# Diogenes Laertius' Biography of Epicurus

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Diogenes Laertius' Book Ten - his biography of Epicurus - is the primary source of information about Epicurus remaining to us from the ancient world. The version on this page is that of Cyril Bailey as prepared forhis 1926 work "Epicurus - The Extant Remains." The text here was prepared from a PDF of the original which can be found at Archive.org here. The original PDF contains the full Greek, footnotes, and commentary. Approximate line numbers matching the Bailey edition are placed in brackets such as [20]. Placement of these numbers should not be considered to be exact, and should be used primarily as an aid in looking up the same section in other translations. Headings are not a part of the original text. The Perseus Greek edition, from which individual words can be looked up for English definitions, is here.

NOTE:

A PDF prepared by Tau Phi with three parallel public domain translations of this and the other letters of Epicurus is here. As of this writing 4/7/25, a work-in-progress of a side-by-side page is here, but the text and especially the line numbers are not yet reliable.

## 1. Introduction

[01] EPICURUS, son of Neocles and Chaerestrata, was an Athenian of the deme of Gargettus, and the family of the Philaidae, as Metrodorus says in his work on Nobility of Birth. Heraclides in his epitome of Sotion and others say that the Athenians having colonized Samos, Epicurus was brought up there. In his eighteenth year, as they say, he came to Athens, when Xenocrates was at the Academy and Aristotle was living in Chalcis. After the death of Alexander of Macedon, when the Athenians were driven out of Samos by Perdiccas, he went to join his father in Colophon.

[02] Having stayed there some time and gathered disciples he returned again to Athens in the archonship of Anaxicrates. For a while he joined with others in the study of philosophy, but later taught independently, when he had founded the school called after him. He tells us himself that he first made acquaintance with philosophy at the age of fourteen. Apollodorus the Epicurean in the first book of his Life of Epicurus says that he took to philosophy because he despised the teachers of literature, since they were not able to explain to him the passage about Chaos in Hesiod. Hermippus says that Epicurus was at one time a schoolmaster and then after he met with the writings of Democritus, he took eagerly to philosophy.

[03] And this is why Timon says about him: *Last and most shameless of the scientists, infant school teacher from Samos, the most stubborn of all living beings.* His three brothers, Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus, joined him in studying philosophy at his suggestion, according to Philodemus the Epicurean in the tenth book of his *Comparison of Philosophies*. Also a slave called Mys, as Muronianus says in his chapters on historical coincidences.

[04] Diotimus the Stoic, who is ill-disposed to Epicurus, has calumniated him most bitterly by producing fifty lewd letters as Epicurus' work; so has the writer who has assigned to Epicurus the collection of 'billets-doux' which were attributed to Chrysippus, and also Posidonius the Stoic and his followers, as well as Nicolaus and Sotion in the twelve books of the 'Arguments of Diocles' which are named after the Epicurean celebration of The Twentieth; also Dionysius of Halicarnassus. For they say that he used to go round from house to house with his mother reading out the purification prayers, and assisted his father in elementary teaching for a miserable pittance. They add that one of his brothers prostituted himself and kept company with Leontion, the hetaera. Also that he took Democritus' atomic theory and Aristippus' theory of pleasure and taught them as his own. Further, that he was not an Athenian born, as Timocrates says, and Herodotus too in his book *The Youth of Epicurus*. He is also said to have used degrading flattery towards Mithres, the steward of Lysimachus, calling him in his letters both 'Saviour' and 'My lord.'

[05] Idomeneus too and Herodotus and Timo crates, who divulged his secrets, he is said to have praised and flattered all the same. And in his letters he wrote to Leontion, 'Lord and Saviour, my dearest Leontion, what a hurrahing you drew from us, as we read aloud your dear letter,' and to Themista, Leonteus' wife, "If you two don't come to me, I am capable of arriving with a hop, skip and jump, wherever you and Themista summon me.' And to Pythocles, who was young and beautiful, he writes, 'I will sit down and wait for your lovely and godlike appearance.' And again in writing to Themista he calls her (by a most flattering name), as Theodorus says in the fourth book of his attack on Epicurus.

[06] They say that he wrote to many other women of pleasure and particularly to Leontion, with whom Metrodorus was also in love; and that in the treatise *On the End of Life* he wrote, 'I know not how I can conceive the good, if I withdraw the pleasures of taste and withdraw the pleasures of love and those of hearing and sight.' Again in the letter to Pythocles they say he wrote 'Blest youth, set sail in your bark and flee from every form of culture.' Epictetus moreover calls him a filthy talker and abuses him roundly. And even Timocrates, who was the brother of Metrodorus and a disciple of Epicurus, after he had abandoned the school, wrote in a book with the title *Pleasant Things* that Epicurus used to vomit twice a day owing to his luxurious living, and that he himself was scarcely able to escape from his philosophical disquisitions during the night and from the community of the initiates.

[07] He adds that Epicurus was profoundly ignorant of philosophy, and still more so of practical life, that his body was miserably weak, so that for many years he was unable to rise from his portable couch. Further, that he spent no less than a mina a day on his food, as Epicurus writes himself in the letter to Leontion and in the letters to the philosophers in Mytilene. Moreover, there were other women who lived with him and Metrodorus, named Mammarion and Hedeia and Erotion and Nicidion. He adds that in the thirty-seven books *On Nature* he repeats himself for the most part and attacks many other philosophers in them, but Nausiphanes most of all, saying in his own words, 'Away with them all, for Nausiphanes, like many another slave, was in travail with that wordy braggart, sophistic.'

[08] He says that Epicurus himself in his letters about Nausiphanes said, 'This drove him to such a state of fury that he abused me and ironically called me "Master."' He used to call Nausiphanes 'The mollusk,' 'The illiterate,' 'The cheat,' 'The harlot.' The followers of Plato he called 'Flatterers of Dionysus,' and Plato himself 'The golden man,' and Aristotle 'The debauchee,' saying that he devoured his inheritance and then enlisted and sold drugs. Protagoras he called 'Porter' or 'Copier of Democritus,' saying that he taught in the village schools. Heraclitus he called 'The Muddler,' Democritus [he called] Lerocritus ('judge of nonsense'), Antidorus he called Sannidorus ('Maniac'), the Cynics [he called] 'Enemies of Hellas,' the Logicians [he called] 'The destroyers,' and Pyrrho [he called] 'The uneducated fool.'

[09] But these calumniators are all mad. For Epicurus has witnesses enough and to spare to his unsurpassed kindness to all men. There is his country which honoured him with bronze statues, his friends so numerous that they could not even be reckoned by entire cities, and his disciples who all remained bound forever by the charm of his teaching, except Metrodorus, son of Stratoniceus, who went over to Carneades, overweighted perhaps by Epicurus' excessive goodness. There is also the permanent continuance of the school after almost all the others had come to an end, and that though it had a countless succession of heads from among the disciples.

[10] There is again his grateful devotion to his parents, his generosity to his brothers, and his gentleness towards his servants, of whom the most notable was Mys, already mentioned, as is proved by his will and the part they took in his philosophical discussions. In short, there is his benevolence to all.

Of his reverence towards the gods and his love of his country it would be impossible to speak adequately. But from excess of modesty he would not take any part in politics. Yet although Greece was at that time in great straits, he continued to live there, and only once or twice made a voyage to Ionia and the neighborhood to see his friends. But they came to him from all quarters, and took up their abode with him in the garden, as Apollodorus says [who adds that he bought it for eighty minae. Diocles in the third book of his *Course in Philosophy* confirms this], living a most frugal and simple life.

[11] Indeed, he says, they were satisfied with half a pint of wine, and for the most part drank water. He adds that Epicurus did not recommend them to put their belongings into a common stock, as did Pythagoras, who said that 'Friends have all in common.' For to do so implied distrust: and distrust could not go with friendship. Epicurus himself says in his letters that he was content with nothing but water and a bit of bread.

'Send me,' he says, 'some preserved cheese, that when I like I may have a feast.' Such was the man who taught that the end is pleasure. Athenaeus sings his praise in an epigram:

[12] *Men toil at mean pursuits, for love of gain,*

*Insatiate they welcome war and strife;*

*Their idle fancies lead on endless paths,*

*But nature's wealth is set in narrow bounds.*

*This truth the prudent son of Neocles*

*Learnt from the Muses or Apollo's shrine.*

The truth of this we shall know better as we go on from his own words and teaching. Diocles says that of the earlier philosophers he showed most sympathy with Anaxagoras, though on certain points he opposed him, and with Arclielaus, the master of Socrates. And, he adds, he used to practice his disciples in getting his writings by heart.

[13] Apollodorus in his *Chronicles* asserts that he listened to the teaching of Nausiphanes and Praxiphanes. Epicurus himself denies this in his letter to Eurylochus, and says he was his own teacher. And indeed both Epicurus and Hermarchus deny that there ever was such a philosopher as Leucippus, whom Apollodorus the Epicurean and others say was the master of Democritus. Demetrius of Magnesia says that he was also a follower of Xenocrates.

He uses current diction to expound his theory, but Aristophanes the grammarian censures it as being too peculiar.

[14] But he was clear in expression, Just as in his book *On Rhetoric* he insists on clearness above everything. In his letters he used to say 'Prosper' or 'Live well,' instead of the conventional introduction 'Be happy.' Ariston in his *Life of Epicurus* says that he borrowed *The Canon* from the *Tripod* of Nausiphanes,

whose pupil he says he was, as well as being a disciple of Pamphilus the Platonist in Samos. He states that Epicurus began philosophy at the age of twelve, and was at the head of his School at thirty-two. He was born, says Apollodorus in the *Chronicles*, in the third year of the 109th Olympiad in the archonship of Sosigenes on the seventh day of the month Gamelion, seven years after the death of Plato.

[15] When he was thirty-two he started his school, first for five years at Mitylene and Lampsacus, and then he migrated to Athens. There he died in the second year of the 127th Olympiad in the archonship of Pytharatus, at the age of seventy-two. Hermarchus of Mitylene, son of Agemortus, succeeded to the headship of the school. Epicurus died of a stone in the bladder, as Hermarchus also says in his letters, after an illness of fourteen days. Hermippus tells us that as he was dying he got into a bronze bath filled with hot water, and asked for a cup of unmixed wine, which he gulped down.

[16] Then, having adjured his friends to remember his teaching, he expired. I have composed the following epigram on him:

*'Farewell, remember my sayings.' Thus spake at his death Epicurus,*

*These the last words as he died spake he aloud to his friends.*

*Then in a hot bath he laid him, a goblet of wine he demanded,*

*Quaffed it, and soon the cold air quaffed he of Hades below.'*

Such was Epicurus' life and such his death.

