Le poème de Parménide

I

'Ὅποι ταὶ μὲ φέρουσιν, ὅσον τ’ ἐπὶ θυμὸς ἰκάνοι, πέμπουν, ἐπεὶ μ’ ἐς ὄδον βήσαν πολυφῦμον ἀγοῦσαι δαίμονον, ἢ κατὰ πάντες’ ἀστή φέρει εὐδώς φώτα’ τῇ φερόμην’ τῇ γάρ με πολυφυστοί σε φέρον ὅποιον

[5] ἀρμα τιταίνοντα, κούραι δ’ ὄδον ἡγεμόνευν. Ἀξόν δ’ ἐν χροὶς οἶε σύργης αὐτῆς αἰσθήμενος - δοιοὶ γὰρ ἐπείγοντο διανοοῦσιν κύκλος αμφοτέρωθεν’, δὴ στερεοῖς πέμπτειν Ἡλαίδες κούραι, προλυποῦσά δόματα Νυκτός,

[10] εἰς φάος, ὦσσάμενα κράτων ἅτῳ χερός καλύπτορας. Ἐνθα πῦλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός οἰς κελεύθουν, καὶ σφαῖρα ὑγράθωρον ἁμόρις ἔχει καὶ λάνος οὐδόςα. αὐταὶ δ’ αἰδέραις πληνίτα διαμοίραι τῷ ὑδαίνες τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολυπῦλον ἐγείρει κληίδας αμοιβάδος.

[15] Τὴν δ’ παράφημαν κούραι μαλακοὶ λόγοις πείσαν ἐπιφράδεως, ὡς σφαῖρα ἐλάσσων ὀρχάνας ἀπετεύρας, σοιε σπερχοίσιν ἂπτεράς ἀστός ὑπαίθροντων ἅμαναις ποίησαν ἀναπτάμεναι πολυήλοκοις ἁξιόνας ἐν σφαῖρες ἀμοιβάδον εἰλίξεσαι

[20] γόμφοις καὶ περόνησιν ἀρρητοῖς τῇ ὑδ’ αὐτῶν ἢθες ἔχον κούρας καὶ ἀμαλέτοις ἐξαφανίζοις. Καὶ με θέα πρόφρον ὑπεδέξατο, χείρα δ’ χειρί δεξτερήθην ἐλεν, ὅδε δ’ ἔτος φάτο καὶ με προσφέραι ὡς κοῦρ’ ἀθανάταις συνάρχοις ἰνιχόαις,

[25] ἵππων προσεῦκεν ἀκοῦσας, ταῖς ὑπὸν ἐν πύλοις ἀθήσεις. Αὐταί δὲ μαθῆται, ἄλλα ταῖς ἔμμεσας, ὡς τὰ δοκοῦσίν χρὴν θυμισμός εἶναι διὰ πάντος πάντα περίνεσσα.

II

The steeds that bear me carried me as far as ever my heart
Desired, since they brought me and set me on the renowned
Way of the goddess, who with her own hands conducts the man
Who knows through all things. On what way was I borne

5 along: for on it did the wise steeds carry me, drawing my car,
and maidens showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket
– for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at each
end - gave forth a sound as of a pipe, when the daughters of the
Sun, hasting to convey me into the light, threw back their veils

10 from off their faces and left the abode of Night.
There are the gates of the ways of Night and Day, fitted
above with a lintel and below with a threshold of stone. They
themselves, high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and
Avenging Justice keeps the keys that open them. Her did

15 the maidens entreat with gentle words and skilfully
persuade - to unfasten without demur the bolted bars from the
gates. Then, when the doors were thrown back,
they disclosed a wide opening, when their brazen
hinges swung backwards in the

20 sockets fastened with rivets and nails. Straight through them,
on the broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the car,
and the goddess greeted me kindly, and took my right hand
in hers, and spake to me these words: -
Welcome, noble youth, that comest to my abode on the car

25 that bears thee tended by immortal charioteers! It is no ill
chance, but justice and right that has sent thee forth to travel
on this way. Far, indeed, does it lie from the beaten track of
men! Meet it is that thou shouldst learn all things, as well
the unshaken heart of persuasive truth, as the opinions of

30 mortals in which is no true belief at all. Yet none the less
shalt thou learn of these things also, since thou must judge
approvedly of the things that seem to men as thou goest
through all things in thy journey.

