

Episode 196 - The Epicurean Arguments In Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 06

Post by “Cassius” of October 16, 2023 at 4:23 PM

It is *maddening* that the [Principal Doctrines](#) do not include in their top statements - or at all! - the simple positive statement that "pleasure is desirable."

I am sure there are more, but I can see two main possible explanations for this:

(1) Epicurus was treating his letter to Menoeceus, or some other document where he does say this, as a preliminary statement even more fundamental than the list contained in the [Principal Doctrines](#).

(2) Epicurus was being "in your face" again (like "*the sun it is the size it appears to be*") and taking a rigorously logical position that it is not necessary to say what is not necessary to say. This **might** be what Torquatus is alluding to at line 30 of On Ends Book One:

[30] Every creature, as soon as it is born, seeks after pleasure and delights therein as in its supreme good, while it recoils from pain as its supreme evil, and banishes that, so far as it can, from its own presence, and this it does while still uncorrupted, and while nature herself prompts unbiased and unaffected decisions. So he says we need no reasoning or debate to shew why pleasure is matter for desire, pain for aversion. These facts he thinks are simply perceived, just as the fact that fire is hot, snow is white, and honey sweet, no one of which facts are we bound to support by elaborate arguments; it is enough merely to draw attention to the fact; and there is a difference between proof and formal argument on the one hand and a slight hint and direction of the attention on the other; the one process reveals to us mysteries and things under a veil, so to speak; the other enables us to pronounce upon patent and evident facts.

Given our recent discussions, anyone want to suggest other possibilities?