His will was as follows:

## 2. The Will of Epicurus

[17] I hereby leave all my possessions to Amynomachus, son of Philocrates, of the deme of Bate, and Timocrates, son of Demetrius, of the deme of Potamos, according to the form of gift to each registered in the Metroum, on condition that they make over the garden and all that goes with it to Hermarchus, son of Ageniortus, of Mitylene, and to those who study philosophy with him and to those whom Hermarchus may leave as his successors in the school, for them to live there in the pursuit of philosophy. And to those who hereafter follow my philosophy I assign the right to live in the garden, that they may assist Amynomachus and Timocrates to maintain it to the best of their power, and to their heirs, in whatever way may give the securest possession, that they too may preserve the garden, and after them those to whom the disciples of my school may hand it on.

The house in Melite, Amynomachus and Timocrates shall assign for a dwelling to Hermarchus and to those who study philosophy with him, as long as Hermarchus shall live.

[18] The income of the property left by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates shall be divided by them as far as possible, with the advice of Hermarchus, for the offerings in honor of my father and mother and brothers, and for the customary celebration of my birthday every year on the tenth of Gamelion, and likewise for the assembly of my disciples which takes place on the twentieth of each month, having been established in recollection of myself and Metrodorus. Let them also keep the day of my brothers in Poseideon and the day of Polyaenus in Metageitmon, as I have done myself.

[19] Amynomachus and Timocrates shall take care of Epicurus, the son of Metrodorus, and of the son of Polyaenus, provided they devote themselves to philosophy and live with Hermarchus. Likewise they shall take care of Metrodorus' daughter, and when she comes of age shall give her in marriage to one of his disciples whom Hermarchus shall choose, provided she is well-behaved and obedient to Hermarchus. Amynomachus and Timocrates shall set aside for the maintenance of these children such sum out of the revenues of my estate as shall seem good to them each year in consultation with Hermarchus.

[20] They shall give Hermarchus authority with themselves over the income, in order that everything may be done in consultation with the man who has grown old with me in the study of philosophy and has been left by me head of the school. The dowry for the girl, when she comes of age, shall be apportioned by Amynomachus and Timocrates, who shall take a suitable sum from the capital with the approval of Hermarchus. They shall also take care of Nicanor, as I have done, to show that those who have studied with me and have met my needs from their own resources and shown me every mark of friendship and elected to grow old with me in the study of philosophy, may not lack for anything that is necessary, as far as lies in my power.

[21] They are to give all the books that belong to me to Hermarchus. And if any mortal chance befall Hermarchus before Metrodorus' children come of age, Amynomachus and Timocrates shall as far as possible provide all that is necessary from the income of my estate, if the children are well-behaved. They shall carefully carry out all my other arrangements, so that each may be fulfilled as far as possible. Of my slaves I set free Mys, Nicias and Lycon, and I also set Phaedrium free.

## 3. The Letter to Idomeneus

[22] When he was on the point of death he wrote the following letter to Idomeneus: 'On this truly happy day of my life, as I am at the point of death, I write this to you. The disease in my bladder and stomach are pursuing their course, lacking nothing of their natural severity: but against all this is the joy in my heart at the recollection of my conversations with you. Do you, as I might expect from your devotion from boyhood to me and to philosophy, take good care of the children of Metrodorus.' Such then was his will.

## 4. The Followers of Epicurus

He had many disciples, but among the most distinguished was first Metrodorus, son of Athenaeus (or Timocrates) and Sande, of Lampsacus. From the time when he first came to know Epicurus he never left him, except when he went to his native city for six months, and then he came back.

[23] He was a good man in all respects, as Epicurus too bears witness in prologues to his writings and in the third book of his *Timocrates*. Such was his character: his sister Batis he married to Idomeneus, and had for his own mistress Leontion the Athenian hetaera. He was imperturbable in the face of trouble and of death, as Epicurus says in the first book of his *Metrodorus*. They say that he died at the age of fifty-two, seven years before Epicurus, and of this Epicurus gives evidence, since in the will already quoted he makes provision for the care of his children, implying that he had already died. He had also as a disciple Timocrates, Metrodorus' brother, who has been mentioned already, an aimless person.

## 5. Metrodorus' Writings

[24] Metrodorus' writings were as follows:

Three books *Against the Physicians. About Sensations. To Timocrates. Concerning Magnanimity. About Epicurus' Ill Health. Against the Logicians.* Nine books *Against the Sophists. Concerning the Path To Wisdom. Concerning Change. Concerning Wealth. Against Democritus. Concerning Nobility of Birth.*

There was also Polyaenus, son of Athenodorus, of Lampsacus, a modest and friendly man, as Philodemus and his followers say.

## 6. Hermarchus' Writings

[25] Also Hermarchus, Epicurus' successor, son of Agemortus, of Mytilene, the son of a poor father, and at first a student of rhetoric. His best books are said to be these twenty-two essays in the form of letters *On Empedocles*. *On Science*. *Against Plato*. *Against Aristotle*. He was a good man and died of paralysis.

## 7. Other Epicureans

Likewise there was Leontius of Lampsacus and his wife Themista, to whom Epicurus addressed one of his letters.

Also Colotes and Idomeneus, both of Lampsacus. They too were distinguished, as was also Polystratus who succeeded Hermarchus; then followed Dionysius and after him Basilides. Apollodorus the 'King of the Garden' was also famous, and wrote over four hundred volumes. There were also the two Ptolemies of Alexandria, the Black and the White, Zeno of Sidon, a pupil of Apollodorus, a prolific writer, Demetrius called the Laconian, Diogenes of Tarsus who wrote *Selected Lessons*, Orion, and others whom the genuine Epicureans call Sophists.

[26] There were three other Epicuruses, the son of Leonteus and Themista, another, who was a Magnesian, while the fourth was a drill-sergeant.

Epicurus was a very prolific writer, and exceeded all others in the bulk of his works, of which there are more than three hundred rolls. There is not in them one single citation from another author - it is all Epicurus' own words. Chrysippus tried to rival him in the amount of his writings, as Carneades tells us, calling him the parasite who fed on Epicurus' books.

[27] 'Whenever Epicurus wrote anything, Chrysippus felt bound in rivalry to write the equivalent; and this is why he often repeats himself and says whatever occurs to him, and has left a great deal uncorrected in his hurry; moreover, he has so many quotations that his books are filled with them and nothing else, a characteristic which one may observe also in the writings of Zeno and Aristotle.

## 8. The Works of Epicurus

Such are the numerous and important works of Epicurus, of which the best are the following: 1. *On Nature*, thirty-seven books, 2. *On Atoms And Void*, 3. *On Love,* 4. Epitome of the books *Against the Physicists*, 5. *Against the Megarians*, 6. *Problems,* 7. *Principal Doctrines*, 8. *On Choice and Avoidance*, 9. *On the End*, 10. *On the Criterion*, or *The Canon*,

[28] 11. *Chaeredemus*, 12. *On the Gods*, 13. *On Religion*, 14. *Hegesianax*, 15. *On Lives*, four books, 16. *On Just Action*, 17. *Neocles*, addressed to Themista, 18. *Symposium*, 19. *Eurylochus*, addressed to Metrodorus, 20. *On Vision*, 21. *On the Corner in the Atom*, 22. *On Touch*, 23. *On Fate*, 24. *On Internal Sensations*, maxims addressed to Timocrates, 25. *Prognostic*, 26. *The Protreptic*, 27. *On Images*, 28. *On Perception*, 29. *Aristobulus*, 30. *On Music*, 31. *On Justice And The Other Virtues*, 32. *On Gifts and Gratitude*, 33. *Polymedes*, 34. *Timocrates*, three books, 35. *Metrodorus*, five books, 36. *Antidorus*, two books, 37. *On Disease*, maxims addressed to Mithras, 38. *Callistolas*, 39. *On Royal Power*, 40. *Anaximenes*, 41. *Letters*.

## 9. The Doctrines of Epicurus

I will now endeavour to expound the doctrines which he sets forth in these works and will put before you three of his letters, in which he has abridged his whole philosophy.

[29] I will also give you the Principal Doctrines, and a selection from his sayings which seem most worthy of mention. You will thus be able to understand Epicurus from every point of view and could form a judgment on him. The first letter he writes to Herodotus (and it deals with Physics; the second is to Pythocles), and it deals with Celestial Phenomena; the third is to Menoeceus, and contains the moral teaching. We must begin with the first letter, but I will first speak briefly about the divisions of his philosophy.

[30] It is divided into three parts, the Canonicon (or Procedure), the Physics and the Ethics. The Canonicon gives the method of approach to the system, and is contained in the work called *The Canon*. The Physics contains all the investigation into nature, and is contained in the thirty-seven books *On Nature* and in an abridged form in the letters. The Ethics deals with choice and avoidance, and is contained in the books *On*

*Lives* and the letters and the book on *The End.* The Epicureans usually group the Canonicon with the Physics and state that it deals with the criterion of truth and the fundamental principles and contains the elements of the system. The Physics deals with creation and dissolution and with nature; the Ethics with things to be chosen or avoided, with the conduct of life and its purpose.

[31] Logic they reject as misleading. For they say it is sufficient for physicists to be guided by what things say of themselves. Thus in *The Canon* Epicurus says that the tests of truth are the sensations and concepts and the feelings; the Epicureans add to these the intuitive apprehensions of the mind. And this he says himself too in the summary addressed to Herodotus and in the Principal Doctrines. For, he says, all sensation is irrational and does not admit of memory; for it is not set in motion by itself, nor when it is set in motion by something else, can it add to it or take from it.

[32] Nor is there anything which can refute the sensations. For a similar sensation cannot refute a similar because it is equivalent in validity, nor a dissimilar a dissimilar, for the objects of which they are the criteria are not the same; nor again can reason, for all reason is dependent upon sensations; nor can one sensation refute another, for we attend to them all alike. Again, the fact of apperception confirms the truth of the sensations. And seeing and hearing are as much facts as feeling pain. From this it follows that as regards the imperceptible we must draw inferences from phenomena. For all thoughts have their origin in sensations by means of coincidence and analogy and similarity and combination, reasoning too contributing something. And the visions of the insane and those in dreams are true, for they cause movement, and that which does not exist cannot cause movement.

