

My struggle with Norman DeWitt

Post by “Joshua” of August 25, 2023 at 11:27 AM

You also have to situate DeWitt's book in its time and place--North America during the early years of the Cold War. In fact, Joseph McCarthy was censured by the Senate the same year DeWitt published. I presume his endless perceived connections between Christianity and Epicureanism were an attempt to get his Christian contemporaries to take another look at Epicurus.

It is nevertheless rather overbearing!

Regarding Epicureanism as a missionary philosophy, there are a number of issues at play. Since the Epicureans were barred by the Gymnasiarchs from teaching in the Gymnasium, the usual place for philosophy, they were bound by necessity to pursue alternatives; writing letters, teaching in private, and placing statues where passers-by might see them and become curious.

Epicurus was also nearly unique in the ancient world for thinking that philosophy should not be relegated to the high born and their sons, but could be studied profitably by everyone. Then there is the issue of dogma, which I am out of time on break to address!