O my good sir, he will say, come to the argument in a more generous spirit; and either show, if you can, that our sensations are not relative and individual, or, if you admit them to be so, prove that this does not involve the consequence that the appearance becomes, or, if you will have the word, is, to the individual only. As to your talk about pigs and baboons, you are yourself behaving like a pig, and you teach your hearers to make sport of my writings in the same ignorant manner; but this is not to your credit. For I declare that the truth is as I have written, and that each of us is a measure of existence and

1 of non-existence. Yet one man may be a thousand times better than another in  
proportion as different things are and appear to him. And I am far from saying  
that wisdom and the wise man have no existence; but I say that the wise man  
is he who makes the evils which appear and are to a man, into goods which are  
5 and appear to him. And I would beg you not to press my words in the letter,  
but to take the meaning of them as I will explain them. Remember what has  
been already said,—that to the sick man his food appears to be and is bitter,  
and to the man in health the opposite of bitter. Now I cannot conceive that  
one of these men can be or ought to be made wiser than the other: nor can  
10 you assert that the sick man because he has one impression is foolish, and the  
healthy man because he has another is wise; but the one state requires to be  
changed into the other, the worse into the better. As in education, a change  
of state has to be effected, and the sophist accomplishes by words the change  
which the physician works by the aid of drugs. Not that any one ever made  
another think truly, who previously thought falsely. For no one can think what  
15 is not, or, think anything different from that which he feels; and this is always  
true. But as the inferior habit of mind has thoughts of kindred nature, so I  
conceive that a good mind causes men to have good thoughts; and these which  
the inexperienced call true, I maintain to be only better, and not truer than  
others. And, O my dear Socrates, I do not call wise men tadpoles: far from  
it; I say that they are the physicians of the human body, and the husbandmen  
of plants—for the husbandmen also take away the evil and disordered sensations  
20 of plants, and infuse into them good and healthy sensations—aye and true ones;  
and the wise and good rhetoricians make the good instead of the evil to seem  
just to states; for whatever appears to a state to be just and fair, so long as  
it is regarded as such, is just and fair to it; but the teacher of wisdom causes  
the good to take the place of the evil, both in appearance and in reality. And  
in like manner the Sophist who is able to train his pupils in this spirit is a  
25 wise man, and deserves to be well paid by them. And so one man is wiser  
than another; and no one thinks falsely, and you, whether you will or not, must  
endure to be a measure. On these foundations the argument stands firm, which  
you, Socrates, may, if you please, overthrow by an opposite argument, or if you  
like you may put questions to me—a method to which no intelligent person will  
object, quite the reverse. But I must beg you to put fair questions: for there is  
30 great inconsistency in saying that you have a zeal for virtue, and then always  
behaving unfairly in argument. The unfairness of which I complain is that you  
do not distinguish between mere disputation and dialectic: the disputer may  
trip up his opponent as often as he likes, and make fun; but the dialectician will  
be in earnest, and only correct his adversary when necessary, telling him the  
errors into which he has fallen through his own fault, or that of the company  
35 which he has previously kept. If you do so, your adversary will lay the blame  
of his own confusion and perplexity on himself, and not on you. He will follow  
and love you, and will hate himself, and escape from himself into philosophy,  
in order that he may become different from what he was. But the other mode  
of arguing, which is practised by the many, will have just the opposite effect  
upon him; and as he grows older, instead of turning philosopher, he will come  
to hate philosophy. I would recommend you, therefore, as I said before, not  
40 to encourage yourself in this polemical and controversial temper, but to find  
out, in a friendly and congenial spirit, what we really mean when we say that  
all things are in motion, and that to every individual and state what appears,

1 is. In this manner you will consider whether knowledge and sensation are the same or different, but you will not argue, as you were just now doing, from the customary use of names and words, which the vulgar pervert in all sorts of ways, causing infinite perplexity to one another. Such, Theodorus, is the very slight  
5 help which I am able to offer to your old friend; had he been living, he would have helped himself in a far more gloriose style.

THEODORUS: You are jesting, Socrates; indeed, your defence of him has been most valorous.

SOCRATES: Thank you, friend; and I hope that you observed Protagoras bidding us be serious, as the text, 'Man is the measure of all things,' was a solemn one; and he reproached us with making a boy the medium of discourse, and said that the boy's timidity was made to tell against his argument; he also declared that we made a joke of him.

THEODORUS: How could I fail to observe all that, Socrates?

SOCRATES: Well, and shall we do as he says?

THEODORUS: By all means.

15 SOCRATES: But if his wishes are to be regarded, you and I must take up the argument, and in all seriousness, and ask and answer one another, for you see that the rest of us are nothing but boys. In no other way can we escape the imputation, that in our fresh analysis of his thesis we are making fun with boys.

THEODORUS: Well, but is not Theaetetus better able to follow a philosophical enquiry than a great many men who have long beards?

20 SOCRATES: Yes, Theodorus, but not better than you; and therefore please not to imagine that I am to defend by every means in my power your departed friend; and that you are to defend nothing and nobody. At any rate, my good man, do not sheer off until we know whether you are a true measure of diagrams, or whether all men are equally measures and sufficient for themselves in astronomy and geometry, and the other branches of knowledge in which you are supposed to excel them.

25 THEODORUS: He who is sitting by you, Socrates, will not easily avoid being drawn into an argument; and when I said just now that you would excuse me, and not, like the Lacedaemonians, compel me to strip and fight, I was talking nonsense—I should rather compare you to Scirrhon, who threw travellers from the rocks; for the Lacedaemonian rule is 'strip or depart,' but you seem to go about your work more after the fashion of Antaeus: you will not allow any one who approaches you to depart until you have stripped him, and he has been  
30 compelled to try a fall with you in argument.

