

Epicurus, gods and God

Post by "Cassius" of October 15, 2019 at 1:26 PM

My commentary on how the canon would apply would include this:

Quote

24. If you reject absolutely any single sensation without stopping to distinguish between opinion about things awaiting confirmation and that which is already confirmed to be present, whether in sensation or in feelings or in any application of intellect to the presentations, you will confuse the rest of your sensations by your groundless opinion and so you will reject every standard of truth. If in your ideas based upon opinion you hastily affirm as true all that awaits confirmation as well as that which does not, you will not avoid error, as you will be maintaining the entire basis for doubt in every judgment between correct and incorrect opinion.

At the very "worst" I would say that the Epicurean theory of the existence of extraterrestrial gods "awaits" confirmation. But as far as I can tell the Epicureans stated their observational arguments on which they expected eventual confirmation, (boundless eternal universe, isonomia, nature never creates a single thing of a kind, anticipations) so my personal view is that it is clear error under the Epicurean canon to rule out the theory, since the argument against it (based on my understanding of what Hiram and some others argue) seems to be based solely on "we haven't seen any yet."

We didn't see atoms for thousands of years either, but it was the wrong bet to dismiss the theory of atomism, and the smart bet to accept the existence of atoms, even before a single man ever "saw" one through advanced technology.

In fact, much of the first book and other parts of Lucretius are devoted to arguing exactly that - the reasonableness of accepting an argument as to the existence of something for which there is no visible evidence, and no way of proof other than deduction.