

"Nothing Comes from Nothing" and Parmenides

Post by "Cassius" of January 21, 2021 at 11:11 AM

Matt this discussion takes me back to another passage of "A Few Days In Athens" I always questioned, from Chapter 14. where Wright has Epicurus say:

Quote

To *deny* the existence of the gods would indeed be presumption in a philosopher; a presumption equaled only by that of him who should *assert* their existence."

"How!" exclaimed the youth, with a countenance in which astonishment seemed to suspend every other expression.

"As I never saw the gods, my son," calmly continued the Sage, "I cannot *assert* their existence; and, that I never saw them, is no reason for my *denying* it."

"But do we believe nothing except that of which we have ocular demonstration?"

"Nothing, at least, for which we have not the evidence of one or more of our senses; that is, when we believe on just grounds, which, I grant, taking men collectively, is very seldom."

First, I don't think this accurately reflects Epicurus' position at all, and it seems mighty presumptuous to me that Wright put these words in Epicurus' mouth. But, having got that observation out of the way, we should ask:

What should WE think of this? Is it correct? Is it the position we should take today? How does it fit with Epicurus' and Parmenides' arguments?