SOCRATES: There, Theodorus, you have hit off precisely the nature of my complaint; but I am even more pugnacious than the giants of old, for I have met with no end of heroes; many a Heracles, many a Theseus, mighty in words, has broken my head; nevertheless I am always at this rough exercise, which  
35 inspires me like a passion. Please, then, to try a fall with me, whereby you will do yourself good as well as me.

THEODORUS: I consent; lead me whither you will, for I know that you are like destiny; no man can escape from any argument which you may weave for him. But I am not disposed to go further than you suggest.

40 SOCRATES: Once will be enough; and now take particular care that we do not again unwittingly expose ourselves to the reproach of talking childishly.

THEODORUS: I will do my best to avoid that error.

1           SOCRATES: In the first place, let us return to our old objection, and see whether we were right in blaming and taking offence at Protagoras on the ground that he assumed all to be equal and sufficient in wisdom; although he admitted that there was a better and worse, and that in respect of this, some who as he

5           said were the wise excelled others.

          THEODORUS: Very true.

          SOCRATES: Had Protagoras been living and answered for himself, instead of our answering for him, there would have been no need of our reviewing or reinforcing the argument. But as he is not here, and some one may accuse us of speaking without authority on his behalf, had we not better come to a clearer agreement about his meaning, for a great deal may be at stake?

10          THEODORUS: True.

          SOCRATES: Then let us obtain, not through any third person, but from his own statement and in the fewest words possible, the basis of agreement.

          THEODORUS: In what way?

          SOCRATES: In this way:—His words are, 'What seems to a man, is to him.'

15          THEODORUS: Yes, so he says.

          SOCRATES: And are not we, Protagoras, uttering the opinion of man, or rather of all mankind, when we say that every one thinks himself wiser than other men in some things, and their inferior in others? In the hour of danger, when they are in perils of war, or of the sea, or of sickness, do they not look up to their commanders as if they were gods, and expect salvation from them, only because they excel them in knowledge? Is not the world full of men in their several employments, who are looking for teachers and rulers of themselves and of the animals? and there are plenty who think that they are able to teach and able to rule. Now, in all this is implied that ignorance and wisdom exist among them, at least in their own opinion.

20          THEODORUS: Certainly.

          SOCRATES: And wisdom is assumed by them to be true thought, and ignorance to be false opinion.

25          THEODORUS: Exactly.

          SOCRATES: How then, Protagoras, would you have us treat the argument? Shall we say that the opinions of men are always true, or sometimes true and sometimes false? In either case, the result is the same, and their opinions are not always true, but sometimes true and sometimes false. For tell me, Theodorus, do you suppose that you yourself, or any other follower of Protagoras, would contend that no one deems another ignorant or mistaken in his opinion?

30          THEODORUS: The thing is incredible, Socrates.

          SOCRATES: And yet that absurdity is necessarily involved in the thesis which declares man to be the measure of all things.

          THEODORUS: How so?

35          SOCRATES: Why, suppose that you determine in your own mind something to be true, and declare your opinion to me; let us assume, as he argues, that this is true to you. Now, if so, you must either say that the rest of us are not the judges of this opinion or judgment of yours, or that we judge you always to have a true opinion? But are there not thousands upon thousands who, whenever you form a judgment, take up arms against you and are of an opposite judgment and opinion, deeming that you judge falsely?

40          THEODORUS: Yes, indeed, Socrates, thousands and tens of thousands, as Homer says, who give me a world of trouble.

1           SOCRATES: Well, but are we to assert that what you think is true to you  
and false to the ten thousand others?

          THEODORUS: No other inference seems to be possible.

          SOCRATES: And how about Protagoras himself? If neither he nor the  
5           multitude thought, as indeed they do not think, that man is the measure of all  
things, must it not follow that the truth of which Protagoras wrote would be  
true to no one? But if you suppose that he himself thought this, and that the  
multitude does not agree with him, you must begin by allowing that in whatever  
proportion the many are more than one, in that proportion his truth is more  
untrue than true.

10          THEODORUS: That would follow if the truth is supposed to vary with  
individual opinion.

          SOCRATES: And the best of the joke is, that he acknowledges the truth of  
their opinion who believe his own opinion to be false; for he admits that the  
opinions of all men are true.

          THEODORUS: Certainly.

15          SOCRATES: And does he not allow that his own opinion is false, if he admits  
that the opinion of those who think him false is true?

          THEODORUS: Of course.

          SOCRATES: Whereas the other side do not admit that they speak falsely?

          THEODORUS: They do not.

          SOCRATES: And he, as may be inferred from his writings, agrees that this  
opinion is also true.

20          THEODORUS: Clearly.

          SOCRATES: Then all mankind, beginning with Protagoras, will contend,  
or rather, I should say that he will allow, when he concedes that his adversary  
has a true opinion—Protagoras, I say, will himself allow that neither a dog nor  
any ordinary man is the measure of anything which he has not learned—am I  
not right?

25          THEODORUS: Yes.

          SOCRATES: And the truth of Protagoras being doubted by all, will be true  
neither to himself to any one else?

          THEODORUS: I think, Socrates, that we are running my old friend too  
hard.

30          SOCRATES: But I do not know that we are going beyond the truth. Doubt-  
less, as he is older, he may be expected to be wiser than we are. And if he could  
only just get his head out of the world below, he would have overthrown both  
of us again and again, me for talking nonsense and you for assenting to me, and  
have been off and underground in a trice. But as he is not within call, we must  
make the best use of our own faculties, such as they are, and speak out what  
appears to us to be true. And one thing which no one will deny is, that there  
35           are great differences in the understandings of men.

