

# The destruction of the ancient world

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I am reading *Nature's GOD: The Heretical Origins of the American Republic* by Matthew Stewart right now who discusses the tensions and influence of the Calvinists and Puritans in Colonial North America versus self-described "Deists" like Thomas Young and Ethan Allen. He goes to great lengths to demonstrate his postulate (similar to *The Swerve*) that the re-discovery and dissemination of *De Rerum Natura* is the definitive catalyst that lead to the modern age.

He provides a number of interesting anecdotes about Calvinist arguments against Epicurean Philosophy. Needless to say, Epicurus seems to live atop *History's "Most Wanted"* list as a perpetual antagonist to the political and religious authorities who could benefit from incorporating the systems of Epicurus' philosophical opponents:

“In Epicurus [...] there was nothing of that compromising, dialectical spirit that pervaded Aristotle and the others and allowed them to be wrestled to the ground and marked with the sign of the cross" (85).

I think that American rejectors of Christianity have a lot in common with Epicureans in the late Roman Empire. In both time periods, we have political figures who were publicly ridiculed for their devotion to the teachings of Epicurus. In both periods, people regularly misunderstood the principles behind scientific innovations that they, themselves, use. Both periods feature huge groups of reactionaries who actively seek the destruction of modern inventions. In both periods, there is a tension between Superstitious Fear-Based Religion versus Natural Reason, and it usually leads to the fearfully religious with the benefit of legal authority applying punitive measures against the naturally reasonable.