Come now, I will tell thee - and do thou hearken to my
saying and carry it away - the only two ways of search that
can be thought of. The first, namely, that It is, and that it is
impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction,
[5] ἡ δ᾽ ωσ᾽ ἐστιν τε καὶ ωσ᾽ χρεων ἐστι μη εἶναι, τὴν δη τοι φράξεν παναπευθέντα ἐμὲν ἀταρπὸν· οὔτε γάρ ἀν γνοής τὸ γε μη ἐδν - οὐ γάρ ἀνουσόν - οὔτε φράσας·

III

... τὸ γάρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.

IV

Λεύσε δ’ ὡσς ἀπεόντα νόῳ παρεόντα βεβαιώς· οὔτε γάρ ἀποτήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι οὔτε σκιδνάς εἰς πάντως κατὰ κόσμον οὔτε συνιστάειν.

V

Ξυνὸν δέ εστίν, ὃππόθεν ἄρξω οι· τὸ γὰρ πάλιν ἢξοι αὖθι.

VII

Οὐ γάρ μῆποτε τούτο δαμὴ εἶναί μη ἐντα· ἀλλὰ σου τῆδε ἀφ’ ὦδου διώκισις ἐφερε νόημα· μηδὲ σ’ ἐθεὶς πολύπειρον ὦδον κατὰ τἳνε διώκθει, νομαν ἀποκτὸν ὴμμα καὶ ἡχήσαν ἄκουην

VIII

Μόνος δ’ ἐτι μύθος ὦδοι λείπεται ως ἐστιν· ταύτη δ’ ἐπι σήματ’ ἐστι πολλὰ μάλ’, ως ἀγένητον ἐν καὶ ἀνώλεθρον ἐστιν, ἐστι γὰρ υολομελές τε καὶ ἀτερμές ἀτέλεστον·

[5] for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that It is not, and that something must needs not be, - that, I tell thee, is a wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is not - that is impossible - nor utter it;

III

For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.

IV

It needs must be that what can be thought and spoken of is; for it is possible for it to be, and it is not possible for, what is nothing to be. This is what I bid thee ponder. I hold thee back from this first way of inquiry, and from this other also,

V

5 upon which mortals knowing naught wander in two minds; for hesitation guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind. Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes the same thing and not the same is and is not, and all things travel in opposite directions!

VII

For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry. Nor let habit force thee to cast a wandering eye upon this devious track, or to turn thither thy resounding ear or thy tongue; but do thou judge the subtle refutation of their discourse uttered by me.

VIII

One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that It is. In it are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for
[5] oúde pot’ ĵn oud’ ēstai, ēpē νūn ēstīn ómōu pān, ēn, συνεχὲς tīn gār gēnān dīzēsai autōs; tī pōthēn auðhēn; oud’ ēk μή ēǒntos ḕsōw fāsēstai s’ oud’ neoiν ou gār faotan oudē nothn ēstīn ὅπωs ouk ēstī. Tī d’ ān mīn kai χρέως ὅρθεν

[10] οὗτοιν ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μὴν δῶνος αὐξημένον, φῶν; οὕτως ἢ πάμταν πελάναι χρέων ēstīn ἢ οὐχί. Οὐδὲ pot’ ēk μὴ ēómo nas fēsēstai πίττως ισχύς γίγνεσθαι τι παρ’ αὐτό τοῦ εἶνεν οὕτε γενέσθαι oud’ ἀλλοσθαί ἄνδρε ἄληχη χαλάσασα πέδησιν,

[15] ἀλλ’ ἐνεῖ ό ἐκ κρίτης τούτων εν τῷ d’ ēstīν ēstīn ἢ οὐ καὶ ēstīν κέκριται d’ οὖν, ἀσπερ ανάγκη, τὴν μὲν εἶn anóntōn anώνυμον - ou γὰρ αἰλήθης ēstīn ὅδε - τήν d’ ὥστε πέλειν καὶ εὔτημον εἶn. Πῶς δ’ ἂν ἐπείτα πέλειται εὐόν; πῶς d’ ἂν κε γένειτο;