          THEODORUS: In that opinion I quite agree.

          SOCRATES: And is there not most likely to be firm ground in the distinction  
which we were indicating on behalf of Protagoras, viz. that most things, and  
all immediate sensations, such as hot, dry, sweet, are only such as they appear;  
if however difference of opinion is to be allowed at all, surely we must allow it  
40           in respect of health or disease? for every woman, child, or living creature has  
not such a knowledge of what conduces to health as to enable them to cure  
themselves.

1 THEODORUS: I quite agree.

SOCRATES: Or again, in politics, while affirming that just and unjust, honourable and disgraceful, holy and unholy, are in reality to each state such as the state thinks and makes lawful, and that in determining these matters no individual or state is wiser than another, still the followers of Protagoras will not deny that in determining what is or is not expedient for the community one state is wiser and one counsellor better than another—they will scarcely venture to maintain, that what a city enacts in the belief that it is expedient will always be really expedient. But in the other case, I mean when they speak of justice and injustice, piety and impiety, they are confident that in nature these have no existence or essence of their own—the truth is that which is agreed on at the time of the agreement, and as long as the agreement lasts; and this is the philosophy of many who do not altogether go along with Protagoras. Here arises a new question, Theodorus, which threatens to be more serious than the last.

THEODORUS: Well, Socrates, we have plenty of leisure.

SOCRATES: That is true, and your remark recalls to my mind an observation which I have often made, that those who have passed their days in the pursuit of philosophy are ridiculously at fault when they have to appear and speak in court. How natural is this!

THEODORUS: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: I mean to say, that those who have been trained in philosophy and liberal pursuits are as unlike those who from their youth upwards have been knocking about in the courts and such places, as a freeman is in breeding unlike a slave.

THEODORUS: In what is the difference seen?

SOCRATES: In the leisure spoken of by you, which a freeman can always command: he has his talk out in peace, and, like ourselves, he wanders at will from one subject to another, and from a second to a third,—if the fancy takes him, he begins again, as we are doing now, caring not whether his words are many or few; his only aim is to attain the truth. But the lawyer is always in a hurry; there is the water of the clepsydra driving him on, and not allowing him to expatiate at will: and there is his adversary standing over him, enforcing his rights; the indictment, which in their phraseology is termed the affidavit, is recited at the time: and from this he must not deviate. He is a servant, and is continually disputing about a fellow-servant before his master, who is seated, and has the cause in his hands; the trial is never about some indifferent matter, but always concerns himself; and often the race is for his life. The consequence has been, that he has become keen and shrewd; he has learned how to flatter his master in word and indulge him in deed; but his soul is small and unrighteous. His condition, which has been that of a slave from his youth upwards, has deprived him of growth and uprightness and independence; dangers and fears, which were too much for his truth and honesty, came upon him in early years, when the tenderness of youth was unequal to them, and he has been driven into crooked ways; from the first he has practised deception and retaliation, and has become stunted and warped. And so he has passed out of youth into manhood, having no soundness in him; and is now, as he thinks, a master in wisdom. Such is the lawyer, Theodorus. Will you have the companion picture of the philosopher, who is of our brotherhood; or shall we return to the argument? Do not let us abuse the freedom of digression which we claim.

THEODORUS: Nay, Socrates, not until we have finished what we are about;

1 for you truly said that we belong to a brotherhood which is free, and are not  
the servants of the argument; but the argument is our servant, and must wait  
our leisure. Who is our judge? Or where is the spectator having any right to  
censure or control us, as he might the poets?

5 SOCRATES: Then, as this is your wish, I will describe the leaders; for  
there is no use in talking about the inferior sort. In the first place, the lords  
of philosophy have never, from their youth upwards, known their way to the  
Agora, or the dicastery, or the council, or any other political assembly; they  
neither see nor hear the laws or decrees, as they are called, of the state written  
10 or recited; the eagerness of political societies in the attainment of offices—clubs,  
and banquets, and revels, and singing-maidens,—do not enter even into their  
dreams. Whether any event has turned out well or ill in the city, what disgrace  
may have descended to any one from his ancestors, male or female, are matters  
of which the philosopher no more knows than he can tell, as they say, how many  
15 pints are contained in the ocean. Neither is he conscious of his ignorance. For  
he does not hold aloof in order that he may gain a reputation; but the truth  
is, that the outer form of him only is in the city: his mind, disdainful of the  
littlenesses and nothingnesses of human things, is 'flying all abroad' as Pindar  
says, measuring earth and heaven and the things which are under and on the  
earth and above the heaven, interrogating the whole nature of each and all in  
their entirety, but not condescending to anything which is within reach.

THEODORUS: What do you mean, Socrates?

20 SOCRATES: I will illustrate my meaning, Theodorus, by the jest which the  
clever witty Thracian handmaid is said to have made about Thales, when he  
fell into a well as he was looking up at the stars. She said, that he was so  
eager to know what was going on in heaven, that he could not see what was  
before his feet. This is a jest which is equally applicable to all philosophers.  
For the philosopher is wholly unacquainted with his next-door neighbour; he is  
ignorant, not only of what he is doing, but he hardly knows whether he is a man  
25 or an animal; he is searching into the essence of man, and busy in enquiring  
what belongs to such a nature to do or suffer different from any other;—I think  
that you understand me, Theodorus?

THEODORUS: I do, and what you say is true.

