

My notes - Tsouna's Prolepsis Essay

Post by "Hiram" of April 4, 2017 at 3:43 PM

LETTER OF EPICURUS TO HERODOTUS

37-38

[37] [G](#) This method being useful even to those who are already familiarised with the laws of the universe, I recommend them, while still pursuing without intermission the study of nature, which contributes more than anything else to the tranquillity and happiness of life, to make a concise statement, or summary of their opinions.

First of all then [Herodotus](#), one must determine with exactness the notion comprehended under each separate word, in order to be able to refer to it, as to a certain criterion, the conceptions which emanate from ourselves, the ulterior researches and the difficulties; otherwise the judgment has no foundation. One goes on from demonstration to demonstration *ad infinitum*; or else one gains nothing beyond mere words. [38] [G](#) In fact, it is absolutely necessary that we should perceive directly, and without the assistance of any demonstration, the fundamental notion which every word expresses, if we wish to have any foundation to which we may refer our researches, our difficulties, and our personal judgments, whatever in other respects may be the criterion which we adopt, whether we take as our standard the impressions produced on our senses, or the actual impression in general; or whether we cling to the idea by itself, or to any other criterion.

We must also note carefully the impressions which we receive in the presence of objects, in order to bring ourselves back to that point in the circumstances in which it is necessary to suspend the judgment, or even when the question is about things, the evidence of which is not immediately perceived.

When these foundations are once laid we may pass to the study of those things, about which the evidence is not immediate. And, first of all, we must admit that nothing can come of that which does not exist; for, were the fact otherwise, then everything would be produced from everything, and there would be no need of any seed