

DISSERTATION ON THE END FOR WHICH GOD CREATED THE WORLD. *by Jonathan Edwards*

A Study- Scott Doherty May 9 – June 13 2014 Reformed Presbyterian Church, Oswego, NY 7:00PM-8:30PM

June 13 - Scripture II Chapter 2 §5-7

SECTION V. *Places of Scripture from whence it may be argued, that communication of good to the creature, was one thing which God had in view, as an ultimate end of the creation of the world.*

1. According to the Scripture, *communicating good* to the creatures is what is *in itself* pleasing to God.
2. The work of *redemption* wrought out by Jesus Christ, is spoken of in such a manner as, being from the grace and love of God to men, does not well consist with his seeking a communication of good to them, *only subordinately*.
3. The communications of divine goodness, particularly forgiveness of sin, and salvation, are spoken of, from time to time, as being for God's *goodness' sake*, and for his *mercies' sake*, just in the same manner as they are spoken of as being for God's *name's sake*, in the places observed before.
4. That the government of the world in all its parts, is *for the good* of such as are to be the eternal subjects of God's goodness, is *implied* in what the Scripture teaches us of Christ being set at God's right hand, made king of angels and men; set at the head of the universe, having all power given him in heaven and earth, *to that end* that he may promote their *happiness*; being made head over all things to the church, and having the government of the whole creation for their good.
5. That God uses the whole creation, in his government of it, for the good of his people, is most elegantly represented in Deut. xxxiii. 26. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven."
6. God's *judgments* on the wicked in this world, and also their eternal damnation in the world to come, are spoken of, as being for the *happiness of God's people*.
7. It seems to argue, that God's goodness to them who are to be the eternal subjects of his goodness, is the end of the creation; since the whole creation, in all its parts, is spoken of as theirs.
8. All God's works, both of creation and providence, are represented as works of *goodness* or *mercy* to his people;
9. That expression in the blessed sentence pronounced on the righteous at the day of judgment, "Inherit the kingdom *prepared for you* from the foundation of the world," seems to hold forth thus much, that the fruits of God's goodness to them was his end in creating the world, and in his providential disposals: that God in all his works, in laying the foundation of the world, and ever since the foundation of it, had been preparing this kingdom and glory for them.
10. Agreeable to this, the good of men is spoken of as an ultimate end of the virtue of the moral world.

SECTION VI. *Wherein is considered what is meant by the glory of God and the name of God in Scripture, when spoken of as God's ends in his works.*

1. Let us begin with the phrase, the glory of god
 - The word *glory* denotes sometimes what is *internal*.
 - The word *glory* is used in Scripture often to express the exhibition, emanation, or communication of the internal glory.
 - That the happiness and salvation of men, was an end that Christ ultimately aimed at in his labours and sufferings.
 - The glory of God, and the emanations and fruits of his grace in man's salvation, are so spoken of by Christ on this occasion in just the same manner, that it would be quite unnatural to understand him as speaking of two distinct things.
 - Again, the word *glory*, as applied to God in Scripture, implies the *view* or *knowledge* of God's excellency.
 - Again, *glory*, as the word is used in Scripture, often signifies or implies *praise*.
2. Having thus considered what is implied in the phrase, *the glory of God*, as we find it used in Scripture; I proceed to inquire what is meant by the name of God.

SECTION VII. *Showing that the ultimate end of the creation of the world is but one, and what that one end is.*

Edwards' Logic

The word good must be understood

Inanimate existence? Physical/spiritual existence? Unconscious existence? If the creation is part of God's expression of goodness, there must be a proper use and enjoyment of them. Short-lived good?

2.5 Man's good is God's ultimate aim in creation

1. Man's good is pleasing to God in itself and not only subordinately.
2. Man's redemption shows man's good to be ultimate and not subordinate.
3. God's goodness of mercy is an end in itself just as his name is.
4. God in Christ governs the whole creation for the good of his people.
5. #4 is shown elegantly in Deut 33:26
6. God's temporal and eternal judgments on the wicked are for the good of his people.
7. God has given the whole creation to his people.
8. All God's works of creation and providence are for the good of his people.
9. God prepared his kingdom for his people from the beginning.
10. The good of men is the end of the moral world.

