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63. Life of Herakleitos

HERAKLEITOS of Ephesos, son of Blosson, is said to have "flourished" in Ol. LXIX. (504/3-501/0 B.C.);¹ that is to say, just in the middle of the reign of Dareios, with whom several traditions connected him.² It is more important, however, for our purpose to notice that, while Herakleitos refers to Pythagoras and Xenophanes by name and in the past tense ([fr. 16](#)), he is in turn alluded to by Parmenides ([fr. 6](#)). These references mark his place in the history of philosophy. Zeller held, indeed, that he could not have published his work till after 478 B.C., on the ground that the expulsion of Hermodoros, alluded to in [fr. 114](#), could not have taken place before the downfall of Persian rule. If

that were so, it might be hard to see how Parmenides could have known the views of Herakleitos at the time he wrote his poem;³ but there is no difficulty in supposing that the Ephesians may have sent one of their citizens into banishment when they were still paying tribute to the Great King. The spurious *Letters* of Herakleitos show that the expulsion of Hermodoros was believed to have taken place during the reign of Dareios,⁴ and it seems probable that the party led by him had enjoyed the confidence of the Persian government. His expulsion would mark the beginnings of the movement against Persian rule, rather than its successful issue.

Sotion quotes a statement that Herakleitos was a disciple of Xenophanes,⁵ which is not probable; for Xenophanes left Ionia before Herakleitos was born. More likely he was not a disciple of any one; but it is clear that he was acquainted both with the Milesian cosmology and with the poems of Xenophanes. He also knew something of the theories taught by Pythagoras ([fr. 17](#)). Of his life we really know nothing, except, perhaps, that he belonged to the ancient royal house and resigned the nominal position of Basileus in favour of his brother.⁶ The origin of the other statements bearing on it is quite transparent.⁷

64. His Book

We do not know the title of the work of Herakleitos.⁸—if, indeed, it had one—and it is not easy to form a clear idea of its contents. We are told that it was divided into three discourses: one dealing with the universe, one political, and one theological.⁹ It is not to be supposed that this division is due to Herakleitos himself; all we can infer is that the work fell naturally into these three parts when the Stoic commentators took their editions of it in hand.

The style of Herakleitos is proverbially obscure, and, at a later date, got him the nickname of "the Dark."¹⁰ Now the fragments about the Delphic god and the Sibyl ([frs. 11](#) and [12](#)) seem to show that he was conscious of writing an oracular style, and we have to ask why he did so. In the first place, it was the manner of the time.¹¹ The stirring events of the age, and the influence of the religious revival, gave something of a prophetic tone to all the leaders of thought. Pindar and Aischylos have it too. It was also an age of great individualities, and these are apt to be solitary and disdainful. Herakleitos at least was so. If men cared to dig for the gold they might find it ([fr. 8](#)); if not, they must be content with straw ([fr. 51](#)). This seems to have been the view taken by Theophrastos, who said the headstrong temperament of Herakleitos sometimes led him into incompleteness and inconsistencies of statement.¹²

65. The Fragments

I give a version of the fragments according to the arrangement of Bywater's exemplary edition.¹³

(1) It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word, and to confess that all things are one.¹⁴
R.P. 40.

(2) Though this Word¹⁵ 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 truly is. But other men know not what they are doing when awake, even as they forget what they do in sleep. R.P. 32.

(3) Fools when they do hear are like the deaf: of them does the saying bear witness that they are absent when present. R.P. 31 a.

(4) Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to men if they have souls that understand not their language. R.P. 42.

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

(6) Knowing not how to listen nor how to speak.

(7) If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it; for it is hard to be sought out and difficult.¹⁶

(8) Those who seek for gold dig up much earth and find a little. R.P. 44 b.

(10) Nature loves to hide. R.P. 34 f.

(11) The lord whose is the oracle at Delphoi neither utters nor hides his meaning, but shows it by a sign. R.P. 30. a.

(12) And the Sibyl, with raving lips uttering things mirthless, unbedizened, and unperfumed, reaches over a thousand years with her voice, thanks to the god in her. R.P. 30 a.

(13) The things that can be seen, heard, and learned are what I prize the most. R.P. 42.

(14) . . . bringing untrustworthy witnesses in support of disputed points.

(15) The eyes are more exact witnesses than the ears.¹⁷ R.P. 42 c.

(16) The learning of many things teacheth not understanding, else would it have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hekataios. R.P. 31.

(17) Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchos, practised scientific inquiry beyond all other men, and making a selection of these writings, claimed for his own wisdom what was but a knowledge of many things and an imposture.¹⁸ R.P. 31 a.

(18) Of all whose discourses I have heard, there is not one who attains to understanding that wisdom is apart from all. R.P. 32 b.

(19) Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things. R.P. 40.

(20) This world,¹⁹ which is the same for all, no one of gods or men has made; but it was ever, is now, and ever shall be an ever-living Fire, with measures of it kindling, and measures going out. R.P. 35.²⁰

(21) The transformations of Fire are, first of all, sea; and half of the sea is earth, half whirlwind...²¹ R.P. 35 b.

(22) All things are an exchange for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares. R.P. 35.

(23) It becomes liquid sea, and is measured by the same tale as before it became earth.²² R.P. 39.

(24) Fire is want and surfeit. R.P. 36 a.

(25) Fire lives the death of air,²³ and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of earth, earth that of water. R.P. 37.

(26) Fire in its advance will judge and convict²⁴ all things. R.P. 36 a.

(27) How can one hide from that which never sets?

(28) It is the thunderbolt that steers the course of all things. R.P. 35 b.

(29) The sun will not overstep his measures; if he does, the Erinyes, the handmaids of Justice, will find him out. R.P. 39.

(30) The limit of dawn and evening is the Bear; and opposite the Bear is the boundary of bright Zeus.²⁵

(31) If there were no sun it would be night, for all the other stars could do.²⁶

(32) The sun is new every day.

(33) (Thales foretold an eclipse.)

(34) . . . the seasons that bring all things.

(35) Hesiod is most men's teacher. Men are sure he knew very many things, a man who did not know day or night! They are one.²⁷ R.P. 39 b.

(36) God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger; but he takes various shapes, just as fire,²⁸ when it is mingled with spices, is named according to the savour of each. R.P. 39 b.

(37) If all things were turned to smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them.

(38) Souls smell in Hades. R.P. 46 d.

(39) Cold things become warm, and what is warm cools; what is wet dries, and the parched is moistened.

(40) It scatters and it gathers; it advances and retires.

(41, 42) You cannot step twice into the same rivers; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you. R.P. 33.

(43) Homer was wrong in saying: "Would that strife might perish from among gods and men!" He did not see that he was praying for the destruction of the universe; for, if his prayer were heard, all things would pass away.²⁹ . . . R.P. 34 d.

(44) War is the father of all and the king of all; and some he has made gods and some men, some bond and some free. R.P. 34.

(45) Men do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions,³⁰ like that of the bow and the lyre. R.P. 34.E

(46) It is the opposite which is good for us.³¹

(47) The hidden attunement is better than the open. R.P. 34.

(48) Let us not conjecture at random about the greatest things.

(49) Men that love wisdom must be acquainted with very many things indeed.

(50) The straight and the crooked path of the fuller's comb is one and the same.

(51) Asses would rather have straw than gold. R.P. 37 a.

(51a)³² Oxen are happy when they find bitter vetches to eat. R.P. 48

(52) The sea is the purest and the impurest water. Fish can drink it, and it is good for them; to men it is undrinkable and destructive. R.P. 47 c.

(53) Swine wash in the mire, and barnyard fowls in dust.

(54) . . . to delight in the mire.

(55) Every beast is driven to pasture with blows.³³

(56) Same as 45: Men do not know how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre. R.P. 34.E

(57) Good and ill are one. R.P. 47 c.

(58) Physicians who cut, burn, stab, and rack the sick, demand a fee for it which they do not deserve to get. R.P. 47 c.³⁴

(59) Couples are things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one.³⁵

(60) Men would not have known the name of justice if these things were not.³⁶

(61) To God all things are fair and good and right, but men hold some things wrong and some right. R.P. 45.

(62) We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away (?) through strife.

(64) All the things we see when awake are death, even as all we see in slumber are sleep. R.P. 42c.³⁷

(65) The wise is one only. It is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus. R.P. 40.'

(66) The bow (βιός) is called life (βίος) but its work is death. R.P. 49 a.

(67) Mortals are immortals and immortals are mortals, the one living the others' death and dying the others' life. R.P. 46.

(68) For it is death to souls to become water, and death to water to become earth. But water comes from earth; and from water, soul. R.P. 38.

(69) The way up and the way down is one and the same. R.P. 36 d.

(70) In the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common.

(71) You will not find the boundaries of soul by travelling in any direction, so deep is the measure of it.³⁸ R.P. 41 d.

(72) It is pleasure to souls to become moist. R.P. 46 c.

(73) A man, when he gets drunk, is led by a beardless lad, tripping, knowing not where he steps, having his soul moist. R.P. 42.

(74-76) The dry soul is the wisest and best.³⁹ R.P. 42.

(77) Man kindles a light for himself in the night-time, when he has died but is alive. The sleeper, whose vision has been put out, lights up from the dead; he that is awake lights up from the sleeping.⁴⁰

(78) And it is the same thing in us that is quick and dead, awake and asleep, young and old; the former are shifted⁴¹ and become the latter, and the latter in turn are shifted and become the former. R.P. 47.

(79) Time is a child playing draughts, the kingly power is a child's. R.P. 40 a.

(80) I have sought for myself. R.P. 48.

(81) We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not. R.P. 33 a.

(82) It is a weariness to labour for the same masters and be ruled by them.

(83) It rests by changing.

(84) Even the posset separates if it is not stirred.

(85) Corpses are more fit to be cast out than dung.

(86) When they are born, they wish to live and to meet with their dooms—or rather to rest—and they leave children behind them to meet with their dooms in turn.

(87-89) A man may be a grandfather in thirty years.

(90) Those who are asleep are fellow-workers (in what goes on in the world).

(91a) Thought is common to all.

(91b) Those who speak with understanding must hold fast to what is common to all as a city holds fast to its law, 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. R.P. 43.

(92) So we must follow the common,⁴² yet though my Word is common, the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own. R.P. 44.

