

Happiness in the Fourth Epistle of  
Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*  
by Dr. David Naugle

**Introduction**

Alexander Pope's philosophical poem *An Essay on Man*, published in 1732-'34, may even more precisely be classified, to use a German phrase, as *Weltanschauungliche Dichtung* (worldviewish poetry). That it is appropriate to understand *An Essay on Man* as world view in verse, as a work which depicts humanity's relationship to and understanding of a perplexing and amazing world, is indicated in the statement of the poem's "Design" in which the author avows that his goal was to examine "*Man* in the abstract, his Nature and his State." Indeed, Pope sought to fulfill his agenda by describing in each of the work's four "epistles" the nature and state of man with respect (1) to the universe, (2) to man himself as an individual, (3) to society, and finally, (4) in relation to happiness. Pope's poetic and powerful examination of these themes in which "attitudes generated by deism, eighteenth-century sociality, and Roman Catholicism come together" (Mack lxxiv-lxxv) establish this composition as one of the truly great literary statements of a particular world view perspective in the history of the West.

Pope's concern with human teleology in *An Essay on Man* also distinguish it as a distinctive piece of world view literature. According to "The Design" of the poem, Pope asserted that in order to understand man or any creature, it was necessary "first to know what *condition* and *relation* it is placed in, and what is the proper *end* and *purpose* of its *being*." For Pope, drawing on a venerable ideal from antiquity onwards, the end and purpose of humanity was happiness.<sup>1</sup> As he exclaims at the very beginning of the fourth epistle,

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<sup>1</sup> The heritage of the supremacy of happiness is impressive. For example, Aristotle believed that happiness was man's strongest desire which involved "an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue or excellence" (*Nicomachean Ethics* I. v). Likewise Cicero stated that "those who achieve [virtue], guiding themselves by magnanimity and uprightness, are always happy" (*De Finibus* V. xxiv. 71). Richard Hooker similarly argued that all men desire a happy life based on the unencumbered pursuit and exercise of righteousness or virtue. In a theological vein, he wrote, "Infinitely happy in himself from all Eternity," God so communicates his goodness as to show "no other design in creating Mankind than their happiness" (*Of*

“Oh Happiness! our being’s end and aim!  
Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate’er thy name.”

The whole of the fourth epistle is a poetic meditation on the relation of humanity and happiness, and it serves as the culmination of *An Essay on Man*, “on which it lies like crown” (Tillotson 50).<sup>2</sup> In terms of substance, it is an extended argument to the effect that happiness is not tied to any particular condition, state, location or possession, but is singularly related to virtue (Atkins 57), a conception which is fundamentally Stoic in origin. As Mack points out, what the fourth Epistle adds to the argument of the text is “a sustained and brilliant Stoic account of the pre-eminence of virtue over externals, partly by way of theodicy, vindicating Providence for the unequal distribution of these goods, [and] partly by way of ethics, showing where true ethical objectives lie” (xxxix). This same author elaborates on the Stoic framework of the entire poem, and on its Stoic conception of happiness in these words.

In the *Essay on Man*, the necessary framework to all ethical considerations is man’s attitude with respect to the universe, his firm acceptance of the propositions that all things, taken together, are right. This is, of course, the point to which the poet addresses himself in the first Epistle. Within this framework, man’s other relationships, to himself and society, can be discussed, and finally the result of appropriate attitudes in all these fields which is inward happiness: indestructible because no one can take the attitudes away, equal because all men have power to achieve them, independent of externals because the individual can will good even if fortune incapacitates him from carrying out his will, and inexhaustible for the same reason. Many of these conceptions originated with or were chiefly transmitted by the Stoics, and in this sense the general structure and theme of Pope’s ethics are strongly Stoic (xxxv).<sup>3</sup>

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*the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* I. X. 2). St. Augustine, the early church father, likemindedly and in a rather humorous way noted: “It is the decided opinion of all who use their brains, that all men desire to be happy.” (*City of God* X. 1). Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher, has similarly observed: “All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end.” (*Pensées*, #425). Finally, the Earl of Shaftesbury said all creatures human and otherwise are meant to fulfill their purposes in the great scheme of things, and in that fulfillment find their ultimate satisfaction (*Characteristics* II. 287). Some of the above references were taken from Humphreys (92).

