

How To Turn Epicurean Philosophy On Its Head As Quickly As Possible - A Quick Comment on Mark 12

Post by "Cassius" of December 21, 2018 at 8:58 AM

Would you like a short summary of how to exactly and precisely turn Epicurean philosophy, and the natural order of human life itself, on its head? Try this from Mark 12:

"This is the most important: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

The truth about the universe as being composed of atoms rather than "divine fire" or other single nonsense, the truth about any sense of "divinity" as being totally natural and not meddling in our affairs, and the truth about pleasure as rooted in what is naturally pleasing to us, as opposed to "virtue."

The most central truths of life all turned on their head in an instant!

Post by "Matt" of December 21, 2018 at 10:10 AM

The "to love thy neighbor as thyself" is the sum of all Christian philosophy. Without it there is nothing to be gained from the Gospel. For someone who cannot love their neighbor, no matter who they are, will never apprehend nor comprehend any of the other teachings.

It takes an incredible amount of compassion to love those who would persecute you. It's easy enough to love those who already love you, but how can a person come to have compassion for an enemy? That is powerful because it in fact does turn all human nature on its head. We want to lash out and attack, but we are told to fight against our nature and see it from a different perspective. It is in my opinion a powerful concept, and the lack of it leads to alienation.

In the spirit of the season, Charles Dickens explained this most powerfully in the Christmas Carol. The Ghost of Christmas Present opens his robe to reveal two children:

"This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased."

Post by “Cassius” of December 21, 2018 at 12:03 PM

Yep you definitely see the issue LD! With the greatest of respect to you, I would say pending some translation error or ambiguity the statement is on its face ridiculous. Just because someone is physically next to me, which I think is a fair meaning of the word "neighbor," that certainly does not entitle that person to be "loved" by me to the same degree that I would love my wife, my child, my relatives, my friends, or even "me." To suggest that we should love a terrorist who wants to kill me and that same list of people is in every way unnatural and illogical, no matter whether we want to refer to the Epicurean standard or the Academic standards. So you're right, someone who believes that Nature and reason are the keys to life, to any extent, then an assertion that totally flies in the face of both cannot be accepted. It's "not even wrong" -- loving everyone equally is just an assertion of an ethical standard which has no basis for acceptance than pure faith - which in this case amounts to pure wishful thinking.

Of course minds a lot better than us have debated these things without resolution, so I doubt we'll reach one either! But I will still say "merry Christmas!"

Post by “Matt” of December 21, 2018 at 3:22 PM

Merry Christmas and...Peace and Safety to you Cassius! I hope we may continue have great discourse into the New Year!