(93) They are estranged from that with which they have most constant intercourse.⁴³ R.P. 32 b.

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

(95) The waking have one common world, but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own.

(96) The way of man has no wisdom, but that of God has. R.P. 45.

(97) Man is called a baby by God, even as a child by a man. R.P. 45.

(98, 99) The wisest man is an ape compared to God, just as the most beautiful ape is ugly compared to man.

(100) The people must fight for its law as for its walls. R.P. 43 b.

(101) Greater deaths win greater portions. R.P. 49 a.

(102) Gods and men honour those who are slain in battle. R.P. 49 a.

(103) Wantonness needs putting out, even more than a house on fire. R.P. 49 a.

(104) It is not good for men to get all they wish to get. It is sickness that makes health pleasant; evil,⁴⁴ good; hunger, plenty; weariness, rest. R.P. 48 b.

(105-107) It is hard to fight with one's heart's desire.⁴⁵ Whatever it wishes to get, it purchases at the cost of soul. R.P. 49 a.

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

(110) And it is law, too, to obey the counsel of one. R.P. 49 a.

(111) For what thought or wisdom have they? They follow the poets and take the crowd as their teacher, knowing not that there are many bad and few good. For even the best of them choose one thing above all others, immortal glory among mortals, while most of them are gluttoned like beasts.⁴⁶ R.P. 31 a.

(112) In Priene lived Bias, son of Teutamias, who is of more account than the rest. (He said, "Most men are bad.")

(113) One is ten thousand to me, if he be the best. R.P. 31 a.

(114) The Ephesians would do well to hang themselves, every grown man of them, and leave the city to beardless lads; for they have cast out Hermodoros, the best man among them, saying, "We will have none who is best among us; if there be any such, let him be so elsewhere and among others."⁴⁷ R.P. 29 b.

(115) Dogs bark at every one they do not know. R.P. 31 a.

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

(117) The fool is fluttered at every word. R.P. 44 b.

(118) The most esteemed of them knows but fancies,⁴⁸ and holds fast to them, yet of a truth justice shall overtake the artificers of lies and the false witnesses.

(119) Homer should be turned out of the lists and whipped, and Archilochos likewise. R.P. 31.

(120) One day is like any other.

(121) Man's character is his fate.⁴⁹

(122) There awaits men when they die such things as they look not for nor dream of. R.P. 46 d.

(123) . . . ⁵⁰ that they rise up and become the wakeful guardians of the quick and dead. R.P. 46 d.

(124) Night-walkers, Magians, Bakchoi, Lenai, and the initiated . . .

(125) The mysteries practised among men are unholy mysteries. R.P. 48.

(126) And they pray to these images, as if one were to talk with a man's house, knowing not what gods or heroes are. R.P. 49 a.

(127) For if it were not to Dionysos that they made a procession and sang the shameful phallic hymn, they would be acting most shamelessly. But Hades is the same as Dionysos in whose honour they go mad and rave. R.P. 49.

(129, 130) They vainly purify themselves by defiling themselves with blood, just as if one who had stepped into the mud were to wash his feet in mud. Any man who marked him doing thus, would deem him mad. R.P. 49 a.

66. The Doxographical Tradition

Some of these fragments are far from clear; and there are probably not a few of which the meaning will never be recovered. We turn, then, to the doxographers for a clue; but unfortunately they are less instructive with regard to Herakleitos than we have found them in other cases. Hippolytos, on whom we can generally rely for a fairly accurate account of what Theophrastos said, derived the material for his first four chapters, which treat of Thales, Pythagoras, Herakleitos, and Empedokles, not from the excellent epitome he afterwards used, but from a biographical compendium,⁵¹ mostly consisting of apocryphal anecdotes and apophthegms. It was based, further, on some writer of *Successions* who regarded Herakleitos as a Pythagorean. The link between him and the Pythagoreans was Hippasos, in whose system fire played an important part. Theophrastos, following Aristotle, had spoken of the two in the same sentence, and that was enough for the writers of *Successions*.⁵² We are forced, then, to look to the more detailed of the two accounts of the opinions of Herakleitos given in Diogenes,⁵³ which goes back to the *Vetusta Placita*, and is, fortunately, pretty full and accurate.

Another difficulty we have to face is that most of the commentators on Herakleitos mentioned in Diogenes were Stoics.⁵⁴ Now, the Stoics held the Ephesian in peculiar veneration, and sought to interpret him as far as possible in accordance with their own system. Further, they were fond of "accommodating"⁵⁵ the views of earlier thinkers to their own, and this has had serious consequences. In particular, the Stoic theories of the λόγος and the ἐκπύρωσις are constantly ascribed to Herakleitos, and the very fragments are adulterated with scraps of Stoic terminology.

67. The Discovery of Herakleitos Herakleitos looks down not only on the mass of men, but on all previous inquirers into nature. This must mean that he believed himself to have attained insight into some truth not hitherto recognised, though it was staring men in the face (fr. 93). To get at the central thing in his teaching, we must try then to find out what he was thinking of when he launched into those denunciations of human dulness and ignorance. The answer seems to be given in two fragments, 18 and 45. From them we gather that the truth hitherto ignored is that the many apparently independent and conflicting things we know are really one, and that, on the other hand, this one is also many. The "strife of opposites" is really an "attunement" (ἄρμονία). From this it follows that wisdom is not a knowledge of many things, but the perception of the underlying unity of the warring opposites. That this really was the fundamental thought of Herakleitos is stated by Philo. He says: "For that which is made up of both the opposites is one; and, when the one is divided, the opposites are disclosed. Is not this just what the Greeks say their great and much belauded Herakleitos put in the forefront of his philosophy as summing it all up, and boasted of as a new discovery?"⁵⁶

68. The One and the Many

Anaximander had taught that the opposites were separated out from the Boundless, but passed away into it once more, so paying the penalty to one another for their unjust encroachments. It is here implied that there is something wrong in the war of opposites, and that the existence of the opposites is a breach in the unity of the One. The truth Herakleitos proclaimed was that the world is at once one and many, and that it is just the "opposite tension" of the opposites that constitutes the unity of the One. It is the same conclusion as that of Pythagoras, though it is put in another way. The use of the word ἄρμονία suggests that Herakleitos had come under the influence of his older contemporary to some extent.

Plato clearly states that this was the central thought of Herakleitos. In the *Sophist* (242 d), the Eleatic stranger, after explaining how the Eleatics maintained that what we call many is really one, proceeds

But certain Ionian and (at a later date) certain Sicilian Muses remarked that it was safest to unite these two things, and to say that reality is both many and one, and is kept together by Hate and Love. "For," say the more severe Muses, "in its division it is always being brought together" (cf. [fr. 59](#)); while the softer Muses relaxed the requirement that this should always be so, and said that the All was alternately one and at peace through the power of Aphrodite, and many and at war with itself because of something they called Strife.

In this passage the Ionian Muses stand, of course, for Herakleitos, and the Sicilian for Empedokles. According to Plato, then, Herakleitos taught that reality was at once many and one. This was not meant as a logical principle.⁵⁷ The identity which Herakleitos explains as consisting in difference is just that of the primary substance in all its manifestations. This identity had been realised already by the Milesians, but they had found a difficulty in the difference. Anaximander had treated the strife of opposites as an "injustice," and what Herakleitos set himself to show was that, on the contrary, it was the highest justice ([fr. 62](#)).

69. Fire

All this made it necessary for him to seek out a new primary substance. He wanted not merely something from which opposites could be "separated out," but something which of its own nature would pass into everything else, while everything else would pass in turn into it. This he found in Fire, and it is easy to see why, if we consider the phenomenon of combustion. The quantity of fire in a flame burning steadily appears to remain the same, the flame seems to be what we call a "thing." And yet the substance of it is continually changing. It is always passing away in smoke, and its place is always being taken by fresh matter from the fuel that feeds it. This is just what we want. If we regard the world as an "ever-living fire" ([fr. 20](#)), we can understand how it is always becoming all things, while all things are always returning to it.⁵⁸

70. Flux

This necessarily brings with it a certain way of looking at the change and movement of the world. Fire burns continuously and without interruption. It is always consuming fuel and always liberating smoke. Everything is either mounting upwards to serve as fuel, or sinking downwards after having nourished the flame. It follows that the whole of reality is like an ever-flowing stream, and that nothing is ever at rest for a moment. The substance of the things we see is in constant change. Even as we look at them, some of the stuff of which they are composed has already passed into something else, while fresh stuff has come into them from another source. This is usually summed up, appropriately enough, in the phrase "All things are flowing" (πάντα ῥεῖ), though this does not seem to be a quotation

from Herakleitos. Plato, however, expresses the idea quite clearly. "Nothing ever is, everything is becoming"; "All things are in motion like streams"; "All things are passing, and nothing abides"; "Herakleitos says somewhere that all things pass and naught abides; and, comparing things to the current of a river, he says you cannot step twice into the same stream" (cf. [fr. 41](#))—these are the terms in which he describes the system. And Aristotle says the same thing, "All things are in motion," "nothing steadfastly is."⁵⁹ Herakleitos held, in fact, that any given thing, however stable in appearance, was merely a section in the stream, and that the stuff composing it was never the same in any two consecutive moments. We shall see presently how he conceived the process to operate; meanwhile we remark that this is not the most original feature of the system. The Milesians had held a similar view.

71. The Upward and Downward Path

Herakleitos appears to have worked out the details with reference to the theories of Anaximenes.⁶⁰ It is unlikely, however, that he explained the transformations of matter by means of rarefaction and condensation.⁶¹ Theophrastos, it appears, suggested that he did; but he allowed it was by no means clear. The passage from Diogenes we are about to quote has faithfully preserved this touch.⁶² In the fragments we find nothing about rarefaction and condensation. The expression used is "exchange" ([fr. 22](#)), a very good name for what happens when fire gives out smoke and takes in fuel instead.

It has been pointed out that, in default of Hippolytos, our best account of the Theophrastean doxography of Herakleitos is the fuller of the two accounts given in [Laertios Diogenes](#). It is as follows

His opinions on particular points are these:

He held that Fire was the element, and that all things were an exchange for fire, produced by condensation and rarefaction. But he explains nothing clearly. All things were produced in opposition, and all things were in flux like a river.

