

ARISTOTLE, PROEMIUM, N. ETHICS, BOOK I, READING 3

Enough will be said if it is made clear according to the underlying matter. For certitude ought not to be sought in like manner in speaking about all things, just as neither in the products of the arts. But there is much difference and error about good and just things which political knowledge considers, so that they seem to be by custom only, and not by nature. And there is much error about good things due to many being harmed as a result of them. For some have perished through wealth and others, through courage.

We should be content therefore, in speaking about such things and from such things, to show the truth roughly and in outline; and in speaking about such things and from such things as are for the most part, to conclude such as are the same.

In the same way, one should receive each thing said. For it belongs to the educated man to seek certitude in each kind of subject to the extent that the nature of the thing admits. For it seems about the same to accept the mathematician persuading and to demand demonstration from a rhetorician.

Each man judge well what he knows and of these things he is a good judge - the man educated in something, about that; and simply, the man educated in all things. Hence, the young man is not the proper hearer of political knowledge. For he is without experience of the actions in life while the arguments are from these and about these.

Further, being a follower of the emotions, he will listen in vain and uselessly since the end is not knowledge, but action. It makes no difference whether he is young in age or youthful in character. For the defect is not by time, but through living and pursuing each thing by emotion. But knowledge is useless to such, as it is to the incontinent. But to those desiring and acting according to reason, it will be very useful to know about such things.

Let this much about the hearer and how it should be received and what we propose pave the way.

