

"Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists." Review.

Post by "Daniel" of April 7, 2019 at 11:23 AM

CHRISTIANITY VERSUS EPICUREANISM (VI)

"...Since there is such deep irreconcilable disagreement between Christianity and Epicureanism on the cosmological and larger moral level - both in regard to their respective natural foundations and in regard to Christianity's supernatural elements and goal - there will also be radical disagreement between the two on the particularities of morality, even when there appears to be agreement on the surface..."

"...we must also realize that Christians were not the only ones arguing from an intelligent design position. Much of what is said in this chapter of Christianity, insofar as it is based on the natural law, could be said of Stoicism and Aristotelianism as well, but historically Stoicism and Aristotelianism were influential in the long run because they supported the approach of Christianity, and therefore, Christianity took up their arguments and carried them forward..."

"...As a consequence, no sexual act is intrinsically evil, for as Epicurus himself said, "every pleasure is a good thing...Moral restrictions arise in Epicureanism from two sources, our bodily constitution and the peculiar moral boundaries of the society in which we happen to find ourselves...for Epicureanism, a particular relationship of sexuality to marriage can only be considered a social convention which may be useful but is not essentially good..."

"...Thus, when Jesus was asked about divorce, he did not question whether divorce might be useful, or allow for greater pleasure, or reduce the amount of pain; rather, he rejected divorce as contrary to the natural, created order..."

"...Therefore, in contrast to Epicurean relativism, permanent monogamy is the natural moral standard by which all other sexual practices and marriage customs one happens to find, rather than being explained in terms of the accidents of place and time, are understood to be caused by moral defect, a falling away from the intended natural goal...masturbation, fornication (sex outside marriage), adultery, homosexuality, pederasty and bestiality are all condemned as violations of the natural order..."

"...in the current debate about abortion, everything ultimately depends on whether one thinks that human beings do or do not have an immortal soul, that is, on whether one is adopting the argument of the Christian or the Epicurean...If the Epicurean is right about nature, then the Christian is a fool, and a pernicious, meddling one at that, for treating a mass of cells no bigger than a pencil point as a divinely informed sacred life. But if the Christian is right about nature, then the Epicurean is promoting and engaging in mass murder on a scale dwarfing the

wickedness of all other combined..."

"...It is also important to notice that Christianity stands almost alone in its condemnation of suicide...the centrality of Christ's passion made the bearing of severe suffering the very model of redemption. Christians were commanded to take up the cross and, as Christ did, bear their suffering to the bitter end, for bearing such suffering in imitation of Christ was taken to be the path to holiness and eternal life...That ancient, great abyss between the Epicurean's and the Christian's moral reasoning about suicide is the very abyss that has opened up again in the contemporary debates about euthanasia and the right to die; and again, the two sides share nothing in common..."