DIVINE GLORIFICATION AND HUMAN HAPPINESS IN

CHRISTIAN TELEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION

Dogmatic theology treats of many truths of momentous import, but there is not one of more fundamental importance than the question of the ultimate purpose or end of creation. For if the end holds the primacy among all causes and if, from it, all other causes depend for the exercise of their causality, then there can be no theological doctrine dealing with the relations of creatures to God, whose objective truth is not dependent ultimately on the first of all causes, which is the ultimate end of creation.[1]

This is a work of Christian teleology. My inquiry concerns the end, or purpose, of the divine act of creation, asking in short 'Why did God create?' In particular, I will consider the teleological relationship between two likely contenders: divine self-glorification and human happiness. The first option, known as 'glorificationism,' is the position that declares God's ultimate end in creation to be the manifestation of his own glory, human happiness being teleologically subordinate. The second option, which I have termed 'felicificationism,' posits instead that the happiness of God's people is his ultimate end in creation, and that the manifestation of divine glory is subordinate to that happiness.

Because 'happiness' is so easily misunderstood, it is appropriate here to clarify what is meant by it. I have termed the position advocated in this work 'felicificationism', from the Latin *felicitas*, which has long been understood as a synonym used 'almost interchangeably' with a number of related words used in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Scriptures to refer to the happiness of God. These equivalents include *asher* and *makarios*, which are best translated 'happy' from Hebrew and Greek respectively,[2] and the Latin *beatitudo* (blessedness), *delectatio* (delight), and *complacencia* (contentment).[3] Though the happiness I have in view is human happiness, not divine, it should nevertheless be understood in the sense of the beatitude, or blessedness, long attributed in the Christian tradition to God's people. As Reinhard Hütter

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[1] Philip J. Donnelly, 'Saint Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation', *Theological Studies*, 2, no. 1 (1941): 53.

[2] Randy Alcorn, *Happiness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 197-208.

[3] Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy ca. 1520 to ca. 1725. Volume Three: The Divine Essence and Attributes,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 381.

further explains, this is not the fleeting, preferential happiness an individual might *think* he wants. Rather, it is the everlasting, objective 'participation in the divine happiness' for which we were designed.[4]

A vast portion of the theological literature relevant to this project is primarily concerned with the work of Jonathan Edwards, especially his *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*. The consensus reading of this work is that Edwards positions human happiness in teleological subordination to God's glory.[5] This consensus was challenged in a recent doctoral dissertation by James H. Thomforde, who argues that Edwards' work was in fact characterized by a lifelong effort to develop a teleology prioritizing human happiness.[6] While human happiness is indeed a mainstay in Edwards' thought, I remain convinced of the broader consensus view of Edwards's position as strictly glorificationist. Thomforde's work nevertheless serves as a reminder that Edwards' teleology does in fact emphasize human happiness, identifying it quite closely with the glorification of God; we must be careful, then, not to mischaracterize glorificationism as dismissing human happiness.

Edwards' argument for glorificationism was so compelling (and complex) to have discouraged, until quite recently, any teleological objections to God's glorification as the ultimate end of creation. Recent inquiries into divine action within analytic theology, however, demonstrate a willingness to challenge Edwards' argumentation. Especially relevant is the work of Jordan Wessling, who contrasts his theory of divine 'amorism' against Edwards'

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[4] Reinhard Hütter, *Bound for Beatitude: A Thomistic Study in Eschatology and Ethics*, Thomistic Ressourcement Series 12 (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019), 7.

[5] This consensus is almost universal. For examples, see Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9, 146; Walter J. Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End for Which God Created the World: Exposition, Analysis, and Philosophical Implications* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 15; Stephen J. Stein, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3; Kyle C. Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 76-77.

[6] James H. Thomforde, 'Defending Happiness: Jonathan Edwards's Enduring Pursuit of a Reformed Teleology of Happiness', PhD diss., The University of Edinburgh, 2018. I am grateful to Professor David Fergusson for bringing Thomforde's work to my attention.

glorificationism,[7] as well as another alternative theory posited by fellow analytic theologian Mark Murphy.[8] We will consider this interchange in Chapter 4.

This is, furthermore, a work of constructive theology. In it I seek not merely to explore the historical development of Christian teleology but also to propose felicificationism as a framework more consistent with historical Christian orthodoxy (which I take to require conformity to the Apostles', Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds) as well as the commitments of the Reformed tradition to which Edwards contributed. Especially relevant is the Reformed doctrine of *duplex cognitio Dei*, which understands nature to reveal much about God and his works, but Scripture as God's only sufficient revelation of his redemptive work in creation.[9]

The methodology of this work, therefore, is both analytic and exegetical. In the first place, I will employ the methods of analytic philosophy, placing a primary emphasis on the logic of each position considered, illumined as much as possible in clear language. Syllogisms, for example, feature prominently in much of the work as a way of making explicit what often is implicitly assumed. Doing this enables us to examine more accurately the validity as well as the veracity of each argument, which in turn allows us to determine which position is in fact superior. Definitions also are important to the work, for in order contribute successfully to a conversation as long and complex as that of Christian teleology, we must be sure to account for the different shades of meaning attributed to a given term by multiple interlocutors. It does no good to 'talk past' one another, and though the attention given to semantic distinctions in the

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[7] Jordan Wessling, *Love Divine: A Systematic Account of God's Love for Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[8] Jonathan C. Rutledge and Jordan Wessling, 'God of Holy Love: Toward an Agapist Alternative to Mark Murphy's Holiness Framework for Divine Action', *Journal of Analytic Theology* 11 (2023).

[9] Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012) 19, 26.

following pages may at times seem superfluous, it is an analytic necessity for the success of this project.

Secondly, but no less importantly, the work rests also on Scriptural exegesis. Any explanation of the end for which God created must be rational in order to be accepted, but reason is insufficient for certainty regarding this question. The purpose of any intelligent action can only be known with certainty if the agent of that action makes his purpose known; anything apart from the agent's revelation is conjecture. This is as true of divine action as of that of any other agent. There is no way to determine what God sought to accomplish unless he reveals his intent to us—and I operate on the shared orthodox conviction that such revelation is given in the Christian Scriptures.[10] Thus, in addition to examining the natural arguments for each position, I will also give careful attention to the exegetical arguments for both.

With these methodological components in view, I offer this brief overview of the pages that follow. In Chapter 1, I survey the development of teleological thought from its origins in Plato and Aristotle to its Christian appropriations in Wolff and Edwards. This survey yields three criteria which should be expected of any extrinsic teleological explanation, including that of this thesis. Chapter 2 presents Edwards' natural argument for glorificationism and considers the presuppositions on which his logic rests, one of which is doubtful. I then summarize four possible approaches to defending that doubtful premise, for the strength of Edwards' argument depends on it. I offer my response to Edwards' natural argument in Chapter 3, submitting that it is deficient in three ways: first, it seems incompatible with divine love; second, none of the defences offered in Chapter 2 for his premise are in fact sufficient; and third, it ultimately fails to satisfy the second teleological criterion from Chapter 1. This last deficiency, however, becomes the very reason why glorificationism is not altogether dismissed. Rather, it is modified in

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[10] Again, I share this conviction with Edwards: 'I confess it would be relying too much on reason to determine the affair of God's last end in the creation of the world, only by our own reason, or without being herein principally guided by divine revelation, since God has given a revelation containing instructions concerning this matter.' (Jonathan Edwards, 'Concerning the End for Which God Created the World', in *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 419-420.)

