

from the most characteristic of the Platonic Dialogues. In these, Socrates is represented as finally successful in refuting or routing his adversaries, however confident their tone and however popular their assertions. They are angered or humbled; he retains his good temper and his air of superiority, and when they are exhausted, he sums up in his own way.

In the *Parmenides*, on the contrary, every thing is the reverse of this. Parmenides and Zeno exchange good-humored smiles at Socrates' criticism, when the bystanders expect them to grow angry. They listen to Socrates while he propounds Plato's doctrine of Ideas; and reply to him with solid arguments which he does not answer, and which have never yet been answered. Parmenides, in a patronizing way, lets him off; and having done this, being much entreated, he pronounces a discourse concerning the One and the Many; which, obscure as it may seem to us, was obviously intended to be irrefutable: and during the whole of this part of the Dialogue, the friend of Socrates appears only as a passive respondent, saying *Yes* or *No* as the assertions of Parmenides require him to do; just in the same way in which the opponents of Socrates are represented in other Dialogues.

These circumstances, to which other historical difficulties might be added, seem to show plainly that the *Parmenides* must be regarded as an Eleatic, not as a Platonic Dialogue;—as composed to confute, not to assert, the Platonic doctrine of Ideas.

The Platonic doctrine of Ideas has an important bearing upon the philosophy of Science, and was suggested in a great measure by the progress which the Greeks had really made in Geometry, Astronomy, and other Sciences, as I shall elsewhere endeavor to show. This doctrine has been recommended in our own time,¹ as containing "a mighty substance of imperishable truth." It cannot fail to be interesting to see in what manner the doctrine is presented by those who thus judge of it. The following is the statement of its leading features which they give us.

Man's soul is made to contain not merely a consistent scheme of its own notions, but a direct apprehension of *real and eternal laws beyond it*. These real and eternal laws are things *intelligible*, and not things sensible. The laws, impressed upon creation by its Creator, and apprehended by man, are something equally distinct from the Creator

¹ A. Butler's *Lectures*, Second Series, Lect. viii. p. 182.