

then it would antecedently have been possible to be made; but without motion the possibility-of-being-made is not actually made [to be anything]. Hence, he concludes that neither motion nor time has been made.⁶⁹ If he had noted that prior to the possibility-of-being-made there is actually that which is eternal, he would not have denied that the possibility-of-being-made was originated from that which precedes it. For successiveness—which is present in the case of motion, the measure of which motion is time—indicates, in and of itself,⁷⁰ that time and motion and things that are moved are not eternal. Since eternity is actually and all-at-once that which (it) is possible to be, it precedes successiveness. For successiveness falls short of the eternal. Therefore, Plato, seeing more clearly [than Aristotle], rightly said that time is the image of the eternal.⁷¹ For time imitates the eternal and is subsequent to the possibility-of-being-made.⁷² For how could there be successiveness unless successiveness were possible to be made?

Anaxagoras posited the beginnings of things and an end of time. For when he was asked whether the ocean would ever be present where the Lampsacian mountains were, he replied: “Yes, indeed, unless time runs out.”⁷³ Therefore, he believed that time would some day reach an endpoint; so too did the Stoics, who affirmed that the world is corruptible and who agreed more closely with the truth revealed to us by faith.

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CHAPTER TEN

The ways in which the wise
have named the possibility-of-being-made.

Thales the Milesian likened water to the possibility-of-being-made. [He did so] when he saw that air is made from moist-vapor and that fire is made from a fineness of moist-vapor and that earth is made from a thickness of water and that all living things are nourished from—and, hence, made from—water. For living things are nourished from the things by means of which they live. But the fact that water is not the possibility-of-the-world’s-being-made or the possibility-of-all-things’-being-made (even though in water the possibility-of-all-things-being-made shines forth a great deal) is evident from the following [consideration]: God, as Thales rightly says, is the Most Ancient One.⁷⁴ Therefore, He precedes everything made or created. Therefore, since water is subsequent to God, it is made. Therefore, the possibility-of-being-made precedes water.