Chapter 4 to comprise a portion of the felicificationist explanation. I explain in this chapter that felicificationism is not in fact a repudiation of glorificationism but is a necessary extension of what is true in it. Having completed the analytical work of Chapters 1-4, I turn in Chapter 5 to consider the exegetical arguments for both positions. In light of the conclusions of the previous chapters, it becomes clear that Edwards' exegetical arguments for glorificationism are in fact arguments for the more expansive felicificationist position, which I then further substantiate with still other texts which cast the weight of Scripture in favour of felicificationism. In the end, I conclude that felicificationism is the superior Christian teleology: that God designs creation in order to glorify himself maximally, for the ultimate purpose of making his people maximally happy in beholding his glory.

CHAPTER 1: THE DEVELOPMENT OF TELEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify exactly what is sought in the 'end of creation'. To do this, we will explore the development of the teleological discipline, from its origins in the ancient Greeks to its introduction as a distinct inquiry in Christendom and its appropriation within Christian theology. In doing so, we will glean three 'teleological criteria' to which we will return through the subsequent chapters.

## 1.1 The Classical Aetiology of Plato and Aristotle

Exploring the concept of teleology in the ancients may at first appear to be anachronistic, for, as a term, 'teleology,' is of modern coinage. Even the term 'telos', the discipline's namesake, was not used by Plato in the technical sense in which we use it now; Aristotle, who provided its technical meaning, understood the inquiry as only a subsection of the larger study of causality. But as we will see, it is not anachronism—it is a case of conceptual advancement far outpacing linguistic accommodation.

### 1.1.1 Plato

Despite Plato's exclusive preference for the term *aetia* over *telos*, the telic concept is a fixture in the broader Platonic aetiology.[11] This inquiry begins in the *Phaedo*, where Socrates recounts his own exploration of what is now understood in terms of final causality.[12] He recalls hearing it said that Anaxagoras before him had believed *Nous*, or Mind, to be the cause of all creation. Upon hearing this, he believed he 'had found in Anaxagoras a teacher about the cause of things after my own heart'.[13] His 'hope was dashed', however, upon reading Anaxagoras for himself and realizing that he 'made no use of Mind, nor gave it any responsibility for the

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[11] By 'aetiology' I refer to the general study of causality.

[12] David Wiggins, 'Teleology and the Good in Plato's *Phaedo'*, in *A Festschrift for J.L. Ackrill*, ed. Julia Annas and Michael Woods, Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 1-18.

[13] Plato, *Phaedo* 97c-e.

management of things'.[14] As Socrates reasoned, a causal explanation which explains his own personal actions by physical elements, the 'bones and sinews' that made those personal actions possible, is an explanation that fails to account for the higher causality of the mind by which he directed those bones and sinews to remain in Athens.[15] This appears on the surface to reflect a typically Platonic disparagement of the physical—and it is that—but his logic must not be ignored. He understands by way of analogy that just as there must be an intelligent cause behind any movement of merely material bones and sinews, so it follows that there must be an Intelligence guiding the movements of the material world. This Mind is non-negotiable for Plato's Socrates in the *Phaedo*.

This Socratic commitment to a causal *Nous* seems to have withstood the test of time in Plato's own thought, as it finds only a more mature treatment in the later *Timaeus* dialogue. The aetiology of the *Timaeus* takes on what Johansen has called the 'craft model' after the demiurge, or craftsman, put forth by the character Timaeus as the Mind responsible for designing and making the material world.[16] In a development that foreshadows Aristotle's distinction between efficient and material causality, Timaeus reconciles the *Phaedo's* conflict between the Mind and the physical elements by proposing that this divine craftsman employs 'visible bodies' such as 'fire, water, earth and air' intentionally designing the universe according to his ends.[17] As Johansen writes, this 'craft model is the key to Plato's understanding of the means-end relationship in teleology'.[18] Indeed, the means-end relationship for Plato is established here, as he is willing to incorporate material causes into his aetiology in a way that in the *Phaedo* he was

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[14] Plato, *Phaedo* 98b-c.

[15] Plato, *Phaedo* 98c-99a.

[16] Thomas Kjeller Johansen, 'Plato's Teleology', in *Teleology: A History*, ed. Jeffrey K. McDonough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 29.

[17] Plato, *Timaeus* 46d.

[18] Johansen, 'Plato's Teleology', 32.

not. The logic of his thought is this: the material elements are means, and means must have ends; but ends must be intended, and intentionality requires a rational agent.

Even in the *Phaedo*, the very reason Socrates was set on an aetiology consisting of a Mind is that he was convinced that whatever the great, transcendent Cause was (for he was not then represented as a craftsman), it was a beneficent one, having designed the world in such a way that 'the best for each' was 'the cause for each and the general cause for all.'[19] The agent responsible for creation must have been able, intellectually, to discern what was good for all, for by that metric creation was evidently designed. Whatever or whomever the agent, the purpose was the good of all things. Further clarity comes once again in the later *Timaeus*, wherein the causality (*aitios*) of the whole world is attributed to the craftsman. But this provides a *who*, not a *why*. Timaeus has identified the efficient cause but not the final cause. Of the craftsman's desired end, he has this to say:

> Now why did he who framed this whole universe of becoming frame it? Let us state the reason why: He was good, and one who is good can never become jealous of anything. And so, being free of jealousy, he wanted everything to become as much like himself as was possible. In fact, men of wisdom will tell you (and you couldn't do better than to accept their claim) that this, more than anything else, was the most preeminent reason for the origin of the world's coming to be.[20]

This teleological statement, to which we will return in a later chapter, sheds great light on the 'good' Plato has in mind as he explains the universe's cause. It is clear from the relationship between the craftsman's goodness and that which he seeks to bring about in his creation that the desired goodness is in some way participative in the divine Goodness. Yet here there is no notion of magnetism or being drawn naturally towards this divine Good. Such an idea is certainly present elsewhere in Plato, but the emphasis here is different. Timaeus is as interested in *why* the craftsman desires what he seeks to accomplish as he is in *what* the craftsman seeks to accomplish; his argument hangs on the craftsman's lack of jealousy: his

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[19] Plato, *Phaedo* 98b.

[20] Plato, *Timaeus* 29d-30a.

desire is for the benefit of the creation, and it is for the sake of that benefit that he gives what is best. Here Plato's concern is directed to what Aristotle would later call the end *for which* a thing is done, and his conclusion is nothing less than that creation is designed for the good of the created beings. [21]

Thus we have a rational Mind who, as a divine craftsman, designs according to intelligent intentions to bring about the best for the universe. This is taken as axiomatic, an element of common sense not to be checked at philosophy's door. There simply must be a rational mind to account for whatever other causal arrangements may be discerned, for it is evident that all things are set in motion towards their good. This for Plato is a requirement for any viable teleology. This is our first teleological criterion: *the telos must be intended by a rational mind, for good.*

### 1.1.2 Aristotle

Plato's foundational work in aetiology was famously systematized by Aristotle in his doctrine of the four causes, which he presents in *Physics* II as four distinct ways of answering the question, 'Why?': the material cause (*hyle*), 'that out of which a thing comes to be and which persists,' the formal cause (*eidos*), 'the form or archetype,' the efficient cause (*kinoun*), 'the primary source of the change or rest', and the final cause (*telos*), the 'end or that for the sake of which a thing is done'.[22] It is this final cause that most concerns the teleological inquiry, but, as we will soon see, the efficient cause too is important to the discussion. Both the agent and the purposes are in question.

For Plato, as established above, the agent is an intelligent designer; but Aristotle does not see the same necessity for such intelligent intentionality. As Peters writes, 'There is a radical change in Aristotle: for Plato *nous* was the dominating factor in the teleological scheme; for

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[21] Plato, *Timaeus* 29d-30a.

[22] Aristotle, *Physics* II, 194b.

