

# Five Doses That Trump Four Every Time - The "Five-Part Cure"

Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 9:04 AM

[Edit: Originally posted as "Six-Part" Cure, consolidated to five for reasons stated in [post 16 below](#).]

My issues with the tetrapharmakon have been frequently stated. What would I suggest is a much better summary that is better documented in the texts? Instead of the "four-part cure" I think we can look to a much better-stated "Six-part cure" as stated by Torquatus in "On Ends" (which means it was taken from the best handbooks available in about 50 BC by Cicero, who also had access to the best Epicurean teachers of his time, and who was subject to the sanction of some of his best friends if he got it wrong).

I need to look further at the Latin and variations of the translations, but let's take this from Rackham as a starting point:

## Quote

The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.

I can see it dividing this way:

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain
2. Work to possess a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain;
3. Work to understand that death means complete unconsciousness,

4. Work to understand that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.
5. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
6. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.

Some may divide it differently, and suggestions are welcome.

This post is just my first thought on the subject, but it covers the same points as the first two of the "T" while stating the other key fundamental points of the philosophy in much more clear fashion. Someone might want to say that point one is not a "dose" but the definition of health, but I think it's probably essential to keep it in the list given that the absence of such a statement is a major contributor to the ambiguities of the "T"

And this is a list that comes with some of the best possible documentation from the ancient world, not from a fragment of Greek of which we have next to no context with which to judge its subtleties, and about which we really do not even know for sure that Philodemus endorsed.

(Thanks to Don for inspiring this post.)

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2023 at 9:43 AM**

As usual there is lots of room for varying the wording of the translation from the Latin:

nihil desiderare manum cum ita esset affecta, secundum non recte, si voluptas esset bonum, fuisse desideraturam. Idcirco enim non desideraret quia quod dolore caret id in voluptate est.

40 XII. "Extremum autem esse bonorum voluptatem ex hoc facillime perspicitur potest: Constituamus aliquem magnis, multis, perpetuis fruentem et animo et corpore voluptatibus, nullo dolore nec impediendo nec impendente; quem tandem hoc statu praestabiliorem aut magis expetendum possimus dicere? Inesse enim necesse est in eo qui ita sit affectus et firmitatem animi nec mortem nec dolorem timentis, quod mors sensu careat, dolor in longinquitate levis, in gravitate brevis soleat esse, ut eius magnitudinem  
41 celeritas, diuturnitatem allevatio consoletur. Ad ea cum accedit ut neque divinum numen horreat nec praeteritas voluptates effluere patiatur earumque assidua recordatione laetetur, quid est quod huc possit, quo melius sit,<sup>1</sup> accedere? Statue contra aliquem confectum tantis animi corporisque doloribus quanti in hominem maximi cadere possunt, nulla spe proposita fore levius aliquando, nulla praeterea neque praesenti nec expectata voluptate; quid eo miserius dici aut fingi potest? Quod si vita doloribus referta maxime fugienda est, summum profecto malum est vivere cum dolore; cui sententiae consentaneum est ultimum esse bonorum cum voluptate vivere. Nec enim habet nostra mens quidquam ubi

<sup>1</sup>quo melius sit Müller; quod melius sit Mdv. with MSS.

his hand in that condition wanted nothing, was not justified in his second admission, that if pleasure were a good, his hand would have wanted it. And the reason why it would not have wanted pleasure is, that to be without pain is to be in a state of pleasure.

