

NOTE V.

ΣΩ. Τω οὐκ εἶδοτι ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἶδη ἐνεισὶν ἀληθεὶς δοῖναι περὶ τούτων ὧν οὐκ οἶδεν. ΜΕΝ. Φαίνεται . . . ΣΩ. Ἐὶ οὖν ὅν ἂν ἡ χρόνον καὶ ὅν ἂν μὴ ἡ ἀνθρώπος ἐνεσονται αὐτῷ ἀληθεὶς δοῖναι, αἱ ἐρωτησεὶ ἐπεγερθεῖσαι ἐπιστημαὶ γίνονται, ἀρ' οὖν τὸν αἰ χρόνον μεμαθηκυῖα ἔσται ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ.— (*Meno*, §§ 20, 21. Bekker).

This passage, which Stallbaum condemns as irreconcilable with the immediately preceding part of the dialogue, and as vicious in its logic, is not, in my judgment, open to either of these objections. Rightly interpreted, it is both in harmony with the rest of the dialogue, and (I say nothing of the principles which Plato assumes) unexceptionable in its logical form. The point sought to be established, is, that there never was a time, in this life or before it, when the human soul had not in it true opinions, in a latent or undeveloped state—a view involving the existence of the soul throughout at least all past time; and the several steps of the argument on which this conclusion is made to rest are as follows :

- a. Learning (ὁ δὲ μαθησὶν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι) is reminiscence, that is, the recovery, from within the depths of one's own soul, of knowledge formerly possessed. This is supposed to be proved by an experiment performed by Socrates on one of Meno's attendants; from which it appeared that there were in the boy's mind true opinions regarding things of which he had no knowledge (τῷ οὐκ εἶδοτι ἄρα περὶ ὧν ἂν μὴ εἶδη ἐνεισὶν ἀληθεὶς δοῖναι), and that the process of learning was merely the development of these latent true opinions into knowledge (καὶ νῦν μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ ὥς περὶ ὄναρ ἀρτί ἀνακεκνηται αἱ δοῖναι αὐταί).
- b. In a case like that of Meno's attendant, awaking, under the interrogations of Socrates, to a knowledge of truths of which he had all his life before been ignorant, the knowledge acquired, as it was not always possessed (οὐκ οὖν εἰ ἔναι αἰ εἶχεν, αἰ καὶ ἦν ἐπιστημῶν), and as it is seen to be not an absolutely new acquisition, but merely the development of what has been lying dormant in the mind, must have been received at some former time (Ἀρ' οὖν ὅν τὴν ἐπιστημὴν, ἣν νῦν οὗτος ἔχει, ἦτοι ἔλαβε ποτὲ ἡ αἰ εἶχεν; ναι). Since, by hypothesis, it was not received at any previous time in the