Aristotle *nous* operates only in the human sphere of *techne*, purposeful design, and, indeed, all the [human] artisan is doing is attempting to imitate *physis*, which has its own purpose (*telos*) as well as being a source of movement.'[23] The analogy drawn by Plato between the intelligent design experienced in human action and what therefore must be an intelligent design in nature, Aristotle takes only to be a more disjunctive analogy between the intelligent designs of humans and the unintelligent design of nature. Aristotle agrees that Socrates' mind must have guided his bones and sinews either to go or to stay, to move or to rest; but as for the nature of the bones and sinews themselves, they have something of a mind of their own—an innate tendency according to which their potential is actualized and their end met. According to this 'immanent' teleology, 'every object in nature has in itself an intrinsic vital purpose, a purposive cause.'[24] Aristotle does not reject, however, the notion of final causality applied to an intelligent agent's design *in the case of humans*. Only his transcendent, non-human, agent has more to do with *physis* than with *nous*. Of this ultimate Being Aristotle writes, 'That that for the sake of which [the Final Cause] is found among the unmovables is shown by making a distinction; for that for the sake of which is both that *for* which and that *towards* which, and of these the one is unmovable and the other is not. Thus it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other moving things.'[25] He does, then, maintain a category for a transcendent Cause, an unmovable Mover, towards which all other things move. In this sense, as things move naturally towards this being much like needles to a magnet, this transcendent Being is said to be the end of all things.

But Aristotle is careful also to maintain a category for a different kind of end, namely the end '*for* which' rather than '*towards* which' something is done. To return to the magnet analogy, consider the parallel of a compass whose needle moves *towards* North *for* navigation.

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[23] F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 191-192.

[24] Ivan Timofeevich, 'Teleology', in *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Progress Publishers, 1984), 417.

[25] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1972b.

Therefore, we can offer a two-fold final-causal explanation for that movement: the needle moves for the sake of North's magnetism *and* the needle moves for the sake of the hiker's navigation. Until recently this distinction has received little attention, Johansen notes, adding that

> The dismissal of the distinction reflects the view that Aristotle is only serious about one of the senses distinguished, the end-genitive. For it is only in this sense of 'end', it is thought, that ends are operative in nature. So the expectation is that when Aristotle introduces the distinction in these passages he is only doing so to set aside the dative use, and to reassure us that we are talking about the *telos* in its proper genitive use.[26]

Whether Aristotle is 'serious' about one sense of the term or both, we must for our own part recognize the importance of both. The difference between 'towards' and 'for' does indeed seem to represent the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic teloi, respectively. But while intrinsic teleology excludes any notion of rational intention, and so any end *for* which, the inverse statement is not true; an extrinsic teleological model requires the end *for* which but does not necessarily preclude an end *towards* which.[27] How then do these two kinds of telos relate within an extrinsic model? Put simply, they relate as means and end. As the needle points towards north for the hiker's navigation rather than the man successfully navigating in order for the needle to point north, so the end *towards* which must always be a means to the accomplishment of the end *for* which. The result of this relationship is that, in an extrinsic teleology, the end *for* which is always the ultimate end—the importance of this will become only clearer as the inquiry progresses.

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[26] Thomas Kjeller Johansen, 'The Two Kinds of End in Aristotle: The View from the *de Anima*', in *Theory and Practice in Aristotle's Natural Science*, edited by David Ebrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 120.

[27] Aristotle's intrinsic model is not merely an alternative to Plato's extrinsic model. It is a smaller part of the encapsulation model that will come later to appropriate the truths of both into the Christian view. While for Plato, nature was guided by Nous according to an extrinsic teleology and for Aristotle the extrinsic teleology of human experience was an imitation of the natural, intrinsic teleology, the Christian view incorporates the intrinsic teleologies attributed to nature into the larger extrinsic model. In this view, God, external to nature, designs particular essences with natural teloi according to his transcendent extrinsic teleology. The extrinsic teleology recognized in human experience by Aristotle is not then an imitation of nature but of God, and so employs the various natural ends under humanity's dominion.

A related argument has been put forth regarding a similar and alternative distinction

which, if true, results in such a different reading of Aristotle as to change the course of our

teleological inquiry. As Francis Slade explains,

> End, as telos, is not synonymous with "purpose," although the words are commonly
> understood to be, and are used as, synonyms. But telos does not mean purpose. Agents and
> actors have "purposes" by which they determine themselves to certain actions. Purposes are
> motives, "motors" propelling us toward destinations. Ends, on the other hand, are
> characteristic of all kinds of things; the end of the axe is "cutting," but the axe executes no
> purpose in its cutting. Those who use axes, the agents, have many purposes: to clear land, to
> obtain firewood, to blaze trails, to attack someone, etc. Ends are not executed by agents.
> Purposes require agents. Purposes belong to agents as they determine themselves to
> actions.[28]

He further explains,

> Purpose is synonymous with "intention." I define it, following Oakeshott, as "an imagined
> and wished-for satisfaction." Aristotle's term *proairesis* is "purpose" in this sense. Man has
> an end (*telos*); individual human beings have "intentions" or "purposes" in executing their
> acts. Purpose (*proairesis*), the efficient cause of action, is what we propose to ourselves to
> do.[29]

Slade is helpful, but only almost correct. In fact, *proairesis* refers to the agent's

decision as to the means by which he will bring about the intended consequence. The agent's

desire, or wish, for the end to be accomplished is rather *boulesis*. Accordingly, it might be said

that the *kinoun* (agent, efficient cause) has a *boulesis* (desire, wish) for an envisioned *telos* (end),

and thus makes a *proairesis* (decision) as to the means most suitable to the accomplishment of

that end.[30]

Better than Slade's artificial distinction between end and purpose is Aristotle's own

distinction between two different kinds of end described above: *for* and *towards.* In *Physics* II

Aristotle offers his own example of what Slade calls purpose being instead understood as the end

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[28] Francis Slade, 'Ends and Purposes', in *Final Causality in Nature and Human Affairs*, ed. Richard F. Hassing (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 83.

[29] Francis Slade, 'Ends and Purposes', 84. (Slade refers to–but it is not a verbatim quote–Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 39.)

[30] Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 163.

*for* which something is done. 'Again' he writes, 'in the sense of end or 'that for the sake of which' a thing is done, e.g. health is the cause of walking about. ('Why is he walking about?' we say. 'To be healthy', and, having said that, we think we have assigned the cause.)'[31] Aristotle is clear, and so will our teleology be if we follow this helpful 'two-end' model. Thus our second criterion may be stated accordingly: *a comprehensive teleology must employ a two-telos model, accounting for the telos* for *which a thing moves and the telos* towards *which the thing moves*.

It is worth further noting that just as Plato was not agnostic regarding the intention of his divine craftsman, neither was Aristotle about the ends (or the end) of things. Aristotle too identifies a thing's end with its good.[32] In *Physics* II he explains that 'not every stage that is last claims to be an end, but only that which is best.'[33] The end of an acorn, then, is not the rot that may come of it at the last but rather the fully grown oak tree that it becomes at its best. That is what is good for the acorn—to flourish to the maturity of its essence—to reach its telos. Anything else is not its end, because anything else is not its good. Aristotle identifies not only particular ends and goods but also the ultimate End with the ultimate Good. In introducing his unmovable Mover in the Metaphysics, having identified this being as the end *towards* which all things move, he notes that 'it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other things.'[34] He reasons that such a 'first mover,' must exist 'by necessity,' so that 'its mode of being is good…,' and from there, calling this being 'God,' that therefore 'God is a living being, eternal, *most good*, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God.'[35] In a way not altogether unlike Plato's Form of the Good, the being who is himself the end of all creation is for Aristotle also the great Good of all creation, which very presence of which moves all creation

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[31] Aristotle, *Physics* II, 194b.