[25] Τῷ ἔνεχες πάν ēstīn εὐόν γὰρ ἔστιν πελάζει. Αὐτάρκεί κήπηντο μεγάλῶν ἐν πεῖρας δείομον ēstīn ἀνάρχον ἀπαντῶσιν, ἔπει γένεσις καὶ οἶλεθρός τὴν μᾶλλ’ ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπόσε δὲ πετεῖς αἰλήθης. Τάυτων τ’ ἐν ταύτῃ τε μένον καθ’ ἐαυτό τε κεῖται

[30] χοῦτος ἔμπεδον αὔθι μένει κρατήρ χάρᾳ Ἀνάγκῃ πεῖρατος ἐν δείομοισίν ἐχεῖ, τὸ μὲν ἁμαρτίς εἴργει, οὐκενεν οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον τὸ εὖν θείς εἶναι· ἐστι γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίδει, μὴ ἢ δ’ ἂν παντὸς ἐδέητο. Τάυτων δ’ ἐστι νοεῖν ς καὶ οὐκενεν ἔστι νόημα.

[35] ὅ γὰρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἔόντος, ἐν χ’ εὐφατειμένον ἐστίν, εὐφατείς τὸ νοεῖν οὐδ’ ἢ γὰρ σὰρ ἐστίν ἢ ἐστιά άλλο πάξει τοῦ ἔόντος, ἔπει τὸ γε Μούρ’ ἐπέδησεν οὐλόν ἀκινήτου τ’ ἐμεναί τῷ πάντ’ ὅνοι ἐστια, ὅσον βροτοί κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι αἰλήθης.

[40] γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ἀλλοσθαί, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί, καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τῇ χρᾶς φανόν ἀμείβειν.

5 now it is, all at once, a continuous one. For what kind of origin for it. will you look for? In what way and from what source could it have drawn its increase? I shall not let thee say nor think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from

10 nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than sooner? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at all. Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not lose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass

15 away, but holds it fast. “ Is it or is it not ? ” Surely it is adjudged, as it needs must be, that we are to set aside the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real and true. How, then, can what is be going to be in the future ?

20 Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than in another, to hinder it from holding together, nor less of it, but everything is full of what is.

25 Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is. Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself.

30 And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side. Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing; while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything. It is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists;

35 for you cannot find thought without something that is, to which it is betrothed. And there is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which is present, since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable. Wherefore all these things are but the names which mortals have given, believing them, to be true –

40 coming into being and passing away, being and not being, change of place and alteration of bright colour.
Αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ πείρας τύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ πάντοθεν, εὐκόκλου ὁσφαίρης ἐναλήγκιαν ὅγκοι, μεσοθέν ισοπαλὲς πάντι τὸ γὰρ οὐτὶ τε μεῖον

[45] οὔτε τι βιώστερον πελέναι χρεόν ἐστὶ τῇ ἢ τῇ. Οὔτε γὰρ οὐκ ἐόν ἐστι, τὸ κεν πάνοι μιν ἴκνεοίσθαι εἰς ὁμοῖον, οὔτὲ ἐόν ἐστιν ὅπως εἰπ̣ κεν ἐόντος τῇ μᾶλλον τῇ δ’ ἱσσον, ἐπεὶ πᾶς ἐστὶν ἁσύλον· οἱ γὰρ πάντωθεν ἴσον, ὡς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.

[50] Ἐν τῷ σοι παύσῃ πιστον λόγον ἦδε νόημα ἀμφίς ἄλθεις· δόξας δ’ ἀπὸ τούτῃ βροτεῖας μάνθανε κόσμον ἐπίκειν ἀπαθήλον ἀκούν. Μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δῦο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν· τῶν μιαν ὑπὸ χρεῶν ἐστιν· ἐν ὧν πεπλανημένοι εἰσιν·

[55] ταύτα δ’ ἐκρινόμενον δέμας καὶ σήματ’ ἐθεντω χωρίς ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων, τῇ μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ, ἢπιον οὐ, μεγ’ ἐλαφρόν, ἡμῶν πάντοσε πωτόν, τῷ δ’ ἐπέρχη μὴ πωτόν· ἀτάρ κάκειν κατ’ αὐτὸ ταὐτία νύκτ’ ἀδάφη, πυκνὸν δέμας ἐμβρύσθει τε.

