

Epicureanism and Scientism: What are the main differences?

Post by "Cassius" of July 24, 2024 at 12:22 PM

It seems to me that it would be tempting for opponents of Epicurus to say: "He never seems to be weighing evidence and discussing probabilities at all. He is always going straight from 0% certainty to 100% certainty, with nothing but "maybes" in between. And therefore we can discard Epicurus because no one with any sense would do away with the concept of probabilities."

But I don't think that would be a fair reading of Epicurus to reach that conclusion. Is it even possible to imagine that in his life or teaching Epicurus did not admit that "some things are more probable than others?"

It would be good to go through the texts and see what arguments can be raised based on specific examples, but I can't imagine that in his intention to refute the skeptics who said that "nothing is knowable" he would have erased any distinction between "the more and less probable."

I see that Bailey references "probable" in that quote from Pythocles:

Quote

Now all goes on without disturbance as far as regards each of those things which may be explained in several ways so as to harmonize with what we perceive, when one admits, as we are bound to do, *probable* theories about them.