[32] Peters, *Greek Philosophical* Terms, 191-192.

[33] Aristotle, *Physics* II, 194a.

[34] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b.

[35] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b. Emphasis added.

onward towards the good. In every sense, whether the end *for* which or the end *towards* which, whether the end of a particular thing or the end of all things, Plato and Aristotle agree: the telos must be the good.

## 1.2 The Modern Teleology of Christian Wolff

For all the teleological focus of classical aetiology, it was not until Christian Wolff's suggestion in 1728 that it came to be seen as its own discipline. The term itself was never used until he proposed it, writing, 'Besides [other] sciences, there is still another part of natural philosophy which explains the end of things. There is no name for this discipline, even though it is very important and most useful. It could be called teleology.'[36] Teleology is indeed a fitting name for the modern discipline as he defined it, for it faithfully reflects the classical inquiry into specifically what Aristotle called the telos; it is meanwhile an appropriate study for Christian theologians, as we will see that it also does justice to the development of this question within the Christian tradition before Wolff as well as after him.

Like the pagans, Wolff understands teleology in relation to the other elements of causality. Of the other three in Aristotle's scheme, the efficient cause remains especially relevant to the final cause, or end, while the formal and material causes are less relevant to teleology proper. Wolff defines this efficient cause as the being 'whose action is the reason for the other's existence.'[37] Of the final cause, or end, the object of teleological inquiry, he writes that 'That, because of which the efficient cause acts, is called the End, and so the final cause. But it is said that an efficient cause acts for the sake of something, if for this reason it acts, that it [the End]

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[36] Christian Wolff, *Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General*, trans. Richard J. Blackwell (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1963) 43-44.

[37] 'Causa, cuius causalitas in actione consistit, est *Causa efficiens*; ut adeo *ens fit causa efficiens alterius, cuius actio est ratio existentiae alterius*'. Christian Wolff, *Prima Philosophia sive Ontologia*, (Frankfurt: Officina Libraria Rengeriana, 1736), 654.

might be or become.'[38] Thus he carries forward the ancient understanding of the end as that for the sake of which someone acts. It is what comes to 'be or become' as a result of the action.

This modern teleology certainly includes, then, the notion of intentional purposes on the part of a rational agent. Wolff's teleology has therefore been described as external, or 'transcendental-anthropocentric,' wherein 'the target-setting principle, or God, is outside the world' and 'introduces purposes in nature created for man.'[39] Such a description bears testimony to the similarity between Wolff and Plato, as like the ancient, the modern teleology seeks a rational mind behind the end of creation, thereby satisfying our first teleological criterion.

Wolff's modern model is not, however, so Platonic as to be anti-Aristotelian. In the first place, extrinsic causality does not preclude the intrinsic causality with which Aristotle and the natural-scientific functionalists of today are primarily concerned, wherein a thing, based solely on its own ontology and apart from any external or rational purpose, is understood to move towards culmination in a particular actuality. In the second place, it certainly allows for Aristotle's two-telos model. In stating that the efficient cause acts for the sake of the end, he does not say whether the action or being itself is *for* or *towards* the end. It could be that the compass maker fashions a needle for the sake of pointing *towards* North or for the sake of pointing *for* navigation. Wolff's modern teleology is perfectly capable of accounting for both, thus satisfying our second teleological criterion.

In his consistency with the classical teleological requirements, Wolff proposes a modern discipline that is faithful to its philosophical context; that it is also amenable to Christian orthodoxy as has been understood through the historical creeds may be demonstrated by a brief consideration of how the Christian tradition relates to the same teleological criteria, since the modern teleology itself entails both. The first criterion is easily met from within the Christian

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[38] 'Id, propter quod causa efficiens agit, dicitur *Finis*, itemque *causa finalis*. Dicitur autem causa efficiens agere propter quidpiam, si ideo agit, ut ipsum sit vel fiat'. Wolff, *Prima Philosophia sive Ontologia*, 678.

[39] Timofeevich, 'Teleology', 417.

worldview, for the rationality of God is so basic to Christian orthodoxy that the very denial of divine rationality places one firmly outside the realm of Christian thought. Moreover, that God's purposes should be for good rather than ill is taken to be axiomatic given the Christian perception of God's own good nature, only to be further supported on exegetical grounds from texts such as Romans 8:28.[40] The second criterion, though not quite as forcefully demanded by the Christian worldview in particular, is perfectly consistent with it. We will look more closely below at potential Christian models for satisfying this requirement, but for now it is evident that the Christian God is as capable of creating a world to move towards one end *and* for another as is the compass maker of designing his needle.

Is it not disingenuous, though, to interpret these requirements through a Christian lens obviously not intended by the pagans? Does such a Christian appropriation of these old doctrines not consist of word games amounting to a different notion of teleology altogether? There are indeed great differences between the pagan and Christian conceptions of these things. For all the similarities between their theories of the creator and the Christian doctrine of God, neither Plato nor Aristotle seem to have in mind the categorical binary between Creator and creation of the Christian metaphysic. Plato's craftsman, after all, does not create *ex nihilo* but rather is confined in his work to the materials available to him.[41] Likewise, despite the merits of Aristotle's ascription of life, eternality, and goodness to his unmoved Mover, he seems to place this being in the realm of yet other 'unchangeable entities.'[42] But there need not be perfect agreement between the pre-Christian aetiologists and Christian teleologists, for there was not perfect agreement among the pre-Christian aetiologists themselves, even regarding their teleological criteria; this is

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[40] 'And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose' (ESV). As one commentator writes of this passage, 'the idea is that all things work together for good *because of God's agency*' (Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 449. Emphasis added.)

[41] Johansen, 'Plato's Teleology', 25.

[42] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b.

clear enough in the differences between Plato's *Nous* and Aristotle's unmoved Mover. That Christians have yet another understanding of the efficient cause renders our teleology no less legitimate. The breadth of allowance within these teleological criteria allows Wolff's modern teleology to adopt them in a way that is faithful to the philosophical context and amenable to Christian use. As a discipline, this modern teleology is not weighed down by modern accretions, nor need it be relegated to the heap of misrepresentative anachronism. It is a faithful stewardship of the telic foci within the best of classical aetiology and offers Christian theology a time-tested means to understanding God's ends in creation.

### 1.3 The Christian Teleology of Jonathan Edwards

The discipline we now call teleology was practiced by Christian theologians in accordance with these ancient requirements long before Wolff's proposal. For now, however, it will be sufficient to look ahead to the subsequent contribution of Jonathan Edwards. The teleological work of Edwards finds its culmination in his posthumously published dissertation *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*. As Wolff and Edwards were roughly contemporaries, it is unclear whether Edwards ever came into contact with Wolff's proposal of teleology as a name for the discipline. What is clear, however, is that the two had the same discipline in mind whether they called it by the same name or not. Like Wolff, Edwards operates with great familiarity and consistency with the ancients, and, also like Wolff, he narrows his focus especially to final causality. He is not here primarily concerned with a complete aetiological explanation of God's motives *ad intra* from eternity, nor is he attempting an entire theory of divine action in which an account of God's relation to creation is given systematically. Rather, he uses 'end' in its technical sense, fully aware of its philosophical context. His inquiry is to do with the final cause of God's creation and can be described as nothing less than a work of Christian teleology.