[33] The concept they speak of as an apprehension or right opinion or thought or general idea stored within the mind, that is to say a recollection of what has often been presented from without, as for instance ‘Such and such a thing is a man,’ for the moment the word ‘man’ is spoken, immediately by means of the concept his form too is thought of, as the senses give us the information. Therefore the first signification of every name is immediate and clear evidence. And we could not look for the object of our search, unless we have first known it. For instance, we ask, ‘Is that standing yonder a horse or a cow?’ To do this we must know by means of a concept the shape of horse and of cow. Otherwise we could not have named them, unless we previously knew their appearance by means of a concept. So the concepts are clear and immediate evidence. Further, the decision of opinion depends on some previous clear and immediate evidence, to which we refer when we express it: for instance, ‘How do we know whether this is a man?’

[34] Opinion they also call supposition, and say that it may be true or false: if it is confirmed or not contradicted, it is true ; if it is not confirmed or is contradicted, it is false. For this reason was introduced the notion of the problem awaiting confirmation: for example, waiting to come near the tower and see how it looks to the near view. The internal sensations they say are two, pleasure and pain, which occur to every living creature, and the one is akin to nature and the other alien: by means of these two choice and avoidance are determined. Of investigations some concern actual things, others mere words. This is a brief summary of the division of their philosophy and their views on the criterion of truth.

Now we must proceed to the letter.

## 10. Letter to Herodotus

[35] For those who are unable, Herodotus, to work in detail through all that I have written about nature, or to peruse the larger books which I have composed, I have already prepared at sufficient length an epitome of the whole system, that they may keep adequately in mind at least the most general principles in each department, in order that as occasion arises they may be able to assist themselves on the most important points, in so far as they undertake the study of nature. But those also who have made considerable progress in the survey of the main principles ought to bear in mind the scheme of the whole system set forth in its essentials. For we have frequent need of the general view, but not so often of the detailed exposition.

[36] Indeed it is necessary to go back on the main principles, and constantly to fix in one’s memory enough to give one the most essential comprehension of the truth. And in fact the accurate knowledge of details will be

fully discovered, if the general principles in the various departments are thoroughly grasped and borne in mind; for even in the case of one fully initiated the most essential feature in all accurate knowledge is the capacity to make a rapid use of observation and mental apprehension, and this can be done if everything is summed up in elementary principles and formulae. For it is not possible for anyone to abbreviate the complete course through the whole system, if he cannot embrace in his own mind by means of short formulae all that might be set out with accuracy in detail.

[37] Wherefore since the method I have described is valuable to all those who are accustomed to the investigation of nature, I who urge upon others the constant occupation in the investigation of nature, and find my own peace chiefly in a life so occupied, have composed for you another epitome on these lines, summing up the first principles of the whole doctrine.

First of all, Herodotus, we must grasp the ideas attached to words, in order that we may be able to refer to them and so to judge the inferences of opinion or problems of investigation or reflection, so that we may not either leave everything uncertain and go on explaining to infinity or use words devoid of meaning.

[38] For this purpose it is essential that the first mental image associated with each word should be regarded, and that there should be no need of explanation, if we are really to have a standard to which to refer a problem of investigation or reflection or a mental inference. And besides we must keep all our investigations in accord with our sensations, and in particular with the immediate apprehensions whether of the mind or of any one of the instruments of judgment, and likewise in accord with the feelings existing in us, in order that we may have indications whereby we may judge both the problem of sense perception and the unseen. Having made these points clear, we must now consider things imperceptible to the senses. First of all, that nothing is created out of that which does not exist: for if it were, everything would be created out of everything with no need of seeds.

[39] And again, if that which disappears were destroyed into that which did not exist, all things would have perished, since that into which they were dissolved would not exist. Furthermore, the universe always was such as it is now, and always will be the same. For there is nothing into which it changes: for outside the universe there is nothing which could come into it and bring about the change.

Moreover, the universe is bodies and space: for that bodies exist, sense itself witnesses in the experience of all men, and in accordance with the evidence of sense we must of necessity judge of the imperceptible by reasoning, as I have already said.

[40] And if there were not that which we term void and place and intangible existence, bodies would have nowhere to exist and nothing through which to move, as they are seen to move. And besides these two, nothing can even be thought of either by conception or on the analogy of things conceivable such as could be grasped as whole existences and not spoken of as the accidents or properties of such existences. Furthermore, among bodies some are compounds, and others those of which compounds are formed.

[41] And these latter are indivisible and unalterable (if, that is, all things are not to be destroyed into the non-existent, but something permanent is to remain behind at the dissolution of compounds): they are completely solid in nature, and can by no means be dissolved in any part. So it must needs be that the first beginnings are indivisible corporeal existences. Moreover, the universe is boundless. For that which is bounded has an extreme point: and the extreme point is seen against something else. So that as it has no extreme point, it has no limit; and as it has no limit, it must be boundless and not bounded.

[42] Furthermore, the infinite is boundless both in the number of the bodies and in the extent of the void. For if on the one hand the void were boundless, and the bodies limited in number, the bodies could not stay anywhere, but would be carried about and scattered through the infinite void, not having other bodies to support them and keep them in place by means of collisions. But if, on the other hand, the void were limited, the infinite bodies would not have room wherein to take their place. Besides this the indivisible and solid bodies, out of which too the compounds are created and into which they are dissolved, have an incomprehensible number of varieties in shape: for it is not possible that such great varieties of things should

arise from the same atomic shapes, if they are limited in number. And so in each shape the atoms are quite infinite in number, but their differences of shape are not quite infinite, but only incomprehensible in number.

[43] And the atoms move continuously for all time, some of them falling straight down, others swerving, and others recoiling from their collisions. And of the latter, some are borne on, separating to a long distance from one another, while others again recoil and recoil, whenever they chance to be checked by the interlacing with others, or else shut in by atoms interlaced around them.

[44] For on the one hand the nature of the void which separates each atom by itself brings this about, as it is not able to afford resistance, and on the other hand the hardness which belongs to the atoms makes them recoil after collision to as great a distance as the interlacing permits separation after the collision. And these motions have no beginning, since the atoms and the void are the cause.

[45] These brief sayings, if all these points are borne in mind, afford a sufficient outline for our understanding of the nature of existing things. Furthermore, there are infinite worlds both like and unlike this world of ours. For the atoms being infinite in number, as was proved already, are borne on far out into space. For those atoms, which are of such nature that a world could be created out of them or made by them, have not been used up either on one world or on a limited number of worlds, nor again on all the worlds which are alike, or on those which are different from these. So that there nowhere exists an obstacle to the infinite number of the worlds.

[46] Moreover, there are images like in shape to the solid bodies, far surpassing perceptible things in their subtlety of texture. For it is not impossible that such emanations should be formed in that which surrounds the objects, nor that there should be opportunities for the formation of such hollow and thin frames, nor that there should be effluences which preserve the respective position and order which they had before in the solid bodies: these images we call idols.

[47] Next, nothing among perceptible things contradicts the belief that the images have unsurpassable fineness of texture. And for this reason they have also unsurpassable speed of motion, since the movement of all their atoms is uniform, and besides nothing or very few things hinder their emission by collisions, whereas a body composed of many or infinite atoms is at once hindered by collisions.

[48] Besides this, nothing contradicts the belief that the creation of the idols takes place as quick as thought. For the flow of atoms from the surface of bodies is continuous, yet it cannot be detected by any lessening in the size of the object because of the constant filling up of what is lost. The flow of images preserves for a long time the position and order of the atoms in the solid body, though it is occasionally confused. Moreover, compound idols are quickly formed in the air around, because it is not necessary for their substance to be filled in deep inside: and besides there are certain other methods in which existences of this sort are produced. For not one of these beliefs is contradicted by our sensations, if one looks to see in what way sensation will bring us the clear visions from external objects, and in what way again the corresponding sequences of qualities and movements.

[49] Now we must suppose too that it is when something enters us from external objects that we not only see but think of their shapes. For external objects could not make on us an impression of the nature of their own colour and shape by means of the air which lies between us and them, nor again by means of the rays or effluences of any sort which pass from us to them — nearly so well as if models, similar in color and shape, leave the objects and enter according to their respective size either into our sight or into our mind; moving along swiftly, and so by this means reproducing the image of a single continuous thing and preserving the corresponding sequence of qualities and movements from the original object as the result of their uniform contact with us, kept up by the vibration of the atoms deep in the interior of the concrete body.

[50] And every image which we obtain by an act of apprehension on the part of the mind or of the sense-organs, whether of shape or of properties, this image is the shape or the properties of the concrete object, and is produced by the constant repetition of the image or the impression it has left. Now falsehood and error always lie in the addition of opinion with regard to what is waiting to be confirmed or not contradicted, and

then is not confirmed or is contradicted.

[51] For the similarity between the things which exist, which we call real and the images received as a likeness of things and produced either in sleep or through some other acts of apprehension on the part of the mind or the other instruments of judgment, could never be, unless there were some effluences of this nature actually brought into contact with our senses. And error would not exist unless another kind of movement too were produced inside ourselves, closely linked to the apprehension of images, but differing from it; and it is owing to this, supposing it is not confirmed, or is contradicted, that falsehood arises; but if it is confirmed or not contradicted, it is true.

[52] Therefore we must do our best to keep this doctrine in mind, in order that on the one hand the standards of judgment dependent on the clear visions may not be undermined, and on the other error may not be as firmly established as truth and so throw all into confusion. Moreover, hearing, too, results when a current is carried off from the object speaking or sounding or making a noise, or causing in any other way a sensation of hearing. Now this current is split up into particles, each like the whole, which at the same time preserve a correspondence of qualities with one another and a unity of character which stretches right back to the object which emitted the sound: this unity it is which in most cases produces comprehension in the recipient, or, if not, merely makes manifest the presence of the external object.

[53] For without the transference from the object of some correspondence of qualities, comprehension of this nature could not result. We must not then suppose that the actual air is molded into shape by the voice which is emitted or by other similar sounds — for it will be very far from being so acted upon by it — but that the blow which takes place inside us, when we emit our voice, causes at once a squeezing out of certain particles, which produce a stream of breath, of such a character as to afford us the sensation of hearing. Furthermore, we must suppose that smell too, just like hearing, could never bring about any sensation, unless there were certain particles carried off from the object of suitable size to stir this sense-organ, some of them in a manner disorderly and alien to it, others in a regular manner and akin in nature.

