

knowledge can exist, entertained the same opinions at a later period also. When, afterwards, Socrates treated of moral subjects, and gave no attention to physics, but, in the subjects which he did discuss, arrived at universal truths, and before any man, turned his thoughts to definitions, Plato adopted similar doctrines on this subject also; and construed them in this way, that these truths and definitions must be applicable to something else, and not to sensible things: for it was impossible, he conceived, that there should be a general common definition of any sensible object, since such were always in a state of change. The things, then, which were the subjects of universal truths he called *Ideas*; and held that objects of sense had their names according to Ideas and after them; so that things participated in that Idea which had the same name as was applied to them."

In agreement with this, we find the opinions suggested in the *Parmenides* of Plato, the dialogue which is considered by many to contain the most decided exposition of the doctrine of Ideas. In this dialogue, Parmenides is made to say to Socrates, then a young man,²⁶ "O Socrates, philosophy has not yet claimed you for her own, as, in my judgment, she will claim you, and you will not dishonor her. As yet, like a young man as you are, you look to the opinions of men. But tell me this: it appears to you, as you say, that there are certain *Kinds* or *Ideas* (εἰδῆ) of which things partake and receive applications according to that of which they partake: thus those things which partake of *Likeness* are called *like*; those things which partake of *Greatness* are called *great*; those things which partake of *Beauty* and *Justice* are called *beautiful* and *just*." To this Socrates assents. And in another part of the dialogue he shows that these Ideas are not included in our common knowledge, from whence he infers that they are objects of the Divine mind.

In the *Phædo* the same opinion is maintained, and is summed up in this way, by a reporter of the last conversation of Socrates,²⁷ εἶναι τι ἕκαστον τῶν εἰδῶν, καὶ τούτων τ' ἄλλα μεταλαμβάνοντα αὐτῶν τούτων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἴσχειν; "that each *Kind* has an existence, and that other things partake of these *Kinds*, and are called according to the *Kind* of which they partake."

The inference drawn from this view was, that in order to obtain true and certain knowledge, men must elevate themselves, as much as possible, to these Ideas of the qualities which they have to consider:

²⁶ *Parmenid.* p. 131.

²⁷ *Phædo*, p. 102.