

Should Epicurean Philosophy Be Made More Accessible?

Post by "Cassius" of January 1, 2022 at 12:52 PM

From Brown's translation of Book 2, line 1023:

Now apply your mind closely to the documents of true reason, for a new scheme of philosophy presses earnestly for your attention, a new scene of things displays itself before you. Yet there is nothing so obvious but may at first view seem difficult to be believed, and there is nothing so prodigious and wonderful at first that men do not by degrees cease to admire. For see the bright and pure color of the sky, possessed on every side by wandering stars, and the Moon's splendor, and the Sun's glorious light; these, if they now first shown to mortal eyes, and suddenly presented to our view, what could more wonderful appear than these? And what before could men less presume to expect? Nothing surely, so surprising would be the sight have been. But now, quite tired and cloyed with the prospect, none of us vouchsafes so much as to cast our eyes up towards the bright temples of the sky. Therefore do not be frightened, and conceive an aversion to an opinion because of its novelty; but search it rather with a more piercing judgment. If it appears true to you, embrace it; if false, set yourself against it.

Bailey version:

[1023] Now turn your mind, I pray, to a true reasoning. For a truth wondrously new is struggling to fall upon your ears, and a new face of things to reveal itself. Yet neither is anything so easy, but that at first it is more difficult to believe, and likewise nothing is so great or so marvelous but that little by little all decrease their wonder at it. First of all the bright clear color of the sky, and all it holds within it, the stars that wander here and there, and the moon and the sheen of the sun with its brilliant light; all these, if now they had come to being for the first time for mortals, if all unforeseen they were in a moment placed before their eyes, what story could be told more marvelous than these things, or what that the nations would less dare to believe beforehand? Nothing, I trow: so worthy of wonder would this sight have been. Yet think how no one now, wearied with satiety of seeing, deigns to gaze up at the shining quarters of the sky! Wherefore cease to spew out reason from your mind, struck with terror at mere newness, but rather with eager judgement weigh things, and, if you see them true, lift your hands and yield, or, if it is false, gird yourself to battle.