

Plato's Timaeus vs. On Nature, Book 14

Post by "Bryan" of January 29, 2025 at 2:01 PM

I wanted to highlight this section:

"God began by first marking them out into shapes by means of forms and numbers. And that God constructed them, so far as He could, to be as fair and good as possible, whereas they had been otherwise,—this above all else must always be postulated in our account. Now, however, it is the disposition and origin [53c] of each of these Kinds which I must endeavor to explain to you in an exposition of an unusual type; yet, inasmuch as you have some acquaintance with the technical method which I must necessarily employ in my exposition, you will follow me.

[53c fin.] In the first place, then, it is plain I presume to everyone that fire and earth and water and air are solid bodies; and the form of a body, in every case, possesses depth also. Further, it is absolutely necessary that depth should be bounded by a plane surface; and the rectilinear plane is composed of triangles. [53d] Now all triangles derive their origin from two triangles, each having one angle right and the others acute; and the one of these triangles has on each side half a right angle marked off by equal sides, while the other has the right angle divided into unequal parts by unequal sides. These we lay down as the principles of fire and all the other bodies, proceeding according to a method in which the probable is combined with the necessary; but the principles which are still higher than these are known only to God and the man who is dear to God."