<sup>2</sup> For a listing of every reference to the words Happier, Happily, Happiness, Happy, and Bliss in *Essay on Man*, see Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> Mack also cites W. L. Davidson’s *The Stoic Creed* (1907) who thinks that the *Essay on Man* is “simply Stoicism in verse” (xxxv, note 2). Of Stoicism, Mack himself

What, then, may we say *An Essay on Man* and its corresponding view of happiness really is? Is it not in many ways the Stoic world view in eighteenth century dress? I believe this to be the case, and the remainder of this present essay will be devoted to understanding in greater detail Pope's basic ideas about happiness in this particular context. I will proceed by laying out the main themes regarding happiness contained in the fourth epistle, citing the texts on which these themes are based, and offer a brief interpretation of each major concept.

### **Themes Regarding Happiness in the Fourth Epistle of *An Essay on Man*<sup>4</sup>**

**Theme #1:** Happiness is humanity's teleology (aim or end), that for which men live and die; it is omnipresent and free (1-18).

In the exordium, after extolling happiness as "our being's end and aim," Pope notes that this theme is "something still which prompts th' eternal sigh," signifying the significance and perhaps also the frustration that accompanies the quest to understand and obtain this ultimate possession. Then deploying the image of a sower, he asks that if happiness as a "celestial seed" was dropped (sowed) below, in what kind of mortal soil, in what kind of human heart, would happiness choose to grow? "Where grows?—where grows it not?" If it does not grow, the fault lies, he avers, not in the soil of the human heart *per se*, but rather in the culture in which the human heart is found. "We ought to blame the culture, not the soil," he opines. In any case, happiness is not limited spatially. Paradoxically it is either nowhere or everywhere. It certainly cannot be bought with money, for it is free, and even though it may escape the clutches of kings, it nonetheless dwells, Pope says, with St. John, a reference to St. John, Lord Bolingbroke to whom the entire essay was addressed.

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has said: "The wisdom which teaches us not to weep cannot dry our tears, still less can it draw them forth." (xliv).

<sup>4</sup> It may be worth pointing out that George Herbert's "The Pulley" contains in miniature the same themes that Pope works with, even if in slightly different terms. See the Appendix B for the text of this poem.

**Theme #2:** A meaningful definition or description of happiness has escaped the learned thinkers and philosophers (19-28).

Does happiness consist in action, ease, pleasure, or contentment as the Stoics and Epicureans would say? Or is it found, as it is for the perverse, in sadistic pain? Perhaps it is connected with pride or indolence? Some suggest happiness is found in seemingly everything; others, perhaps the skeptics or cynics, find it in nothing at all. In any case, according to Pope, if we should “ask of the Learned the way [to happiness], he is forthright in his opinion that “the learned are blind” when it comes to detailing happiness. In the end their definitions are jejune:

Who thus define it, say they more or less  
Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?<sup>5</sup>

Hence, Pope’s failure to find a suitable understanding of happiness in the history of thought sets him on a course to describe it himself, and the remaining six sections of Epistle IV are devoted to this project.

**Theme #3:** Happiness as the end of all mankind is equally attainable by all because God rules by general rather than by particular laws that distribute happiness to everyone (29-48).

Admonishing readers to forsake the “mad opinions” of the learned regarding happiness, Pope counsels that all people can reach and conceive of it by means of “thinking right and meaning well.” Furthermore, even if there are inequities among us in terms of giftedness, possessions or whatever, nevertheless there is an equality of “common sense” among all people which provides equal access to the garden of happiness.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This seems to foreshadow the modern discipline of “metaethics” which is the highly technical discipline investigating the meaning of ethical terms and the sentences in which they appear.