[54] Moreover, we must suppose that the atoms do not possess any of the qualities belonging to perceptible things, except shape, weight, and size, and all that necessarily goes with shape. For every quality changes; but the atoms do not change at all, since there must needs be something which remains solid and indissoluble at the dissolution of compounds, which can cause changes; not changes into the nonexistent or from the non-existent, but changes effected by the shifting of position of some particles, and by the addition or departure of others. For this reason it is essential that the bodies which shift their position should be imperishable and should not possess the nature of what changes, but parts and configuration of their own. For thus much must needs remain constant.

[55] For even in things perceptible to us which change their shape by the withdrawal of matter it is seen that shape remains to them, whereas the qualities do not remain in the changing object, in the way in which shape is left behind, but are lost from the entire body. Now these particles which are left behind are sufficient to cause the differences in compound bodies, since it is essential that some things should be left behind and not be destroyed into the non-existent. Moreover, we must not either suppose that every size exists among the atoms, in order that the evidence of phenomena may not contradict us, but we must suppose that there are some variations of size. For if this be the case, we can give a better account of what occurs in our feelings and sensations.

[56] But the existence of atoms of every size is not required to explain the differences of qualities in things, and at the same time some atoms would be bound to come within our ken and be visible; but this is never seen to be the case, nor is it possible to imagine how an atom could become visible.

Besides this we must not suppose that in a limited body there can be infinite parts or parts of every degree of smallness. Therefore, we must not only do away with division into smaller and smaller parts to infinity, in order that we may not make all things weak, and so in the composition of aggregate bodies be compelled to crush and squander the things that exist into the non-existent, but we must not either suppose that in limited bodies there is a possibility of continuing to infinity in passing even to smaller and smaller parts.

[57] For if once one says that there are infinite parts in a body or parts of any degree of smallness, it is not possible to conceive how this should be, and indeed how could the body any longer be limited in size? (For it is obvious that these infinite particles must be of some size or other; and however small they may be, the size of the body too would be infinite.) And again, since the limited body has an extreme point, which is distinguishable, even though not perceptible by itself, you cannot conceive that the succeeding point to it is not similar in character, or that if you go on in this way from one point to another, it should be possible for you to proceed to infinity marking such points in your mind.

[58] We must notice also that the least thing in sensation is neither exactly like that which admits of progression from one part to another, nor again is it in every respect wholly unlike it, but it has a certain affinity with such bodies, yet cannot be divided into parts. But when on the analogy of this resemblance we think to divide off parts of it, one on the one side and another on the other, it must needs be that another point like the first meets our view. And we look at these points in succession starting from the first, not within the limits of the same point nor in contact part with part, but yet by means of their own proper characteristics measuring the size of bodies, more in a greater body and fewer in a smaller.

[59] Now we must suppose that the least part in the atom too bears the same relation to the whole; for though in smallness it is obvious that it exceeds that which is seen by sensation, yet it has the same relations. For indeed we have already declared on the ground of its relation to sensible bodies that the atom has size, only we placed it far below them in smallness. Further, we must consider these least indivisible points as boundary-marks, providing in themselves as primary units the measure of size for the atoms, both for the smaller and the greater, in our contemplation of these unseen bodies by means of thought. For the affinity which the least parts of the atom have to the homogeneous parts of sensible things is sufficient to justify our conclusion to this extent: but that they should ever come together as bodies with motion is quite impossible.

[60] Furthermore, in the infinite we must not speak of “up” or “down,” as though with reference to an absolute highest or lowest — and indeed we must say that, though it is possible to proceed to infinity in the direction above our heads from wherever we take our stand, the absolute highest point will never appear to us — nor yet can that which passes beneath the point thought of to infinity be at the same time both up and down in reference to the same thing: for it is impossible to think this. So that it is possible to consider as one single motion that which is thought of as the upward motion to infinity and as another the downward motion, even though that which passes from us into the regions above our heads arrives countless times at the feet of beings above and that which passes downwards from us at the head of beings below; for none the less the whole motions are thought of as opposed, the one to the other, to infinity.

[61] Moreover, the atoms must move with equal speed, when they are borne onwards through the void, nothing colliding with them. For neither will the heavy move more quickly than the small and light, when, that is, nothing meets them: nor again the small more quickly than the great, having their whole course uniform, when nothing collides with them either: nor is the motion upwards or sideways owing to blows quicker, nor again that downwards owing to their own weight. For as long as either of the two motions prevails, so long will it have a course as quick as thought, until something checks it either from outside or from its own weight counteracting the force of that which dealt the blow. Moreover, their passage through the void, when it takes place without meeting any bodies which might collide, accomplishes every comprehensible distance in an inconceivably short time. For it is collision and its absence which take the outward appearance of slowness and quickness.

[62] Moreover, it will be said that in compound bodies too one atom is faster than another, though as a matter of fact all are equal in speed: this will be said because even in the least period of continuous time all the atoms in aggregate bodies move towards one place, even though in moments of time perceptible only by thought they do not move towards one place but are constantly jostling one against another, until the continuity of their movement comes under the ken of sensation. For the addition of opinion with regard to the unseen, that the moments perceptible only by thought will also contain continuity of motion, is not true in such cases; for we must remember that it is what we observe with the senses or grasp with the mind by an apprehension that is true.

Nor must it either be supposed that in moments perceptible only by thought the moving body too passes to the several places to which its component atoms move (for this too is unthinkable, and in that case, when it arrives all together in a sensible period of time from any point that may be in the infinite void, it would not be taking its departure from the place from which we apprehend its motion); for the motion of the whole body will be the outward expression of its internal collisions, even though up to the limits of perception we suppose the speed of its motion not to be retarded by collision. It is of advantage to grasp this first principle as well.

[63] Next, referring always to the sensations and the feelings, for in this way you will obtain the most trustworthy ground of belief, you must consider that the soul is a body of fine particles distributed throughout the whole structure, and most resembling wind with a certain admixture of heat, and in some respects like to one of these and in some to the other. There is also the part which is many degrees more advanced even than these in fineness of composition, and for this reason is more capable of feeling in harmony with the rest of the structure as well. Now all this is made manifest by the activities of the soul and the feelings and the readiness of its movements and its processes of thought and by what we lose at the moment of death.

[64] Further, you must grasp that the soul possesses the chief cause of sensation: yet it could not have acquired sensation, unless it were in some way enclosed by the rest of the structure. And this in its turn having afforded the soul this cause of sensation acquires itself too a share in this contingent capacity from the soul. Yet it does not acquire all the capacities which the soul possesses: and therefore when the soul is released from the body, the body no longer has sensation. For it never possessed this power in itself, but used to afford opportunity for it to another existence, brought into being at the same time with itself: and this existence, owing to the power now consummated within itself as a result of motion, used spontaneously to produce for itself the capacity of sensation and then to communicate it to the body as well, in virtue of its contact and correspondence of movement, as I have already said.

[65] Therefore, so long as the soul remains in the body, even though some other part of the body be lost, it will never lose sensation; nay more, whatever portions of the soul may perish too, when that which enclosed it is removed either in whole or in part, if the soul continues to exist at all, it will retain sensation. On the other hand the rest of the structure, though it continues to exist either as a whole or in part, does not retain sensation, if it has once lost that sum of atoms, however small it be, which together goes to produce the nature of the soul. Moreover, if the whole structure is dissolved, the soul is dispersed and no longer has the same powers nor performs its movements, so that it does not possess sensation either.

[66] For it is impossible to imagine it with sensation, if it is not in this organism and cannot effect these movements, when what encloses and surrounds it is no longer the same as the surroundings in which it now exists and performs these movements.

[67] Furthermore, we must clearly comprehend as well, that the incorporeal in the general acceptation of the term is applied to that which could be thought of as such as an independent existence. Now it is impossible to conceive the incorporeal as a separate existence, except the void: and the void can neither act nor be acted upon, but only provides opportunity of motion through itself to bodies. So that those who say that the soul is incorporeal are talking idly. For it would not be able to act or be acted on in any respect, if it were of this nature. But as it is, both these occurrences are clearly distinguished in respect of the soul.

[68] Now if one refers all these reasonings about the soul to the standards of feeling and sensation and remembers what was said at the outset, he will see that they are sufficiently embraced in these general formulae to enable him to work out with certainty on this basis the details of the system as well.

[69] Moreover, as regards shape and colour and size and weight and all other things that are predicated of body, as though they were concomitant properties either of all things or of things visible or recognizable through the sensation of these qualities, we must not suppose that they are either independent existences (for it is impossible to imagine that), nor that they absolutely do not exist, nor that they are some other kind of incorporeal existence accompanying body, nor that they are material parts of body: rather we should suppose that the whole body in its totality owes its own permanent existence to all these, yet not in the sense that it is composed of properties brought together to form it (as when, for instance, a larger structure is put together

out of the parts which compose it, whether the first units of size or other parts smaller than itself, whatever it is), but only, as I say, that it owes its own permanent existence to all of them. All these properties have their own peculiar means of being perceived and distinguished, provided always that the aggregate body goes along with them and is never wrested from them, but in virtue of its comprehension as an aggregate of qualities acquires the predicate of body.

[70] Furthermore, there often happen to bodies and yet do not permanently accompany them accidents, of which we must suppose neither that they do not exist at all nor that they have the nature of a whole body, nor that they can be classed among unseen things nor as incorporeal. So that when according to the most general usage we employ this name, we make it clear that accidents have neither the nature of the whole, which we comprehend in its aggregate and call body, nor that of the qualities which permanently accompany it, without which a given body cannot be conceived.

[71] But as the result of certain acts of apprehension, provided the aggregate body goes along with them, they might each be given this name, but only on occasions when each one of them is seen to occur, since accidents are not permanent accompaniments. And we must not banish this clear vision from the realm of existence, because it does not possess the nature of the whole to which it is joined nor that of the permanent accompaniments, nor must we suppose that such contingencies exist independently (for this is inconceivable both with regard to them and to the permanent properties), but, just as it appears in sensation, we must think of them all as accidents occurring to bodies, and that not as permanent accompaniments, or again as having in themselves a place in the ranks of material existence; rather they are seen to be just what our actual sensation shows their proper character to be.

[72] Moreover, you must firmly grasp this point as well; we must not look for time, as we do for all other things which we look for in an object, by referring them to the general conceptions which we perceive in our own minds, but we must take the direct intuition, in accordance with which we speak of “a long time” or “a short time,” and examine it, applying our intuition to time as we do to other things. Neither must we search for expressions as likely to be better, but employ just those which are in common use about it. Nor again must we predicate of time anything else as having the same essential nature as this special perception, as some people do, but we must turn our thoughts particularly to that only with which we associate this peculiar perception and by which we measure it.

