

Summum bonum (Atheist & Bishop podcast)

Post by "Cassius" of June 24, 2023 at 1:28 PM

My current thinking is that Torquatus' statement that the highest good is pleasure was by the book and correct, and that DeWitt's reformulation of the words is not the best way forward to explain the issue.

However I am thinking that Dewitt is sensing correctly that Epicurus was linking pleasure to life so closely that Dewitt is in fact correct to see that there is an important shift in perspectives going on which Cicero is not explaining. And moving toward "life" is a much more accurate and satisfying way forward rather than obsessing over "katastematic pleasure" or "pleasures of rest."

And that shift is something like --- Since life itself is to be considered pleasurable in so fundamental a way, as the healthy and active functioning of body and mind, it is more faithful to the meaning for us today to think "I am alive and therefore I am going to seize the day and pursue life and pleasure to the fullest" than it is to think "I am alive and today gives me another opportunity to pursue pleasure (if by pleasure we understand ice cream and only indulgence of the senses."

Everything turns on how wide a definition we can understand the word "Pleasure" to mean. Once we accept that everything which is not painful is pleasurable then we can be understood to refer to Pleasure, but til then steps have to be undertaken to emphasize that life itself is pleasurable.