

(δ). Then, in the case supposed, the production would not take place from a principle (*οὐκ ἂν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γιγνοίτο*), inasmuch as, if it did, there would be two principles, the one produced from the other—a view, the absurdity of which is to Plato too apparent to require to be expressly set forth.

(ε). But the conclusion (δ) is contradictory of the Premiss (β); and therefore the hypothesis (γ) is untenable. In other words, the Proposition sought to be proved is established.

While the unamended text thus yields an intelligible and (from the Platonic point of view) conclusive argument, the readings suggested by Muretus (*a*), Buttman (*b*), and Ast (*c*), reduce the import of the reasoning contained in the clause, *ἐν γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ἀρχῆς γιγνοίτο κ. τ. λ.*, to this: *a principle is unproduced, for if it were not, it would not be a principle*; where it is plain that no real advancement in the demonstration is made. Why (the reader asks) is it impossible for that which is produced to be a principle? The only conceivable answer is, that, if what is produced were a principle, there would be two principles, the one produced from the other. Now this is exactly what the unamended text expresses; so that the emendations suggested by the eminent scholars named, reject from the text an idea which Plato must be understood to have had in his mind. But more, in the passage as amended, the clause *ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀνάγκη παντὸς γιγνομένου γιγνεσθαι*, which we cannot suppose Plato to have introduced without a purpose, serves absolutely no purpose whatsoever.

According to Schleiermacher's amendment (*d*), *τοῦτο* refers to the preceding *ἐκ τοῦ*. The argument then is: *if a principle (which we may call P), is produced from anything (as from x), it will follow that this x (τοῦ) is not produced from a principle*. This view appears the most unsatisfactory of all. Besides being open to other objections, it attributes to Plato irrelevant reasoning—which we are not gratuitously to do. For, though *x* were not produced from a principle, what then? Let it be conceived that *x* is not produced at all. This does not (at least, directly) warrant the inference that *P* is unproduced.