[73] For indeed this requires no demonstration, but only reflection, to show that it is with days and nights and their divisions that we associate it and likewise also with internal feelings or absence of feeling, and with movements and states of rest; in connection with these last again we think of this very perception as a peculiar kind of accident, and in virtue of this we call it time. And in addition to what we have already said we must believe that worlds, and indeed every limited compound body which continuously exhibits a similar appearance to the things we see, were created from the infinite, and that all such things, greater and less alike, were separated off from individual agglomerations of matter; and that all are again dissolved, some more quickly, some more slowly, some suffering from one set of causes, others from another.

[74] And further we must believe that these worlds were neither created all of necessity with one configuration nor yet with every kind of shape. Furthermore, we must believe that in all worlds there are living creatures and plants and other things we see in this world; for indeed no one could prove that in a world of one kind there might or might not have been included the kinds of seeds from which living things and plants and all the rest of the things we see are composed, and that in a world of another kind they could not have been.

[75] Moreover, we must suppose that human nature too was taught and constrained to do many things of every kind merely by circumstances; and that later on reasoning elaborated what had been suggested by nature and made further inventions, in some matters quickly, in others slowly, at some epochs and times making great advances, and lesser again at others. And so names too were not at first deliberately given to things, but men’s natures according to their different nationalities had their own peculiar feelings and received their peculiar impressions, and so each in their own way emitted air formed into shape by each of these feelings and impressions, according to the differences made in the different nations by the places of their

abode as well.

[76] And then later on by common consent in each nationality special names were deliberately given in order to make their meanings less ambiguous to one another and more briefly demonstrated. And sometimes those who were acquainted with them brought in things hitherto unknown and introduced sounds for them, on some occasions being naturally constrained to utter them, and on others choosing them by reasoning in accordance with the prevailing mode of formation, and thus making their meaning clear.

[77] Furthermore, the motions of the heavenly bodies and their turnings and eclipses and risings and settings, and kindred phenomena to these, must not be thought to be due to any being who controls and ordains or has ordained them and at the same time enjoys perfect bliss together with immortality (for trouble and care and anger and kindness are not consistent with a life of blessedness, but these things come to pass where there is weakness and fear and dependence on neighbors). Nor again must we believe that they, which are but fire agglomerated in a mass, possess blessedness, and voluntarily take upon themselves these movements. But we must preserve their full majestic significance in all expressions which we apply to such conceptions, in order that there may not arise out of them opinions contrary to this notion of majesty. Otherwise this very contradiction will cause the greatest disturbance in men's souls. Therefore we must believe that it is due to the original inclusion of matter in such agglomerations during the birth-process of the world that this law of regular succession is also brought about.

[78] Furthermore, we must believe that to discover accurately the cause of the most essential facts is the function of the science of nature, and that blessedness for us in the knowledge of celestial phenomena lies in this and in the understanding of the nature of the existences seen in these celestial phenomena, and of all else that is akin to the exact knowledge requisite for our happiness: in knowing too that what occurs in several ways or is capable of being otherwise has no place here but that nothing which suggests doubt or alarm can be included at all in that which is naturally immortal and blessed. Now this we can ascertain by our mind is absolutely the case.

[79] But what falls within the investigation of risings and settings and turnings and eclipses, and all that is akin to this, is no longer of any value for the happiness which knowledge brings, but persons who have perceived all this, but yet do not know what are the natures of these things and what are the essential causes, are still in fear, just as if they did not know these things at all: indeed, their fear may be even greater, since the wonder which arises out of the observation of these things cannot discover any solution or realize the regulation of the essentials.

[80] And for this very reason, even if we discover several causes for turnings and settings and risings and eclipses and the like, as has been the case already in our investigation of detail, we must not suppose that our inquiry into these things has not reached sufficient accuracy to contribute to our peace of mind and happiness. So we must carefully consider in how many ways a similar phenomenon is produced on earth, when we reason about the causes of celestial phenomena and all that is imperceptible to the senses; and we must despise those persons who do not recognize either what exists or comes into being in one way only, or that which may occur in several ways in the case of things which can only be seen by us from a distance, and further are not aware under what conditions it is impossible to have peace of mind. If, therefore, we think that a phenomenon probably occurs in some such particular way, and that in circumstances under which it is equally possible for us to be at peace, when we realize that it may occur in several ways, we shall be just as little disturbed as if we know that it occurs in some particular way.

[81] And besides all these matters in general we must grasp this point, that the principal disturbance in the minds of men arises because they think that these celestial bodies are blessed and immortal, and yet have wills and actions and motives inconsistent with these attributes; and because they are always expecting or imagining some everlasting misery, such as is depicted in legends, or even fear the loss of feeling in death as though it would concern them themselves; and, again, because they are brought to this pass not by reasoned opinion, but rather by some irrational presentiment, and therefore, as they do not know the limits of pain, they suffer a disturbance equally great or even more extensive than if they had reached this belief by opinion.

[82] But peace of mind is being delivered from all this, and having a constant memory of the general and most essential principles. Wherefore we must pay attention to internal feelings and to external sensations in general and in particular, according as the subject is general or particular, and to every immediate intuition in accordance with each of the standards of judgment. For if we pay attention to these, we shall rightly trace the causes whence arose our mental disturbance and fear, and, by learning the true causes of celestial phenomena and all other occurrences that come to pass from time to time, we shall free ourselves from all which produces the utmost fear in other men.

[83] Here, Herodotus, is my treatise on the chief points concerning the nature of the general principles, abridged so that my account would be easy to grasp with accuracy. I think that, even if one were unable to proceed to all the detailed particulars of the system, he would from this obtain an unrivaled strength compared with other men. For indeed he will clear up for himself many of the detailed points by reference to our general system, and these very principles, if he stores them in his mind, will constantly aid him. For such is their character that even those who are at present engaged in working out the details to a considerable degree, or even completely, will be able to carry out the greater part of their investigations into the nature of the whole by conducting their analysis in reference to such a survey as this. And as for all who are not fully among those on the way to being perfected, some of them can from this summary obtain a hasty view of the most important matters without oral instruction so as to secure peace of mind.

Such was his letter on Physics: then follows his letter on Celestial Things.

## 11. Letter to Pythocles

[84] CLEON brought me a letter from you in which you continue to express a kindly feeling towards me, which is a just return for my interest in you, and you attempt with some success to recall the arguments which lead to a life of blessedness. You ask me to send you a brief argument about the phenomena of the sky in a short sketch, that you may easily recall it to mind. For you say that what I have written in my other works is hard to remember, even though, as you state, you constantly have them in your hands. I was glad to receive your request and felt constrained to answer it by pleasant expectations for the future.

[85] Therefore, as I have finished all my other writings I now intend to accomplish your request, feeling that these arguments will be of value to many other persons as well, and especially to those who have but recently tasted the genuine inquiry into nature, and also to those who are involved too deeply in the business of some regular occupation. Therefore lay good hold on it, keep it in mind, and go through it all keenly, together with the rest which I sent in the small epitome to Herodotus. First of all then we must not suppose that any other object is to be gained from the knowledge of the phenomena of the sky, whether they are dealt with in connection with other doctrines or independently, than peace of mind and a sure confidence, just as in all other branches of study.

[86] We must not try to force an impossible explanation, nor employ a method of inquiry like our reasoning either about the modes of life or with respect to the solution of other physical problems: witness such propositions as that ‘the universe consists of bodies and the intangible,’ or that ‘the elements are indivisible,' and all such statements in circumstances where there is only one explanation which harmonizes with phenomena. For this is not so with the things above us: they admit of more than one cause of coming into being and more than one account of their nature which harmonizes with our sensations.

[87] For we must not conduct scientific investigation by means of empty assumptions and arbitrary principles, but follow the lead of phenomena: for our life has not now any place for irrational belief and groundless imaginings, but we must live free from trouble. 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. But when one accepts one theory and rejects another, which harmonizes as well with the phenomenon, it is obvious that he altogether leaves the path of scientific inquiry and has recourse to myth. Now we can obtain indications of what happens above from some of the phenomena on earth: for we can observe how they come to pass, though we cannot observe the phenomena in the sky: for they may be produced in several ways.

[88] Yet we must never desert the appearance of each of these phenomena, and further, as regards what is associated with it, must distinguish those things whose production in several ways is not contradicted by phenomena on earth. A world is a circumscribed portion of sky, containing heavenly bodies and an earth and all the heavenly phenomena, whose dissolution will cause all within it to fall into confusion: it is a piece cut off from the infinite and ends in a boundary either rare or dense, either revolving or stationary: its outline may be spherical or three-cornered, or any kind of shape. For all such conditions are possible, seeing that no phenomenon is evidence against this in our world, in which it is not possible to perceive an ending.

[89] And that such worlds are infinite in number we can be sure, and also that such a world may come into being both inside another world and in an interworld, by which we mean a space between worlds; it will be in a place with much void, and not in a large empty space quite void, as some say: this occurs when seeds of the right kind have rushed in from a single world or interworld, or from several: little by little they make junctions and articulations, and cause changes of position to another place, as it may happen, and produce irrigations of the appropriate matter until the period of completion and stability, which lasts as long as the underlying foundations are capable of receiving additions.

[90] For it is not merely necessary for a gathering of atoms to take place, nor indeed for a whirl and nothing more to be set in motion, as is supposed, by necessity, in an empty space in which it is possible for a world to come into being, nor can the world go on increasing until it collides with another world, as one of the so-called physical philosophers says. For this is a contradiction of phenomena. Sun and moon and the other stars were not created by themselves and subsequently taken in by the world, but were fashioned in it from the first and

gradually grew in size by the aggregations and whirlings of bodies of minute parts, either windy or fiery or both, for this is what our sensation suggests.

[91] The size of sun (and moon) and the other stars is for us what it appears to be; and in reality it is either (slightly) greater than what we see or slightly less or the same size: for so too fires on earth when looked at from a distance seem to the senses. And every objection at this point will easily be dissipated, if we pay attention to the clear vision, as I show in my books about nature.

[92] The risings and settings of the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies may be due to kindling and extinction, the composition of the surrounding matter at the places of rising and setting being such as to lead to these results: for nothing in phenomena is against it. Or again, the effect in question might be produced by their appearance over the top of the earth, and again the interposition of the earth in front of them: for once more nothing in phenomena is against it.

