

## A. Le Grand's Divine Epicurus

Post by "Cassius" of June 5, 2026 at 7:01 AM

My verdict is that this book is an abomination, but a highly useful one.

It might deserve the award of being the first "truly modern" book on Epicurus that has led the way toward the numerous watered-down versions of Epicurean philosophy that we have today.

It's best use is going to be the evidence it gives to diagnose how non-Epicurean of orientations can latch on to certain aspects of what Epicurus wrote and enlist them for very non-Epicurean goals. This tactic is probably even more clear here than it is in Gassendi. To give Gassendi credit, he paid considerable attention to Epicurean physics and canonics. LeGrande totally ignores them. Now that I've gone through it all I can confirm that there is ZERO physics and ZERO canonics in it.

I would summarize what LeGrande has done as that he has featured the psychological hedonism "everyone pursues pleasure" argument early in the book. This takes the teeth out of pleasure as a philosophical goal and turns it into nothing more than live-simply advice: Isolate oneself from society, shun sex and marriage and children as more trouble than they are worth, and assorted other homespun positions. Then eliminate almost all further reference to Epicurus in favor of a very conventional "eternal wisdom" and "faith"-based virtue-ethics morality. Praise Plato, but not Aristotle, because Aristotle dared to say that strong emotions may sometimes be beneficial.

The final paragraph of the book, which makes no mention whatsoever of Epicurus, but fittingly cites Plato.

### Quote

As Love according to Plato, is the bond of the Universe, and causes that good Intelligence to arise, which is observed in each of its parts; Friendship has not its subsistence but through Vertue, it derives all its Glory from its Merit, and ceases being True as soon as it leaves off further Converse with it. The Antients, whose Ignorance and Infidelity had buried them in darkness, had of it but an imperfect shadow, and the cause of its birth, being wanting to them, they could never ingage themselves but into affections that were Illegitimate. But as soon as the Eternal Wisdom dissipated their darkness, that Faith began to cast its beams into their hearts, Friendship was re-established in the World, Men lived in a Community, their thoughts were no more divided then their goods, and all agreeing in one and the same Principle, they discovered in their Republick the image and representation of an Eternal Peace. So

that Vertue is the soul of Friendship, it is requisite that the knot which unites the Hearts should be sacred, and derive its Force from Piety, to become True and Real.

FINIS.

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