The all is finite and the world is one. It arises from fire, and is consumed again by fire alternately through all eternity in certain cycles. This happens according to fate. Of the opposites, that which leads to the becoming of the world is called War and Strife; that which leads to the final conflagration is Concord and Peace

He called change the upward and the downward path, and held that the world comes into being in virtue of this. When fire is condensed it becomes moist, and when compressed it turns to water; water being congealed turns to earth, and this he calls the downward path. And, again, the earth is in

turn liquefied, and from it water arises, and from that everything else; for he refers almost everything to the evaporation from the sea. This is the path upwards. R.P. 36.

He held, too, that exhalations arose both from the sea and the land; some bright and pure, others dark. Fire was nourished by the bright ones, and moisture by the others.

He does not make it clear what is the nature of that which surrounds the world. He held, however, that there were bowls in it with the concave sides turned towards us, in which the bright exhalations were collected and produced flames. These were the heavenly bodies.

The flame of the sun was the brightest and warmest; for the other heavenly bodies were more distant from the earth; and for that reason gave less light and heat. The moon, on the other hand, was nearer the earth; but it moved through an impure region. The sun moved in a bright and unmixed region and at the same time was at just the right distance from us. That is why it gives more heat and light. The eclipses of the sun and moon were due to the turning of the bowls upwards, while the monthly phases of the moon were produced by a gradual turning of its bowl.

Day and night, months and seasons and years, rains and winds, and things like these, were due to the different exhalations. The bright exhalation, when ignited in the circle of the sun, produced day, and the preponderance of the opposite exhalations produced night. The increase of warmth proceeding from the bright exhalation produced summer, and the preponderance of moisture from the dark exhalation produced winter. He assigns the causes of other things in conformity with this.

As to the earth, he makes no clear statement about its nature, any more than he does about that of the bowls.

These, then, were his opinions. R.P. 39 b.

Now, if we can trust this passage, it is of the greatest value; and that, upon the whole, we can trust it is shown by the fact that it follows the exact order of topics to which all the doxographies derived from the work of Theophrastos adhere. First we have the primary substance, then the world, then the heavenly bodies, and lastly, meteorological phenomena. We conclude, then, that it may be accepted with the exceptions, firstly, of the probably erroneous conjecture of Theophrastos as to rarefaction and condensation; and secondly, of some pieces of Stoical interpretation which come from the *Vetusta Placita*.

Let us look at the details. The pure fire, we are told, is to be found chiefly in the sun. This, like the other heavenly bodies, is a trough or bowl, with the concave side turned towards us, in which the

bright exhalations from the sea collect and burn. How does the fire of the sun pass into other forms? If we look at the fragments which deal with the downward path, we find that the first transformation it undergoes is into sea, and we are further told that half of the sea is earth and half of it *πρηστήρ* ([fr. 21](#)). What is this *πρηστήρ*? So far as I know, no one has yet proposed to take the word in the sense it usually bears elsewhere, that, namely, of hurricane accompanied by a fiery waterspout.⁶³ Yet surely this is just what is wanted. It is amply attested that Herakleitos explained the rise of the sea to fire by means of the bright evaporations; and we want a similar meteorological explanation of the passing of fire back into sea. We want, in fact, something which will stand equally for the smoke produced by the burning of the sun and for the immediate stage between fire and water. What could serve the turn better than a fiery waterspout? It sufficiently resembles smoke to be accounted for as the product of the sun's combustion, and it certainly comes down in the form of water. And this interpretation becomes practically certain when taken in connexion with the report of Aetios as to the Herakleitean theory of *πρηστῆρες*. They were due, we are told, "to the kindling and extinction of clouds."⁶⁴ In other words, the bright vapour, after kindling in the bowl of the sun and going out again, reappears as the dark fiery storm-cloud, and so passes once more into sea. At the next stage we find water continually passing into earth. We are already familiar with this idea ([§10](#)). Turning to the "upward path," we find that the earth is liquefied in the same proportion as the sea becomes earth, so that the sea is still "measured by the same tale" ([fr. 23](#)). Half of it is earth and half of it is *πρηστήρ* ([fr. 21](#)). This must mean that, at any given moment, half of the sea is taking the downward path, and has just been fiery storm-cloud, while half of it is going up, and has just been earth. In proportion as the sea is increased by rain, water passes into earth; in proportion as the sea is diminished by evaporation, it is fed by the earth. Lastly, the ignition of the bright vapour from the sea in the bowl of the sun completes the circle of the "upward and downward path."

72. Measure for Measure

How is it that, in spite of this constant flux, things appear relatively stable? The answer of Herakleitos was that it is owing to the observance of the "measures," in virtue of which the aggregate bulk of each form of matter in the long run remains the same, though its substance is constantly changing. Certain "measures" of the "ever-living fire" are always being kindled, while like "measures" are always going out ([fr. 20](#)). All things are "exchanged" for fire and fire for all things ([fr. 22](#)), and this implies that for everything it takes, fire will give as much. "The sun will not exceed his measures" ([fr. 29](#)).

And yet the "measures" are not absolutely fixed. We gather from the passage of Diogenes quoted above that Theophrastos spoke of an alternate preponderance of the bright and dark

exhalations, and Aristotle speaks of Herakleitos as explaining all things by evaporation.⁶⁵ In particular, the alternation of day and night, summer and winter, were accounted for in this way. Now, in a passage of the pseudo-Hippokratean treatise *Περὶ διαίτης*, which is almost certainly of Herakleitean origin,⁶⁶ we read of an "advance of fire and, water" in connexion with day and night and the courses of the sun and moon.⁶⁷ In [fr. 26](#), again, we read of fire "advancing," and all these things seem to be closely connected. We must therefore try to see whether there is anything in the remaining fragments that bears on the subject.

73. Man

In studying this alternate advance of fire and water, it will be convenient to start with the microcosm. We have more definite information about the two exhalations in man than about the analogous processes in the world at large, and it would seem that Herakleitos himself explained the world by man rather than man by the world. Aristotle implies that soul is identical with the dry exhalation,⁶⁸ and this is confirmed by the fragments. Man is made up of three things, fire, water, and earth. But, just as in the macrocosm fire is identified with the one wisdom, so in the microcosm the fire alone is conscious. When it has left the body, the remainder, the mere earth and water, is altogether worthless ([fr. 85](#)). Of course, the fire which animates man is subject to the "upward and, downward path," just as much as the fire of the world. The *Περὶ διαίτης* has preserved the obviously Herakleitean sentence: "All things are passing, both human and divine, upwards and downwards by exchanges."⁶⁹ We are just as much in perpetual flux as anything else in the world. We are and are not the same for two consecutive instants ([fr. 81](#)). The fire in us is perpetually becoming water, and the water earth; but, as the opposite process goes on simultaneously, we appear to remain the same.⁷⁰

74. Sleeping and Waking

This, however, is not all. Man is subject to a certain oscillation in his "measures" of fire and water, which gives rise to the alternations of sleeping and waking, life and death. The *locus classicus* on this is a passage of Sextus Empiricus, which reproduces the account given by Ainesidemos.⁷¹

It is as follows (R.P. 41):

The natural philosopher is of opinion that what surrounds us⁷² is rational and endowed with consciousness. According to Herakleitos, when we draw in this divine reason by means of respiration, we become rational. In sleep we forget, but at our waking we become conscious once more. For in sleep, when the openings of the senses close, the mind which is in us is cut off from contact with that which surrounds us, and only our connexion with it by means of respiration, is preserved as a sort of

root (from which the rest may spring again); and, when it is thus separated, it loses the power of memory that it had before. When we awake again, however, it looks out through the openings of the senses, as if through windows, and coming together with the surrounding mind, it assumes the power of reason. Just, then, as embers, when they are brought near the fire, change and become red-hot, and go out when they are taken away from it again, so does the portion of the surrounding mind which sojourns in our body become irrational when it is cut off, and so does it become of like nature to the whole when contact is established through the greatest number of openings.

In this passage there is clearly a large admixture of later ideas. In particular, the identification of "that which surrounds us" with the air cannot be Herakleitean; for Herakleitos knew nothing of air except as a form of water (§ 27). The reference to the pores or openings of the senses is probably foreign to him also; for the theory of pores is due to Alkmaion (§ 96). Lastly, the distinction between mind and body is far too sharply drawn. On the other hand, the important rôle assigned to respiration may very well be Herakleitean; for we have met with it already in Anaximenes. And we can hardly doubt that the striking simile of the embers which glow when brought near the fire is genuine (cf. fr. 77). The true doctrine doubtless was, that sleep was produced by the encroachment of moist, dark exhalations from the water in the body, which cause the fire to burn low. In sleep, we lose contact with the fire in the world which is common to all, and retire to a world of our own (fr. 95). In a soul where the fire and water are evenly balanced, the equilibrium is restored in the morning by an equal advance of the bright exhalation.

75. Life and Death

But in no soul are the fire and water thus evenly balanced for long. One or the other acquires predominance, and the result in either case is death. Let us take each of these cases in turn. It is death, we know, to souls to become water (fr. 68); but that is what happens to souls which seek after pleasure. For pleasure is a moistening of the soul (fr. 72), as may be seen in the case of the drunken man, who has so moistened his soul that he does not know where he is going (fr. 73). Even in gentle relaxation over our cups, it is more difficult to hide folly than at other times (fr. 108). That is why we must quench wantonness (fr. 103); for whatever our heart's desire insists on it purchases at the price of life, that is, of the fire within us (fr. 105). Take now the other case. The dry soul, that which has least moisture, is the best (fr. 74); but the preponderance of fire causes death as much as that of water. It is a very different death, however, and wins "greater portions" for those who die it (fr. 101).