Conclusion: man's good is not properly subordinate to God's glory because God delights in man's good for its own sake and not only as a means to his glory. Our good is truly ultimate to God.

2.6 What does the glory of God and name of God mean?

I. The glory of God

Hebrew *kabod*, Greek *doxa*

[1] internal, inherent, or in the possession of the person:

[2] emanation, exhibition, or communication of this internal glory:

[3] knowledge, or sense of these, in those to whom the exhibition or communication is made;

[4] expression of this knowledge, sense or effect - praise.

1. Internal excellency
 - a. Excellency, dignity, or worthiness of regard
 - b. *excellency* of a person or a thing, as consisting either in *greatness*, or in *beauty*, or in both conjunctly
 - c. Possession
 - d. And it is often put for a great height of prosperity, and fulness of good in general.
2. Exhibition of the internal excellency
 - a. Shining bodies
 - b. Communication of God's fullness = goodness and grace
 - c. John 12:23-32
 - i. Christ aimed at men's happiness in the same manner as God's glory
 - ii. The glory of God and his salvation of men is one thing.
3. The view or knowledge of God's excellency
 - a. The exhibition of glory is to the *view* of beholders.
 - b. One thing, directly intended, is *making known* his divine greatness and excellency.
4. The praise of God's excellency
 - a. Glory = honor = praise = high esteem and the expression of it in words and actions
 - b. high *esteem* and love of the heart, exalting thoughts of God, and complacency in his excellence and perfection.
 - c. It also implies joy in God, or *rejoicing* in his *perfections* - implies *gratitude* or *love* to God for his benefits to us.

II. The name of God

1. Name and glory are equivalent expressions
2. As *glory* often implies the *manifestation, publication, and knowledge* of excellency, and the *honour* that any one has in the world; so does *name*.
3. Name is equivalent to praise
4. The expression or exhibition of God's goodness is called his name
5. The visible brightness of God's glory is called his name

2.7 God had only one end in creation

God's ultimate end is not many but one- the fullness of his internal glory manifested *ad extra*

1. God's excellence is in his understanding and his will – knowledge, holiness, happiness
2. The communications to the creature are to his understanding and will – knowledge, holiness, happiness
3. God's glory and man's good are one thing.
4. God seeks man's good out of a supreme regard to himself.

Where do we go from here?

This book is worthy to be digested.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. *Sir Francis Bacon*

I would add re-read. Especially now that you have a better understanding of its structure and logic and the meaning of its terms. This first pass was to acquaint you with this great book so that now you can reread it with much greater profit. And since it is not merely a piece of literature, but a doctrine that you are learning, it is worthy to be studied until fully comprehended – which is an obvious oxymoron.

Implications

1. Edwards works out the implications for this in ethics in his next volume “The Nature of True Virtue”.
2. You should see the significance and ultimacy of knowledge.
3. You should see the significance and ultimacy of affection.
4. You should see the beauty of the relation between knowledge and affection – they are to be united in one.
5. You should see the goal of your receiving and the goal of your giving of all your abilities.
6. You should see how all else possible falls under this great head, and aim at conforming all your life so that it coheres with the end for which God has made you.
7. You should see worship (in all the fullness of that word) to be not merely a side show, but as ultimate.
8. You should see how good toward man both from God and from man must aim at this one great good.
9. You should see how all your good is ultimately from God, through God, and to God.
10. You should see every Biblical doctrine in light of this great end.
11. All your efforts in the church for man’s good and God’s glory should be informed by it.
12. Your reading of the Bible should be informed by the chief end for which there is a Bible.
13. Your regard for God’s holiness should feel the weight of his infinite regard to himself above all else.
14. All of your life should be shaped by that vision of God’s holiness, or supreme regard to himself.
15. All temporal good should be seen in the light of this end.
16. Your education and the education you seek or provide for any under you should be supremely shaped by this as the end of all education.
17. Your life should overflow with a desire to know and make God known to as many people as possible – for his name’s sake.
18. Preaching should be shaped and regulated by this.
19. Bible teaching should be shaped and regulated by this.
20. The shepherding and management of your household should be seen in light of what their chief end is.
21. You should cultivate knowledge of God.
22. You should cultivate affection for God.
23. You should cultivate joy in God.
24. Your view of God himself should supremely be shaped by this. This is who God is. Behold your God!