40 XII. "The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover  
41 have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection,—and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement. Suppose on the other hand a person crushed beneath the heaviest load of mental and of bodily anguish to which humanity is liable. Grant him no hope of ultimate relief in view; also give him no pleasure either present or in prospect. Can one describe or imagine a more pitiable state? If then a life full of pain is the thing most to be avoided, it follows that to live in pain is the highest evil; and this position implies that a life of pleasure is the ultimate good. In fact the mind

Pleasure proved the Chief Good by extreme cases of happiness and misery

## Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 10:03 AM

If we wanted to stick to four, that's easily done as well:

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain

2. Work to possess a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain by understanding that death means complete unconsciousness, and pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.
  3. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
  4. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.
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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2023 at 10:08 AM**

Thinking back to Don's "strength of mind" emphasis, here's back to Six -

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain
  2. Work to possess a strength of mind that is proof against (resistant to?) all fear,
  3. Work to understand that death means complete unconsciousness,
  4. Work to understand that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.
  5. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
  6. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.
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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2023 at 10:19 AM**

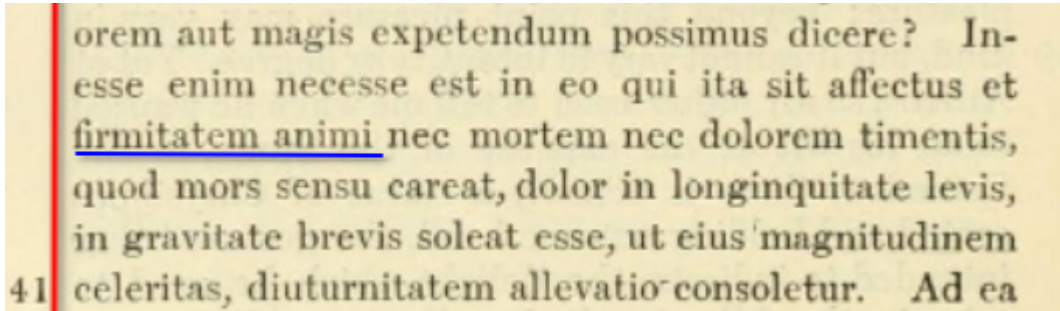
Again thinking that "strength of mind" is worth emphasizing for its own role as the means to the goal (which is indeed how I would see "tranquility," as a part of the means to to the goal of Pleasure, and not the goal in itself):

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain
2. Work to possess strength of mind,
3. Work to understand that death means complete unconsciousness,
4. Work to understand that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.

5. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
6. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.

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**Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2023 at 10:22 AM**



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**Post by “waterholic” of February 9, 2023 at 11:16 AM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Work to possess strength of mind,

Great list, like very much the six, except the "strength of mind". I don't understand why, but it "sounds stoic".

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**Post by “Don” of February 9, 2023 at 11:36 AM**

[Quote from waterholic](#)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Work to possess strength of mind,

Great list, like very much the six, except the "strength of mind". I don't understand why, but it "sounds stoic".

I would prefer something like "steadfastness, stability, constancy." Firmitatem is related to "firmament" i.e., the fixed/stable dome of the stars and celestial bodies above the earth in some ancient mythologies.

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### **Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 11:36 AM**

[Quote from waterholic](#)

Great list, like very much the six, except the "strength of mind". I don't understand why, but it "sounds stoic".

Agreed that it sounds Stoic to me too, but this might be an overreaction on our part.

Just because the Stoics may say the sun rises in the east that doesn't make it false 😊

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### **Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 11:40 AM**

Yes firmitatem is an interesting word choice -- not "strength" of mind in the sense of "virtus" but the words Don suggests, indicating steadfastness, stability, constancy.

Words that very much play into our analogies to bodies of water, except that the point clearly would seem to me to imply "undivertable motion toward a goal" like the powerful Mississippi River flowing downstream, rather than just a small current in a tiny stream which is easy for beavers to divert.

(How's that for mixing metaphors from recent discussions?)

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### **Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 11:43 AM**

So a better choice of words for 2 (firmness might work too, but steadfastness works):

1. Set as your goal that of living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain
2. Work to possess steadfastness of mind,
3. Work to understand that death means complete unconsciousness,
4. Work to understand that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity.
5. Work to possess no dread of any supernatural power;
6. Work to never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.

