

## **Leibniz: Aphorisms concerning happiness, wisdom, charity and justice (summer – winter 1678/9 (?))**

[A VI 4 p2798]

*Justice is charity of the wise.*

*Charity is general benevolence.*

*Benevolence is the habit of love.*

*To love is to be delighted by the happiness of another.*

*Wisdom is the science of happiness.*

*Happiness is durable joy.*

*Joy is an impression of pleasures, that is, a sense of present pleasures, a recollection of past pleasures, and a hope of future ones.*

*Pleasure is a sense of perfection.*

*One is perfected whose power is increased.*

[A VI 4 p2799]

Hypothesis:

The world is governed by the wisest and most powerful monarch.

Every wise man is the friend of God.

Whoever is the friend of God, is wise.

Preliminary propositions concerning the will of God.

God loves all.

God bestows on all as much as is possible.

Neither hatred, nor wrath, nor sadness, nor envy, belong to God.

God loves everyone in proportion to their perfection.

The end or aim of God is his own joy, or love of himself.

God created creatures endowed with minds for his own glory, or love of himself.

God created everything in accordance with the greatest harmony or beauty possible.

The perfection of harmony of the universe does not allow all minds to be equally perfect.

God loves minds in proportion to the perfection that he has given to each of them.

The question why he has given more perfection to this mind than to another is one of a number of pointless questions, such as if you should ask whether the foot is too big or the shoe squeezing the foot is too small. And this is a mystery, ignorance of which has obscured the whole doctrine of predestination.

Theorems concerning wisdom and happiness

He who does not obey God, is not the friend of God.

He who obeys God out of fear is not yet the friend of God.

He who loves God above all things is alone the friend of God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Here Leibniz wrote and then deleted: 'He who works for the glory of God, obeys God.'

He who does not seek the common good does not obey God.  
He who does not seek the glory of God does not obey God.  
He who at the same time seeks the glory of God and the common good obeys God.

**[A VI 4 p2800]**

Whoever claims that God is not perfect, does not love God sufficiently.  
He who is displeased with some things in the acts of God does not think God perfect.  
He who thinks that God does certain things out of pleasure, having no reason, or from irrational or unreasoning liberty, does not think God perfect.  
He who thinks that God does all things in the best way possible, acknowledges that God is perfect.  
Whoever takes no delight from the contemplation of the divine perfection, does not love God.  
All creatures serve the happiness or glory of God according to the degree of their perfection.  
Whoever serves the happiness of God against his own will, does not love God.  
Whoever places his own happiness in relation to divine happiness, he alone loves God.  
Whoever loves God endeavours to learn his will.  
Whoever loves God obeys his will.  
Whoever loves God, loves all.  
Every wise man endeavours to benefit all.  
Every wise man benefits many.  
Every wise man is a friend of God.  
Every friend of God is happy.  
The wiser one is, the happier he is, given that his power is equal  
The more powerful one is, the happier he is, given that his wisdom is equal  
Every wise man is just.  
Every just man is happy.

There follow theorems on the justice of the wise or happy man in relation to others, or on our duties:

*A duty* is whatever is necessary in what is perfectly just.  
*Permitted* is whatever is possible with regard to justice.

**[A VI 4 p2801]**

*A sin* is whatever is impossible with regard to justice.  
To speak accurately, nothing is indifferent, i.e. every act is either a duty or a sin.  
Therefore indifference arises only from our ignorance.  
Our duty is  
    To seek wisdom  
    (To seek power in proportion to the wisdom already acquired)  
    To seek knowledge of God  
    To seek knowledge of ourselves  
    To seek knowledge of the world  
    To seek knowledge useful to our perfection

To seek knowledge of the general method  
To seek knowledge of persuading  
To seek virtue, or a habit of disposition governed by reason  
To rule all things with a certain order  
To make a summary of what is to be done  
To have one's own faculties of the mind and of one's fortune at hand and ready  
to act

- A. To be of use to all things as far as it is permitted
- B. To change nothing in established things without a sufficiently great hope of a greater good, and therefore
- B. To preserve every single thing in established things which lies in our power.  
From this now arises jurisprudence, or the doctrine of right, ownership, obligations and actions.

From A follows distributive justice, i.e. that which concerns the best state.

From B follows the doctrine of commutative justice, or of right and ownership and of the way of preserving every single thing in them which lies in our power, for right in this sense is nothing other than our means of preserving those things which are in our power, for that is permitted.

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