

Politics and Christian Civilization: Class Fourteen

Ethics and Politics Moral and Intellectual Virtue

Review:

- What is Ethics?
- First Self Evident Principle of Ethics?
- Voluntary Movement versus Freedom of Movement
- Teleology
- What is the end that Human beings seek, that which all other things are means?
- What are the two levels of this end, what two parts of man does it involve?
- What is the Totum Bonum
- What is Sumum Bonum
- What is the difference between the two
- According to Aristotle can you have one without the other?
- Difference between Good life and perfect?
- Did Aristotle have knowledge of the perfect
- Where does the highest good of man reside

ARISTOTLE

"The self-sufficiency that is spoken of must belong most to the contemplative activity. And this activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake; for nothing arises from it apart from the contemplating, while from practical activities we gain more or less apart from the action"

" But we must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything.

It would be strange, then, if he were to chose not the life of his self but that of something else. And what we said before' will apply now; that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else is man. This life therefore is also the happiest" (Ethics, Book X, Chapter, 7).

First principles regulate or determine all truths as the end determines all means.

So Ethics next asks what are the means that human beings need to acquire happiness

HOW ACQUIRE HAPPINESS

To attain happiness, life must be lived properly, that is, in accordance with virtue.

WHAT IS GOOD FOR MAN IS THE GOOD DISCOVERED BY REASON THAT MOVES HIM TO HIS TRUE END.

ADAMS

“All sober enquiries after truth ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, have declared that the happiness of man as well as his dignity consists in virtue.”

Thus, to know something more about happiness as an activity of the soul, must know more about virtue.

ARISTOTLE

"Since happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with perfect virtue, we must consider the nature of virtue; for perhaps we shall thus see better the nature of happiness. The true student of politics, too, is thought to have studied virtue above all things; for he wishes to make his fellow citizens good and obedient to the laws. "(Book I, Chapter XIII).

Intellectual Virtue: There are Five

Two are Practical: (1) **Art** and (2) **Prudence**

Three are Speculative: (3) **Intuition**, (4) **Science**, (5) **Wisdom**

Have to do with Making, Doing and Thinking

Moral Virtue: Has to do with action and the appetites

Prudence: Correct means to correct ends.

Temperance

Fortitude

Justice

Prudence special because deals with intellect and action:

“Accordingly, we must say that since prudence is in the reason, it is differentiated from the other intellectual virtues by a material difference of objects. "Wisdom," "knowledge" and "understanding" are about necessary things, whereas "art" and "prudence" are about contingent things, art being concerned with "things made," that is, with things produced in external matter, such as a house, a knife and so forth; and prudence, being concerned with "things done," that is, with things that have their being in the doer himself, as stated above (FS, Question [57], Article [4]). On the other hand prudence is differentiated from the moral virtues according to a formal aspect distinctive of powers, i.e. the intellective power, wherein is prudence, and the appetitive power, wherein is moral virtue. Hence it is evident that prudence is a special virtue, distinct from all other virtues.”

Temperance and Fortitude

Virtues or Habits of Doing that have to do with body and its appetites.

Temperance: Discipline, self control regulates **concupiscible passions** (pleasures of flesh)

Fortitude: Courage regulates **irascible passions** (fear and anger)

THESE VIRTUES characterized by A MEAN AND **RELATIVE EXCESS** AND DEFECT.

They all have a mean: "*Virtus en medias stat*"

Example:

RASH	(Excess)
COURAGE	(Virtue)
COWARD	(Defect)

Relative Mean

If intellect not developed there is a Danger of Mistaking Means for End

Can have too much or too little of the passions.

BUT TO FEEL THEM AT THE

- RIGHT TIME
- TOWARD THE RIGHT PEOPLE
- WITH THE RIGHT MOTIVE AND
- IN THE RIGHT AMOUNT

IS THE INTERMEDIATE CHARACTERISTIC OF VIRTUE

THERE IS ONE OTHER PART TO MORAL VIRTUE: Justice which we will consider next time
Justice greatest of the social virtues. Involved in all our social relationships, doing good to others and the community. Realization that being just to others assists their pursuit of happiness. Consists in giving each person his due, that which is necessary for development.

JUSTICE

Keeping balance in human social relationships. **The only virtue relating to our neighbor.**

Has to do with keeping things in proportional balance p.379

A SPECIAL PART OF MORAL VIRTUE THAT HAS TO DO WITH RELATIONSHIPS IN COMMUNITY, THIS IS THE PART OF MORAL VIRTUE PAR EXCELLENCE THAT IS THE CONCERN OF POLITICS WHICH GOVERNS HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN COMMUNITY AS WE WILL SEE WHEN WE EXAMINE POLITICS.

3 TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS IN SOCIETY.

I-I

I-S

S-I

COMMUTATIVE (CIVIL LAW) Regulates action between individuals Example LEX TALIONIS. EYE FOR AN EYE
= LIMIT ON REVENGE AND RETRIBUTION TO KEEP JUST AND BALANCE.
LAW SUITS NECESSARY IF DO NOT VOLUNTARILY REMEDY SITUATION. RESTORES BALANCE

DISTRIBUTIVE = Give to equals equally and unequals unequally but fairly p 378
Pay to Ph. D and BA

SOCIAL = Ask not what your country can do for you but....

In summary, intellectual virtues needed to know the end and purpose of life, moral virtues needed as equipment to aid us in our sojourn to happiness. Moral virtues include prudence which is unique as both a intellectual and moral virtue, temperance and fortitude, that discipline and regulate appetites, and justice which involves us in our relationships to each other in community.