

Biographical Details of Norman W. DeWitt

Post by "Cassius" of July 31, 2023 at 9:19 AM

[Quote from Titus](#)

While his assumptions are often experimental and lacking obvious evidence, this is exactly the reason why his work is so valueable.

I very much agree with this and the rest of the paragraph / post. You can't accept at face value anyone's speculations, and you shouldn't accept Dewitt's. But a classical scholar can bring together a huge array of information and draw parallels that others simply can't, and those provide food for thought whether they pan out to be "provable" by other facts or not. The material in St Paul and Epicurus where DeWitt discusses that the early Christians considered Epicurus to be an "antichrist" figure is particularly stimulating and useful. I think probably some significant number of them did consider Epicurus that way, and thinking through the ramifications of that would be very stimulating for any number of modern Christians in re-examining their own views. I'd personally be very interested to read much more writing about the new testament from that very same perspective. Presumably there's a lot buried in the "church father" material and other records of the "early church" (to the extent they exist) that involve confrontation with Epicurean arguments. DeWitt had the scope of study to start the process but I would think there's a lot more to be done.

One of the points DeWitt brings out in the final chapter of Epicurus and His Philosophy was that the dying down of the controversies in which the Epicureans were involved with Judeo-Christianity marked the parallel dying down of the Epicurean school as a whole. It might well be that any resurgence of interest in Epicurus will end up being accompanied by the re-lighting of those same flames of controversy.