Further, just as summer and winter are one, and necessarily reproduce one another by their "opposite tension," so do life and death. They, too, are one, we are told; and so are youth and age (fr. 78). It follows that the soul will be now living and now dead; that it will only turn to fire or water, as the

case may be, to recommence once more its unceasing upward and downward path. The soul that has died from excess of moisture sinks down to earth; but from the earth comes water, and from water is once more exhaled a soul ([fr. 68](#)). So, too, we are told ([fr. 67](#)) that gods and men are really one. They live each others' life, and die each others' death. Those mortals that die the fiery death become immortal,⁷³ they become the guardians of the quick and the dead ([fr. 123](#));⁷⁴ and those immortals become mortal in their turn. Everything is the death of something else ([fr. 64](#)). The living and the dead are always changing places ([fr. 78](#)), like the pieces on a child's draught-board ([fr. 79](#)), and this applies not only to the souls that have become water, but to those that have become fire and are now guardian spirits. The real weariness is continuance in the same state ([fr. 82](#)), and the real rest is change ([fr. 83](#)). Rest in any other sense is tantamount to dissolution ([fr. 84](#));⁷⁵ So they too are born once more. Herakleitos estimated the duration of the cycle which preserves the balance of life and death as thirty years, the shortest time in which a man may become a grandfather ([frs. 87-89](#)).⁷⁶

76. The Day and the Year

Let us turn now to the world. Diogenes tells us that fire was kept up by the bright vapours from land and sea, and moisture by the dark.⁷⁷ What are these "dark" vapours which increase the moist element? If we remember the "Air" of Anaximenes, we shall be inclined to regard them as darkness itself. We know that the idea of darkness as privation of light is not primitive. I suppose, then, that Herakleitos believed night and winter to be produced by the rise of darkness from earth and sea—he saw, of course, that the valleys were dark before the hill-tops—and that this darkness, being moist, so increased the watery element as to put out the sun's light. This, however, destroys the power of darkness itself. It can no longer rise upwards unless the sun gives it motion, and so it becomes possible for a fresh sun ([fr. 32](#)) to be kindled, and to nourish itself at the expense of the moist element for a time. But it can only be for a time. The sun, by burning up the bright vapour, deprives himself of nourishment, and the dark vapour once more gets the upper hand. It is in this sense that "day and night are one" ([fr. 35](#)). Each implies the other; they are merely two sides of one process, in which alone their true ground of explanation is to be found ([fr. 36](#)).

Summer and winter were to be explained in the same way. We know that the "turnings back" of the sun were a subject of interest in those days, and it was natural for Herakleitos to see in its retreat to the south the advance of the moist element, caused by the heat of the sun itself. This, however, diminishes the power of the sun to cause evaporation, and so it must return to the north that it may supply itself with nourishment. Such was, at any rate, the Stoic doctrine,⁷⁸ and that it comes from Herakleitos seems to be proved by its occurrence in the *Περὶ διαίτης*. The following passage is clearly Herakleitean:

And in turn each (fire and water) prevails and is prevailed over to the greatest and least degree that is possible. For neither can prevail altogether for the following reasons. If fire advances towards the utmost limit of the water, its nourishment fails it. It retires, then, to a place where it can get nourishment. And if water advances towards the utmost limit of the fire, movement fails it. At that point, then, it stands still; and, when it has come to a stand, it has no longer power to resist, but is consumed as nourishment for the fire that falls upon it. For these reasons neither can prevail altogether. But if at any time either should be in any way overcome, then none of the things that exist would be as they are now. So long as things are as they are, fire and water will always be too, and neither will ever fail.⁷⁹

77. The Great Year

Herakleitos spoke also of a longer period, which is identified with the "Great Year," and is variously described as lasting 18,000 and 10,800 years.⁸⁰ We have no definite statement, however, of what process Herakleitos supposed to take place in the Great Year. The period of 36,000 years was Babylonian, and 18,000 years is just half that period, a fact which may be connected with Herakleitos's way of dividing all cycles into an "upward and downward path." The Stoics, or some of them, held that the Great Year was the period between one world-conflagration and the next. They were careful, however, to make it a good deal longer than Herakleitos did, and, in any case, we are not entitled without more ado to credit him with the theory of a general conflagration.⁸¹ We must try first to interpret the Great Year on the analogy of the shorter periods discussed already.

Now we have seen that a generation is the shortest time in which a man can become a grandfather, it is the period of the upward or downward path of the soul, and the most natural interpretation of the longer period would surely be that it represents the time taken by a "measure" of the fire in the world to travel on the downward path to earth or return to fire once more by the upward path. Plato implies that such a parallelism between the periods of man and the world was recognised,⁸² and this receives a curious confirmation from a passage in Aristotle, which is usually supposed to refer to the doctrine of a periodic conflagration. He is discussing the question whether the "heavens," that is to say, what he calls the "first heaven," is eternal or not, and naturally enough, from his own point of view, he identifies this with the Fire of Herakleitos. He quotes him along with Empedokles as holding that the "heavens" are alternately as they are now and in some other state, one of passing away; and he goes on to point out that this is not really to say they pass away, any more than it would be to say that a man ceases to be, if we said that he turned from boy to man and then from man to boy again.⁸³ It is surely clear that this is a reference to the parallel between the generation and the Great Year, and, if so, the ordinary interpretation of the passage must be wrong. It is not, indeed, quite consistent with the theory to suppose that a "measure" of Fire could preserve its identity throughout the whole of its

upward and downward path; but that is exactly the inconsistency we have felt bound to recognise with regard to the continuance of individual souls. Now, it will be noted that, while 18,000 is half 36,000, 10,800 is 360×30 , which would make each generation a day in the Great Year, and this is in favour of the higher number.⁸⁴

78. Did Herakleitos Teach a General Conflagration?

Most writers ascribe to Herakleitos the doctrine of a periodical conflagration or *ἐπιύρωσις*, to use the Stoic term.⁸⁵ That this is inconsistent with his general view is obvious, and is indeed admitted by Zeller, who adds to his paraphrase of the statement of Plato quoted above (p.144) the words: "Herakleitos did not intend to retract this principle in the doctrine of a periodic change in the constitution of the world; if the two doctrines are not compatible, it is a contradiction which he has not observed." Now, it is quite likely that there were contradictions in the discourse of Herakleitos, but it is very unlikely that there was this particular contradiction. In the first place, it is inconsistent with the central idea of his system, the thought that possessed his whole mind (§67), and we can only admit the possibility of that, if the evidence for it should prove irresistible. In the second place, such an interpretation destroys the whole point of Plato's contrast between Herakleitos and Empedokles (§68), which is just that, while Herakleitos said the One was always many, and the Many always one, Empedokles said the All was many and one by turns. Zeller's interpretation obliges us, then, to suppose that Herakleitos flatly contradicted his own discovery without noticing it, and that Plato, in discussing this very discovery, was also blind to the contradiction.⁸⁶

Nor is there anything in Aristotle to set against Plato's statement. We have seen that the passage in which he speaks of him along with Empedokles as holding that the heavens were alternately in one condition and in another refers not to the world, but to fire, which Aristotle identified with the substance of his own "first heaven."⁸⁷ It is also quite consistent with our interpretation when he says that all things at one time or another become fire. This need not mean that they all become fire at the same time, but may be merely a statement of the undoubted Herakleitean doctrine of the upward and downward path.⁸⁸

The earliest statements to the effect that Herakleitos taught the doctrine of a general conflagration are found in Stoic writers. The Christian apologists too were interested in the idea of a final conflagration, and reproduce the Stoic view. The curious thing, however, is that there was a difference of opinion on the subject even among the Stoics. In one place, Marcus Aurelius says: "So that all these things are taken up into the Reason of the universe, whether by a periodical conflagration or a renovation effected by eternal exchanges."⁸⁹ Indeed, there were some who said there was no general conflagration at all in Herakleitos. "I hear all that," Plutarch makes one of his personages say,

"from many people, and I see the Stoic conflagration spreading over the poems of Hesiod, just as it does over the writings of Herakleitos and the verses of Orpheus."⁹⁰ We see from this that the question was debated, and we should therefore expect any statement of Herakleitos which could settle it to be quoted over and over again. It is highly significant that not a single quotation of the kind can be produced.⁹¹

On the contrary, the absence of anything to show that Herakleitos spoke of a general conflagration only becomes more patent when we turn to the few fragments which are supposed to prove it. The favourite is [fr. 24](#), where we are told that Herakleitos said Fire was Want and Surfeit. That is just in his manner, and it has a perfectly intelligible meaning on our interpretation, which is further confirmed by [fr. 36](#). The next is [fr. 26](#), where we read that fire in its advance will judge and convict all things. There is nothing in this, however, to suggest that fire will judge all things at once rather than in turn, and, indeed, the phraseology reminds us of the advance of fire and water which we have seen reason for attributing to Herakleitos, but which is expressly said to be limited to a certain maximum.⁹² These appear to be the only passages which the Stoics and the Christian apologists could discover, and, whether our interpretation of them is right or wrong, it is surely clear that they cannot bear the weight of their conclusion, and that there was nothing more definite to be found.

It is much easier to find fragments which are inconsistent with a general conflagration. The "measures" of [fr. 20](#) and [fr. 29](#) must be the same thing, and they must be interpreted in the light of [fr. 23](#). If this be so, [fr. 20](#), and more especially [fr. 29](#), directly contradict the idea of a general conflagration. "The sun will not overstep his measures."⁹³ Secondly, the metaphor of "exchange," which is applied to the transformations of fire in [fr. 22](#), points in the same direction. When gold is given in exchange for wares and wares for gold, the sum or "measure" of each remains constant, though they change owners. All the wares and gold do not come into the same hands. In the same way, when anything becomes fire, something of equal amount must cease to be fire, if the "exchange" is to be a just one; and that it will be just, we are assured by the watchfulness of the Erinyes ([fr. 29](#)), who see to it that the sun does not take more than he gives. Of course there is a certain variation, as we saw; but it is strictly confined within limits, and is compensated in the long run by a variation in the other direction. Thirdly, [fr. 43](#), in which Herakleitos blames Homer for desiring the cessation of strife, is very conclusive. The cessation of strife, would mean that all things should take the upward or downward path at the same time, and cease to "run in opposite directions." If they all took the upward path, we should have a general conflagration. Now, if Herakleitos had himself held this to be the appointment of fate, would he have been likely to upbraid Homer for desiring so necessary a consummation?⁹⁴ Fourthly, we note that in [fr. 20](#) it is *this* world,⁹⁵ and not merely the "ever-living fire," which is said to be eternal; and it appears also that its eternity depends on the fact that it is always kindling and always going out in the same

"measures," or that an encroachment in one direction is compensated by a subsequent encroachment in the other. Lastly, Lassalle's argument from the concluding sentence of the passage from the *Περὶ διαίτης* quoted above, is really untouched by Zeller's objection, that it cannot be Herakleitean because it implies that all things are fire and water. It does not imply this, but only that man, like the heavenly bodies, oscillates between fire and water; and that is just what Herakleitos taught. Now, in this passage we read that neither fire nor water can prevail completely, and a very good reason is given for this, a reason too which is in striking agreement with the other views of Herakleitos.⁹⁶ And, indeed, it is not easy to see how, in accordance with these views, the world could ever recover from a general conflagration if such a thing were to take place. The whole process depends on the fact that Surfeit is also Want, or, in other words, that an advance of fire increases the moist exhalation, while an advance of water deprives the fire of its power to cause evaporation. The conflagration, though it lasted but for a moment,⁹⁷ would destroy the opposite tension on which the rise of a new world depends, and then motion would become impossible.