Their motions may not impossibly be due to the revolution of the whole heaven, or else it may remain stationary, and they may revolve owing to the natural impulse towards the east, which was produced at the beginning of the world . . . . . by an excessive heat owing to a spreading of the fire which is always moving on to the regions nearest in succession.

[93] The tropics of sun and moon may be caused owing to an obliquity of the whole heaven, which is constrained into this position in the successive seasons; or equally well by an outward impulsion of a current of air, or because the appropriate material successively catches fire, as the former fails; or again, from the beginning this particular form of revolution may have been assigned to these stars, so that they move in a kind of spiral. For all these and kindred explanations are not at variance with any clear-seen facts, if one always clings in such departments of inquiry to the possible and can refer each point to what is in agreement with phenomena without fearing the slavish artifices of the astronomers.

[94] The wanings of the moon and its subsequent waxings might be due to the revolution of its own body, or equally well to successive conformations of the atmosphere, or again to the interposition of other bodies; they may be accounted for in all the ways in which phenomena on earth invite us to such explanations of these phases; provided only one does not become enamoured of the method of the single cause and groundlessly put the others out of court, without having considered what it is possible for a man to observe and what is not,

and desiring therefore to observe what is impossible. Next the moon may have her light from herself or from the sun.

[95] For on earth too we see many things shining with their own, and many with reflected light. Nor is any celestial phenomenon against these explanations, if one always remembers the method of manifold causes and investigates hypotheses and explanations consistent with them, and does not look to inconsistent notions and emphasize them without cause and so fall back in different ways on different occasions on the method of the single cause. The impression of a face in the moon may be due to the variation of its parts or to interposition or to any one of many causes which might be observed, all in harmony with phenomena.

[96] For in the case of all celestial phenomena this process of investigation must never be abandoned - for if one is in opposition to clear-seen facts, he can never have his part in true peace of mind. The eclipse of sun and moon may take place both owing to their extinction, as we see this effect is produced on earth, or again by the interposition of some other bodies, either the earth or some unseen body or something else of this sort. And in this way we must consider together the causes that suit with one another and realize that it is not impossible that some should coincide at the same time.

[97] Next the regularity of the periods of the heavenly bodies must be understood in the same way as such regularity is seen in some of the events that happen on earth. And do not let the divine nature be introduced at any point into these considerations, but let it be preserved free from burdensome duties and in entire blessedness. For if this principle is not observed, the whole discussion of causes in celestial phenomena is in vain, as it has already been for certain persons who have not clung to the method of possible explanations, but have fallen back on the useless course of thinking that things could only happen in one way, and of rejecting all other ways in harmony with what is possible, being driven thus to what is inconceivable and being unable to compare earthly phenomena, which we must accept as indications.

[98] The successive changes in the length of nights and days may be due to the fact that the sun's movements above the earth become fast and then slow again because he passes across regions of unequal length or because he traverses some regions more quickly or more slowly, (or again to the quicker or slower gathering of the fires that make the sun), as we observe occurs with some things on earth, with which we must be in harmony in speaking of celestial phenomena. But those who assume one cause fight against the evidence of phenomena and fail to ask whether it is possible for men to make such observations.

[99] Signs of the weather may occur owing to the coincidence of occasions, as happens with animals we can all see on earth, and also through alterations and changes in the atmosphere. For both these are in accordance with phenomena. But under what circumstances the cause is produced by this or that, we cannot perceive. Clouds may be produced and formed both by the condensation of the atmosphere owing to compression by winds and by the interlacing of atoms clinging to one another and suitable for producing this result, and again by the gathering of streams from earth and the waters: and there are several other ways in which the formation of such things may not impossibly be brought about.

[100] And from them again rain may be produced if they are squeezed in one part or changed in another, or again by a downward current of wind moving through the atmosphere from appropriate places, a more violent shower being produced from certain conglomerations of atoms suited to create such downfalls.

Thunder may be produced by the rushing about of wind in the hollows of the clouds, as happens in vessels on earth, or by the reverberation of fire filled with wind inside them, or by the rending and tearing of clouds, or by the friction and bursting of clouds when they have been congealed into a form like ice: phenomena demand that we should say that this department of celestial events, just like them all, may be caused in several ways.

[101] And lightnings too are produced in several ways: for both owing to the friction and collision of clouds a conformation of atoms which produces fire slips out and gives birth to the lightning, and owing to wind bodies which give rise to this flash are dashed from the clouds: or compression may be the cause, when clouds are squeezed either by one another or by the wind. Or again it may be that the light scattered abroad from the

heavenly bodies is taken in by the clouds, and then is driven together by the movement of the clouds and wind, and falls out through the clouds; or else light composed of most subtle particles may filter through the clouds, whereby the clouds may be set on fire by the flame and thunder produced by the movement of the fire.

[102] Or the wind may be fired owing to the strain of motion and its violent rotation, or clouds may be rent by wind and atoms fall out which produce fire and cause the appearance of lightning. And several other methods may easily be observed, if one clings always to phenomena and can compare what is akin to these things. Lightning precedes thunder in such a conformation of the clouds, either because at the moment when the wind dashes in, the formation of atoms which gives rise to lightning is driven out, but afterwards the wind whirls about and produces the reverberation; or because they both dash out at the same moment, but lightning moves at a higher speed towards us, and thunder comes after, as in the case of some things seen at a distance and producing blows.

[103] Thunderbolts may occur because there are frequent gatherings of wind, which whirls about and is fanned into a fierce flame, and then a portion of it breaks off and rushes violently on the places beneath, the breaking taking place because the regions approached are successively denser owing to the condensation of clouds, or as the result of the actual outburst of the whirling fire, in the same way that thunder may be produced, when the fire becomes too great and is too violently fanned by wind and so breaks through the cloud, because it cannot retreat to the next regions owing to the constant condensation of clouds one on the other.

[104] And thunderbolts may be produced in other ways too. Only superstition must be excluded, as it will, if one successfully follows the lead of seen phenomena to gain indications about the invisible. Cyclones may be produced either by the driving down of a cloud into the regions below in the form of a pillar, because it is pushed by the wind gathered inside it and is driven on by the violence of the wind, while at the same time the wind outside impels it sideways; or by wind forming into circular motion, while mist is simultaneously thrust down from above; or when a great rush of wind takes place and cannot pass through sideways owing to the surrounding condensation of the atmosphere.

[105] And when the spout is let down on to the land, whirlwinds are produced in all the various ways in which their creation may occur owing to the movement of the wind, but if it reaches the sea it produces waterspouts. Earthquakes may be brought about both because wind is caught up in the earth, so that the earth is dislocated in small masses and is continually shaken, and that causes it to sway. This wind it either takes into itself from outside, or else because masses of ground fall in into cavernous places in the earth and fan into wind the air that is imprisoned in them. And again, earthquakes may be brought about by the actual spreading of the movement which results from the fall of many such masses of ground and the return shock, when the first motion comes into collision with more densely packed bodies of earth.

[106] There are also many other ways in which these motions of the earth may be caused.

....

The winds may be produced when from time to time some alien matter is continually and gradually forcing its way in, or owing to the gathering of a vast quantity of water. The other winds arise when a few (currents of air) fall into many hollow spaces, and cause a spreading of wind.

Hail is produced both by a powerful congelation, when certain windy bodies form together from all sides and split up: also by a more moderate congelation of watery bodies and their simultaneous division, which causes at one and the same time their coagulation and separation, so that they cling together as they freeze in their separate parts as well as in their whole masses.

[107] Their circular shape may possibly arise because the comers melt off all round or because at their conformation bodies, whether watery or windy, come together evenly from all directions part by part, as is alleged. Snow may be produced when fine particles of rain are poured out of the clouds owing to the existence of pores of suitable shape and the strong and constant compression by winds of clouds of the right

kind; and then the water is congealed in its descent owing to some conformation of excessive coldness in the clouds in the lower regions.

[108] Or else owing to congelation in clouds of uniform thinness an exudation of this kind might arise from watery clouds lying side by side and rubbing against one another: for they produce hail by causing coagulation, a process most frequent in the atmosphere. Or else, owing to the friction of congealed clouds, these nuclei of snow may find occasion to break off. And there are many other ways in which snow may be produced.

Dew may be produced both when such particles as are productive of this kind of moisture issue from the atmosphere and meet one another, and also when particles rise from moist regions or regions containing water, in which dew is most naturally produced, and then meet together and cause moisture to be produced, and afterwards fall back on the ground below, as (is) frequently (seen) to be the case in phenomena on earth as well. (And frost is produced by a change) in the dew-particles, when such particles as we have described undergo a definite kind of congelation owing to the neighborhood of a cold atmosphere.

[109] Ice is caused both by the squeezing out from the water of particles of round formation and the driving together of the triangular and acute-angled particles which exist already in the water, and again by the addition from without of particles of this kind, which when driven together produce a congelation in the water, by squeezing out a certain number of the round particles. The rainbow is caused by light shining from the sun on to watery atmosphere: or else by a peculiar union of light and air, which can produce the special qualities of these colours whether all together or separately; from it as it reflects back again the neighbouring regions of the air can take the tint which we see, by means of the shining of the light on to its various parts.

[110] The appearance of its round shape is caused because it is perceived by our sight at equal distance from all its points, or else because the atoms in the air or those in the clouds which are derived from the same air, are pressed together in this manner, and so the combination spreads out in a round shape. A halo round the moon is caused either when air is carried towards the moon from all sides, or when the air checks the effluences carried from the moon so equably that it forms them into this cloudy ring all round without any gaps or differences, or else when it checks the air round the moon uniformly on all sides so as to make that which encircles it round and thick in texture.

[111] This comes to pass in different parts either because some current outside forces the air or because heat blocks the passages in such a way as to produce this effect. Comets occur either when fire is collected together in certain regions at certain intervals of time in the upper air because some gathering of matter takes place, or when at certain intervals the heaven above us has some peculiar movement, so that stars of this nature are revealed, or when they themselves at certain seasons start to move on account of some gathering of matter and come into the regions within our ken and appear visible. And their disappearance occurs owing to the opposite causes to these.

[112] Some stars ‘revolve in their place’(as Homer says), which comes to pass not only because this part of the world is stationary and round it the rest revolves, as some say, but also because a whirl of air is formed in a ring round it, which prevents their moving about as do the other stars: or else it is because there is not a succession of appropriate fuel for them, but only in this place in which they are seen fixed. And there are many other ways in which this may be brought about, if one is able to infer what is in agreement with phenomena.

