

SOURCE BOOK IN
ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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BY

CHARLES M. BAKEWELL

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN YALE UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1907

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Published, September, 1907

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

P R E F A C E

EVERY one who has attempted to introduce students to the study of Philosophy by way of its history must have felt the need of having in compact form the most significant documents upon which the interpretations of that history are based, in order that it may be possible from the first to bring the student into direct contact with the sources, so far at least as that may be done through the medium of translations. The primary aim of this book is to supply this need. It is intended to serve either as a companion volume to any History of Philosophy that may be adopted as a text-book, or as a substitute for such a history where the instructor may prefer through his own lectures to give his own interpretation of this philosophical movement. It is hoped that the book may also, as a reference work, prove of value to students of philosophy generally, as well as to all who are interested in the development of ancient thought.

No attempt has been made to make an exhaustive Source Book. I have simply brought together the more significant passages from the earlier philosophers, beginning with Thales and reaching as far as Plotinus. The book includes most of the fragments of the earliest philosophers, together with the passages from the secondary sources which are most important in throwing light upon these fragments. In the case of the other philosophers it includes a number of brief extracts which may

serve as texts to hang discussions on, and also some more extended passages selected with the view of bringing one directly into the spirit and method of the several philosophers represented. More space has been given to Plotinus than his relative importance would warrant. This, however, needs no apology. Plotinus is perhaps more frequently misrepresented in historical discussions than any other Greek philosopher. Here especially is it necessary to let the philosopher speak for himself. And, besides, Plotinus's works are comparatively inaccessible to English readers, whereas the extracts from Plato and Aristotle, from Lucretius and the later Stoics can be supplemented at will.

While most of these sources are already accessible in translation they are scattered through so many volumes, and are mixed with so much material that is chiefly of value to the advanced student whose historical interests have become highly specialized, as to be practically unavailable for use in connection with introductory courses.

My obligations to others are so numerous that it would be impossible to mention them all. In making the translations I have in each case had before me all of the translations already in the field, whether in English, German, French, or Latin, upon which I could lay my hands; and I have borrowed freely from most of them. In especial, however, I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professors Diels, Burnet, and Fairbanks; and in the selection of passages I have taken many suggestions from the works of Ritter and Preller, Wallace, Jackson, and Adam.

I wish also to express my gratitude to Prof. G. H. Palmer for many valuable suggestions, and for the con-

tribution of his translation of the Hymn of Cleanthes; and to Dr. B. A. G. Fuller for the selection and translation of the passages from Plotinus, and the passages from Plutarch in criticism of the Stoic theodicy.

My thanks are also due to Mr. T. W. Higginson for permission to quote from his translation of Epictetus, to Dr. W. T. Harris for permission to reprint from *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* the translation of the fragments of Parmenides, made by the late Thomas Davidson, and to the Cambridge University Press, the Oxford University Press, Messrs. George Bell & Sons, The Macmillan Company, and Little, Brown & Company, for permission to use translations published by them. Special acknowledgments of borrowed translations are made in foot-notes. The only case where confusion is likely to arise is in the extracts from Plato. I assume responsibility myself for the translation of the Apology; the selections from the Republic are from the translation of Davies and Vaughan, and all the remaining Plato selections are from the latest edition of Jowett's work.

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I

THE MILESIAN SCHOOL

THALES

[Flourished 585 B.C.]

GENERAL STANDPOINT OF THE EARLY PHILOSOPHERS AND THE OPINIONS OF THALES

MOST¹ of the early philosophers were content to seek a material first principle as the cause of all things. For that of which all things consist, from which they arise, into which they pass away, the substance remaining the same through all its changing states—that, I say, is what they mean by the element, or the first principle, of the things that are. And this is why they hold that, strictly speaking, (nothing comes into being or perishes,) (since the primal nature remains ever the same.) For instance, when Socrates becomes handsome or cultured we do not just say he comes into being; nor, when he loses these characteristics, do we say that Socrates is no more. Socrates, the subject, remains the same throughout these changes. And it is the same with all things. There must be some natural body (*φύσις*), one or many, from which all things arise, but which itself remains the same.