79. Strife and "Harmony"

We are now in a position to understand more clearly the law of strife or opposition which manifests itself in the "upward and downward path." At any given moment, each of the three aggregates, Fire, Water, and Earth, is made up of two equal portions—subject, of course, to the oscillation described above—one of which is taking the upward and the other the downward path. Now, it is just the fact that the two halves of everything are being "drawn in opposite directions," this "opposite tension," that "keeps things together," and maintains them in an equilibrium which can only be disturbed temporarily and within certain limits. It thus forms the "hidden attunement" of the universe ([fr. 47](#)), though, in another aspect of it, it is Strife. As to the "bow and the lyre" ([fr. 45](#)), I think that Campbell gave the best explanation of the simile. "As the arrow leaves the string," he said, "the hands are pulling opposite ways to each other, and to the different parts of the bow (cf. Plato, *Rep.* iv. 439); and the sweet note of the lyre is due to a similar tension and retention. The secret of the universe is the same."⁹⁸ War, then, is the father and king of all things, in the world as in human society ([fr. 44](#)); and Homer's wish that strife might cease was really a prayer for the destruction of the world ([fr. 43](#)).

We know from Philo that Herakleitos supported his theory by a multitude of examples; and some of these can still be recovered. There is a remarkable agreement between a passage of this kind in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Περὶ κόσμου* and the Hippokratean *Περὶ διαίτης*. That the authors of both drew from the same source, namely, Herakleitos, is made practically certain by the fact that this agreement extends in part to the *Letters of Herakleitos*, which, though spurious, were certainly composed by some one who had access to the original work. The argument was that men themselves act just in

the same way as Nature, and it is therefore surprising that they do not recognise the laws by which she works. The painter produces his harmonious effects by the contrast of colours, the musician by that of high and low notes. "If one were to make all things alike, there would be no delight in them." There are many similar examples, some of which must certainly come from Herakleitos; but it is not easy to separate them from the later additions.⁹⁹

80. Correlation of Opposites

There are several Herakleitean fragments which form a class by themselves, and are among the most striking of the utterances that have come down to us. These assert in the most downright way the identity of various things usually regarded as opposites. The clue to their meaning is to be found in the account already given of the assertion that day and night are one. We have seen that Herakleitos meant, not that day was night, or night was day, but that they were two sides of the same process: namely, the oscillation of the "measures" of fire and water, and that neither would be possible without the other. Any explanation that can be given of night will also be an explanation of day, and *vice versa*; for it will be an account of what is common to both, and manifests itself now as one and now as the other. Now this is only a particular application of the principle that the primary fire is one even in its division. It itself is, even in its unity, both surfeit and want, war and peace ([fr. 36](#)). In other words, the "satiety" which makes fire pass into other forms, which makes it seek "rest in change" ([fr. 83](#)), and "hide itself" ([fr. 10](#)) in the "hidden attunement" of opposition, is only one side of the process. The other is the "want" which leads it to consume the bright vapour as fuel. The upward path is nothing without the downward ([fr. 69](#)). If either were to cease, the other would cease too, and the world would disappear; for it takes both to make an apparently stable reality.

All other utterances of the kind are to be explained in the same way. If there were no cold, there would be no heat; for a thing can only grow warm if, and in so far as, it is already cold. And the same thing applies to the opposition of wet and dry ([fr. 39](#)). These, it will be observed, are just the two primary oppositions of Anaximander, and Herakleitos is showing that the war between them is really peace, for it is the common element in them ([fr. 62](#)) which appears as strife, and that very strife is justice, and not, as Anaximander had taught, an injustice which they commit one against the other, and which must be expiated by a reabsorption of both in their common ground.¹⁰⁰

The most startling of these sayings is that which affirms that good and evil are the same ([fr. 57](#)). This does not mean that good is evil or that evil is good, but simply that they are the two inseparable halves of one and the same thing. A thing can become good only in so far as it is already evil, and evil only in so far as it is already good, and everything depends on the contrast. The illustration given in [fr. 58](#) shows this clearly. Torture, one would say, was an evil, and yet it is made a good by the presence of

another evil, namely, disease; as is shown by the fact that surgeons expect a fee for inflicting it on their patients. Justice, on the other hand, which is a good, would be unknown were it not for injustice, which is an evil ([fr. 60](#)). And that is why it is not good for men to get everything they wish ([fr. 104](#)). Just as the cessation of strife in the world would mean its destruction, so the disappearance of hunger, disease, and weariness would mean the disappearance of satisfaction, health, and rest.

This leads to a theory of relativity which prepares the way for the doctrine of Protagoras, that "Man is the measure of all things."¹⁰¹ Sea-water is good for fish and bad for men ([fr. 52](#)), and so with many other things. At the same time, Herakleitos is not a believer in absolute relativity. The process of the world is not merely a circle, but an "upward and downward path." At the upper end, where the two paths meet, we have the pure fire, in which, as there is no separation, there is no relativity. We are told that, while to man some things are evil and some things are good, all things are good to God ([fr. 61](#)). Now by God, or the "one wise," there is no doubt Herakleitos meant Fire. There can hardly be any question that what he meant to say was that in it the opposition and relativity universal in the world disappear. It is doubtless to this that frs. [96](#), [97](#), and [98](#) refer.

81. The Wise

Herakleitos speaks of "wisdom" or the "wise" in two senses. We have seen already that he said wisdom was "something apart from everything else" ([fr. 18](#)), meaning by it the perception of the unity of the many; and he also applies the term to that unity itself regarded as the "thought that directs the course of all things." This is synonymous with the pure fire which is not differentiated into two parts, one taking the upward and the other the downward path. That alone has wisdom; the partial things we see have not. We ourselves are only wise in so far as we are fiery ([fr. 74](#)).

82. Theology

With certain reservations, Herakleitos was prepared to call the one Wisdom by the name of Zeus. Such, at least, appears to be the meaning of [fr. 65](#). What these reservations were, it is easy to guess. It is not, of course, to be pictured in the form of a man. In saying this, Herakleitos would only have been repeating what had already been said by Xenophanes. He agrees further with Xenophanes in holding that this "god," if it is to be called so, is one; but his polemic against popular religion was directed rather against the rites and ceremonies themselves than their mythological outgrowth. He gives a list ([fr. 124](#)) of some of the religious figures of his time, and the context in which the fragment is quoted shows that he in some way threatened them with the wrath to come. He comments on the absurdity of praying to images ([fr.126](#)), and the strange idea that blood-guiltiness can be washed out by the shedding of blood ([fr.130](#)). He seems also to have said that it was absurd to celebrate the worship

of Dionysos by cheerful and licentious ceremonies, while Hades was propitiated by gloomy rites ([fr. 127](#)). According to the mystic doctrine itself, the two were really one; and the one Wisdom ought to be worshipped in its integrity.

83. Ethics of Herakleitos

The moral teaching of Herakleitos is summed up in the rule "Follow the common." The "common" upon which Herakleitos insists is, nevertheless, something very different from common sense, for which, indeed, he had the greatest possible contempt ([fr. 111](#)). It is, in fact, his strongest objection to "the many," that they live each in his own world ([fr. 95](#)), as if they had a private wisdom of their own ([fr. 92](#)); and public opinion is therefore just the opposite of "the common." The rule is really to be interpreted as a corollary of his anthropological and cosmological views. The first requirement is that we keep our souls dry, and thus assimilate them to the one Wisdom, which is fire. That is what is really "common," and the greatest fault is to act like men asleep ([fr. 94](#)), that is, by letting our souls grow moist, to cut ourselves off from the fire in the world.

Herakleitos prepared the way for the Stoic world-state by comparing "the common" to the laws of a city. And these are even more than a type of the divine law: they are imperfect embodiments of it. They cannot, however, exhaust it altogether; for in all human affairs there is an element of relativity ([fr. 91](#)). "Man is a baby compared to God" ([fr. 97](#)). Such as they are, however, the city must fight for them as for its walls; and, if it has the good fortune to possess a citizen with a dry soul, he is worth ten thousand ([fr. 113](#)); for in him alone is "the common" embodied.

1. [Diog. ix. 1](#). (R.P. 29), no doubt from Apollodoros through some intermediate authority. The name Blyson is better attested than Blyson (see Diels, *Vors.* 12 A 1, *n.*), and is known from inscriptions as an Ionic name.

2. Bernays, *Die heraklitischen Briefe*, pp. 13 sqq.

3. For the date of Parmenides, see p. 169.

4. Bernays, *op. cit.* pp. 20 sqq. This is quite consistent with the Roman tradition that Hermodoros took part later in the legislation of the Twelve Tables at Rome (*Dig.* 1, 2, 2, 4; Strabo, xiv. p. 642). There was a statue of him in the Comitium (Pliny, H.N. xxxiv. 21). The Romans were well aware that the Twelve Tables were framed on a Greek model; and, as Bernays said (*op. cit.* p. 85), the fact is attested as few things are in the early history of Rome.

5. Sotion *ap.* [Diog. ix. 5](#) (R.P. 29 c).

6. [Diog. ix. 6](#) (R.P. 31).