30 SOCRATES: And thus, my friend, on every occasion, private as well as  
public, as I said at first, when he appears in a law-court, or in any place in  
which he has to speak of things which are at his feet and before his eyes, he  
is the jest, not only of Thracian handmaids but of the general herd, tumbling  
into wells and every sort of disaster through his inexperience. His awkwardness  
is fearful, and gives the impression of imbecility. When he is reviled, he has  
nothing personal to say in answer to the civilities of his adversaries, for he  
knows no scandals of any one, and they do not interest him; and therefore he is  
35 laughed at for his sheepishness; and when others are being praised and glorified,  
in the simplicity of his heart he cannot help going into fits of laughter, so that  
he seems to be a downright idiot. When he hears a tyrant or king eulogized, he  
fancies that he is listening to the praises of some keeper of cattle—a swineherd, or  
shepherd, or perhaps a cowherd, who is congratulated on the quantity of milk  
which he squeezes from them; and he remarks that the creature whom they  
40 tend, and out of whom they squeeze the wealth, is of a less tractable and more  
insidious nature. Then, again, he observes that the great man is of necessity as  
ill-mannered and uneducated as any shepherd—for he has no leisure, and he is

1 surrounded by a wall, which is his mountain-pen. Hearing of enormous landed  
 proprietors of ten thousand acres and more, our philosopher deems this to be a  
 trifle, because he has been accustomed to think of the whole earth; and when  
 they sing the praises of family, and say that some one is a gentleman because he  
 5 can show seven generations of wealthy ancestors, he thinks that their sentiments  
 only betray a dull and narrow vision in those who utter them, and who are not  
 educated enough to look at the whole, nor to consider that every man has had  
 thousands and ten thousands of progenitors, and among them have been rich and  
 poor, kings and slaves, Hellenes and barbarians, innumerable. And when people  
 pride themselves on having a pedigree of twenty-five ancestors, which goes back  
 10 to Heracles, the son of Amphitryon, he cannot understand their poverty of ideas.  
 Why are they unable to calculate that Amphitryon had a twenty-fifth ancestor,  
 who might have been anybody, and was such as fortune made him, and he had a  
 fiftieth, and so on? He amuses himself with the notion that they cannot count,  
 and thinks that a little arithmetic would have got rid of their senseless vanity.  
 Now, in all these cases our philosopher is derided by the vulgar, partly because  
 he is thought to despise them, and also because he is ignorant of what is before  
 15 him, and always at a loss.

THEODORUS: That is very true, Socrates.

SOCRATES: But, O my friend, when he draws the other into upper air, and  
 gets him out of his pleas and rejoinders into the contemplation of justice and  
 injustice in their own nature and in their difference from one another and from  
 all other things; or from the commonplaces about the happiness of a king or  
 20 of a rich man to the consideration of government, and of human happiness and  
 misery in general—what they are, and how a man is to attain the one and avoid  
 the other—when that narrow, keen, little legal mind is called to account about  
 all this, he gives the philosopher his revenge; for dizzied by the height at which  
 he is hanging, whence he looks down into space, which is a strange experience  
 to him, he being dismayed, and lost, and stammering broken words, is laughed  
 25 at, not by Thracian handmaidens or any other uneducated persons, for they  
 have no eye for the situation, but by every man who has not been brought up  
 a slave. Such are the two characters, Theodorus: the one of the freeman, who  
 has been trained in liberty and leisure, whom you call the philosopher,—him  
 we cannot blame because he appears simple and of no account when he has to  
 perform some menial task, such as packing up bed-clothes, or flavouring a sauce  
 or fawning speech; the other character is that of the man who is able to do all  
 30 this kind of service smartly and neatly, but knows not how to wear his cloak  
 like a gentleman; still less with the music of discourse can he hymn the true life  
 aright which is lived by immortals or men blessed of heaven.

THEODORUS: If you could only persuade everybody, Socrates, as you do  
 me, of the truth of your words, there would be more peace and fewer evils among  
 35 men.

SOCRATES: Evils, Theodorus, can never pass away; for there must always  
 remain something which is antagonistic to good. Having no place among the  
 gods in heaven, of necessity they hover around the mortal nature, and this  
 earthly sphere. Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly  
 as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible;  
 and to become like him, is to become holy, just, and wise. But, O my friend,  
 40 you cannot easily convince mankind that they should pursue virtue or avoid  
 vice, not merely in order that a man may seem to be good, which is the reason

1 given by the world, and in my judgment is only a repetition of an old wives'  
fable. Whereas, the truth is that God is never in any way unrighteous—he is  
perfect righteousness; and he of us who is the most righteous is most like him.  
Herein is seen the true cleverness of a man, and also his nothingness and want  
5 of manhood. For to know this is true wisdom and virtue, and ignorance of this  
is manifest folly and vice. All other kinds of wisdom or cleverness, which seem  
only, such as the wisdom of politicians, or the wisdom of the arts, are coarse  
and vulgar. The unrighteous man, or the sayer and doer of unholy things, had  
far better not be encouraged in the illusion that his roguery is clever; for men  
glory in their shame—they fancy that they hear others saying of them, 'These  
10 are not mere good-for-nothing persons, mere burdens of the earth, but such as  
men should be who mean to dwell safely in a state.' Let us tell them that they  
are all the more truly what they do not think they are because they do not  
know it; for they do not know the penalty of injustice, which above all things  
they ought to know—not stripes and death, as they suppose, which evil-doers  
often escape, but a penalty which cannot be escaped.

THEODORUS: What is that?

15 SOCRATES: There are two patterns eternally set before them; the one  
blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched: but they do not see them,  
or perceive that in their utter folly and infatuation they are growing like the  
one and unlike the other, by reason of their evil deeds; and the penalty is, that  
they lead a life answering to the pattern which they are growing like. And if  
we tell them, that unless they depart from their cunning, the place of innocence  
20 will not receive them after death; and that here on earth, they will live ever in  
the likeness of their own evil selves, and with evil friends—when they hear this  
they in their superior cunning will seem to be listening to the talk of idiots.

