

A thought on duty to the whole world, and why virtue must be an instrument to happiness.

Post by "Cassius" of January 16, 2022 at 5:03 PM

[Quote from SimonC](#)

I agree with your critique of utilitarianism: it is difficult to motivate limiting the number of morally relevant people, which leads to the conclusion that you should probably sell all your property and give to charities, which is clearly unacceptable even to utilitarians.

You're probably right that that is unacceptable even to utilitarians, so that may not be part of their philosophy (I am not sure what Bentham wrote in full).

But that's pretty much exactly the box in which Christianity has itself. And the early Christians seem to have taken that literally and attempted to adapt communism (I believe the reference is in the book of Acts). And as a result of that being the logical conclusion of their doctrines they corner themselves into the point where modern Christians pretty much have to admit that they are not good Christians by definition, since they don't sell all their belongings, given them to the poor, and devote themselves to a life of ascetic religion. And to justify THAT, they have to resort to excuses like saying that they are "not perfect, just forgiven...." and similar excuses.

They've set up a paradigm that is impossible for them to achieve and live a life of guilt as a result, if they bother to think about it.

That's very different with Epicurus - the goals are achievable and realistic and very much not "suicidal."