7. Herakleitos said ([fr. 68](#)) that it was death to souls to become water; and we are told accordingly that he died of dropsy. He said ([fr. 14](#)) that the Ephesians should leave their city to their children, and ([fr. 79](#)) that Time was a child playing draughts. We are therefore told that he refused to take any part in public life, and went to play with the children in the temple of Artemis. He said ([fr. 85](#)) that corpses were more fit to be cast out than dung; and we are told that he covered himself with dung when attacked with dropsy. Lastly, he is said to have argued at great length with his doctors because of [fr. 58](#). For these tales see [Diog. ix. 3-5](#).

8. The variety of titles enumerated in [Diog. ix. 12](#) (R.P. 30 b) seems to show that none was authentically known. That of "Muses" comes from Plato, *Soph.* 242 d 7. The others are mere "mottoes" (Schuster) prefixed by Stoic editors (*Diog. ix. 15*; R.P. 30 c),

9. [Diog. ix. 5](#) (R.P. 30). Bywater followed this hint in his arrangement of the fragments. The three sections are 1-90., 91-97, 98-130.
10. R.P. 30 a. The epithet ὁ σκοτεινός is of later date, but Timon of Phleious already called him αἰνκτικός (fr. 43, Diels).
11. See the valuable observations of Diels in the Introduction to his *Herakleitos von Ephesos*, pp. iv. *sqq.*
12. Cf. [Diog. ix. 6](#) (R.P. 31).
13. In his edition, Diels has given up all attempt to arrange the fragments according to subject, and this makes his text unsuitable for our purpose. I think, too, that he overestimates the difficulty of an approximate arrangement, and makes too much of the view that the style of Herakleitos was "aphoristic." That it was so, is an important and valuable remark; but it does not follow that Herakleitos wrote like Nietzsche. For a Greek, however prophetic in his tone, there must always be a distinction between an aphoristic and an incoherent style.
14. Both Bywater and Diels accept Bergk's λόγου for δόγματος and Miller's εἶναι for εἶδεναι Cf. Philo, *Leg. all.* iii. c 3, quoted in Bywater's note.
15. The λόγος is primarily the discourse of Herakleitos himself; though, as he is a prophet, we may call it his "Word." It can neither mean a discourse addressed to Herakleitos nor yet "reason." (Cf. Zeller, p. 630, n. 1; Eng. trans. ii. p. 7, n. 2.) A difficulty has been raised about the words ἐόντος αἰεί. How could Herakleitos say that his discourse had always existed? The answer is that in Ionic ἐών means "true" when coupled with words like λόγος Cf. Herod. 1. 30, τῶ ἐόντι χρησάμενος λέγει; and even Aristoph. *Frogs*, 1052, οὐκ ὄντα λόγον. It is only by taking the words in this way that we can understand Aristotle's hesitation as to the proper punctuation (*Rhet. Γ*, 5. 1407 b 15; R.P. 30. a). The Stoic interpretation given by Marcus Aurelius, iv. 46 (R.P. 32 b), must be rejected. In any case, the Johannine doctrine of the λόγος has nothing to do with Herakleitos or with anything at all in Greek philosophy, but comes from the Hebrew Wisdom literature. See Rendel Harris, "The Origin of the Prologue to St. John's Gospel," in *The Expositor*, 1916, pp. 147 *sqq.*
16. I have departed from the punctuation of Bywater here, and supplied a fresh object to the verb as suggested by Gomperz (*Arch.* i. 100).
17. Cf. Herod. 1. 8.
18. The best attested reading is ἐποιήσατο not ἐποίησεν, and ἐποιήσατο ἑαυτοῦ means "claimed as his own." The words ἐκλεξάμενος ταύτας τὰς συγγραφάς have been doubted since the time of Schleiermacher, and Diels now regards the whole fragment as spurious. This is because it was used to prove that Pythagoras wrote books (cf. Diels, *Arch.* iii. p. 451). As Bywater pointed out, however, the fragment itself only says that he read books. I would further suggest that the old-fashioned συγγραφάς is too good for a forger, and that the omission of the very thing to be proved would be remarkable. The last suggestion of a book by Pythagoras disappears with the reading ἐποιήσατο for ἐποίησεν. For the rendering given for κακοτεχνίη, compare its legal sense of "falsified evidence."
19. The word κόσμος must mean "world" here, not merely "order"; for only the world could be identified with fire. This use of the word is Pythagorean, and Herakleitos may quite well have known it.
20. It is important to notice that μέτρα is internal accusative with ἀπτόμενον, "with its measures kindling and its measures going out." This interpretation, which I gave in the first edition, is now adopted by Diels (*Vors.* 3 12 B 30 n.).
21. On the word πρηστήρ, see below, [p. 149, n. 1](#).
22. The subject of [fr. 23](#) is γῆ as we see from [Diog. ix. 9](#) (R.P. 36), πάλιν τε αὖ τὴν γῆν χειῖσθαι; and Aet. i. 3, 11 (*Dox.* p. 284 a 1; b 5), ἔπειτα ἀναχαλωμένην τὴν γῆν ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς χύσει (Dübner: φύσει, *libri*) ὕδωρ ἀποτελεῖσθαι. Herakleitos may have said γῆ θάλασσα διαχέεται, and Clement (*Strom.* v. p. 712) seems to imply this. The phrase μετρέεται εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον can only mean that the proportion of the measures remains constant. So Zeller (p. 690, n. 1), *zu derselben Grösse*. Diels (*Vors.* 12 B 31 n.) renders "nach demselben Wort (*Gesetz*)," but refers to Lucr. v. 257, which supports the other interpretation (*pro parte sua*).
23. It is doubtful whether this fragment is quoted textually. It seems to imply the four elements of Empedokles.
24. I understand ἐπελθόν of the πυρὸς ἔφοδος, for which see [p. 151, n. 1](#). Diels has pointed out that καταλαμβάνειν is the old word for "to convict."
25. Here it is clear that οὖρος = τέρματα, and therefore means "boundary," not "hill." Strabo, who quotes the fragment (i. 6, p. 3), is probably right in taking ἠοῦς καὶ ἐσπέρας as equivalent to ἀνατολῆς καὶ δύσεως and making the words refer to the "arctic" circle.

- As αἴθριος Ζεὺς means the bright blue sky, it is impossible for its οὐρός to be the South Pole, as Diels suggests. It is more likely the horizon. I take the fragment as a protest against the Pythagorean theory of a southern hemisphere.
26. We learn from Diog. ix. 10 (quoted below, [p. 147](#)) that Herakleitos explained why the sun was warmer and brighter than the moon, and this is doubtless a fragment of that passage.
27. Hesiod said Day was the child of Night (*Theog.* 124).
28. Reading ὅκωπερ πῦρ for ὅκωσπερ with Diels.
29. *Il.* xviii. 107. I add οἰχίσεσθαι γὰρ πάντα from Simplic. *in Cat.* 412, 26. It must represent something that was in the original.
30. I cannot believe Herakleitos said both παλίντονος and παλίντροπος ἀρμονίη, and I prefer Plutarch's παλίντονος (R.P. 34 b) to the παλίντροπος of Hippolytos. Diels thinks that the polemic of Parmenides favours παλίντροπος, but see below, [p. 164, n. 1](#), and Chap. IV. [p. 174, n. 3](#).
31. This refers to the medical rule αἰ δ' ἰατρεῖαι διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων, e.g. βοηθεῖν τῷ θερμῷ ἐπὶ τὸ ψυχρόν.
32. See Bywater in *Journ. Phil.* ix. p. 230.
33. On fr. 55 see Diels in *Berl. Sitzb.*, 1901, p. 188.
34. I now read ἐπαιτέονται with Bernays and Diels.
35. On fr. 59 see Diels in *Berl. Sitzb.*, 1901, p. 188. The reading συνάψεις seems to be well attested and gives an excellent sense. The alternative reading συλλάψεις is preferred by Hoffmann, *Gr. Dial.* iii. 240.
36. By "these things" he probably meant all kinds of injustice.
37. Diels supposes that fr. 64 went on ὁκόσα δὲ τεθηκότες ζωῆ. "Life, Sleep, Death is the threefold ladder in psychology, as in physics Fire, Water, Earth."
38. The words οὕτω βαθὺν λόγον ἔχει present no difficulty if we remember that λόγος means "measurement," as in [fr. 23](#).
39. This fragment is interesting because of the antiquity of the corruptions it has suffered. According to Stephanus, who is followed by Bywater, we should read: Αὕη ψυχῆ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη, ξηρὴ being a mere gloss upon αὕη. When once ξηρὴ got into the text; αὕη became αὐγὴ, and we get the sentence, "the dry light is the wisest soul," whence the *siccum lumen* of Bacon. Now this reading is as old as Plutarch, who, in his Life of Romulus (c. 28), takes αὐγὴ to mean lightning, as it sometimes does, and supposes the idea to be that the wise soul bursts through the prison of the body like dry lightning (whatever that may be) through a cloud. (It should be added that Diels now holds that a αὐγὴ ξηρὴ ψυχῆ σοφωτάτη καὶ ἀρίστη is the genuine reading.) Lastly, though Plutarch must have written αὐγὴ, the MSS. vary between αὐτή and αὐτή (cf. *De def. or.* 432 f. αὐτή γὰρ ξηρὰ ψυχῆ in the MSS.). The next stage is the corruption of the αὐγὴ into οὐ γῆ. This yields the sentiment that "where the earth is dry, the soul is wisest," and is as old as Philo (see Bywater's notes).
40. I adopt the fuller text of Diels here. It is clear that Death, Sleep, Waking correspond to Earth, Water, Air in Herakleitos (cf. [fr. 68](#)). I think, however, that we must take ἄπτεται in the same sense all through the fragment, so I do not translate "is in contact with," as Diels does.
41. I understand μεταπεσόντα here as meaning "moved" from one γραμμῆ or division of the draught-board to another.
42. Sext. *Math.* vii. 133, διὸ δεῖ ἐπεσθαι τῷ κοινῷ (so the MSS. ξυνῶ Schleiermacher). ξυνὸς γὰρ ὁ κοινός. Bywater omits the words, but I think they must belong to Herakleitos. Diels adopts Bekker's suggestion to read διὸ δεῖ ἐπεσθαι τῷ <ξυνῶ, τουτέστι τῷ> κοινῷ. I now think also that, if we understand the term λόγος in the sense explained above ([p. 133, n. 1](#)), there is no reason to doubt the words which follow.
43. The words λόγῳ τῷ τὰ ὅλα διοικοῦντι belong to Marcus Aurelius and not to Herakleitos.
44. Adopting Heitz's καθὸν for καὶ with Diels.