But of what sort this first principle is, and how many such there are, this is a point upon which they are not agreed. Thales, the originator of this kind of philosophy,

¹ Aristotle, *Met.* I. 3, 983 b 6 (R. P. 9 A).

declares it to be water. (And this is why he said that the earth floats on water.) Possibly he was led to this opinion by observing that the nourishment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated and kept alive by moisture. And that from which all things are generated is just what we mean by their first principle. This may be where he got his idea, and also from observing that the germs of all things are moist, and that moist things have water as the first principle of their nature.

Some indeed hold that those who lived ages ago, long before the present generation, and who were the first to reason about the gods, held a similar view about nature, since they sang of Oceanus and Tethys as the parents of creation, and since the oath by which their gods swore was water, or, as the poets themselves called it, Styx. Now that which is most held in esteem is the object by which men swear; and that which is most ancient is that which is most esteemed. Whether there be any such ancient and primitive opinion about nature is doubtless an obscure question. However, Thales is said to have expressed the opinion above set forth concerning the first cause.

And ² some hold that the soul † is diffused through the universe. Perhaps this is what led Thales to say that all things are full of gods.

² Aristotle, *Psychology*, I. 5, 411 a 7 (R. P. 10 A).

† One must beware of reading later meanings into the word 'soul.' To 'have soul' (*ψυχὴν ἔχειν*) means little more than 'to be alive.' 'Vital principle' would perhaps express the meaning better, were it not for the fact that that expression implies a greater degree of abstraction than we can properly attribute to these early thinkers.

Judging ³ from what is reported of him, Thales appears to have viewed the soul as something having the capacity to set up movement, if it is true that he said that the loadstone has a soul because it moves iron.

ANAXIMANDER

[Flourished about 570 B.C.]

THE "BOUNDLESS" AS FIRST PRINCIPLE

Among ⁴ those who say that the first principle is one and mobile and boundless is to be reckoned Anaximander of Miletus, the son of Praxiades, the successor and follower of Thales. He said that "the boundless" (τὸ ἄπειρον) was the first principle and element of the things that are, being the first to make use of this term in describing the first principle. He says it is neither water nor any of the other elements now recognized, but some other and different natural body which is boundless; and from it arise all the heavens and all the worlds which they contain.

That from which things take their origin, into that again they pass away, as destiny orders; for they are punished and give satisfaction to one another for their injustice in the ordering of time, as he puts it in rather poetical language.

It is evident that, observing the way in which the four elements are transformed into one another, he thought fit to take for the substratum, not some one

³ Aristotle, 405 a 17 (R. P. 10 B).

⁴ Theophr. Fr. 2 ap. Simplic. *Phys.*, 24 (Dox. 476; R. P. 12). [I use throughout the customary abbreviations,—“Dox.” for Diels’ *Doxographi Græci*, and “R. P.” for Ritter and Preller, *Historia Philosophiæ Græcæ*.]

of them, but rather something else over and above them all. And he did not attribute creation (*γένεσις*) to any change in this element, but rather to the separating of the opposites occasioned by the eternal movement. This is why Aristotle compares his view with that of Anaxagoras.

* * *

And ⁵ he says that this principle, which encompasses all worlds, is eternal and ageless.—And besides this, there is eternal movement in which there results the creation of the heavens.

* * *

And ⁶ there is another point of view from which one does not make the cause any change of matter, nor ascribe creation to any transformation of the substratum, but rather to separation. Anaximander says that the opposites inhering in the substratum, which is a boundless body, are separated out,—he being the first to name the substratum as first principle. (And the “opposites” are, hot and cold, moist and dry,) etc.

* * *

Everything ⁷ either is a first principle or arises from a first principle; but of the boundless there is no first principle, for to find a first principle for it would be to give it bounds. Further, it (the boundless) is unbegotten and indestructible, being a first principle. That which is created perishes, and there is a limit to all destruction. Therefore there is no first principle of the boundless, but it is rather the first principle of other things. And it encompasses all things and rules all things, in the opinion of those who do not assume, in

⁵ Hipp. Ref. I. 6 (Dox. 559; R. P. 13).

⁶ Simpl. Phys. 150, 29 D (R. P. 14 A).

⁷ Aristotle, Phys. III. 4, 203 b 6 (R. P. 13).

addition to the boundless, some other cause such as "reason," or "love." And this is the divine, for it is deathless and indestructible, as Anaximander holds in agreement with most of the physical philosophers.

