

AFDIA - Chapter Two - Text and Discussion

Post by “Joshua” of February 6, 2022 at 6:15 PM

Chapter 2 Outline (slightly out of order with the text)

I. In the house of Epicurus, Theon meets three Scholars and two Problems

A. Sofron

1. Too eager to please (or too eager to trust?)

A. First to greet Theon

B. "premature affection"

C. "I hope [Theon] will judge all things, and all people, with his own understanding, and not with that of Epicurus"

B. Metrodorus

1. Too zealous to condemn (and too hesitant to forgive?)

A. "there are vices, different from those he saved me from, which, if not more unworthy, are perhaps more unpardonable, because committed with less temptation"

B. "Are we not prone," said the sage, "to extenuate our foibles, even while condemning them? And does it not flatter our self-love, to weigh our own vices against those of more erring neighbors?"

C. Leontion

1. Appropriate; her bearing and conduct is in harmony with philosophy

A. "But I would not particularize Theophrastus for sometimes forgetting this, as I have never known but one who always remembers it." [on arguing with care and modesty]

B. "Such grace! such majesty! More than all such intellect! And this — this was the Leontium Timocrates had called a prostitute without shame or measure!"

II. Epicurus answers the two philosophical problems

A. Problem; "I know not," resumed Leontium, "that I should this evening have so frequently thought Theophrastus wrong, if he had not made me so continually feel that he thought himself right. Must I seek the cause of this in the writer's or the reader's vanity?"

1. "Perhaps," said the master, smiling, " you will find that it lies in both."

2. "The mode of delivering a truth makes, for the most part, as much impression on the mind of the listener, as the truth itself."

B. Problem: "Whether the vicious were more justly objects of indignation or of contempt: Metrodorus argued for the first, and I for the latter. Let the master decide."

1. "He will give his opinion certainly; but that is not decision."

2. "Had I regarded the vicious with indignation, I had never gained one to virtue. Had I viewed them with contempt, I had never sought to gain one."

III. Zeno's Virtue and the lies of Timocrates

A. Theon: "I have long owned the power of virtue, but surely till this night I never felt its persuasion."

B. Epicurus, on Timocrates; "And so I do. I answer him in my life. The only way in which a philosopher should ever answer a fool, or, as in this case, a knave."

C. Epicurus on Zeno; "Don't you know that who quarrels with your doctrine, must always quarrel with your practice? Nothing is so provoking as that a man should preach viciously and act virtuously."