Edwards takes great care at the beginning of his dissertation to make clear what must and must not be meant by 'end' as a technical term. The distinctions he draws may generally be

understood in terms of two spectrums, one of *ultimacy* and the other of *supremacy*. The first

regards the degree to which an end is ultimate or, alternatively, subordinate. He defines an

ultimate end as 'that which the agent seeks in what he does for its own sake; that he has respect

to, as what he loves, values and takes pleasure in on its own account, and not merely as a means

of a further end.'[43] Its opposite, a subordinate end, is 'something an agent seeks and aims at in

what he does; but yet don't seek it, or regard it at all upon its own account, but wholly on the

account of a further end.'[44] The ultimacy of an end, therefore, refers to its logical relation to the

other ends in a particular sequence of action. If an end is accomplished as a step in order to

accomplish another end, it is also then a means, and therefore called subordinate. If, on the other

hand, an end is that to which all the others in its sequence were steps, then it is itself a means to

nothing, and so is called the ultimate end in that chain of action.

The supremacy spectrum similarly ranges from *chief* (or supreme) to *inferior*. This

designation is one of value as ascribed by the agent. A chief end for Edwards is 'an end that is

most valued; and therefore most sought after by the agent in what he does.'[45] Its opposite, the

inferior end, is therefore that which is least valued, and so not sought after, by the agent. This

distinction is related to but not the same as the previous category of ultimacy. In this case the

question is not one of logical priority in a sequence of actions but simply of how valuable the end

is to the acting agent. This is an especially important designation for the extrinsic teleology

sought by the Christian theologian, calling to mind for Edwards and for his readers the familiar

language of the Westminster catechisms written in the century before.[46]

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[43] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 405.

[44] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 405.

[45] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 407.

[46] The Westminster Shorter Catechism answers the first question, 'What is the chief end of man?' with an affirmation of the final causality of both divine self-glorification and human happiness: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever' ('The Westminster Shorter Catechism', in *The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* [Richmond, VA: The Board of Christian Education, 1965], 285.)

Edwards is careful to ensure that these categories of ultimacy and supremacy are not conflated. To call an end chief does not signify the same reality as to call it ultimate. Yet the two are evidently so closely related that it is not unreasonable to ask whether an end that is one of these must not also be the other. That an end may be both—the most valued and thus sought for its own sake—is plain enough. But can an end be one and not the other? Edwards answers in the affirmative: 'though the chief end be always an ultimate end, yet every ultimate end is not always a chief end.'[47] As he later explains, there are scenarios, though rare in human experience, wherein

> the ultimate end entirely depends on the subordinate, so that [the agent] has no other means by which to obtain his last [final] end, and also is looked upon as certainly connected with it—then the subordinate end may be as much valued as the last end; because the last end, in such a case, does altogether depend upon, and is wholly and certainly conveyed by it.[48]

To summarize, an ultimate end may be valued no more than, and thus not be chief over, its subordinate end, if three conditions are met: (1) the subordinate end is entirely necessary for the accomplishment of the ultimate end, (2) the subordinate end is entirely sufficient for the accomplishment of the ultimate end, and (3) the agent is aware of the first two conditions being met my the subordinate end. In such a scenario, and in only such a scenario, may an ultimate end not also be the chief end in a sequence of actions; but where there is a chief end in a sequence of actions, it must always be the ultimate.

Of these chief ultimate ends, Edwards further distinguishes between the categories of *original* and *consequential* ultimate ends. An original ultimate end is valued by the agent 'on its own account, *simply* and *absolutely* considered, and is so universally and originally, antecedent to and *independent* of all conditions, or any supposition of particular cases and circumstances.'[49] A consequential ultimate end, on the other hand, 'may be said to be in itself agreeable to an

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[47] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 405.

[48] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 409.

[49] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 411.

agent, *hypothetically* and consequentially: or, on supposition or condition of such and such circumstances or on the happening of a particular case.'[50] The greatest of chief ends, on Edwards' reckoning, must be of the original kind, its value to the agent not being in any way contingent upon any other action or step in its telic sequence. It must therefore be such an original chief end, argues Edwards, that best explains the end for which God created the world, and so this becomes our third teleological criterion: *the telos of creation must be an 'original' chief ultimate end*.

## 1.4 Conclusion

There is a remarkable consistency between pagan and Christian teleology, even concerning the end of creation. Each successive generation we have considered here has served to clarify and further the work of those before, and it is proper that Christian theologians continue this development with a view to its philosophical and Christian-doctrinal contexts. By this point three particular criteria have become clear which must be fulfilled in such a continuation as this: The answer must (1) provide an extrinsic account of God's intelligent design of creation for the accomplishment of some objective good, (2) follow a two-telos model in which, being an extrinsic account, includes an end *towards* which as well as *for* which, and (3) offer an 'original' chief ultimate end, ensuring that no purpose of greater inherent value may be omitted from the explanation.

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[50] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 411.

## CHAPTER 2: EDWARDS' NATURAL ARGUMENT FOR GLORIFICATIONISM

Glorificationism has been defined as 'the position that God creates, and thereby governs, for the ultimate purpose of glorifying Himself; all other divine purposes or aims regarding creation are subordinate to God's self-glorification'.[51] In short, it is the belief that the ultimate end of creation is the glorification of God.

But this does not preclude the telic significance of human happiness. E. Brooks Holifield has noted that even within the Reformed tradition, which has been so closely associated with the glorificationist framework, 'Calvinists spoke often of happiness as one of the ends of creation, but they subordinated it to the supreme end of God's glory'.[52] Representative of this tradition is Louis Berkhof, who, writing of the 'purpose' of election in God's eternal plan, held that 'The final aim is the glory of God. Even the salvation of men is subordinate to this'.[53] As we will see, Jonathan Edwards before him argued that 'The ultimate end of creation was not human happiness but the diffusion of God's "excellent fullness" for its own sake'.[54] By no means does glorificationism seek to deny God's love for humanity or his intention of human happiness. The difference between glorificationism and felicificationism is not *whether* these realities are included in the telic sequence but *where* they are positioned in that sequence. Glorificationism simply asserts that 'That which God does in love for His creatures are acts of grace done in subordination to His self-focused glorifying purposes'.[55] According to glorificationism, God acts to secure human happiness for the ultimate purpose of glorifying himself.

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[51] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 77.

[52] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 88.

[53] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), 115.

[54] E. Brooks Holifield, 'Edwards as Theologian', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 149.

[55] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 81.

Because Jonathan Edwards' dissertation *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World* is thought by Wessling to be the most formidable articulation of glorificationism, its argument will be the primary focus of our engagement.[56] The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to provide a summary of Edwards' argument. In the first section we will consider Edwards' argument in general, with special attention given to its logic, including the presuppositions necessary for its success. In the second, we will survey four possible approaches to securing that logic against the weakness of one of those presuppositions.

### 2.1 Edwards' Argument

As we saw in the previous chapter, Edwards' *End of Creation* is part of a long discussion of teleology within the Christian tradition. In contributing to that discussion, he seeks, on premises common to all within that tradition, to present a God of such transcendent and infinite value that it is unthinkable—even morally unjustifiable—that he should act for any ultimate purpose other than the manifestation of his own eternal glory. In his exposition of the dissertation, Walter J. Schultz writes that Edwards' argues that the end for which God created the world,

> is the pleasure God takes in his "internal glory," that is, God's self-knowledge, holiness, and happiness eternally-increasing in a society of beings who ae upheld in existence moment-by-moment ex nihilo. Put another way, God's end is God's Holy Spirit (the Spirit

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[56] 'In *A Dissertation Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*, Jonathan Edwards presents what is perhaps to date the most thorough and impressive natural theological argument for glorificationism.' (Wessling, *Love Divine*, 86.)

The reader will note two limitations on the scope of this chapter's assessment of Edwards' argument. The first is the exclusive focus on Edwards' philosophical argument rather than his exegetical argument from Scripture. This decision was made for the sake of space: to engage both parts of his argument thoroughly would nearly double the length of an already long chapter. The great strength of his argument lies in his philosophical section anyway, and his exegesis is informed by his philosophical work. His Scriptural arguments are not unimportant though, and they will be considered in Chapter 3 as part of the adoption of Edwards' work into felicificationism.