45. The word θυμός has its Homeric sense. The gratification of desire implies the exchange of dry soul-fire ([fr. 74](#)) for moisture ([fr. 72](#)). Aristotle misunderstood θυμός here as anger (*Eth. Nic.* B, 2. 1105 a 8).
46. This seems to refer to the "three lives," Chap. II. [§ 45](#), p. 98.
47. He went to Italy and took part in framing the Twelve Tables at Rome. See [p. 131, n. 1](#).
48. Reading δοκέοντα with Schleiermacher (or δοκέοντ' ὄν with Diels). I also read γινώσκει, φυλάσσει with Diels, who quotes the combination φυλάσσουσι καὶ γινώσκουσι from Hippokrates.
49. On the meaning of δαίμων here, see my edition of Aristotle's *Ethics*, pp. 1 *sq.*
50. I have not ventured to include the words ἔνθα δ' ἔόντι at the beginning, as the text seems to me too uncertain. See, however, Diels's note.
51. See Diels, *Dox.* p. 145. We must distinguish Ref. i. and Ref. ix. as sources of information about Herakleitos. The latter book is an attempt to show that the Monarchian heresy of Noetos was derived from Herakleitos, and is a rich mine of Herakleitean fragments.
52. Arist. *Met.* A, 3. 984 a 7 (R.P. 56 c); Theophr. *ap. Simpl. Phys.* 23, 33 (R.P. 36 c).
53. For these double accounts see Note on Sources, [§ 15](#).
54. [Diog. ix. 15](#) (R.P. 30 c). Schleiermacher rightly insisted upon this.
55. The word συνοικειοῦν is used of the Stoic method of interpretation by Philodemos (cf. *Dox.* 547 b, *n.*), and Cicero (*N.D.* 1. 41) renders it by *accommodare*.
56. Philo, *Rer. div. her.* 43 (R.P. 34 e).
57. This was the mistake of Lassalle's book. The source of his error was Hegel's statement that there was no proposition of Herakleitos that he had not taken up into his own logic (*Gesch. d. Phil.* i. 328). The example which he cites is the statement that Being does not exist any more than not-Being, for which he refers to Arist. *Met.* A, 4. This, however, is not there ascribed to Herakleitos, but to Leukippos or Demokritos, with whom it meant that space was as real as body ([§ 175](#)). Aristotle does, indeed, tell us in the *Metaphysics* that "some" think Herakleitos says that the same thing can be and not be; but he adds that it does not follow that a man thinks what he says (*Met.* Γ, 3.1005 b 24). This is explained by B, 5. 1062 a 31, where we are told that by being questioned in a certain manner Herakleitos could be made to admit the principle of contradiction; as it was, he did not understand what he said. In other words, he was unconscious of its logical bearing.
58. That the Fire of Herakleitos was something on the same level as the "Air" of Anaximenes is clearly implied in such passages as Arist. *Met.* A, 3. 984 a 5. In support of the view that something different from literal fire is meant, Plato, *Crat.* 413 b, is sometimes quoted; but the context shows the passage will not bear this interpretation. Sokrates is discussing the derivation of δίκαιον from δαίμων, and certainly δίκη was a prominent Herakleitean conception, and a good deal that is here said may be the authentic doctrine of the school. He goes on to complain that when he asks what this is which "goes through" everything, he gets inconsistent answers. One says it is the sun. Another asks if there is no justice after sunset, and says it is simply fire. A third says it is not fire itself, but the heat which is in fire. A fourth identifies it with Mind. Now all we are entitled to infer from this is that different accounts were given in the Herakleitean school at a later date. The view that it was not fire itself, but Heat, which "passed through" all things, is related to the theory of Herakleitos as Hippo's Moisture is to the Water of Thales. It is quite likely, too, that some Herakleiteans attempted to fuse the system of Anaxagoras with their own, just as Diogenes of Apollonia tried to fuse it with that of Anaximenes. We shall see, indeed, that we still have a work in which this attempt is made ([p. 150, n. 2](#)).
59. Plato, *Theaet.* 152 e 1; *Crat.* 401 d 5, 402 a 8; Arist. *Top.* A, 11. 104 b 22 ; *De caelo*, Γ, 1. 298 b 30; *Phys.* Θ, 3. 253 b 2.
60. See above, Chap. I. [§ 29](#).
61. See, however, the remark of Diels (*Dox.* p. 165) quoted R.P. 36 c.
62. [Diog. ix. 8](#), σαφῶς δ' οὐθὲν ἐκτίθεται.
63. This was written in 1890. In his *Herakleitos von Ephesos* (1901) Diels takes it as I did, rendering *Glutwind*. Cf. Herod, vii. 42, and Lucretius vi. 424. Seneca (*Q.N.* ii. 56) calls it *igneus turbo*. The opinions of early philosophers on these phenomena are collected in Aetios iii. 3. The πρηστήρ of Anaximander (Chap. I. [p. 68, n. 2](#)) is a different thing. Greek sailors probably named the meteorological phenomena after the familiar bellows of the smith.

64. Aet. iii. 3. 9, πρηστήρας δὲ κατὰ νεφῶν ἐμπρήσεις καὶ σβέσεις (sc. Ἡράκλειτος ἀποφαίνεται γίνεσθαι).

65. Arist. *De an.* B, 2. 405 a 26, τὴν ἀναθυμίασιν ἐξ ἧς τὰλλα συνίστησιν.

66. The presence of Herakleitean matter in this treatise was pointed out by Gesner, but Bernays was the first to make any considerable use of it in reconstructing the system. The older literature of the subject has been in the main superseded by Carl Friedrichs' *Hippokratische Untersuchungen* (1899). He shows that (as I said already in the first edition) the work belongs to the period of eclecticism and reaction briefly characterised in § 184, and he points out that c 3, which was formerly supposed to be mainly Herakleitean, is strongly influenced by Empedokles and Anaxagoras. I think, however, that he goes wrong in attributing the section to a nameless "Physiker" of the school of Archelaos, or even to Archelaos himself; it is far more like what we should expect from the eclectic Herakleiteans described by Plato in *Crat.* 413 c (see p. 145, n. 1). He is certainly wrong in holding the doctrine of the balance of fire and water not to be Herakleitean, and there is no justification for separating the remark quoted in the text from its context because it happens to agree almost verbally with the beginning of c 3.

67. Περὶ διαίτης, i. 5. I read thus: ἡμέρη καὶ εὐφρόνη ἐπὶ τὸ μῆκιστον καὶ ἐλάχιστον ἥλιος, σελήνη ἐπὶ τὸ μῆκιστον καὶ ἐλάχιστον πῦρὸς ἔφοδος καὶ ὕδατος. In any case, the sentence occurs between χωρεῖ δὲ πάντα καὶ θεῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπινα ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἀμειβόμενα and πάντα ταῦτα καὶ οὐ τὰ αὐτά which are surely Herakleitean utterances.

68. Arist. *De an.* A, 2. 405 a 25 (R.P. 38). Diels attributes to Herakleitos himself the words καὶ ψυχαὶ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ὑγρῶν ἀναθυμῶνται, which are found in Areios Didymos after fr. 42. I can hardly believe, however, that the word ἀναθυμίασις is Herakleitean. He seems rather to have called the two exhalations καπνός and ἀήρ (cf. fr. 37).

69. Περὶ διαίτης i. 5, χωρεῖ δὲ πάντα καὶ θεῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπινα ἄνω καὶ κάτω ἀμειβόμενα.

70. We seem to have a reference to this in Epicharmos, fr. 2, Diels (170 b, Kaibel): "Look now at men too. One grows and another passes away, and all are in change always. What changes in its substance (κατὰ φύσιν) and never abides in the same spot, will already be something different from what has passed away. So thou and I were different yesterday, and are now quite other people, and again we shall become others and even the same again, and so on in the same way." This is said by a debtor who does not wish to pay.

71. Sextus quotes "Ainesidemos according to Herakleitos." Natorp holds (*Forschungen*, p. 78) that Ainesidemos really did combine Herakleiteanism with Skepticism. Diels (*Dox.* pp. 210, 211), insists that he only gave an account of the theories of Herakleitos. This controversy does not affect the use we make of the passage.

72. Τὸ περιέχον ἡμᾶς, opposed to but parallel with τὸ περιέχον τὸν κόσμον.

73. The word is used for its paradoxical effect. Strictly speaking, they are all mortal from one point of view and immortal from another.

74. Those who fall in battle apparently share the same lot (fr. 102). Rohde, *Psyche* (II. pp. 148 *sqq.*), refused to admit that Herakleitos believed the soul survived death. Strictly speaking, it is no doubt an inconsistency; but I believe, with Zeller and Diels, that it is one of a kind we may well admit. The first argument which Plato uses to establish the doctrine of immortality in the *Phaedo* is just the Herakleitean parallelism of life and death with sleeping and waking.

75. These fragments are quoted by Plotinos, Iamblichos, and Noumenios in this connexion (R.P. 46 c), and it does not seem possible to hold, with Rohde, that they had no grounds for so interpreting them. They knew the context and we do not.

76. Plut. *Def. orac.* 415 d, ἔτη τριάκοντα ποιοῦσι τὴν γενεάν καθ' Ἡράκλειτον, ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ γεννῶντα παρέχει τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένον ὁ γεννήσας Philo, fr. Harris, p. 20, δυνατὸν ἐν τριακοσιῶ ἔτει αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπον πάμπαν γενέσθαι κτλ. Censorinus, *De die nat.* 17. 2, "hoc enim tempus (triaginta annos) *genean* vocari Herakleitos auctor est, quia *orbis aetatis* in eo sit spatio: orbem autem vocat aetatis, dum natura ab sementi humana ad sementim revertitur." The words *orbis aetatis* seem to mean αἰῶνος κύκλος, "the circle of life." If so, we may compare the Orphic κύκλος γενέσεως.

77. [Diog. ix. 9](#) (R.P. 39 b).