<sup>6</sup> As René Descartes said in his *Discourse on Method*, Part One, “Good sense is the most evenly distributed commodity in the world. . .” (1).

Happiness as a common and equal possession is also rooted, according to Pope, in the general character of God's laws which distribute happiness in parity thereby benefiting all. Pope seems to say that happiness is impossible in isolation from others, even for those who pretend to shun or hate mankind. For this reason happiness must be social, for "individual happiness," is oxymoronic. Happiness is hopeless apart from community. Hence in poetic terms, Pope describes what some theologians have termed "common grace" which contends that God's blessing, in this case happiness, is bestowed on all impartially. Pope writes:

Remember, Man, "the Universal Cause  
Acts not by partial, but by general laws;"  
And makes what Happiness we justly call  
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.

**Theme #4:** Happiness does not consist in the possession of external goods, and the balance of happiness is preserved among humanity by the equalizing passions of hope and fear among the poor and rich respectively (49-76).

God is a God of order, "Heaven's first law," and thus he desires order in society. According to Pope, however, the very order, peace and welfare of society depends on the unequal possession of external goods: "But Fortune's gifts if each alike possest, And each were equal, must not all contest?" But this inequality of possessions should not lead to the conclusion that the richer and the wiser are happier than their impoverished counterparts. Pope's thought is beautifully expressed in these texts.

More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence  
That such are happier, shocks all common sense.

. . . . .  
Condition, circumstance is not the thing;  
Bliss is the same in subject or in king.

. . . . .  
Heaven breathes through every member of the whole  
One common blessing, as one common soul.

The idea is clear: happiness for humanity is meant by God to be enjoyed equally, and if this is the case, then given the inequality of possessions, it is clear that

God did not intend possessions (or externals) to be the basis of happiness. If he did, then happiness itself would be unequal. Pope put it succinctly like this:

If then to all Men Happiness was meant,  
God in Externals could not place content.

In this particular couplet, Pope is beginning to reveal his Stoic inclinations. The Stoics, over against the Aristotelians, argued that no external circumstance positive or negative affected happiness in any way. Happiness consisted in virtue alone, and as a function of character and choice could equally be experienced by all regardless of circumstances. The Aristotelians, on the other hand, believed that happiness consisted in virtue primarily, but was also conditioned by the necessity of a sufficient supply of external goods as well. How could the one who lacked health, wealth, friendship, etc. be truly happy? For Aristotle, Priam, king of Troy—who was proverbial among the ancients as one who experienced the reversals of fortune—was proof positive of this thesis. Happiness to some extent is modulated by externals. However, Pope aligns himself with the Stoics in this ancient debate in arguing that external goods are superfluous to happiness.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, Pope suggests that to mollify those who are deficient in externals, “Heaven’s just balance will appear” providentially in order to give to the needy hope of gaining what they lack, and to give those who possess fear of losing what they possess. In this way the balance of mankind is preserved. Be this as it may, Pope in conclusion of this section betrays the divine mockery and judgment of men who would seek their felicity in the construction and accumulation of external things.

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise,  
By mountains piled on mountains, to the skies?  
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys,

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see T. H. Irwin, “Stoic and Aristotelian Conceptions of Happiness,” in *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics*, edited by Malcolm Schofield and Gisela Striker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 205-44.

And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

**Theme #5:** External goods are not to be conceived as the reward of virtue, but are often inconsistent with and even destructive of virtue. Certainly external goods minus virtue make no one happy (167-308).

What is the reward of virtue? External goods? By some law or character of human nature (greed?), we tend to think that the reward of righteousness should be riches, a foundational principle of “prosperity” theology as we call it today. But Pope critiques this mythology forthrightly. For him, the reward of virtue is of an immaterial, inner sort—tranquility and joy. Virtue’s reward is not earthly in nature, and hence cannot be taken away or destroyed. In his words,

What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,  
The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,  
Is Virtue’s prize.

. . . . .  
Weak, foolish man! will Heaven reward us there [heaven?]  
With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?