The second is what might appear to be a disproportionate regard for the contributions of Walter J. Schultz and Jordan Wessling in this conversation. Not only are both works especially important (Schultz's is the only monograph published to date that is concerned primarily with the Edwards' dissertation, and Wessling, whose scholarly argument against the aetiological implications of the dissertation, though shorter in length, appears also to be unique), there is also the fact that relatively little scholarly work has been devoted to this work of Edwards' in particular, as Schultz himself laments (*Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 17, 25).

of Christ) indwelling the redeemed, thereby enabling and empowering their experience of God's own knowledge, love, and joy, so that their words, deeds, and emotions redound to the praise of his glory.[57]

This 'most thorough and impressive'[58] of philosophical arguments for glorificationism is notoriously complex, and we must take care not to oversimplify it. Like glorification in general, it must not be mistaken for a sophomoric elevation of the glory of God at the expense of human happiness. On the contrary, in Edwards' view God's glory and human happiness are intimately joined. He takes care to be clear 'That God in seeking his glory, therein seeks the good of his creatures… Their excellence and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory: God in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks himself: and in seeking himself…, he seeks their glory and happiness'.[59] Even so, the burden of Edwards' argument remains to prove that the glorification of God, not human happiness, is the ultimate end of creation. As Alexander Allen has summarized it, 'Edwards did not deny that God had some reference, in the final end of the creation, to the happiness of the creature; but it must be an indirect and subordinate end, not the ultimate or crowning purpose'.[60] Schultz further explains the operation of this relationship, in which God accomplishes the good of his redeemed '*so that* their words, deeds, and emotions redound to the praise of his glory'.[61] God's self-glorification in creation, far from being opposed to human happiness, results directly from it. The redeemed praise God's glory only because they have become participants in it. Oliver Crisp summarizes the view similarly: 'The ultimate end of creation is the instantiation of divine glory *ad extra*. Even God's relationship to his creatures is subordinate to that'.[62] The Edwardsian ordering of the telic sequence is unmistakable: God enters into relationship with the redeemed in order that they

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[57] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 15.

[58] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 86.

[59] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 459.

[60] Alexander V. G. Allen, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1975), 329.

[61] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 15. Emphasis added.

[62] Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards*, 146.

might participate in his happiness, and that in order that in their happiness they might worship him.

## 2.1.1 Edwards' Presuppositions

Edwards' argument rests upon a number of presuppositions which he deemed unnecessary to state expressly. In order to understand the argument on its own terms, it is therefore necessary for us to notice a few things he, and presumably his original audience, took for granted. Especially germane are three basic assumptions which Schultz notes are implicit in Edwards' argument, to which we add a reminder of a particular expectation Edwards' adopts from his development of prior teleological thought, namely the 'original' nature of God's ultimate telos.

### 2.1.1.1 Implicit Assumptions

Edwards' 'three implicit assumptions', Schultz says, 'are not self-evident, but nevertheless are accepted and used by most of those who expressed a position' regarding Christian teleology. The first of the three is that 'God has an ultimate end in creating and sustaining the world'.[63] It was beyond the scope of Edwards' work to argue this point. He simply assumes that God's decision to create was a rational, rather than an irrational one, that God's action is not arbitrary but purposeful. Second, Edwards assumes that 'God is infinitely, eternally, unchangeably, and independently glorious and happy… In other words, *God is absolutely self-sufficient*'.[64] On this point Edwards is simply operating within the bounds of historical Christian orthodoxy. God is absolute Being, and thus derives nothing at all from any part of creation. The third assumption only strengthens the second, asserting that 'Creation is *ex nihilo*'.[65] It is because of the very fact that all of creation owes its existence to God alone, who brought it into existence

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[63] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 77.

[64] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 77.

[65] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 78.

out of nothing, that the Creator God who is absolutely self-sufficient cannot possibly gain anything from his creation. Upon these presuppositions, as Edwards himself states, any appearance of God deriving some benefit from creation must only be creation's giving back to God what already had been received from him.[66]

### 2.1.1.2 The 'Original' Ultimate End

We know that Edwards' argument further rests on the criterion that God's chief end in creation must be an 'original' ultimate end. This category is Edwards' own development, and so is not an assumption shared implicitly with his intended readers; it is nevertheless presupposed as a necessary criterion for the rest of his argument, which is why we consider it here. He introduces this criterion at the beginning of his work, alerting the reader that 'when I speak of God's ultimate end in the creation of the world in the following discourse, I commonly mean in the that highest sense, viz. the original ultimate end', which he elsewhere describes as 'actually the effect or consequence of the creation of the world' and 'simply and originally valuable in [itself]'.[67] This originality of God's ultimate end thus entails two particular components. First, it must be accomplished by creation; second, it must be valuable apart from any created reality. Both parts of this definition are crucial, for there are 'Some things, which are valuable and excellent in themselves, [but] are not properly capable of being attained in any divine operation'.[68] God's eternal essence, for example, is of infinite value in and of itself but, existing eternally, does 'not remain to be attained'.[69] Other realities exist only as a result of creation but are not valuable apart from it, such as the redemption of sinners. Edwards argues that only the manifestation of God's glory may properly be called an 'original' ultimate end, and thus must be the end for which God created the world.

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[66] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 447.

[67] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 413, 428.

[68] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 421.

[69] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 421.

### 2.1.2 Edwards' Logic

On the basis of the above presuppositions, Edwards builds an argument of complex logic, the entirety of which is perhaps best summarized in this single passage:

> It was this value for himself that caused him to value and seek that his internal glory should flow forth from himself. It was from his value for his glorious perfections of wisdom and righteousness, etc., that he valued the proper exercise and effect of these perfections, in wise and righteous acts and effects.[70]

God values himself most highly, and thus acts in such a way as to manifest that valuable nature—to glorify himself. But such an argument, even in summary form, requires considerable explanation. 'To make his case', Schultz writes, Edwards 'supplemented his reliance on Scripture with deductive logic. Edwards' philosophical chapter…deserves to be exposited in these terms'.[71] Therefore I will next summarize the logic of Edwards' argument in basic syllogistic form. As Schultz claims, the syllogism does in fact prove valid; it is not the argument's validity but the premises' veracity which comes into question, and so we will consider the best available support for each of the premises.

#### 2.1.2.1 The Basic Syllogism

For the purposes of this chapter, I offer the following syllogism as a summary of Edwards' deductive logic:

Major Premise: *Every action ought to be done primarily for the sake of that which is of highest value.*

Minor Premise: *God alone is of highest value.*

Conclusion: *Therefore, God's action must be done primarily for the sake of himself.*

Because the argument takes the form of a first order enthymeme—its major premise never actually being stated outright—I will give special attention in the next section to that premise, its role in the argument, and possible approaches to supporting the propriety of its place

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[70] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 532.

[71] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 25.

in the work. But first, a couple of brief comments are in order concerning the minor premise and conclusion.

Working backwards, Edwards' conclusion as represented in this syllogism must be understood in light of its context, not least of which the requirements of his 'original' ultimate end. Given the nature of such an end as defined above, Edwards' conclusion entails more specificity than merely that God's ultimate end is 'Himself' generally understood. God's 'self', as we have seen already, cannot in fact meet the criteria due to the impossibility of bringing it about by virtue of any act in creation. This specificity, Schultz argues, is Edwards' great contribution to the view that 'God's end in creation is indeed his glory', a view already 'broadly held'.[72] Edwards understands that it cannot simply be God's glory as it exists eternally, so it must be 'God's "internal glory" existing and eternally increasing as an "emanation." … Edwards make it precise'.[73] The conclusion is not that God's action must be done primarily for the sake of himself *as he exists eternally*, but for the sake of himself *as glorified in creation*.[74]

Edwards' minor premise, that *God alone is of highest value*, is taken to be axiomatic, such that, but for its being stated rather than merely implied, it would not be out of place with Schultz's 'three implied assumptions'. Indeed, he does state that God is 'infinitely the greatest and best of beings', yet also asserts the common nature of such a statement: 'It is evident, by both Scripture and reason', Edwards writes, 'that God is infinitely, eternally, unchangeably, and independently glorious and happy… I need not stand to produce the proofs of God's being such a

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[72] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 82.

