

*What sort of man the real philosopher should be?*



From D'ooge M.L. (Tr. & Com.) *Nicomachus of Gerasa: Introduction to Arithmetic*. New York & London: MacMillan Co, 1926; pp. 185-86. Full text in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers.

Says Archytas of Tarentum at the beginning of his treatise *On Harmony*,

It seems to me that they do well to study mathematics, and it is not at all strange that they have correct knowledge about each thing, what it is. For if they knew rightly the nature of the whole, they were also likely to see well what is the nature of the parts. About geometry, indeed, and arithmetic and astronomy, they have handed down to us a clear understanding, and not least also about music. For these seem to be sister sciences; for they deal with sister subjects, the first two forms of being.

Plato, too, at the end of the thirteenth book of the *Laws*, to which some give the title *The Philosopher*, because he investigates and defines in it what sort of man the real philosopher should be, in the course of his summary of what had previously been fully set forth and established, adds:

Every diagram, system of numbers, every scheme of harmony, and every law of the movement of the stars, ought to appear one to him who studies rightly; and what we say will properly appear if one studies all things looking to one principle, for there will be seen to be one bond for all these things, and if anyone attempts philosophy in any other way he must call on Fortune to assist him. For there is never a path without these; this is the way, these the studies, be they hard or easy; by this course must one go, and not neglect it. The one who has attained all these things in the way I describe him, I for my part call wisest, and this I maintain through thick and thin.

For it is clear that these studies are like ladders and bridges that carry our minds from things apprehended by sense and opinion to those comprehended by the mind and understanding, and from those material, physical things, our foster-brethren known to us from childhood, to the things with which we are unacquainted, foreign to our senses, but in their immateriality and eternity more akin to our souls, and above all to reason which is in our souls.