THEODORUS: Very true, Socrates.

25 SOCRATES: Too true, my friend, as I well know; there is, however, one  
peculiarity in their case: when they begin to reason in private about their  
dislike of philosophy, if they have the courage to hear the argument out, and do  
not run away, they grow at last strangely discontented with themselves; their  
rhetoric fades away, and they become helpless as children. These however are  
digressions from which we must now desist, or they will overflow, and drown  
the original argument; to which, if you please, we will now return.

30 THEODORUS: For my part, Socrates, I would rather have the digressions,  
for at my age I find them easier to follow; but if you wish, let us go back to the  
argument.

35 SOCRATES: Had we not reached the point at which the partisans of the  
perpetual flux, who say that things are as they seem to each one, were confid-  
ently maintaining that the ordinances which the state commanded and thought  
just, were just to the state which imposed them, while they were in force; this  
was especially asserted of justice; but as to the good, no one had any longer the  
hardihood to contend of any ordinances which the state thought and enacted to  
be good that these, while they were in force, were really good;—he who said so  
would be playing with the name 'good,' and would not touch the real question—it  
would be a mockery, would it not?

40 THEODORUS: Certainly it would.

SOCRATES: He ought not to speak of the name, but of the thing which is  
contemplated under the name.

THEODORUS: Right.

1           SOCRATES: Whatever be the term used, the good or expedient is the aim of legislation, and as far as she has an opinion, the state imposes all laws with a view to the greatest expediency; can legislation have any other aim?

          THEODORUS: Certainly not.

5           SOCRATES: But is the aim attained always? do not mistakes often happen?

          THEODORUS: Yes, I think that there are mistakes.

          SOCRATES: The possibility of error will be more distinctly recognised, if we put the question in reference to the whole class under which the good or expedient falls. That whole class has to do with the future, and laws are passed under the idea that they will be useful in after-time; which, in other words, is the future.

10          THEODORUS: Very true.

          SOCRATES: Suppose now, that we ask Protagoras, or one of his disciples, a question:—O, Protagoras, we will say to him, Man is, as you declare, the measure of all things—white, heavy, light: of all such things he is the judge; for he has the criterion of them in himself, and when he thinks that things are such as he experiences them to be, he thinks what is and is true to himself. Is it not so?

15          THEODORUS: Yes.

          SOCRATES: And do you extend your doctrine, Protagoras (as we shall further say), to the future as well as to the present; and has he the criterion not only of what in his opinion is but of what will be, and do things always happen to him as he expected? For example, take the case of heat:—When an ordinary man thinks that he is going to have a fever, and that this kind of heat is coming on, and another person, who is a physician, thinks the contrary, whose opinion is likely to prove right? Or are they both right? —he will have a heat and fever in his own judgment, and not have a fever in the physician's judgment?

20          THEODORUS: How ludicrous!

          SOCRATES: And the vinegrower, if I am not mistaken, is a better judge of the sweetness or dryness of the vintage which is not yet gathered than the harp-player?

25          THEODORUS: Certainly.

          SOCRATES: And in musical composition the musician will know better than the training master what the training master himself will hereafter think harmonious or the reverse?

30          THEODORUS: Of course.

          SOCRATES: And the cook will be a better judge than the guest, who is not a cook, of the pleasure to be derived from the dinner which is in preparation; for of present or past pleasure we are not as yet arguing; but can we say that every one will be to himself the best judge of the pleasure which will seem to be and will be to him in the future?—nay, would not you, Protagoras, better guess which arguments in a court would convince any one of us than the ordinary man?

35          THEODORUS: Certainly, Socrates, he used to profess in the strongest manner that he was the superior of all men in this respect.

          SOCRATES: To be sure, friend: who would have paid a large sum for the privilege of talking to him, if he had really persuaded his visitors that neither a prophet nor any other man was better able to judge what will be and seem to be in the future than every one could for himself?

40          THEODORUS: Who indeed?

1           SOCRATES: And legislation and expediency are all concerned with the future; and every one will admit that states, in passing laws, must often fail of their highest interests?

          THEODORUS: Quite true.

5           SOCRATES: Then we may fairly argue against your master, that he must admit one man to be wiser than another, and that the wiser is a measure: but I, who know nothing, am not at all obliged to accept the honour which the advocate of Protagoras was just now forcing upon me, whether I would or not, of being a measure of anything.

10          THEODORUS: That is the best refutation of him, Socrates; although he is also caught when he ascribes truth to the opinions of others, who give the lie direct to his own opinion.

15          SOCRATES: There are many ways, Theodorus, in which the doctrine that every opinion of every man is true may be refuted; but there is more difficulty in proving that states of feeling, which are present to a man, and out of which arise sensations and opinions in accordance with them, are also untrue. And very likely I have been talking nonsense about them; for they may be unassailable, and those who say that there is clear evidence of them, and that they are matters of knowledge, may probably be right; in which case our friend Theaetetus was not so far from the mark when he identified perception and knowledge. And therefore let us draw nearer, as the advocate of Protagoras desires; and give the truth of the universal flux a ring: is the theory sound or not? at any rate, no small war is raging about it, and there are combination not a few.

20          THEODORUS: No small, war, indeed, for in Ionia the sect makes rapid strides; the disciples of Heraclitus are most energetic upholders of the doctrine.

          SOCRATES: Then we are the more bound, my dear Theodorus, to examine the question from the foundation as it is set forth by themselves.

