

Indivisibility And Its Significance

Post by "Cassius" of December 28, 2019 at 1:28 PM

Godfrey: That is GREAT if you have time to tackle God and the Atom. I recall Alex saying many good things about Stenger and that book in particular. I think I scanned a few pages but that is as far as I got. It would be tremendously helpful if you are able to expand this or related threads with commentary from Stenger.

As far as the clips above those are from the Cambridge books so I don't think there is a full free copy on line.

I know I have read about this in various sources but unfortunately I don't seem to have kept

He declared dialectic a superfluity but was able to criticize Plato with great acumen and he wrote against the Megarians, the contemporary experts in logic. He rejected geometry as having no bearing upon problems of conduct but adopted the procedures of Euclid in the composition of his own textbooks. He refuted the assumption of the mathematicians that matter is infinitely divisible, rightly insisting that the result would be zero. This is not the thinking of an ignoramus.

He also exhibits great familiarity with the writings of Plato and he distributed among members of his school the work of refuting or ridiculing his various dialogues. His own classification of the desires is developed from a Platonic hint and he begins to erect his structure of hedonism from the point where this topic was left by Plato. A paragraph is extant in which he warns his disciples against the Platonic view of the universe as described in the *Timaeus*, and elsewhere he pokes a little satirical fun at that famous opus. More than half of his forty Authorized Doctrines are direct contradictions of Platonic teachings.

12

The whole issue of "infinity" is charged with implication, both down (infinite divisibility) and "up" (is it right to say that the universe is "infinite" in size, or is "boundless" perhaps a better word?) Because ultimately there must be no mystery to whether something exists or not.....

And of course those issues lead to the closing of the letter to Pythocles:

All these things, Pythocles, you must bear in mind; for thus you will escape in most things from superstition and will be enabled to understand what is akin to them. And most of all **give yourself up to the study of the beginnings and of infinity and of the things akin to them**, and also of the criteria of truth and of the feelings, and of the purpose for which we reason out these things. For these points when they are thoroughly studied will most easily enable you to understand the causes of the details. But those who have not thoroughly taken these things to heart could not rightly study them in themselves, nor have they made their own the reason for observing them.