This latter couplet, virtually angry in tone, seems to betray an almost Manichean disparagement of the world and its goods. The “trash” of the world is unfit as virtue’s reward, either now or in some afterlife. Furthermore, Pope states that materiality as a reward would bring no joy to the truly virtuous whose sights and sensitivities are too high for physical trifles, and could ultimately be destructive of virtue, and also the man. He says,

Rewards, that either would to Virtue bring  
No joy, or be destructive of the thing:  
How oft by these at sixty are undone  
The Virtues of the saint at twenty-one!

Carrying this theme regarding external goods a step farther, in the following extended passage, Pope makes it abundantly clear that the mere possession of external goods alone—fortune, honor, nobility, greatness, fame, and talent to be specific—apart from virtue makes no one happy. After he describes these conditions in eloquent verse, he asks:

Bring then these blessings to a strict account;  
Make fair deductions; see to what they mount.

Though some may think that these idols of the heart may make a true man, Pope swiftly surveys the lives of several who have been the possessors of these alleged benedictions (Lord Umbra, Sir Billy, Gripus, Gripus' wife, Bacon, Cromwell). His conclusion, however, is less than encouraging:

If all, united, thy ambition call,  
From ancient story learn to scorn them all.  
There, in the rich, the honoured, famed, and great,  
See the false scale of happiness complete!  
.....  
In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,  
And all that raised the Hero, sunk the Man:

This is the capstone to Pope's argument: external goods far from being virtue's reward contribute to the obstruction of virtue itself, and to the dissolution of the person who possesses them. Indeed, for Pope, the love of external goods was a root of all sorts of evil.

**Theme #6:** Virtue alone constitutes the universal and permanent happiness of man (309-398).

Up to this point in the Fourth Epistle, Pope has told us that happiness is the end of man; and he has told us that an understanding of happiness seems to have escaped the learned; and he has told us that happiness is available to all because God governs by general laws; and he has told us that happiness does not consist in external goods; and that external goods can destroy virtue and people. But up to this point he has not yet told us exactly what he thinks happiness is. But in the final section of this Fourth Epistle he tells us: virtue is happiness.

Know then this truth (enough for Man to know)  
"Virtue alone is Happiness below."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Pope's equation of virtue and happiness was, as stated earlier, adopted from Stoicism, but he also seems to have followed Samuel Johnson in this according to Tillotson (50ff). In his early work *Life of a Savage*, Johnson saw virtue, and therefore happiness, within the grasp of man. Fifteen years later in *Rasselas*, after the death of his daughter, he mocked the view that man, even when virtuous, has the

Pope's paean of praise to virtue which follows this declaration of the *summum bonum* extols the virtues of virtue itself. Among other things, virtue is permanent: "The only point where human bliss stands still." It is unaffected by circumstances: "The joy unequalled, if its end it gain, And if it lose, attend with no pain." It is noble: "Never elated, while one man's oppressed; Never dejected, while another's blessed." It is universal: "See the sole bliss of Heaven could on all bestow! Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know." It is non-sectarian, and as such provides the basis for a universal religion. I quote Pope *in extensio*:

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,  
But looks through Nature up to Nature's God;  
Pursues that Chain which links the immense design,  
Joins heaven and earth, and mortal and divine;  
Sees, that no Being any bliss can know,  
But touches some above, and some below;  
Learns, from this union of the rising whole,  
The first, last purpose of the human soul;  
And knows where Faith, Law, Morals, all began,  
All end, in Love of God, and Love of Man.