25          THEODORUS: Certainly we are. About these speculations of Heraclitus, which, as you say, are as old as Homer, or even older still, the Ephesians themselves, who profess to know them, are downright mad, and you cannot talk with them on the subject. For, in accordance with their text-books, they are always in motion; but as for dwelling upon an argument or a question, and quietly asking and answering in turn, they can no more do so than they can fly; or rather, the determination of these fellows not to have a particle of rest in them is more than the utmost powers of negation can express. If you ask any of them a question, he will produce, as from a quiver, sayings brief and dark, and shoot them at you; and if you inquire the reason of what he has said, you will be hit by some other new-fangled word, and will make no way with any of them, nor they with one another; their great care is, not to allow of any settled principle either in their arguments or in their minds, conceiving, as I imagine, that any such principle would be stationary; for they are at war with the stationary, and do what they can to drive it out everywhere.

35          SOCRATES: I suppose, Theodorus, that you have only seen them when they were fighting, and have never stayed with them in time of peace, for they are no friends of yours; and their peace doctrines are only communicated by them at leisure, as I imagine, to those disciples of theirs whom they want to make like themselves.

40          THEODORUS: Disciples! my good sir, they have none; men of their sort are not one another's disciples, but they grow up at their own sweet will, and get their inspiration anywhere, each of them saying of his neighbour that he

1 knows nothing. From these men, then, as I was going to remark, you will never  
get a reason, whether with their will or without their will; we must take the  
question out of their hands, and make the analysis ourselves, as if we were doing  
geometrical problem.

5 SOCRATES: Quite right too; but as touching the aforesaid problem, have  
we not heard from the ancients, who concealed their wisdom from the many in  
poetical figures, that Oceanus and Tethys, the origin of all things, are streams,  
and that nothing is at rest? And now the moderns, in their superior wisdom,  
have declared the same openly, that the cobbler too may hear and learn of  
them, and no longer foolishly imagine that some things are at rest and others  
in motion—having learned that all is motion, he will duly honour his teachers. I  
10 had almost forgotten the opposite doctrine, Theodorus,

'Alone Being remains unmoved, which is the name for the all.'

This is the language of Parmenides, Melissus, and their followers, who stoutly  
maintain that all being is one and self-contained, and has no place in which to  
move. What shall we do, friend, with all these people; for, advancing step by  
step, we have imperceptibly got between the combatants, and, unless we can  
15 protect our retreat, we shall pay the penalty of our rashness—like the players  
in the palaestra who are caught upon the line, and are dragged different ways  
by the two parties. Therefore I think that we had better begin by considering  
those whom we first accosted, 'the river-gods,' and, if we find any truth in them,  
we will help them to pull us over, and try to get away from the others. But  
if the partisans of 'the whole' appear to speak more truly, we will fly off from  
20 the party which would move the immovable, to them. And if I find that neither  
of them have anything reasonable to say, we shall be in a ridiculous position,  
having so great a conceit of our own poor opinion and rejecting that of ancient  
and famous men. O Theodorus, do you think that there is any use in proceeding  
when the danger is so great?

25 THEODORUS: Nay, Socrates, not to examine thoroughly what the two  
parties have to say would be quite intolerable.

SOCRATES: Then examine we must, since you, who were so reluctant to  
begin, are so eager to proceed. The nature of motion appears to be the question  
with which we begin. What do they mean when they say that all things are in  
motion? Is there only one kind of motion, or, as I rather incline to think, two?  
I should like to have your opinion upon this point in addition to my own, that  
30 I may err, if I must err, in your company; tell me, then, when a thing changes  
from one place to another, or goes round in the same place, is not that what is  
called motion?

THEODORUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: Here then we have one kind of motion. But when a thing,  
remaining on the same spot, grows old, or becomes black from being white, or  
35 hard from being soft, or undergoes any other change, may not this be properly  
called motion of another kind?

THEODORUS: I think so.

SOCRATES: Say rather that it must be so. Of motion then there are these  
two kinds, 'change,' and 'motion in place.'

THEODORUS: You are right.

40 SOCRATES: And now, having made this distinction, let us address ourselves  
to those who say that all is motion, and ask them whether all things according

1 to them have the two kinds of motion, and are changed as well as move in place, or is one thing moved in both ways, and another in one only?

THEODORUS: Indeed, I do not know what to answer; but I think they would say that all things are moved in both ways.

5 SOCRATES: Yes, comrade; for, if not, they would have to say that the same things are in motion and at rest, and there would be no more truth in saying that all things are in motion, than that all things are at rest.

THEODORUS: To be sure.

SOCRATES: And if they are to be in motion, and nothing is to be devoid of motion, all things must always have every sort of motion?

THEODORUS: Most true.

10 SOCRATES: Consider a further point: did we not understand them to explain the generation of heat, whiteness, or anything else, in some such manner as the following:—were they not saying that each of them is moving between the agent and the patient, together with a perception, and that the patient ceases to be a perceiving power and becomes a percipient, and the agent a quale instead of a quality? I suspect that quality may appear a strange and uncouth term to you, and that you do not understand the abstract expression. Then I will take concrete instances: I mean to say that the producing power or agent becomes neither heat nor whiteness but hot and white, and the like of other things. For I must repeat what I said before, that neither the agent nor patient have any absolute existence, but when they come together and generate sensations and their objects, the one becomes a thing of a certain quality, and the other a percipient. You remember?

THEODORUS: Of course.

SOCRATES: We may leave the details of their theory unexamined, but we must not forget to ask them the only question with which we are concerned: Are all things in motion and flux?

THEODORUS: Yes, they will reply.

25 SOCRATES: And they are moved in both those ways which we distinguished, that is to say, they move in place and are also changed?

