

Episode Ninety-Nine - The Epicurean View of Justice (Part Two)

Post by “Cassius” of December 5, 2021 at 5:56 PM

Now for the alternatives:

BAILEY:

[823] Herein you must eagerly desire to shun this fault, and with foresighted fear to avoid this error; do not think that the bright light of the eyes was created in order that we may be able to look before us, or that, in order that we may have power to plant long paces, therefore the tops of shanks and thighs, based upon the feet, are able to bend; or again, that the forearms are jointed to the strong upper arms and hands given us to serve us on either side, in order that we might be able to do what was needful for life. All other ideas of this sort, which men proclaim, by distorted reasoning set effect for cause, since nothing at all was born in the body that we might be able to use it, but what is born creates its own use. Nor did sight exist before the light of the eyes was born, nor pleading in words before the tongue was created, but rather the birth of the tongue came long before discourse, and the ears were created much before sound was heard, and in short all the limbs, I trow, existed before their use came about: they cannot then have grown for the purpose of using them.

[843] But, on the other side, to join hands in the strife of battle, to mangle limbs and befoul the body with gore; these things were known long before gleaming darts flew abroad, and nature constrained men to avoid a wounding blow, before the left arm, trained by art, held up the defence of a shield. And of a surety to trust the tired body to rest was a habit far older than the soft-spread bed, and the slaking of the thirst was born before cups. These things, then, which are invented to suit the needs of life, might well be thought to have been discovered for the purpose of using them. But all those other things lie apart, which were first born themselves, and thereafter revealed the concept of their usefulness. In this class first of all we see the senses and the limbs; wherefore, again and again, it cannot be that you should believe that they could have been created for the purpose of useful service.

BROWN:

But in subjects of this nature, guard yourself to the utmost of your power against that error, that gross mistake, and never believe that those bright orbs, the eyes, were made that we might see; of that our legs were made upright, and things fixed upon them, and were supported by feet, that we might walk and take large strides; that our arms were braced with strong sinews, and that our hands hung on both sides, to assist us in those offices that are necessary

to the support of life. And whatever constructions they put upon other parts of the body, they are all absurd and against reason; for no member of the body was made for any particular use, but after it was made each member found out a use proper to itself; for there was no such thing as to see before the eyes were made, nor to speak before the tongue was formed, but the tongue was rather in being before there was speech, and the ears were made long before any sound was heard. In short, all the members, in my opinion, were in being before their particular uses were set out.

This is so true that, to engage in battle, to mangle the limbs, and to stain the body over with blood, these were in being before any shining darts flew through the air, and nature taught us to avoid a wound before the left hand learnt to oppose a shield in our defense; and so, to commit the body to rest was long before the invention of soft beds, and to quench the thirst was practiced before the use of cups. All these things, we may believe, were invented for common benefit, as they were found proper and convenient for the occasions of life. All things therefore that were in being before the use of them was determined applied themselves afterwards to the office that was most suitable and serviceable to them. Of this kind principally are the senses and members of our bodies, and therefore you are to avoid, upon all accounts, so much as to think that they were at first formed for any particular design or use.

MUNRO:

And herein you should desire with all your might to shun the weakness, with a lively apprehension to avoid the mistake of supposing that the bright lights of the eyes were made in order that we might see; and that the tapering ends of the shanks and hams are attached to the feet as a base in order to enable us to step out with long strides; or again that the forearms were slung to the stout upper arms and ministering hands given us on each side, that we might be able to discharge the needful duties of life. Other explanations of like sort which men give, one and all put effect for cause through wrongheaded reasoning; since nothing was born in the body that we might use it, but that which is born begets itself a use: thus seeing did not exist before the eyes were born, nor the employment of speech ere the tongue was made; but rather the birth of the tongue was long anterior to language and the ears were made long before sound was heard, and all the limbs, I trow, existed before there was any employment for them: they could not therefore have grown for the purpose of being used.

But on the other hand, engaging in the strife of battle and mangling the body and staining the limbs with gore were in vogue long before glittering darts ever flew; and nature prompted to shun a wound or ever the left arm by the help of art held up before the person the defense of a shield. Yes, and consigning the tired body to rest is much older than a soft-cushioned bed, and the slaking of thirst had birth before cups. These things therefore which have been invented in accordance with the uses and wants of life, may well be believed to have been discovered for the purpose of being used. Far otherwise is it with all those things which first were born, then afterwards made known the purposes to which they might be put; at the head of which class we see the senses and the limbs. Wherefore again and again I repeat, it is quite impossible to

believe that they could have been made for the duties which they discharge.