On the basis of this text, which I think is the climax to the entire work, virtue translates into happiness when in a purely non-sectarian fashion a man through God recognizes his place in the chain of being, learns from his place in the chain his purpose, understands the origin of the cosmic values of the universe (faith, law, morality), and seeks to love both God and man. Virtue is perfected, and along with it happiness,

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power to command happiness. He states his doubts thusly: "Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness," said Nekayah, "this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible virtue. All natural and almost all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the misery of famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of faction; they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience and a steady prospect of a happier state; this may enable us to endure calamity with patience; but remember that patience must presuppose pain" (chapter xxvii). In this regard, compare Ecclesiastes 9: 2-3 in which the temporal fate of the virtuous and the vicious are seen to be indistinguishable. Pope's view of the cause/effect relationship of virtue and happiness has been criticized by many as naive for the reasons that it seems to ignore the nature of human nature and the realities of human experience.

as submission to the divinely established hierarchy is secured. This is the happiness of man: to recognize that he is placed by God “on the isthmus of a middle state” (ll. 3) between the angels and the animals. He should avoid trying to mix with the angels, and he should avoid sinking to the level of the beasts. Whereas “God loves from Whole to Parts, the human soul must rise from the individual to the whole.” The sequence would be “Self-love thus pushed to social, to divine,” that is, a love of the whole to which there is grateful resignation.

Pope closes the entire poem with a tribute to Bolingbroke in which he summarizes his eighteenth century Stoic world view as he had versified it in all four of the work’s epistles.

Come then, my Friend! my Genius! come along;  
Oh master of the poet, and the song!

. . . . .  
That urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art  
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;  
For Wit’s false mirror held up nature’s light;  
Showed erring Pride, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT;<sup>9</sup>  
That REASON, PASSION, answer one great aim;  
That true SELF-LOVE AND SOCIAL the same;  
That VIRTUE only makes our BLISS below;  
And all our knowledge is, OURSELVES TO KNOW.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> These famous words from the *Essay* were incorporated in G. F. Handel’s oratorio *Jephtha*, 1751. The stanza which borrows from Pope reads this way:

How dark, O Lord, are thy decrees!  
All hid from mortal sight!  
Yet on this maxim still obey;  
Whatever is, is right.

Tillotson has described the musical expression of these words in the oratorio as follows: “The unison phrase to which the singers enunciate ‘Whatever is’ is a dignified wail, lying across the beat, and though the chords for ‘is right’ are loud and quick and sudden, they arrive only after the strings have pursued a melancholy meander, as if aimlessly in the ‘labyrinth of life’” (54). Perhaps it is for this reason that Handel has been described as the musical counterpart to the poet of nature.

<sup>10</sup> Mack summarizes the *Essay on Man* after the manner of the doctrine of the *discordia concors*. He writes: “In short, the controlling theme of the *Essay on Man* as a poem is a theme of constructive renunciation. By renouncing the exterior false Paradises, man finds the true one within. By acknowledging his weaknesses, he learns

## Conclusion

In these closing few sentences, I would like to offer a critical response to Pope's view of happiness as virtue. Positively, I commend Pope's view for its important emphasis on virtue which is needed for the personal and social well-being of any culture ancient, medieval, or modern. The virtues have been at the center of the Western moral tradition since Plato and Aristotle, and its recent revival under the leadership of Alasdair MacIntyre (*After Virtue* 1984) testifies to its enduring significance. Pope's embrace and perpetuation of this tradition highlights the importance of virtue in human life as a central to human happiness, both individually and communally. Would that more people, especially today, took moral virtue as seriously as Pope himself obviously did. The world would be a better place.

On the negative side, however, is the question I have about whether or not Pope's view that virtue *alone* to the exclusion of external goods is sufficient for happiness. I think that several genres of virtue are primary when it comes to human happiness—spiritual virtue, moral virtue, intellectual virtue, and so on. My question is about the sufficiency of internal virtue to felicity, and to examine this I would like to propose three formulas regarding happiness. The first, "External Goods = Happiness," is rejected by Pope, by myself, and by all other thinking people for the simple reason that human beings, the materialists notwithstanding, are more than appetitive creatures in search of the satisfaction of physical needs. Man does not live by bread alone. Two, "Virtue = Happiness" is, of course, Pope's view. It seems, however, to be overturned by the profound contribution of externals to human felicity, as their loss so eloquently expresses. People may **say** that external goods make no contribution to their happiness, but their **reactions** to their losses prove otherwise. Man evidently does not and simply cannot live by virtue alone. Hence, I opt for a third formula: "Internal Virtue +

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his strengths. By subordinating himself to the whole, he finds his real importance in it (quoted by Clark 91).

