

Episode 309 - TD37 - The Error of Basing Happiness On The Alleged Divinity Of The Human Mind

Post by "Cassius" of November 26, 2025 at 2:13 PM

Another note: In the first half of this episode, we take up Cicero's gross contradiction - which he calls out himself (!) between what he wrote in "On Ends" and what he is advocating here in "Tusculan Disputations."

The basic point is this:

- In On Ends, Cicero had taken the position that while the Stoics might say that only virtue is good and vice is evil, they also admitted that there were other things to be preferred (health) and not preferred (sickness). Here in On Ends Cicero defends Aristotle's school for saying that health is a good other than virtue, and sickness is an evil, because in the end their disagreement is only a matter of words, and they ultimately agree as to substance.

- Here in Tusculan Disputations Cicero is for some reason taking the *opposite* position, and he is siding with the Stoics that the Aristotelians are making a fatal error by admitting that anything is good other than virtue and anything evil other than vice.

Cicero makes no real effort to explain his inconsistency other than to say that he himself (Cicero) is a skeptic, and he can change his position from day to day according to whatever he thinks is probable.

Cicero doesn't see any problem with his change in positions, and in one thing he does remain absolutely consistent:- No matter what you think of the word-game dispute between Aristotle and Zeno, everyone agrees that Epicurus is a reprobate.