

Aphorisms on Happiness, Wisdom, Charity, Justice (Final Version)¹

Translated by Donald Rutherford

Definitions

- a** **b**
Justice is the *charity* of the *wise*.
- a** **c**
Charity is universal *benevolence*.
- c** **d**
Benevolence is the habit of *loving*.
- d** **f** **e**
To *love* someone is to be *pleased* by his *happiness*.
- b** **e**
Wisdom is the knowledge of *happiness*.
- e** **g**
Happiness is lasting *joy*.
- g** **f**
Joy is a state of pleasure, in which the feeling of pleasure is so great that the feeling of pain is insignificant in comparison to it.
- f** **h**
Pleasure or delight is the sensation of *perfection*, that is, the sensation of some thing which aids or which adds some power.
- h** One is *perfected* whose power is increased or aided.²

¹ LH IV 4, 4 Bl. 32–33. A VI.4, N. 496₄, pp. 2802-5 (Latin). The Akademie editors provisionally date the text between Summer and Winter 1678-79.

² Leibniz added in the margin: “*Glory* is the *reputation* of some perfection. *Reputation* is public opinion. A *friend* is one whom we love in comparison to many others or whom we distinguish by loving.”

Hypothesis Demonstrated Elsewhere

The world is governed by a supremely wise and supremely powerful monarch, whom we call God.

Propositions

God's end or goal is his own joy or love of himself.

God created creatures, and especially those endowed with a mind, for the sake of his own glory or love of himself.

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

God loves all things.

God benefits all things as much as is possible.

Neither hate nor anger nor sadness nor ill-will belong to God.

God loves to be loved or those loving him.

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

The perfection of the universe, or the harmony of things, does not allow that all minds be equally perfect.

The question why God will have given more perfection to this mind than to another is an empty question, just as if we ask whether a foot is rightfully larger or a shoe pressing on the foot rightfully smaller.

And this is the secret of which ignorance obscures the entire doctrine of God's predestination and justice.

Whoever does not obey God is not a friend of God.

Whoever obeys God out of fear is not yet a friend of God.

Whoever loves God above all things is assuredly a friend of God.

Whoever does not seek the common good does not obey God.

Whoever does not seek the glory of God does not obey God.

Whoever seeks at once the glory of God and the common good obeys God.

Whoever does not recognize the perfect does not love God sufficiently.

Whoever finds some things displeasing among God's acts does not think God perfect.

Whoever thinks that God does certain things from absolute good pleasure, having no reason, or from an irrational or indifferent freedom, does not think God perfect.

Anyone who is not delighted by contemplation of divine perfection, does not love God.

All creatures serve God's happiness or glory in proportion to their degree of perfection.

Anyone who serves God's happiness together with their own will does not love God.

Anyone who locates their happiness in relation to the divine happiness for them assuredly loves God.

Whoever loves God strives to know his will.

Whoever loves God obeys his will.

Whoever loves God loves all.
Anyone who is wise loves all.

Anyone who is wise loves all.
Every wise person strives to benefit all.
Every wise person benefits many.
Every wise person is a friend of God.
Every friend of God is happy.
By as much as someone is wiser, he is happier given equal power.
By as much as someone is more powerful, he is happier given equal wisdom.
Every wise person is just.
Every just person is happy.