[113] That some of the stars should wander in their course, if indeed it is the case that their movements are such, while others do not move in this manner, may be due to the reason that from the first as they moved in their circles they were so constrained by necessity that some of them move along the same regular orbit, and others along one which is associated with certain irregularities: or it may be that among the regions to which they are carried in some places there are regular tracts of air which urge them on successively in the same direction and provide flame for them regularly, while in other places the tracts are irregular, so that the aberrations which we observe result. But to assign a single cause for these occurrences, when phenomena demand several explanations, is madness, and is quite wrongly practiced by persons who are partisans of

the foolish notions of astrology, by which they give futile explanations of the causes of certain occurrences, and all the time do not by any means free the divine nature from the burden of responsibilities.

[114] That some stars should be seen to be left behind by others is caused because though they move round in the same orbit they are carried along more slowly, and also because they really move in the opposite direction though they are dragged back by the same revolution: also because some are carried round through a greater space and some through a lesser, though all perform the same revolution. But to give a single explanation of these occurrences is only suitable to those who wish to make a show to the many.

[115] What are called falling stars may be produced in part by the rubbing of star against star, and by the falling out of the fragments wherever an outburst of wind occurs, as we explained in the case of lightning-flashes: or else by the meeting of atoms productive of fire, when a gathering of kindred material occurs to cause this, and a movement in the direction of the impulse which results from the original meeting; or else by a gathering of wind in certain dense and misty formations, and its ignition as it whirls round, and then its bursting out of what encloses it and its rush towards the spot to which the impulse of its flight tends. And there are other ways in which this result may be brought about, quite free from superstition. The signs of the weather which are given by certain animals result from mere coincidence of occasion. For the animals do not exert any compulsion for winter to come to an end, nor is there some divine nature which sits and watches the outgoings of these animals and then fulfills the signs they give.

[116] For not even the lowest animal, although ‘a small thing gives the greater pleasure,’ would be seized by such foolishness, much less one who was possessed of perfect happiness. All these things, Pythocles, you must bear in mind; for thus you will escape in most things from superstition and will be enabled to understand what is akin to them. And most of all give yourself up to the study of the beginnings and of infinity and of the things akin to them, and also of the criteria of truth and of the feelings, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things. For these points when they are thoroughly studied will most easily enable you to understand the causes of the details. But those who have not thoroughly taken these things to heart could not rightly study them in themselves, nor have they made their own the reason for observing them.

Such was his teaching on things celestial.

[117] As regards the principles of living and the grounds on which we ought to choose some things and avoid others, he writes the following letter.

## 12. Wise Man Sayings

But before considering it let us explain what he and his followers think about the wise man. Injuries are done by men either through hate or through envy or through contempt, all of which the wise man overcomes by reasoning. When once a man has attained wisdom, he no longer has any tendency contrary to it or willingly pretends that he has. He will be more deeply moved by feelings, but this will not prove an obstacle to wisdom. A man cannot become wise with every kind of physical constitution, nor in every nation.

[118] And even if the wise man be put on the rack, he is happy. Only the wise man will show gratitude, and will constantly speak well of his friends alike in their presence and their absence. Yet when he is on the rack, then he will cry out and lament. The wise man will not have intercourse with any woman with whom the law forbids it, as Diogenes says in his summary of Epicurus’ moral teaching. Nor will he punish his slaves, but will rather pity them and forgive any that are deserving. They do not think that the wise man will fall in love, or care about his burial. They hold that love is not sent from heaven, as Diogenes says in his . . . book, nor should the wise man make elegant speeches.

Sexual intercourse, they say, has never done a man good, and he is lucky if it has not harmed him.

[119] Moreover, the wise man will marry and have children, as Epicurus says in the *Problems* and in the work *On Nature*. But he will marry according to the circumstances of his life. He will feel shame in the presence of some persons, and certainly will not insult them in his cups, so Epicurus says in the *Symposium*. Nor will he

take part in public life, as he says in the first book *On Lives.* Nor will he act the tyrant, or live like the Cynics, as he writes in the second book *On Lives.* Nor will he beg. Moreover, even if he is deprived of his eyesight, he will not end his whole life, as he says in the same work.

Also, the wise man will feel grief, as Diogenes says in the fifth book of the *Miscellanies*.

[120] He will engage in lawsuits and will leave writings behind him, but will not deliver speeches on public occasions. He will be careful of his possessions and will provide for the future. He will be fond of the country. He will face fortune and never desert a friend. He will be careful of his reputation in so far as to prevent himself from being despised. He will care more than other men for public spectacles.

[121] He will erect statues of others, but whether he had one himself or not, he would be indifferent. Only the Wise man could discourse rightly on music and poetry, but in practice he would not compose poems. One wise man is not wiser than another. He will be ready to make money, but only when he is in straits and by means of his philosophy. He will pay court to a king, if occasion demands. He will rejoice at another's misfortunes, but only for his correction. And he will gather together a school, but never so as to become a popular leader. He will give lectures in public, but never unless asked; he will give definite teaching and not profess doubt. In his sleep he will be as he is awake, and on occasion he will even die for a friend.

[122] They hold that faults are not all of equal gravity, that health is a blessing to some, but indifferent to others, that courage does not come by nature, but by a calculation of advantage. That friendship too has practical needs as its motive: one must indeed lay its foundations (for we sow the ground too for the sake of crops), but it is formed and maintained by means of community of life among those who have reached the fullness of pleasure. They say also that there are two ideas of happiness, complete happiness, such as belongs to a god, which admits of no increase, and the happiness which is concerned with the addition and subtraction of pleasures. Now we must proceed to the letter.

## 13. Letter to Menoeceus

[122] LET no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul. And the man who says that the age for philosophy has either not yet come or has gone by is like the man who says that the age for happiness is not yet come to him, or has passed away. Wherefore both when young and old a man must study philosophy, that as he grows old he may be young in blessings through the grateful recollection of what has been, and that in youth he may be old as well, since he will know no fear of what is to come. We must then meditate on the things that make our happiness, seeing that when that is with us we have all, but when it is absent we do all to win it.

[123] The things which I used unceasingly to commend to you, these do and practice, considering them to be the first principles of the good life. First of all believe that god is a being immortal and blessed, even as the common idea of a god is engraved on men's minds, and do not assign to him anything alien to his immortality or ill-suited to his blessedness: but believe about him everything that can uphold his blessedness and immortality. For gods there are, since the knowledge of them is by clear vision. But they are not such as the many believe them to be: for indeed they do not consistently represent them as they believe them to be. And the impious man is not he who popularly denies the gods of the many, but he who attaches to the gods the beliefs of the many.

[124] For the statements of the many about the gods are not conceptions derived from sensation, but false suppositions, according to which the greatest misfortunes befall the wicked and the greatest blessings (the good) by the gift of the gods. For men being accustomed always to their own virtues welcome those like themselves, but regard all that is not of their nature as alien. Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil consists in sensation, but death is deprivation of sensation. And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality.

[125] For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living. So that the man speaks but idly who says that he fears death not because it will be painful when it comes, but because it is painful in anticipation. For that which gives no trouble when it comes is but an empty pain in anticipation. So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more.

[126] But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another (yearn for it) as a respite from the (evils) in life. (But the wise man neither seeks to escape life) nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil. And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant. And he who counsels the young man to live well, but the old man to make a good end, is foolish, not merely because of the desirability of life, but also because it is the same training which teaches to live well and to die well. Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born but *'once born make haste to pass the gates of Death'.*

[127] For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life? For it is open to him to do so, if he had firmly made up his mind to this. But if he speaks in jest, his words are idle among men who cannot receive them. We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come. We must consider that of desires some are natural, others vain, and of the natural some are necessary and others merely natural; and of the necessary some are necessary for happiness, others for the repose of the body, and others for very life.

[128] The right understanding of these facts enables us to refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and (the soul's) freedom from disturbance, since this is the aim of the life of blessedness. For it is to obtain this end that we always act, namely, to avoid pain and fear. And when this is once secured for us, all the tempest of the soul is dispersed, since the living creature has not to wander as though in search of something that is missing, and to look for some other thing by which he can fulfill the good of the soul and the good of the body. For it is then that we have need of pleasure, when we feel pain owing to the absence of pleasure; (but when we do not feel pain), we no longer need pleasure.

[129] And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.

And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided.

[130] Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good. And again independence of desire we think a great good — not that we may at all times enjoy but a few things, but that, if we do not possess many, we may enjoy the few in the genuine persuasion that those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it, and that all that is natural is easy to be obtained, but that which is superfluous is hard. And so plain savours bring us a pleasure equal to a luxurious diet, when all the pain due to want is removed; and bread and water produce the highest pleasure, when one who needs them puts them to his lips.

[131] To grow accustomed therefore to simple and not luxurious diet gives us health to the full, and makes a man alert for the needful employments of life, and when after long intervals we approach luxuries disposes us better towards them, and fits us to be fearless of fortune. When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by

some who are either ignorant or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind.

[132] For it is not continuous drinkings and revelings, nor the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the wealthy table, which produce a pleasant life, but sober reasoning, searching out the motives for all choice and avoidance, and banishing mere opinions, to which are due the greatest disturbance of the spirit. Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy: for from prudence are sprung all the other virtues, and it teaches us that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honorably and justly, (nor, again, to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice) without living pleasantly. For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them.

[133] For indeed who, think you, is a better man than he who holds reverent opinions concerning the gods, and is at all times free from fear of death, and has reasoned out the end ordained by nature? He understands that the limit of good things is easy to fulfill and easy to attain, whereas the course of ills is either short in time or slight in pain; he laughs at (destiny), whom some have introduced as the mistress of all things. (He thinks that with us lies the chief power in determining events, some of which happen by necessity) and some by chance, and some are within our control; for while necessity cannot be called to account, he sees that chance is inconstant, but that which is in our control is subject to no master, and to it are naturally attached praise and blame.

[134] For, indeed, it were better to follow the myths about the gods than to become a slave to the destiny of the natural philosophers: for the former suggests a hope of placating the gods by worship, whereas the latter involves a necessity which knows no placation. As to chance, he does not regard it as a god as most men do (for in a god's acts there is no disorder), nor as an uncertain cause (of all things) for he does not believe that good and evil are given by chance to man for the framing of a blessed life, but that opportunities for great good and great evil are afforded by it.

[135] He therefore thinks it better to be unfortunate in reasonable action than to prosper in unreason. For it is better in a man's actions that what is well chosen (should fail, rather than that what is ill chosen) should be successful owing to chance. Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself; and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like unto a mortal being.