[60] Τὸν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσιον ἑοικότα πάντα πατίῳ, ὡς οὐ μὴ τετὶς τις ἐν βροτοῖς γνώμη παρελάσῃ.

Where, then, it has its farthest boundary, it is complete on every side, equally poised from the centre in every direction, like the mass of a rounded sphere; for it cannot be greater or smaller in one place than in another. For there is nothing which is not that could keep it from reaching out equally, nor is it possible that there should be more of what is in this place and less in that, since it is all inviolable. For, since it is equal in all directions, it is equally confined within limits.

50 Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth. Henceforward learn the opinions of mortals, giving ear to the deceptive ordering of my words. Mortals have settled in their minds to speak of two forms, one of which they should have left out, and that is where they go astray from the truth.

55 They have assigned an opposite substance to each, and marks distinct from one another. To the one they allot the fire of heaven, light, thin, in every direction the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body.

60 Of these I tell thee the whole arrangement as it seems to men, in order that no mortal may surpass thee in knowledge.

Now that all things have been named light and night; and the things which belong to the power of each have been assigned to these things and to those, everything is full at once of light and dark night, both equal, since neither has aught to do with the other.

And thou shalt know the origin of all the things on high, and all the signs in the sky, and the resplendent works of the glowing sun’s clear torch, and whence they arose. And thou shalt learn likewise of the wandering deeds of the round-faced 5 moon, and of her origin. Thou shalt know, too, the heavens that surround us, whence they arose, and how Necessity took them and bound them to keep the limits of the stars . . .

How the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympos,
ἔσχατος ἢδ’ ἄστρων θερµὸν μένος ὁµήθησαν
gίγνεσθαι.

XII

Αἱ γὰρ στεινότεραι πλήντο τυφός ἀκρήτου,
αι δὲ ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτίς, μετὰ δὲ φλογὸς ἵπται αἰσία
ἐν ὑδὲ µέσῳ τούτων δαίµων ἢ πάντα καθερνά
πάντα γὰρ <ἡ> στυγεροί τόκου καὶ µέξιος ἀρχει
[5] πέµπουσ’ ἄρσεν θῆλυ µιγήν τὸ τ´ ἕκεντιον αὕτις
ἀρχεῖν θηλυτέρῳ.

XIII

Πρώτιστον µὲν Ἐρωτα θεῶν µητίσατο πάντων...

XIV

Νυκτιφαές περὶ γαῖαν ἀλώµενον ἀλλότριον φῶς...

XV

αιὲ παπταίνουσα πρὸς αὕγας ἡλίοιο.

XVII

δεξιτεροῖσιν εἶπεν τὴν γῆν

XVI

Πρὸς γὰρ κράσιν λιθίων µελέων πολυπλάγκτων,
τῶς νόος ἀνθρώποις παριστάται τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ
ἐστιν ὅτερ φρονέει μελέος φύσις ἀνθρώποισιν
καὶ πᾶσιν καὶ παντὶ τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἔστι νόημα.

XVIII

Femina virque simul Veneris cum germina miscent,
Venis informans diverso ex sanguine virtus
Temperiem servans bene condita corpora fingit.
Nam si virtutes permixto semine pugnent
Nec faciant unam permixto in corpore, dirae
Nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum.

and the burning might of the stars arose.

XII

The narrower circles are filled with unmixed fire, and those surrounding them with night, and in the midst of these rushes their portion of fire. In the midst of these circles is the divinity that directs the course of all things; for she rules over all painful birth and all begetting.

5 driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to that of the female.

XIII

First of all she contrived Eros.

XIV

Shining by night with borrowed light, wandering round the earth.

XV

Always straining her eyes to the beams of the sun.

XVII

On the right boys; on the left girls.

XVIII

Femina virque simul Veneris cum germina miscent,
Venis informans diverso ex sanguine virtus
Temperiem servans bene condita corpora fingit.
Nam si virtutes permixto semine pugnent
Nec faciant unam permixto in corpore, dirae
Nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum.
Οὕτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καὶ νυν ἔασι καὶ μετέπειτα ἀπὸ τοῦτο πελευτήσουσι τραφέντα· τοῖς δ’ ὅνομι ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ἕκαστῳ.

Thus, according to men’s opinions, did things comp into being, and thus they are now. In time (they think) they will grow up and pass away. To each of these things men have assigned a fixed name.