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## Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 11:46 AM

To me, a drive for clarity (or to banish improper connotations) is an embodiment of VS46 -

VS46. Let us utterly drive from us our bad habits, as if they were evil men who have long done us great harm.

Improper inferences from words like "tranquility" (and of "easy" in 3 and 4 of the T) have long done us great harm! 😊

So we don't need to jettison them completely, just be clear in our use of them.

I don't think I use the word "precision" twice in a year, but I see that Dewitt uses the word at least 29 times in his book, such as:

### THE FULLNESS OF PLEASURE

It is possible, however, to arrive at a higher degree of precision, always a chief objective in the reasoning of Epicurus. This higher **precision** depends upon discerning the subsidiary doctrine of the fullness of pleasure. For this there is a double logical basis: the first basis is the infinity of time, from which it is deduced that there can be nothing new.

(and the word "precise" 29 more times)

## Post by "Cassius" of February 9, 2023 at 4:07 PM

Here is the latin from the LatinLibrary.com:

### Quote

[40] Extremum autem esse bonorum voluptatem ex hoc facillime perspici potest: Constituamus aliquem magnis, multis, perpetuis fruente[m] et animo et corpore voluptatibus nullo dolore nec impediante nec inpendente, quem tandem hoc statu praestabiliorem aut magis expetendum possimus dicere? inesse enim necesse est in eo, qui ita sit affectus, et firmitatem animi nec mortem nec dolorem timentis, quod mors sensu careat, dolor in longinquitate levis, in gravitate brevis soleat esse, ut eius magnitudinem celeritas, diurnitatem allevatio consoletur. [41] Ad ea cum accedit, ut neque divinum numen horreat nec praeteritas voluptates effluere patiatur earumque assidua recordatione laetetur, quid est, quod huc possit, quod melius sit, accedere? Statue contra aliquem confectum tantis animi corporisque doloribus, quanti in hominem maximi cadere possunt, nulla spe proposita fore levius aliquando, nulla praeterea neque praesenti nec expectata voluptate, quid eo miserius dici aut fingi potest? quodsi vita doloribus referta maxime fugienda est, summum profecto malum est vivere cum dolore, cui sententiae consentaneum est ultimum esse bonorum eum voluptate vivere. nec enim habet nostra mens quicquam, ubi consistat tamquam in extremo, omnesque et metus et aegritudines ad dolorem referuntur, nec praeterea est res ulla, quae sua natura aut sollicitare possit aut angere. [42] Praeterea et appetendi et refugiendi et omnino rerum gerendarum initia proficiscuntur aut a voluptate aut a dolore. quod cum ita sit, perspicuum est omnis rectas res atque laudabilis eo referri, ut cum voluptate vivatur. quoniam autem id est vel summum bonorum vel ultimum vel extremum -- quod Graeci telos nominant --, quod ipsum nullam ad aliam rem, ad id autem res referuntur omnes, fatendum est summum esse bonum iucunde vivere.

This may be our most plain and simple detailed statement of the most desirable life left from the ancient Epicurean writings:

Constituamus aliquem magnis, multis, perpetuis fruente[m] et animo et corpore voluptatibus nullo dolore nec impediante nec inpendente,

Add Interlinear Vocabulary

Constituamus aliquem magnis, multis,

*constituo, constituere, constitui, constitutus* set up/in position, erect; place/dispose/locate; halt; plant

*aliquis* someone; anyone; some

*multus, multa -um, -, plurimus -a -um* much, many, great, many a; large, intense, assiduous; tedious

perpetuis fruente[m] et animo et corpore voluptatibus nullo dolore nec impediante

*perpetuus, perpetua, perpetuum* continuous, uninterpreted; whole; perpetual, lasting; everlasting

*fruo, frui, fructus sum* enjoy, profit by, delight in

*animus, animi M* mind; intellect; soul; feelings; heart; spirit, courage, character, pride; air