THEODORUS: Of course, if the motion is to be perfect.

SOCRATES: If they only moved in place and were not changed, we should be able to say what is the nature of the things which are in motion and flux?

THEODORUS: Exactly.

30 SOCRATES: But now, since not even white continues to flow white, and whiteness itself is a flux or change which is passing into another colour, and is never to be caught standing still, can the name of any colour be rightly used at all?

THEODORUS: How is that possible, Socrates, either in the case of this or of any other quality—if while we are using the word the object is escaping in the flux?

35 SOCRATES: And what would you say of perceptions, such as sight and hearing, or any other kind of perception? Is there any stopping in the act of seeing and hearing?

THEODORUS: Certainly not, if all things are in motion.

40 SOCRATES: Then we must not speak of seeing any more than of not-seeing, nor of any other perception more than of any non-perception, if all things partake of every kind of motion?

THEODORUS: Certainly not.

1           SOCRATES: Yet perception is knowledge: so at least Theaetetus and I were saying.

          THEODORUS: Very true.

          SOCRATES: Then when we were asked what is knowledge, we no more answered what is knowledge than what is not knowledge?

5           THEODORUS: I suppose not.

          SOCRATES: Here, then, is a fine result: we corrected our first answer in our eagerness to prove that nothing is at rest. But if nothing is at rest, every answer upon whatever subject is equally right: you may say that a thing is or is not thus; or, if you prefer, 'becomes' thus; and if we say 'becomes,' we shall not then hamper them with words expressive of rest.

10          THEODORUS: Quite true.

          SOCRATES: Yes, Theodorus, except in saying 'thus' and 'not thus.' But you ought not to use the word 'thus,' for there is no motion in 'thus' or in 'not thus.' The maintainers of the doctrine have as yet no words in which to express themselves, and must get a new language. I know of no word that will suit them, except perhaps 'no how,' which is perfectly indefinite.

15          THEODORUS: Yes, that is a manner of speaking in which they will be quite at home.

          SOCRATES: And so, Theodorus, we have got rid of your friend without assenting to his doctrine, that every man is the measure of all things—a wise man only is a measure; neither can we allow that knowledge is perception, certainly not on the hypothesis of a perpetual flux, unless perchance our friend

20          Theaetetus is able to convince us that it is.

          THEODORUS: Very good, Socrates; and now that the argument about the doctrine of Protagoras has been completed, I am absolved from answering; for this was the agreement.

          THEAETETUS: Not, Theodorus, until you and Socrates have discussed the doctrine of those who say that all things are at rest, as you were proposing.

25          THEODORUS: You, Theaetetus, who are a young rogue, must not instigate your elders to a breach of faith, but should prepare to answer Socrates in the remainder of the argument.

          THEAETETUS: Yes, if he wishes; but I would rather have heard about the doctrine of rest.

          THEODORUS: Invite Socrates to an argument—invite horsemen to the open plain; do but ask him, and he will answer.

30          SOCRATES: Nevertheless, Theodorus, I am afraid that I shall not be able to comply with the request of Theaetetus.

          THEODORUS: Not comply! for what reason?

          SOCRATES: My reason is that I have a kind of reverence; not so much for Melissus and the others, who say that 'All is one and at rest,' as for the great leader himself, Parmenides, venerable and awful, as in Homeric language he may be called;—him I should be ashamed to approach in a spirit unworthy of him. I met him when he was an old man, and I was a mere youth, and he appeared to me to have a glorious depth of mind. And I am afraid that we may not understand his words, and may be still further from understanding his meaning; above all I fear that the nature of knowledge, which is the main subject of our discussion, may be thrust out of sight by the unbidden guests who will come pouring in upon our feast of discourse, if we let them in—besides, the question which is now stirring is of immense extent, and will be treated unfairly

40

1 if only considered by the way; or if treated adequately and at length, will put into the shade the other question of knowledge. Neither the one nor the other can be allowed; but I must try by my art of midwifery to deliver Theaetetus of his conceptions about knowledge.

THEAETETUS: Very well; do so if you will.

5 SOCRATES: Then now, Theaetetus, take another view of the subject: you answered that knowledge is perception?

THEAETETUS: I did.

SOCRATES: And if any one were to ask you: With what does a man see black and white colours? and with what does he hear high and low sounds?—you would say, if I am not mistaken, 'With the eyes and with the ears.'

10 THEAETETUS: I should.

SOCRATES: The free use of words and phrases, rather than minute precision, is generally characteristic of a liberal education, and the opposite is pedantic; but sometimes precision is necessary, and I believe that the answer which you have just given is open to the charge of incorrectness; for which is more correct, to say that we see or hear with the eyes and with the ears, or through the eyes and through the ears.

15 THEAETETUS: I should say 'through,' Socrates, rather than 'with.'

SOCRATES: Yes, my boy, for no one can suppose that in each of us, as in a sort of Trojan horse, there are perched a number of unconnected senses, which do not all meet in some one nature, the mind, or whatever we please to call it, of which they are the instruments, and with which through them we perceive objects of sense.

20 THEAETETUS: I agree with you in that opinion.

SOCRATES: The reason why I am thus precise is, because I want to know whether, when we perceive black and white through the eyes, and again, other qualities through other organs, we do not perceive them with one and the same part of ourselves, and, if you were asked, you might refer all such perceptions to the body. Perhaps, however, I had better allow you to answer for yourself and not interfere. Tell me, then, are not the organs through which you perceive warm and hard and light and sweet, organs of the body?

25 THEAETETUS: Of the body, certainly.

SOCRATES: And you would admit that what you perceive through one faculty you cannot perceive through another; the objects of hearing, for example, cannot be perceived through sight, or the objects of sight through hearing?