External Goods = Happiness.” The appropriate combination of internal virtue along with a sufficient supply of external goods seems to fit nicely and logically with the material and immaterial nature of man. Neither facet of human nature with their corresponding needs can be diminished without serious damage to the life of the whole man. To be truly happy, man must live by both virtue and bread. For these reasons, I think Pope was wrong to restrict happiness to virtue. It is a moral goal that psycho-somatic beings will find impossible to obtain.

However, in the final analysis, the answer to the quest for human happiness may lie in the discipline of theology. Reflecting deeply on his own miserable experience and consequent quest for happiness, the early church father St. Augustine said at the very beginning of his *Confessions*,

O Lord, Thou has made us for Thyself,  
And our spirits are restless until they rest in Thee.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> My own views on happiness are spelled out in two papers,” St. Augustine’s Concept of Disorder Love and Its Contemporary Application,” and “Stoic and Christian Conceptions of Happiness.”

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### Appendix A

From: Edwin Abbott, *A Concordance to the Works of Alexander Pope*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1875. Reprinted, Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, 1965.

EM = *An Essay on Man*

#### Happier

- EM 1. 105-06 (regarding Indians and happiness)  
 "Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,  
 Some happier island in the watery waste."
- EM 2. 229-30 (regarding vice)  
 "What happier natures shrink at with afright,  
 The hard inhabitant contends is right."
- EM 4. 52-53 (regarding external goods and happiness)  
 "More rich, more wise; but who infers from hence,  
 That such are happier, shocks all common sense."
- EM 4. 359-60 (regarding virtue and happiness)  
 "Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,  
 And height of Bliss but height of Charity."

#### Happily

- EM 4. 379-80 (regarding Bolingbroke)  
 "Formed by thy converse, happily to steer,  
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

#### Happiness

- EM 1. 149-50 (regarding human happiness and nature)  
 "If the great end be human happiness,  
 Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less."

EM 2. 285-86 (regarding happiness and hope, emptiness and pride)  
 "Each want of happiness by hope supplied,  
 And each vacuity of sense by Pride."

EM 3. 91-92 (regarding the means to happiness by nature or reason)  
 "Sure by quick Nature happiness to gain,  
 Which heavier Reason labours at in vain."

EM 3. 111-12 (regarding individual wants leading to happiness for all)  
 "But as he framed a Whole, the Whole to bless,  
 On mutual Wants built mutual Happiness."

EM 4. 1-2 (regarding happiness as the end of man)  
 "Oh Happiness! our being's end and aim!  
 Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name."

EM 4. 15-16 (regarding the location of happiness)  
 "Fixed to no spot is Happiness sincere,  
 'Tis nowhere to be found, or everywhere."

EM 4. 27-28 (regarding definitions of happiness)  
 "Who thus define it, say they more or less,  
 Than this, that Happiness is Happiness."

EM 4. 35-38 (regarding happiness designed by God for all)  
 "Remember, Man, "the Universal Cause  
 Acts not by partial, but by general laws;"  
 And makes what Happiness we justly call,  
 Subsist not in the good of one, but all."

EM 4. 53-56 (regarding the equality of happiness)  
 "Heaven to mankind impartial we confess,  
 If all are equal in their Happiness.  
 But mutual wants this Happiness increase;  
 All Nature's difference keeps all Nature's peace."

EM 4. 65-66 (regarding equality of happiness not in external goods)  
 "If then to all Men Happiness was meant,  
 God in externals could not place Content."

EM 4. 91-92 (regarding happiness in vice or virtue)  
 "And grant the bad what happiness they would,  
 One they must want, which is, to pass for good."

EM 4. 288-89 (regarding happiness and fame)  
 "There, in the rich, the honoured, famed, and great,  
 See the false scale of Happiness complete!"

