

Epicurean philosophy vs. Stoicism in public popularity

Post by "Cassius" of March 13, 2021 at 3:00 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

They like simple answers to complex questions. Black and white, not grey. Epicureanism makes you do the work.

Yep I think it is a combination of SIMPLE plus (to many) "distasteful," and I think probaby the "distaste" outweighs the "simplicity" issue. On that point here's one of the sections of "A Few Days In Athens" I think is well stated:

Quote

"It might seem strange," said Metrodorus, "that the pedantry of Aristotle should find so many imitators, and his dark sayings so many believers, in a city, too, now graced and enlightened by the simple language, and simple doctrines of an Epicurus. — But the language of truth is too simple for inexperienced ears. We start in search of knowledge, like the demigods of old in search of adventure, prepared to encounter giants, to scale mountains, to pierce into Tartarean gulfs, and to carry off our prize from the grip of some dark enchanter, invulnerable to all save to charmed weapons and deity-gifted assailants. To find none of all these things, but, in their stead, a smooth road through a pleasant country, with a familiar guide to direct our curiosity, and point out the beauties of the landscape, disappoints us of all exploit and all notoriety; and our vanity turns but too often from the fair and open champaigne, into error's dark labyrinths, where we mistake mystery for wisdom, pedantry for knowledge, and prejudice for virtue."

"I admit the truth of the metaphor," said Theon. "But may we not simplify too much as well as too little? May we not push investigation beyond the limits assigned to human reason, and, with a boldness approaching to profanity, tear, without removing, the veil which enwraps the mysteries of creation from our scrutiny?"

"Without challenging the meaning of the terms you have employed," said Metrodorus, "I would observe, that there is little danger of our pushing investigation too far. Unhappily the limits prescribed to us by our few and imperfect senses must ever cramp the sphere of our observation, as compared to the boundless range of things; and that even when we shall have strained and improved our senses to the uttermost. We trace an effect to a cause, and that cause to another cause, and so on, till we hold some few

links of a chain, whose extent like the charmed circle, is without beginning as without end.”