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2882-five-doses-that-trump-four-every-time-the-five-part-cure/>

*corpus, corporis N* body; person, self; virinity; flesh; corpse; trunk; frame; collection/sum

*voluptas, voluptatis F* pleasure, delight, enjoyment

*nullus, nulla, nullum (gen -ius)* no: none, not any

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## Post by “Cassius” of February 9, 2023 at 7:35 PM

When we reviewed this material in the podcast, we chose the REID translation because it seemed more literal than Rackham. Here is Reid's version of this same passage:

[40] XII. Again, the truth that pleasure is the supreme good can be most easily apprehended from the following consideration. Let us imagine an individual in the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them; I ask what circumstances can we describe as more excellent than these or more desirable? A man whose circumstances are such must needs possess, as well as other things, a robust mind subject to no fear of death or pain, because death is apart from sensation, and pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slightness to its continuance. [41] When in addition we suppose that such a man is in no awe of the influence of the gods, and does not allow his past pleasures to slip away, but takes delight in constantly recalling them, what circumstance is it possible to add to these, to make his condition better?

So going by this one the description of the best life is "the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them. "

Comparing that to Rackham (The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: ) and looking back at the Latin, it appears that the "undisturbed" has crept into Rackham without good justification. I think we can all speculate as to why he would be tempted to use that term even though it is not in the text.

It's pretty easy to read "impede" in the sense of delay (or thwart) for as Reid does, plus the "impending" rings of "threaten" also per Reid, which agrees with my Cassell's Latin dictionary for Impendeo. That rings well with the reference at the beginning of book 1 as Epicurus standing up against the threats of the gods and breaking the bars of the gates of nature.

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## Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 1:13 AM

Varying translation choices between Rackham and Reid:

Rackham

The truth of the position that pleasure is the ultimate good will most readily appear from the following illustration. Let us imagine a man living in the continuous enjoyment of numerous and vivid pleasures alike of body and of mind, undisturbed either by the presence or by the prospect of pain: what possible state of existence could we describe as being more excellent or more desirable? One so situated must possess in the first place a strength of mind that is proof against all fear of death or of pain; he will know that death means complete unconsciousness, and that pain is generally light if long and short if strong, so that its intensity is compensated by brief duration and its continuance by diminishing severity. Let such a man moreover have no dread of any supernatural power; let him never suffer the pleasures of the past to fade away, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection, and his lot will be one which will not admit of further improvement.

Reid

Again, the truth that pleasure is the supreme good can be most easily apprehended from the following consideration. Let us imagine an individual in the enjoyment of pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them; I ask what circumstances can we describe as more excellent than these or more desirable? A man whose circumstances are such must needs possess, as well as other things, a robust mind subject to no fear of death or pain, because death is apart from sensation, and pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slightness to its continuance. [41] When in addition we suppose that such a man is in no awe of the influence of the gods, and does not allow his past pleasures to slip away, but takes delight in constantly recalling them, what circumstance is it possible to add to these, to make his condition better?

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## Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 1:36 AM

I am afraid that listing the "being steadfast" part as a separate item just is not really supported by the Latin. Especially when looking at the Reid translation, seems to me that there are really only five major things going on. This version follows Reid most literally:

1. Set as your goal to live among pleasures great, numerous and constant, both mental and bodily, with no pain to thwart or threaten them, while at the same time:
2. Be confident that death is apart from sensation,
3. Be confident that pain when lasting is usually slight, when oppressive is of short duration, so that its temporariness reconciles us to its intensity, and its slightness to its

- continuance.
4. Be free of awe of the influence of the gods;
  5. Be never forgetful of the pleasures of the past, but constantly renew their enjoyment in recollection.
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### **Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 7:25 AM**

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

Be free of awe of the influence of the gods;

This implies there is still influence of the gods but we shouldn't be in awe of it.

