

June 22nd, 2022 Epicurean Zoom Gathering

Post by "Cassius" of June 23, 2022 at 10:11 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

That bit about pains in brackets is not in every translation above, which I find interesting.

That reminds me to memorialize what we talked about last night, that I think this has multiple levels of meaning, one of which is not the most obvious but may be among the most important:

That because we experience nothing after death, there is a limit to the pain which we need fear, and that is very liberating as it frees us from the threats of religion. Citing Humphries this morning:

You may,

Yourself, some time or other, feel like turning

Away from my instruction, terrified

By priestly rant. How many fantasies

They can invent to overturn your sense

Of logic, muddle your estates by fear!

And rightly so, for if we ever saw

A limit to our troubles, we'd be strong,

Resisters of religion, rant and cant,

But as things are, we have no chance at all

With all their everlasting punishments

Waiting us after death.

Letter to Menoecus:

[125] For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living.

Torquatus from On Ends:

The fear of death plays havoc with the calm and even tenor of life, and to bow the head to pain and bear it abjectly and feebly is a pitiable thing; such weakness has caused many men to betray their parents or their friends, some their country, and very many utterly to ruin themselves. So on the other hand a strong and lofty spirit is entirely free from anxiety and sorrow. It makes light of death, for the dead are only as they were before they were born. It is schooled to encounter pain by recollecting that pains of great severity are ended by death, and slight ones have frequent intervals of respite; while those of medium intensity lie within our own control: we can bear them if they are endurable, or if they are not, we may serenely quit life's theater, when the play has ceased to please us. These considerations prove that timidity and cowardice are not blamed, nor courage and endurance praised, on their own account; the former are rejected because they beget pain, the latter coveted because they beget pleasure.