

## **The Divided Mind—Leibniz & Clarke on Intellect, Will, & Free Choice**

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The issues of divine and human freedom mattered greatly to Leibniz and Clarke, and while commentators have (understandably) emphasized their differences, they were in considerable agreement on important matters. They both agreed that God is perfectly free. They agreed that our idea of human freedom is predicated on the divine case, and not the other way around. They agreed, against Hobbes and Spinoza, that metaphysical necessity is incompatible with free will. They agreed that human beings are sometimes free in their choices and actions. They agreed, against King, that the highest level of freedom involve congruity between the last judgment of the understanding and free choice.

Despite this agreement, their differences and the arguments for them dominate their exchanges on freedom in their correspondence. Leibniz was, and Clarke was not, a determinist. Further, Leibniz was, and Clarke was not, a compatibilist regarding free choice and determination. Clarke was, and Leibniz was not, a libertarian (to use modern terminology) regarding free choice. Clarke subscribed to, and Leibniz did not, ‘voluntarism,’ according to which, for example, what is right and wrong depends on God’s commands in the sense that his commands alone are what make actions right or wrong. According to the contrasting position, ‘intellectualism,’ God commands us to perform certain actions and refrain from performing others because certain actions are right and others are wrong, and being fully rational he knows what is right and wrong, and being completely good he issues commands to humanity that conform to his moral knowledge. (There are, of course, other views that go under these same terms.) Voluntarism, then, appears to offer God a wider range of creative acts with respect to creation. An absolutely foundational difference between Leibniz and Clarke concerns the relation between intellectual evaluation and choice (or volition). For Leibniz, choice must be caused by previous mental states, whereas Clarke rejects this. This model of volition and choice, Leibniz charged, leads to an irrational and divided mind, since Clarke “divide[s] the mind from the motives.”

These differences, and their rationale, are the subject of this paper. Because both Leibniz and Clarke, in other works, commented on the views of freedom of Hobbes, Locke, and King, these other writings are also considered.