[135] In several works he rejects all kinds of prophecy, and specially in the *Shorter Summary*. He says, 'Prophecy does not exist, and even if it did exist, things that come to pass must be counted nothing to us.' So much for his theory of morals, which he has discussed more fully elsewhere.

[136] Epicurus differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure. For they do not admit static pleasure, but only that which consists in motion. But Epicurus admits both kinds both in the soul and in the body, as he says in the work on *Choice and Avoidance* and in the book on *The Ends of Life* and in the first book *On Lives* and in the letter to his friends in Mytilene. Similarly, Diogenes in the 17th book of *Miscellanies* and Metrodorus in the *Timocrates* speak thus: 'Pleasure can be thought of both as consisting in motion and as static.' And Epicurus in the work on *Choice* speaks as follows: 'Freedom from trouble in the mind and from pain in the body are static pleasures, but Joy and exultation are considered as active pleasures involving motion. '

[137] A further difference from the Cyrenaics: they thought that bodily pains were worse than those of the soul, and pointed out that offenses are visited by bodily punishment. But Epicurus held that the pains of the soul are worse, for the flesh is only troubled for the moment, but the soul for past, present, and future. In the same way the pleasures of the soul are greater. As proof that pleasure is the end, he points out that all living creatures as soon as they are born take delight in pleasure, but resist pain by a natural impulse apart from reason. Therefore we avoid pain by instinct, just as Heracles, when he is being devoured by the shirt of Nessus, cries aloud, *With tears and groans: the rocks re-echoed far From Locris' mountain peaks, Euboea's hills.*

[138] He says that virtue is preferred for the sake of pleasure, and not for its own sake, just as the doctor's art is employed for the sake of health. So Diogenes says too in the 20th book of *Miscellanies*, and he adds that education is a ‘way of life. ' Epicurus says also that virtue alone is inseparable from pleasure, but that other things may be separated, such as things to eat. Come, then, let us put the crown, as it were, to the whole work and to the life of our philosopher, in setting out his Principal Doctrines, and closing the whole work with them, thus using as our conclusion the starting-point of happiness.

## 14. The Principal Doctrines

PD01. The blessed and immortal nature knows no trouble itself, nor causes trouble to any other, so that it is never constrained by anger or favor. For all such things exist only in the weak.

PD02. Death is nothing to us, for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us.

PD03. The limit of quantity in pleasures is the removal of all that is painful. Wherever pleasure is present, as long as it is there, there is neither pain of body, nor of mind, nor of both at once.

PD04. Pain does not last continuously in the flesh, but the acutest pain is there for a very short time, and even that which just exceeds the pleasure in the flesh does not continue for many days at once. But chronic illnesses permit a predominance of pleasure over pain in the flesh.

PD05. It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably, and justly, [nor again to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice] without living pleasantly. And the man who does not possess the pleasant life is not living prudently, honorably, and justly, [and the man who does not possess the virtuous life] cannot possibly live pleasantly.

PD06. Whatever you can provide yourself with to secure protection from men is a natural good. [note]

PD07. Some men wished to become famous and conspicuous, thinking that they would thus win for themselves safety from other men. Wherefore if the life of such men is safe, they have obtained the good which nature craves; but if it is not safe, they do not possess that for which they strove at first by the instinct of nature.

PD08. No pleasure is a bad thing in itself; but the means which produce some pleasures bring with them disturbances many times greater than the pleasures.

PD09. If every pleasure could be intensified so that it lasted, and influenced the whole organism or the most essential parts of our nature, pleasures would never differ from one another.

PD10. If the things that produce the pleasures of profligates could dispel the fears of the mind about the phenomena of the sky, and death, and its pains, and also teach the limits of desires (and of pains), we should never have cause to blame them: for they would be filling themselves full, with pleasures from every source, and never have pain of body or mind, which is the evil of life.

PD11. If we were not troubled by our suspicions of the phenomena of the sky, and about death, fearing that it concerns us, and also by our failure to grasp the limits of pains and desires, we should have no need of natural science.

PD12. A man cannot dispel his fear about the most important matters if he does not know what is the nature of the universe, but suspects the truth of some mythical story. So that, without natural science, it is not possible to attain our pleasures unalloyed.

PD13. There is no profit in securing protection in relation to men, if things above, and things beneath the earth, and indeed all in the boundless universe, remain matters of suspicion.

PD14. The most unalloyed source of protection from men, which is secured to some extent by a certain force of expulsion, is in fact the immunity which results from a quiet life, and retirement from the world.

PD15. The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity.

PD16. In but few things chance hinders a wise man, but the greatest and most important matters, reason has ordained, and throughout the whole period of life does and will ordain.

PD17. The just man is most free from trouble; the unjust most full of trouble.

PD18. The pleasure in the flesh is not increased when once the pain due to want is removed, but is only varied: and the limit as regards pleasure in the mind is begotten by the reasoned understanding of these very pleasures, and of the emotions akin to them, which used to cause the greatest fear to the mind.

PD19. Infinite time contains no greater pleasure than limited time, if one measures, by reason, the limits of pleasure.

PD20. The flesh perceives the limits of pleasure as unlimited, and unlimited time is required to supply it. But the mind, having attained a reasoned understanding of the ultimate good of the flesh and its limits, and having dissipated the fears concerning the time to come, supplies us with the complete life, and we have no further need of infinite time; but neither does the mind shun pleasure, nor, when circumstances begin to bring about the departure from life, does it approach its end as though it fell short, in any way, of the best life.

PD21. He who has learned the limits of life knows that that which removes the pain due to want, and makes the whole of life complete, is easy to obtain, so that there is no need of actions which involve competition.

PD22. We must consider both the real purpose, and all the evidence of direct perception, to which we always refer the conclusions of opinion; otherwise, all will be full of doubt and confusion.

PD23. If you fight against all sensations, you will have no standard by which to judge even those of them which you say are false.

PD24. If you reject any single sensation, and fail to distinguish between the conclusion of opinion, as to the appearance awaiting confirmation, and that which is actually given by the sensation or feeling, or each intuitive apprehension of the mind, you will confound all other sensations, as well, with the same groundless opinion, so that you will reject every standard of judgment. And if among the mental images created by your opinion you affirm both that which awaits confirmation, and that which does not, you will not escape error, since you will have preserved the whole cause of doubt in every judgment between what is right and what is wrong.

PD25. If on each occasion, instead of referring your actions to the end of nature, you turn to some other, nearer, standard, when you are making a choice or an avoidance, your actions will not be consistent with your principles.

PD26. Of desires, all that do not lead to a sense of pain, if they are not satisfied, are not necessary, but involve a craving which is easily dispelled when the object is hard to procure, or they seem likely to produce harm.

PD27. Of all the things which wisdom acquires to produce the blessedness of the complete life, far the greatest is the possession of friendship.

PD28. The same knowledge that makes one confident that nothing dreadful is eternal or long-lasting also recognizes, in the face of these limited evils, the security afforded by friendship. [ note]

PD29. Among desires, some are natural (and necessary, some natural) but not necessary, and others neither natural nor necessary, but due to idle imagination.

PD30. Wherever, in the case of desires which are physical, but do not lead to a sense of pain if they are not fulfilled, the effort is intense, such pleasures are due to idle imagination; and it is not owing to their own nature that they fail to be dispelled, but owing to the empty imaginings of the man.

PD31. The justice which arises from nature is a pledge of mutual advantage, to restrain men from harming one another, and save them from being harmed.

PD32. For all living things which have not been able to make compacts not to harm one another, or be harmed, nothing ever is either just or unjust; and likewise, too, for all tribes of men which have been unable, or unwilling, to make compacts not to harm or be harmed.

PD33. Justice never is anything in itself, but in the dealings of men with one another, in any place whatever, and at any time, it is a kind of compact not to harm or be harmed. [note]

PD34. Injustice is not an evil in itself, but only in consequence of the fear which attaches to the apprehension of being unable to escape those appointed to punish such actions.

PD35. It is not possible for one who acts in secret contravention of the terms of the compact not to harm or be harmed to be confident that he will escape detection, even if, at present, he escapes a thousand times. For up to the time of death it cannot be certain that he will indeed escape.

PD36. In its general aspect, justice is the same for all, for it is a kind of mutual advantage in the dealings of men with one another; but with reference to the individual peculiarities of a country, or any other circumstances, the same thing does not turn out to be just for all.

PD37. Among actions which are sanctioned as just by law, that which is proved, on examination, to be of advantage, in the requirements of men's dealings with one another, has the guarantee of justice, whether it is the same for all or not. But if a man makes a law, and it does not turn out to lead to advantage in men's dealings with each other, then it no longer has the essential nature of justice. And even if the advantage in the matter of justice shifts from one side to the other, but for a while accords with the general concept, it is nonetheless just for that period, in the eyes of those who do not confound themselves with empty sounds, but look to the actual facts.

PD38. Where, provided the circumstances have not been altered, actions which were considered just have been shown not to accord with the general concept, in actual practice, then they are not just. But where, when circumstances have changed, the same actions which were sanctioned as just no longer lead to advantage, they were just at the time, when they were of advantage for the dealings of fellow-citizens with one another, but subsequently they are no longer just, when no longer of advantage.

PD39. The man who has best ordered the element of disquiet arising from external circumstances has made those things that he could akin to himself, and the rest at least not alien; but with all to which he could not do even this, he has refrained from mixing, and has expelled from his life all which it was of advantage to treat thus.

PD40. As many as possess the power to procure complete immunity from their neighbors, these also live most pleasantly with one another, since they have the most certain pledge of security, and, after they have enjoyed the fullest intimacy, they do not lament the previous departure of a dead friend, as though he were to be pitied.

Notes To Principal Doctrines:

PD06: The translation given is by Eugene O'Connor from "The Essential Epicurus." Bailey: "To secure protection from men anything is a natural good by which you may be able to attain this end." New Greek Version: "In order to obtain security from other people, there was (always) the natural good of sovereignty and kingship, through which (someone) once could have accomplished this."

PD28: The translation given is by Eugene O'Connor from "The Essential Epicurus." Bailey: "The same conviction which has given us confidence that there is nothing terrible that lasts forever, or even for long, has also seen the protection of friendship most fully completed in the limited evils of this life."

PD33: Translation by Epicurus.net: "There never was such a thing as absolute justice, but only agreements made in mutual dealings among men in whatever places at various times providing against the infliction or suffering of harm."