78. Cf. Cic. *N.D.* iii. 37: "Quid enim? non eisdem vobis placet omnem ignem pastus indigere nec permanere ullo modo posse, nisi alitur: ali autem solem, lunam, reliqua astra aquis, alia dulcibus (from the earth), alia marinis? eamque causam Cleanthes (fr. 29 Pearson; I. 501 v. Arnim) adfert cur se sol referat nec longius progrediatur solstitiali orbi itemque brumali, ne longius discedat a cibo."

79. For the Greek text see below, p. 162, n. 3. Friedrichs allows that it is from the same source as that quoted above (p. 151, n. 1), and, as that comes from Περὶ διαίτης, i. 3, he denies the Herakleitean origin of this passage too. He has not taken account of the fact that it

gives the Stoic doctrine, which raises a presumption in favour of its being Herakleitean. If I could agree with Friedrichs' theory, I should still say that the present passage was a Herakleitean interpolation in the *Physiker* rather than that the other was an interpolation from the *Physiker* in the Herakleitean section. See [p. 150, n. 2](#).

80. Aet. ii. 32. 3. Ἡράκλειτος ἐκ μυρίων ὀκτακισχλίων ἐνιαυτῶν ἡλιακῶν (τὸν μέγαν ἐνιαυτὸν εἶναι) Censorinus, *De die Nat.* ii, Herakleitos et Linus, XDCCC.

81. For the Stoic doctrine, cf. Nemesios, *De Nat. hom.* 38 (R.P. 503). Adam (*Republic*, vol. ii. p. 303) allowed that no destruction of the world or conflagration marked the end of Plato's year, but he declined to draw what seems to me the natural inference that the connexion between the two things belongs to a later age, and should not, therefore, be ascribed to Herakleitos in the absence of any evidence that he did so connect them.

82. This is certainly the general sense of the parallelism between the periods of the ἀνθρώπειον and the θεῖον γεννητον, however we may understand the details. See Adam, *Republic*, vol. ii. pp. 288 sqq.

83. Arist. *De caelo*, A, 10. 279 b 14, οἱ δ' ἐναλλάξ ὅτε μὲν οὕτως ὅτε δὲ ἄλλως ἔχειν φθειρόμενον, . . . ὥσπερ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ὁ Ἀκραγαντῖνος καὶ Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Ἐφέσιος Aristotle points out that this really amounts only to saying that it is eternal and changes its form, ὥσπερ εἴ τις ἐκ παιδὸς ἄνδρα γιγνόμενον καὶ ἐξ ἀνδρὸς παῖδα ὅτε μὲν φθείρεσθαι ὅτε δ' εἶναι οἶοιτο. (280 a 14). The point of the reference to Empedokles will appear from *De Gen. Corr.* B, 6. 334 a 1 sqq. What Aristotle finds fault with in both theories is that they do not regard the substance of the heavens as something outside the upward and downward motion of the elements.

84. Cf. Tannery, *Science hellène*, p. 168. Diels, accordingly, now reads μυρίων ὀκτακοσίων in Aetios (*Vors.* 12 A 13).

85. Schleiermacher and Lassalle are notable exceptions. Zeller, Diels, and Gomperz are all positive that Herakleitos believed in the ἐκπύρωσις.

86. In his fifth edition (p. 699) Zeller seems to have felt this last difficulty; for he said there: "It is a contradiction which he, and which probably Plato too (und den wahrscheinlich auch Plato) has not observed." This seems to me still less arguable. Plato may or may not be mistaken; but he makes the perfectly definite statement that Herakleitos says αἰεί, while Empedokles says ἐν μέρει. The Ionian Muses are called συντονώτεραι and the Sicilian μαλακώτεραι just because the latter "lowered the pitch" (ἐχάλασαν) of the doctrine that this is always so (τὸ αἰεὶ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχειν).

87. See above, [p. 158, n. 1](#).

88. *Phys.* Γ, 205 a 3 (*Met.* K, 10. 1067 a 4), ὥσπερ Ἡράκλειτός φησιν ἅπαντα γίνεσθαι ποτε πῦρ. Zeller translates this *es werde alles dereinst zu Feuer werden*; but that would require γενήσεσθαι. Nor is there anything in his suggestion that ἅπαντα ("not merely πάντα") implies that all things become fire at once. In Aristotle's day, there was no distinction of meaning between πᾶς and ἅπας. Of course, as Diels says, the present tense might be used of a "constant alternation of epochs" (*Vors.* 12 A 10 n.); but for the purpose of Zeller's argument, we want something which not only *may* but *must* mean that.

89. Marcus Aurelius, x. 7, ὥστε καὶ ταῦτα ἀναληφθῆναι εἰς τὸν τοῦ ὄλου λόγον, εἴτε κατὰ περίοδον ἐκπυροῦμένον, εἴτε ἀιδίους ἀμοιβαῖς ἀνανεουμένον. The ἀμοιβαῖ are specifically Herakleitean, and the statement is the more remarkable as Marcus elsewhere follows the usual Stoic interpretation.

90. Plut. *De def. orac.* 415 f., καὶ ὁ Κλεόμβροτος, Ἀκούω ταῦτ' ἔφη, πολλῶν καὶ ὀρῶ τὴν Στωικὴν ἐκπύρωσιν, ὥσπερ τὰ Ἡρακλείτου καὶ Ὀρφέως ἐπινεμομένην ἔπη οὕτω καὶ τὰ Ἡσιόδου καὶ συνεξάπτουσαν. As Zeller admits (p. 693 n.), this proves that some opponents of the Stoic ἐκπύρωσις tried to withdraw the support of Herakleitos from it.

91. This has been called a mere *argumentum ex silentio*; but, in such cases, the *argumentum ex silentio* is stronger than any other. Positive statements may be misinterpreted; but, when we know that a subject was keenly debated, and when we find that neither party can produce an unambiguous text in support of its view, the conclusion that none such existed becomes irresistible. The same remark applies to modern pronouncements on the subject. Diels briefly says that my view "is wrong" (*ist irrig*), but he does not adduce any fresh reason for saying so. The conclusion is that he knows of none.

92. Περί διαίτης i.3 ἐν μέρει δὲ ἑκάτερον κρατεῖ καὶ κρατεῖται ἐς τὸ μήκιστον καὶ ἐλάχιστον ὡς ἀνυστόν.

93. If any one doubts that this is really the meaning of the "measures," let him compare the use of the word by Diogenes of Apollonia, [fr. 3](#).

94. This is just the argument which Plato uses in the *Phaedo* (72 c) to prove the necessity of ἀνταπόδοσις, and the whole series of arguments in that passage is distinctly Herakleitean in character.

95. However we understand κόσμος here, the meaning is the same. Indeed, if we suppose with Bernays that it means "order," the argument will be all the stronger. In no sense of the word could a κόσμος survive the ἐκπύρωσις, and the Stoics accordingly said the κόσμος was φθαρτός, though Herakleitos had declared it to be everlasting.

96. Περὶ διαίτης, i. 3 (see above, p. 150, n. 2), οὐδέτερον γὰρ κρατήσαι παντελῶς δύναται διὰ τὰδε· τό <τε> πῦρ ἐπεξίον ἐπὶ τὸ ἔσχατον τοῦ ὕδατος ἐπιλείπει ἢ τροφή· ἀποτρέπεται οὖν ὅθεν μέλλει τρέφεσθαι· τὸ ὕδωρ τε ἐπεξίον τοῦ πυρός ἐπὶ τὸ ἔσχατον, ἐπιλείπει ἢ κίνησις· ἴσεται οὖν ἐν τούτῳ, ὅταν δὲ στηῖ, οὐκέτι ἐγκρατές ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἤδη τῷ ἐμπίπτοντι πυρὶ ἐς τὴν τροφήν καταναλίσκεται· οὐδέτερον δὲ διὰ ταῦτα δύναται κρατήσαι παντελῶς, εἰ δέ ποτε κρατηθεῖ καὶ ὀπότερον, οὐδὲν ἂν εἴη τῶν νῦν ἐόντων ὥσπερ ἔχει νῦν· οὕτω δὲ ἐχόντων αἰεὶ ἔσται τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ οὐδέτερον οὐδαμὰ ἐπιλείψει.

97. In his note on fr. 66 (= 26 Byw.) Diels seeks to minimise the difficulty of the ἐκπύρωσις by saying that it is only a little one, and can last but a moment; but the contradiction remains. Diels holds that Herakleitos was "dark only in form," and that "he himself was perfectly clear as to the sense and scope of his ideas" (*Herakleitos*, p. i.). To which I would add that he was probably called "the Dark" just because the Stoics sometimes found it hard to read their own ideas into his words.

98. Campbell's *Theaetetus* (2nd ed.), p. 244. Bernays explained the phrase as referring to the *shape* of the bow and lyre, but this is much less likely. Wilamowitz's interpretation is based on Campbell's. "Es ist mit der Welt wie mit dem Bogen, den man auseinanderzieht, damit er zusammenschneilt, wie mit der Saite, die man ihrer Spannung entgegenziehen muss, damit sie klingt" (*Lesebuch*, ii. p. 129). Here we seem to feel the influence of the Pythagorean "tuned string."

99. The sentence (Περὶ διαίτης, i. 5), καὶ τὰ μὲν πρήσσουσιν οὐκ οἶδασιν, ἃ δὲ οὐ πρήσσουσι δοκέουσιν εἰδέναι· καὶ τὰ μὲν ὀρέουσιν οὐ γινώσκουσιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως αὐτοῖσι πάντα γίνεται . . . καὶ ἃ βούλονται καὶ ἃ μὴ βούλονται, has the true Herakleitean ring. This, too, can hardly have had another author: "They trust to their eyes rather than to their understanding, though their eyes are not fit to judge even of the things that are seen. But I speak these things from understanding." These words are grotesque in the mouth of the medical compiler; but we are accustomed to hear such things from the Ephesian. Other examples which may be Herakleitean are the image of the two men sawing wood—"one pushes, the other pulls"—and the illustration from the art of writing.

100. Chap. I. § 16.

101. Plato's exposition of the relativity of knowledge in the *Theaetetus* (152 d *sqq.*) can hardly go back to Herakleitos himself, but is meant to show how Herakleiteanism might give rise to such a doctrine. If the soul is a stream and things are a stream, then of course knowledge is relative. Perhaps the later Herakleiteans had worked out the theory in this direction.