EM 4. 309-10 (regarding happiness as virtue)  
 "Know then this truth (enough for Man to know)  
 "Virtue alone is happiness below."

## Happy

EM 1. 185-86 (regarding lack of happiness in man compared to animals)

“Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:  
Is Heaven unkind to Man, and to Man alone?”

EM 2. 241-42 (regarding happiness and frailty)

“That, happy frailties to all ranks applied;  
Shame to the virgin, to the matron pride.”

EM 2. 263-65\* (regarding the types of happiness in each)

“The learned is happy nature to explore,  
The fool is happy that he knows no more;  
The rich is happy in the plenty given,  
The poor contents him with the care of Heaven.”

EM 4. 67-70 (regarding the balancing of happiness)

“Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,  
And these be happy called, unhappy those;  
But Heaven’s just balance equal will appear,  
While those are placed in Hope, and these in Fear.”

EM 4. 289-90 (regarding loss of happiness by kings and queens)

“In hearts of Kings, or arms of Queens who lay,  
How happy! those to ruin, these to betray.”

## **Bliss**

EM 1. 93-94 (regarding the unknown nature of future bliss)

“What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,  
But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now.”

EM 1. 189-90 (regarding bliss and pride)

“The bliss of Man (could Pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind.”

EM 1. 281-82 (regarding blame and bliss)

“Cease then, nor Order Imperfection name:  
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.”

EM 3. 81-82 (regarding bliss and reason or instinct acc. to nature)

“To bliss alike by that direction tend,  
And find the means proportioned to their end.”

EM 3. 109-110 (regarding bliss and God)

“God in the nature of each being founds,  
Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds.”

EM 4. 21-22 (regarding the source of bliss)

“Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,  
Those call it pleasure, and Contentment these.”

EM 4. 57-58 (regarding the equality of bliss in all)

“Condition, circumstance is not the thing;  
bliss is the same in subject or in king.”

EM 4. 93-94 (regarding the folly of attributing bliss to vice)

“Oh blind to truth, and God’s whole scheme below,

Who fancy Bliss to Vice, to Virtue Woe!”

EM 4. 301-02 (regarding the bliss that comes to the malevolent in death)

“What greater bliss attends their close of life?  
Some greedy minion, or imperious wife.”

EM 4. 311-12 (regarding bliss and virtue)

“The only point where human bliss stands still,  
And tastes the good without the fall to ill.”

EM 4. 327-28 (regarding the availability of bliss to all via virtue)

“See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow!  
Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know.”

EM 4. 335-36 (regarding the bliss of all beings in the chain of being)

“Sees, that no Being any bliss can know,  
But touches some above, and some below.”

EM 4. 343-50 (regarding bliss in God)

“For him alone, hope leads from goal to goal  
And opens still, and opens on his soul;  
Till lengthened on to Faith, and unconfined,  
It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.  
He sees, why Nature plants in Man alone  
Hope of known bliss, and Faith in bliss unknown:  
(Nature, whose dictates to no other kind  
Are given in vain, but what they seek they find)  
Wise is her present; she connects in this  
His greatest Virtue with his greatest Bliss.”

EM 4. 359-60 (regarding love and happiness)

“Happier as kinder, in whate’er degree,  
And height of Bliss but height of Charity.”

EM 4. 397-98 (regarding bliss and virtue)

“That Virtue only makes our bliss below;  
And all our Knowledge is, ourselves to know.”

## Appendix B:

“The Pulley”  
by George Herbert

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

When God at first made man,  
Having a glass of blessings standing by—  
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can;  
Let the world’s riches which dispersed lie,  
Contract into a span.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

So strength first made a way;

Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure:  
 When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
 Perceiving that, alone, of all His treasure,  
 Rest in the bottom lay.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

For if I should (said He)  
 Bestow this jewel also on My creature,  
 He would adore My gifts instead of Me,  
 And rest in nature, not the God of Nature:  
 So both should losers be.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Yet let him keep the rest [of the gifts],  
 But keep them with repining restlessness;  
 Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
 If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
 May toss him to My breast.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