[73] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 82.

[74] Wessling also attests to the identity between these two claims as he summarizes Edwards' conclusion: 'God's ultimate aim (or in Edwards's preferred language, 'chief end' or 'last end') in creation must be Himself—*which, we learn from a bit more analysis, amounts to the claim that God creates for His own glory*.' (Wessling, *Love Divine*, 87, emphasis added). It is worth also noting that it is not immediately clear, given the importance placed on this distinction, how Edwards' end, being tied so inextricably to the conceptualization of creation, actually meets the second requirement of his own 'original' ultimate end—that in meeting the first requirement, it fails the second. Nevertheless, my criticisms below focus on other areas of his argument.

one, it being so universally allowed and maintained by such as call themselves Christians'.[75]

Edwards took this minor premise for granted, for *End of Creation* is meant to contribute to a

discussion of teleology within the scope of Christian orthodoxy.

The major premise, however, is not so easily taken for granted. Wessling has called it

the 'action principle' (AP), 'the principle that *for every action that one performs, that action*

*should primarily be done for the sake of that which is of ultimate or highest value*'.[76] Edwards

nowhere states this explicitly in *End of Creation*, but it does seem to be the premise he assumes

for the completion of his enthymeme. Not only does something very much like the AP provide a

logically valid beginning for the argument, but it also appears necessary in order to make sense

of otherwise unfounded assertions such as,

> If it be an infinitely amiable thing in God that he should have a supreme regard to himself,
> then it is an amiable thing that he should act as having a chief regard to himself; or act in
> such a manner, as to show that he has such a regard; that what is highest in God's heart,
> may be highest in his actions and conduct,[77]

and

> [A hypothetical omniscient Third Being] would therefore determine that the whole
> universe, including all creatures animate and inanimate, in all its actings, proceedings,
> revolutions, and entire series of events, should proceed from a regard and with a view to
> *God*, as the supreme and last end of all,[78]

and 'Whatsoever is … valuable in itself … must be supposed to be regarded or aimed at by God

*ultimately*, or as an ultimate end of creation',[79] and even in the passage quoted at this beginning

of this section as the best summary of his whole argument:

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[75] Edwards, "End of Creation," 420. Schultz concurs with Edwards' estimation of his audience, writing that 'Everyone whom Edwards addresses—those who are sympathetic to his goals and those whom he opposes—either accept this idea or have argued for it or for some synonymous expression.' (Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 43).

[76] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 87.

[77] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 422.

[78] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 424.

[79] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 426.

It was this value for himself that caused him to value and seek that his internal glory should flow forth from himself. It was from his value for his glorious perfections of wisdom and righteousness, etc., that he valued the proper exercise and effect of these perfections, in wise and righteous acts and effects.[80]

Whatever the tacit support may be, Edwards seems in each of these passages to assume some reason, or principle, why God's action must be motivated by God's evaluation of what is most worthy of his action.

## 2.2 Four Possible Solutions

Because Edwards' argument hinges on the AP for its first premise, it is worth exploring on what grounds its veracity might be defended. There are at least four possible approaches to supporting this AP (though in the next chapter we will consider the weaknesses of each), and here I will present the strengths of each one in turn.[81]

### 2.2.1 The 'Proportionate Regard' Approach

Michael J. McClymond has termed the first of these the 'principle of proportionate regard' (PPR). He draws this 'crucial idea' in the dissertation from Edwards' own words, 'For 'tis fit that the regard of the Creator should be proportioned to the worthiness of objects, as well as the regard of creatures', and cites several other passages which feature the principle as well.[82] In one other such passage, Edwards declares of 'the moral rectitude of God's heart' that it 'must chiefly consist in giving due respect to that Being to whom most is due'.[83] His use of the language associated with the classical definition of justice can be no accident and must not be overlooked; Edwards evidently roots the PPR in the very justice of God—it is a necessary implication of his very essence.

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[80] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 532.

[81] These four approaches are drawn from Wessling's own exploration of his 'action principle' in *Love Divine*, 87-97.

[82] Michael J. McClymond, 'Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God: Ethics and Divinity in Jonathan Edwards's *End of Creation*', *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte* 2, no. 1 (1995): 7. (Citing Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 424.)

[83] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 422.

Though McClymond coined the term, he is not the only one to recognize its role in the dissertation. It is exactly what Schultz has in mind as he establishes as part of Edwards' logic that 'God's ultimate end in creation must manifest God's supreme regard for himself'.[84] It is only on the basis that '*Moral goodness consists in showing proportionate regard*' that 'it can now be concluded clearly and emphatically that God is morally justified for loving himself infinitely before creation and for making himself his own original ultimate [end] in creation'.[85] For Schultz, as for McClymond, the PPR is essential for the effectiveness of Edwards' argument.

As McClymond argues, the PPR 'gives Edwards permission to indulge in what might otherwise seem empty speculation regarding God's intentions in creating'.[86] The connection between the PPR and the AP is hardly left to the imagination. 'God, no less than human beings', McClymond writes, '*is ethically bound to take into account and respect* the inherent worth of each of the entities he considers'.[87] Such language as 'take into account' and 'respect' begs the question of what such verbs might look like in God's ethical responsibility, the answer to which seems to require the application of the principle to some divine action. How is God to 'respect' the worth of these entities without action? McClymond only affirms this as he continues on, writing that 'God *in creating* is bound to give highest regard to what is highest in "worth"'.[88] McClymond himself understands the PPR to entail an imposition of ethical obligation on God concerning his action, and this in a manner remarkably consistent with the AP.

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[84] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 84.

[85] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 85-86.

[86] McClymond, 'Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God', 7.

[87] McClymond, 'Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God', 7. Emphasis added.

[88] McClymond, 'Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God', 8. Emphasis added.

## 2.2.2 The Allegiance Approach

The second we will call the 'allegiance approach'. This is Wessling's second proposed option:

> Maybe the idea behind the action principle is that since God is maximally great, perfect allegiance to God is what is due to Him in every action of every living agent, including God. Someone might think, furthermore, that one can have perfect allegiance to God only if one always acts primarily for God's sake.[89]

This approach is admittedly similar to the first, but it differs in the emphasis it places on the allegiance due to God. It may be that this emphasis offers as a necessary link in the apparent leap from the non-controversial PPR to the more tenuous AP. One might agree readily enough that any rational agent ought to evaluate a given entity rightly, in accordance with that entity's objective worth. But how does one conclude from that principle that the rational agent in question must then orient each and every of his actions towards the manifestation of that evaluation? This approach answers, 'Because allegiance requires it'. This in turn assumes (1) that allegiance to the entity in question is itself a moral obligation and (2) that allegiance is defined as something like acting for the other's sake—little different from the bare application of the PPR to the agent's action. If in fact these assumptions can be founded, perhaps allegiance approach does in fact provide sufficient grounds for Edwards' major premise.

## 2.2.3 The Eudaimonic Approach

Wessling derives a third approach from eudaimonist ethics, based on the belief that ethical action in the human realm 'is rationally justified by the human's highest good, namely, union with God'.[90] He considers the potential of reasoning from that *justification* to an implication of *motivation*, which would lead one to say that 'every human action should be done primarily for the sake of bringing about one's highest good'.[91] Granted, there is no necessity in

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[89] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 89.