I haven't dug into the Latin but that's my off the top of my head comment on that

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 8:02 AM**

Very good point. Reid has it that way, so the Latin may support it, i was about to go further and say it's so far off as to be unusable, but really as I think twice this may actually be accurate. Maybe this is affirming what is apparently the true Epicurean position, analogous to reverencing the wise man, that we benefit from reverencing even though the wise man may not be directing his activities toward us at all.

There's a passage in Lucretius about not being able to approach the temples of the gods without fear unless you have a proper understanding of them (but I can't find it right now).

This definitely calls for parsing the Latin

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### **Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 8:19 AM**

I think this is it?

[41] Ad ea cum accedit, ut neque divinum numen horrea

Sort of a paraphrase? When approaching the divine power of the gods, there is no need to tremble in fear.

Or There is no need to fear the gods.

Where have I heard that before 🤔 Oh yeah..

ΑΦΟΒΟΝ Ο ΘΕΟΣ

The first line of the Tetrpharmakos. 😄

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### Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 8:21 AM

Here's the text from Lucretius 6 (Which i remember in Humphries form):

And so they wander, borne along in blind  
Unreason. Spit out all such stuff, I tell you,  
Stop having thoughts unworthy of the gods,  
Alien to their serenity. Affront  
To their high holiness can do you harm -  
Not that their lofty power can be so hurt  
That it would thirst for vengeance in a rage  
For retribution - but that you yourself  
Will feel convinced that mighty tidal waves,  
Huge seas of anger, roll, and flood, and break  
Against your littleness, while all the while  
They have not even noticed, and their calm  
Is quite unbroken. But you cannot go  
Serenely toward their altars; you are blind

To the benignant holy images

They send as heralds of divinity;

And what your life may be in consequence

Perhaps you realize.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 8:22 AM**

Don what source is that?

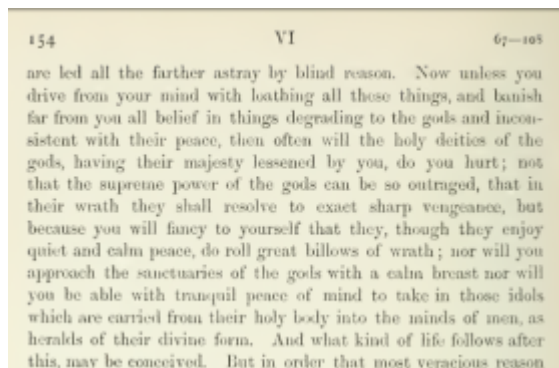
[41] Ad ea cum accedit, ut neque divinum numen horrea

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### **Post by “Cassius” of February 10, 2023 at 8:23 AM**

The more literal Munro of the same passage from book 6:

[68] Now unless you drive from your mind with loathing all these things, and banish far from you all belief in things degrading to the gods and inconsistent with their peace, then often will the holy deities of the gods, having their majesty lessened by you, do you hurt; not that the supreme power of the gods can be so outraged that in their wrath they shall resolve to exact sharp vengeance, but because you will fancy to yourself that they, though they enjoy quiet and calm peace, do roll great billows of wrath; nor will you approach the sanctuaries of the gods with a calm breast, nor will you be able with tranquil peace of mind to take in those idols which are carried from their holy body into the minds of men as heralds of their divine form. And what kind of life follows after this, may be conceived.



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**Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 8:45 AM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Don what source is that?

[41] Ad ea cum accedit, ut neque divinum numen horrea

That's from the Latin you posted on the thread

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**Post by “Don” of February 10, 2023 at 10:03 AM**

Here's the Google translate:

41] When he approaches them, so that he neither abhors the divine deity nor allows past pleasures to flow away and rejoices in their constant remembrance, what is it that he can approach here, that is better?

41] Ad ea cum accedit, ut neque divinum numen horreat nec praeteritas voluptates effluere patiatur earumque assidua recordatione laetetur, quid est, quod huc possit, quod melius sit, accedere?