

# Torquatus' Statement of the Epicurean View Of The Ultimate Good In "On Ends"

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pleasure.

XII. But that pleasure is the boundary of all good things may be easily seen from this consideration. Let us imagine a person enjoying pleasures great, numerous, and perpetual, both of mind and body, with no pain either interrupting him at present or impending over him; what condition can we call superior to or more desirable than this? For it is inevitable that there must be in a man who is in this condition a firmness of mind which fears neither death nor pain, because death is void of all sensation; and pain, if it is of long duration, is a trifle, while if severe it is usually of brief duration; so that its brevity is a consolation if it is violent, and its trifling nature if it is enduring. And when there is added to these circumstances that such a man has no fear of the deity of the gods, and does not suffer past pleasures to be entirely lost, but delights himself with the continued recollection of them, what can be added to this which will be any improvement to it?

Imagine, on the other hand, any one worn out with the greatest pains of mind and body which can possibly befall a man, without any hope being held out to him that they will hereafter be lighter, when, besides, he has no pleasure whatever

either present or expected; what can be spoken of or imagined more miserable than this? But if a life entirely filled with pains is above all things to be avoided, then certainly that is the greatest of evils to live in pain. And akin to this sentiment is the other, that it is the most extreme good to live with pleasure. For our mind has no other point where it can stop as at a boundary; and all fears and distresses are referable to pain: nor is there anything whatever besides, which of its own intrinsic nature can make us anxious or grieve us. Moreover, the beginnings of desiring and avoiding, and indeed altogether of everything which we do, take their rise either in pleasure or pain. And as this is the case, it is plain that everything which is right and laudable has reference to this one object of living with pleasure. And since that is the highest, or extreme, or greatest good, which the Greeks call *τέλος*, because it is referred to nothing else itself, but everything is referred to it, we must confess that the highest good is to live agreeably.