

Highlights and doubts after reading Chapter 1 (Part 1 of 2)

Post by "Don" of July 5, 2020 at 9:55 PM

Quote

P5 "Faith was recognized for the first time as a factor in happiness". **I guess this will be expanded upon later in the book, but... why does faith play such an important role in Epicurean Philosophy? How is this not contradictory to its materialistic ontology and its empiricist epistemology?**

In my opinion, this use of the word "faith" is a relic of Dewitt's Epicurean Christianity habits. I don't like the use of faith here (I went back and looked at Dewitt, too). It's a fine word, but it has far too much religious baggage attached to it.

I think what Dewitt is trying to say is that Epicurus put **trust** (a synonym for faith) in his certainty that knowledge could be obtained. The sentence before the one you quote:

Quote

At the same time the objective of study is stressed, which is ataraxy, the quiet of mind that arises from faith in the certainty of knowledge. Incidentally, faith was recognized for the first time as a factor in happiness.

... Leads me to believe that Dewitt is contrasting Epicurus with the classical Sceptics who didn't believe one could say anything for sure about reality. The Sceptics said one couldn't have "faith" or trust in one's senses or say definitive things about reality. Epicurus trusted in (or "had faith in") his pursuit of knowledge and that he could arrive at a true understanding of reality.