

DRAWING A LINE AROUND THE END OF MAN - N. ETHICS, BK. I, READING TEN

But to say that happiness is the best seems to be agreed upon, and it is desired that what it is, be said more distinctly.

Perhaps this will come about if what man does is taken up. For just as the fluteplayer and the sculptor and every artist and generally everyone for whom there is something to do and some act, the good and well-being seems to be in doing this., so also it would seem for man if there is something he does.

Are there then some doings and acts of the carpenter and the shoemaker, but of man there is none, and he is by nature without anything to do?

Or just as there seems to be something done by the eye and the hand and the foot and generally by each of the parts, should one also lay down something that man does besides all these?

What then will this be? To live seems to be common even to the plants, but what is man's own is sought. The nourishing and growing life therefore should be set aside. Following this, there would be something sensing. But this also seems to be common to the horse and the ox and every animal. There remains the doing of what has reason. But of this, the one as obeying or persuaded by reason and the other as having reason and thinking And this being said in two ways, that according to act should be laid down. For this seems to be said principally.

If then the activity of man is an act of the soul by reason or not without reason, while we say that the act of something and its good act are the same generically - as of a harpist and a good harpist and generally thus in all, adding that it excels by virtue - for it belongs to the harpist to play the harp, but to the good harpist to play the harp well; then if this is so and further that we lay it down that the act of man is some life and this the act of the soul and actions with reason, but of the good man these well and fairly, and each is completed well by its own virtue; if then it is thus, the human good turns out to be the act of the soul by virtue. And if there are many virtues, according into the best and most perfect.

But further in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor one day. And thus neither one day nor a short time makes one blessed and happy.

A line therefore has been draw around the good.