But ⁸ it is not possible that there should be an infinite body which is one and simple; either, as some hold, something over and above the elements and from which they arise, or as one of the elements themselves. For there are some who hold that this (i. e., the something other than the elements) is the boundless, and not air or water, in order that other things may not be destroyed by the boundless. For these (elements themselves) are opposed to one another; air is cold, water moist, fire hot. If one of them were boundless, the rest would have perished ere this. So they say that the boundless is something other than the elements and that from it they arise.

SCIENTIFIC SPECULATIONS

The ⁹ earth hangs free, supported by nothing. It keeps its place because it is in the centre (lit. is equally distant from all things). It is convex and round, like a stone pillar.† There are two surfaces opposite one another, on one of which we are.

The stars are circles of fire, separated from the fire which surrounds the world and covered all around with air. But there are breathing holes, certain tube-like openings, through which the stars appear. When these holes close there is an eclipse; and the moon appears now

⁸ Aristotle, *Phys.* III. 5, 204 b 22 (R. P. 12 B).

⁹ Hipp. *Ref.* I. 6 (Dox. 559-60; R. P. 14 c).

† So Diels, *Dox.* 218, and after him Burnet, p. 72, note. The 'convex' is then taken as referring to the surface of the earth.

to wax and now to wane through the opening and closing of these holes. . . . The sun is highest of all the heavenly bodies and lowest are the circles of the fixed stars. . . . Rain comes from the vapor drawn up from the earth by the sun.

From ¹⁰ the eternal principle was separated at the creation of the world something generative of hot and cold; and from this a sphere of flame grew around the air which surrounds the earth, as the bark grows around the tree. And when the sphere was broken up, and cut into distinct rings, the sun and the moon and the stars came into being.

Living ¹¹ things sprang from (the moist element †) evaporated by the sun. Man sprang from a different animal, in fact from a fish, which at first he resembled.

(Anaximander)¹² says that at first man sprang from a different kind of animal, his reason being that whereas all the other animals are speedily able to find nourishment for themselves, man alone requires a long period of suckling; and if he had been at the beginning such as he is now, he would not have survived.

The ¹³ first living things were generated in moisture, and were covered with a hard skin. When they were old enough they came up on the dry banks, and after a while the skin cracked off, and they lived on.

¹⁰ Ps. Plut. *Strom.* 2 (R. P. 14 B; Dox. 579).

¹¹ Hipp. *Ref.* I. 6 (R. P. 16; Dox. 560).

¹² Ps. Plut. *Strom.* 2 (R. P. 16; Dox. 579).

¹³ Aet. *Plac.* V, 19 (R. P. 16; Dox. 430).

† Cf. Diels, *Dox.*, 560, note.

ANAXIMENES

[Flourished about 550 B.C.]

THE OPINIONS OF ANAXIMENES

Anaximenes ¹⁴ said air was the first principle.

* * *

Anaximenes of Miletus, ¹⁵ son of Eurystratos, an associate of Anaximander, agreed with him in holding that the substance of nature was one and boundless; but he did not agree with him in holding that it was indeterminate, for he said it was air. But it differs in rarity and density with different things. When it is very attenuated fire arises; when it is condensed wind, then cloud, then, when more condensed, water, earth, stones; and other things come from these. He too holds the movement eternal by which the changes arise.

* * *

Just ¹⁶ as our soul which is air holds us together, so it is breath and air that encompasses the whole world.

* * *

All ¹⁷ things are generated by a sort of rarefaction and condensation of air.

* * *

The ¹⁸ earth is flat like a table top.

* * *

The ¹⁹ earth is flat and floats on the air.

* * *

The ²⁰ stars are fixed like nails in the crystalline vault.

¹⁴ Arist. *Met.* I 3, 984 a 5.

¹⁵ Theophr. *Fr.* 2, ap. *Simplic. Phys.*, 24 (R. P. 19 B; Dox. 476).

¹⁶ Aet. *Plac.* I. 3, 4 (Dox. 278; R. P. 18).

¹⁷ Ps. Plut. *Strom.* *Fr.* 3 (R. P. 19 A; Dox. 579).

¹⁸ Aet. *Plac.* III. 10, 3 (Dox. 377).

¹⁹ Hipp. *Ref.* I, 7 (R. P. 21; Dox. 560).

²⁰ Aet. 14, 3 (Dox. 344).