30 THEAETETUS: Of course not.

SOCRATES: If you have any thought about both of them, this common perception cannot come to you, either through the one or the other organ?

THEAETETUS: It cannot.

35 SOCRATES: How about sounds and colours: in the first place you would admit that they both exist?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And that either of them is different from the other, and the same with itself?

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And that both are two and each of them one?

40 THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: You can further observe whether they are like or unlike one another?

1 THEAETETUS: I dare say.

SOCRATES: But through what do you perceive all this about them? for neither through hearing nor yet through seeing can you apprehend that which they have in common. Let me give you an illustration of the point at issue:—If  
5 there were any meaning in asking whether sounds and colours are saline or not, you would be able to tell me what faculty would consider the question. It would not be sight or hearing, but some other.

THEAETETUS: Certainly; the faculty of taste.

SOCRATES: Very good; and now tell me what is the power which discerns, not only in sensible objects, but in all things, universal notions, such as those which are called being and not-being, and those others about which we were  
10 just asking—what organs will you assign for the perception of these notions?

THEAETETUS: You are thinking of being and not being, likeness and unlikeness, sameness and difference, and also of unity and other numbers which are applied to objects of sense; and you mean to ask, through what bodily organ the soul perceives odd and even numbers and other arithmetical conceptions.

SOCRATES: You follow me excellently, Theaetetus; that is precisely what I  
15 am asking.

THEAETETUS: Indeed, Socrates, I cannot answer; my only notion is, that these, unlike objects of sense, have no separate organ, but that the mind, by a power of her own, contemplates the universals in all things.

SOCRATES: You are a beauty, Theaetetus, and not ugly, as Theodorus was saying; for he who utters the beautiful is himself beautiful and good. And  
20 besides being beautiful, you have done me a kindness in releasing me from a very long discussion, if you are clear that the soul views some things by herself and others through the bodily organs. For that was my own opinion, and I wanted you to agree with me.

THEAETETUS: I am quite clear.

SOCRATES: And to which class would you refer being or essence; for this,  
25 of all our notions, is the most universal?

THEAETETUS: I should say, to that class which the soul aspires to know of herself.

SOCRATES: And would you say this also of like and unlike, same and other?

THEAETETUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: And would you say the same of the noble and base, and of  
30 good and evil?

THEAETETUS: These I conceive to be notions which are essentially relative, and which the soul also perceives by comparing in herself things past and present with the future.

SOCRATES: And does she not perceive the hardness of that which is hard by the touch, and the softness of that which is soft equally by the touch?

THEAETETUS: Yes.  
35

SOCRATES: But their essence and what they are, and their opposition to one another, and the essential nature of this opposition, the soul herself endeavours to decide for us by the review and comparison of them?

THEAETETUS: Certainly.

SOCRATES: The simple sensations which reach the soul through the body  
40 are given at birth to men and animals by nature, but their reflections on the being and use of them are slowly and hardly gained, if they are ever gained, by education and long experience.

- 1 THEAETETUS: Assuredly.  
 SOCRATES: And can a man attain truth who fails of attaining being?  
 THEAETETUS: Impossible.  
 SOCRATES: And can he who misses the truth of anything, have a knowledge  
 5 of that thing?  
 THEAETETUS: He cannot.  
 SOCRATES: Then knowledge does not consist in impressions of sense, but  
 in reasoning about them; in that only, and not in the mere impression, truth  
 and being can be attained?  
 THEAETETUS: Clearly.  
 SOCRATES: And would you call the two processes by the same name, when  
 10 there is so great a difference between them?  
 THEAETETUS: That would certainly not be right.  
 SOCRATES: And what name would you give to seeing, hearing, smelling,  
 being cold and being hot?  
 THEAETETUS: I should call all of them perceiving—what other name could  
 15 be given to them?  
 SOCRATES: Perception would be the collective name of them?  
 THEAETETUS: Certainly.  
 SOCRATES: Which, as we say, has no part in the attainment of truth any  
 more than of being?  
 THEAETETUS: Certainly not.  
 SOCRATES: And therefore not in science or knowledge?  
 20 THEAETETUS: No.  
 SOCRATES: Then perception, Theaetetus, can never be the same as know-  
 ledge or science?  
 THEAETETUS: Clearly not, Socrates; and knowledge has now been most  
 distinctly proved to be different from perception.  
 SOCRATES: But the original aim of our discussion was to find out rather  
 25 what knowledge is than what it is not; at the same time we have made some  
 progress, for we no longer seek for knowledge in perception at all, but in that  
 other process, however called, in which the mind is alone and engaged with  
 being.  
 THEAETETUS: You mean, Socrates, if I am not mistaken, what is called  
 30 thinking or opining.  
 SOCRATES: You conceive truly. And now, my friend, please to begin again  
 at this point; and having wiped out of your memory all that has preceded, see  
 if you have arrived at any clearer view, and once more say what is knowledge.  
 THEAETETUS: I cannot say, Socrates, that all opinion is knowledge, be-  
 cause there may be a false opinion; but I will venture to assert, that knowledge  
 35 is true opinion: let this then be my reply; and if this is hereafter disproved, I  
 must try to find another.  
 SOCRATES: That is the way in which you ought to answer, Theaetetus,  
 and not in your former hesitating strain, for if we are bold we shall gain one  
 of two advantages; either we shall find what we seek, or we shall be less likely  
 to think that we know what we do not know—in either case we shall be richly  
 40 rewarded. And now, what are you saying?—Are there two sorts of opinion, one  
 true and the other false; and do you define knowledge to be the true?  
 THEAETETUS: Yes, according to my present view.