[90] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 90.

[91] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 90.

this move from justification to motivation—much less to obligation. The point is not the necessity of such reasoning, but the plausibility of it.

Even still, there remains the subsequent jump from the human ethical realm to the divine. As Wessling continues, 'Based upon this motivational structure, one might hold that God's actions should be arranged in a similar manner: God must act ultimately for His highest good, which is something like Self-love'.[92] Yet even this seems plausible, both generally and for Edwards in particular. Generally, some correlation is assumed between divine and human goodness; it is on the basis of such an analogy that the attribution of goodness to God has been understood to hold meaning.[93] Furthermore, Edwards himself is more than comfortable reasoning upward from the realities of human agencies to that of the divine. He repeatedly draws conclusions about the nature of God's teleological thought based on analogies of human experience, such as a woman whose journey entails a subordinate end of equal value to its ultimate end[94] or a man whose original end in seeking a family is the love of society.[95] This eudaimonist approach, though it is not deductive in its logic, nevertheless seems to supply a possible support for the AP suitable to Edwards' work.

### 2.2.4 The Platonic Approach

The fourth approach to supporting the AP leverages the Platonic notion of love, arguing that only God is properly lovely, and thus whatever love an agent has for anyone or anything else must in truth be for the sake of the apparent beloved's participation in or resemblance to God's loveliness. In other words, God is the only entity in all of reality that can properly be loved. Those other beings whom an agent 'loves' are actually loved only insofar as,

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[92] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 90.

[93] Samuel Renihan, introduction to *God without Passions: A Reader*, by Samuel Renihan (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press), 25.

[94] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 409.

[95] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 411.

and by virtue of the fact that, they exemplify or instantiate what is lovely in God. Robert Merrihew Adams explains this relationship between the lover and the beloved as one in which 'the proximate end should be understood as an exemplification or instance of the ulterior end'.[96] Insofar as one 'loves' anything that is not God, he or she is actually loving God.

According to this view, God as the agent who loves, even in loving his creation, really has himself as the object of that love. Even if creation is the 'proximate end', only he can possibly be the 'ulterior', or ultimate, end, because only he is truly lovely. All else is only lovely because of participation in his loveliness. This approach has the effect of rendering any alternative to the AP categorically absurd: God must act for his own sake, because even in acting for another's sake he really is acting for his own sake.

### 2.3 Conclusion

Edwards' dissertation offers a compelling argument for the glorificationist framework. His philosophical genius is on display as he demonstrates familiarity with the contributions of the ancients as well as of his contemporaries; as he masterfully develops nuanced categories, such as the originality of an ultimate end, which carry the conversation beyond where it had gone before and at the same time appear, once articulated, plainly evident; and as he remains firmly yet creatively orthodox in the Christian faith while doing so. We should not be surprised that the argument has proven as influential as it has. Whatever else may be said, we must recognize the perfect deductive validity of his argument that God's self-glorification alone must be the end for which the world was created. We saw that its veracity depends on a principle that seems entirely plausible on the grounds of any of at least four arguments—but it is nevertheless unproven by Edwards, and in the end is only as plausible as any of those possible grounds are shown to be. In

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[96] Robert Merrihew Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 154.

the next chapter we will further evaluate the merits of Edwards' argument, noting this and other weaknesses within it.

CHAPTER 3: A RESPONSE TO EDWARDS' NATURAL ARGUMENT

FOR GLORIFICATIONISM

Now that we understand the general flow of Edwards' argumentation, we are able in this chapter to consider its merits. It should be clear from Chapter 2 that it is a remarkably strong argument overall. Even still, I submit that it has its weaknesses—weaknesses which, despite the extraordinary value of his contribution to the conversation, are finally detrimental to his conclusion. In this chapter I aim to introduce three of those weaknesses, each of which amounts to an objection against the adoption of Edwards' glorificationism as the framework for Christian teleology: first, that it is incompatible with the Christian doctrine of divine love; second, that the major premise of his syllogism is unfounded, compromising the veracity of his logic; and third, that his categories are insufficient for a complete teleology, failing to account for both elements of Aristotle's two-telos model. Any one of these objections, if legitimate, is enough to question Edwards' conclusion; taken together, the three render the glorificationist model inferior to the felicificationist model I will offer in the following chapters.

## 3.1 Incompatibility with Divine Love

The first objection to Edwards' glorificationism is that it appears incompatible with the doctrine of divine love as historically understood. The doctrine itself is marked by a broad but remarkable consistency throughout the centuries. Augustine simply contrasted it with covetousness.[97] Aquinas followed Aristotle in defining it as 'to wish good to someone'.[98] Francis Turretin espouses the 'commonly held' view of divine love as threefold: 'benevolence by which God willed good to the creature', 'beneficence by which he does good to the creature', and 'complacency by which he delights himself in the creature'.[99] Geerhardus Vos claims that it 'has

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[97] Augustine, *The Trinity* VIII.10.

[98] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, II.I, Q27, Art.4.

[99] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 1:242.

reference to the disposition of God's good pleasure toward what lies outside of Him, or to the affection of the three Divine Persons for each other as well'.[100] Anders Nygren famously describes agape as 'unselfish love'.[101] More recently still, Jack Cottrell defines God's love as 'his self-giving affection for his image-bearing creatures and his unselfish concern for their well-being, that leads him to act on their behalf and for their happiness and welfare'.[102] Whatever is meant in attributing love to God, at least this much must be accepted: it is centred on the other rather than the self, and wills good to that other.

Yet the motivation attributed to God in Edwards' dissertation appears inconsistent with this understanding of divine love. If this is indeed the case, as I seek to demonstrate in this section, then we are forced for the sake of consistency to choose between the two: we must either reframe our doctrine of divine love to conform with Edwards' glorificationism, or else reconsider Edwards' framework in favour of one more consistent with the doctrine of divine love. When forced with this choice, I submit on the basis of the *analogia fidei* that in this case we must not sacrifice our clear, consensus doctrine of divine love on the altar of a more obscure and controversial teleological framework.

Against the objected conflict between the divine self-centeredness he advocates and the selfless nature of divine love we are otherwise inclined to expect, Edwards affirms that in his framework God's action is, if only in a limited sense, motivated by love. 'Indeed after the creatures are intended to be created', he writes, so as to ensure the reader does not to mistake what follows for having to do with the original telos in particular, 'God may be conceived of as being moved by benevolence to these creatures, in the strictest sense, in his dealings with, and works about them'.[103] His evident care to dissociate this benevolence from God's original end in

[100] Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. and ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 37.

[101] Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson (London: S. P. C. K., 1953), 214.

[102] Jack Cottrell, *What the Bible Says about God the Redeemer* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1987), 336.

[103] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 440.

creation makes this point irrelevant to the issue at hand. The question is not whether God acts in benevolence towards creatures as an end subordinate to a different, ultimate end; the question concerns his ultimate end. Thus there appears to remain a tension between his glorificationism and the apparent need to relate God's love to his 'original' end in creation. How then does Edwards seek to reconcile this tension? By arguing that God's glory and human happiness are really not opposed to one another:

> Here God's acting for himself, or making himself his last end, and his acting for their sake, are not to be set in opposition; or to be considered as the opposite parts of a disjunction: they are rather to be considered as coinciding one with the other, and implied one in the other. But yet God is to be considered as first and original in his regard; and the creature is the object of God's regard consequentially and by implication as being as it were comprehended in God.[104]

In short, God's love for creation relates to his original end in that the two necessarily coincide. Yet he insists the distinction remain clear, so that God himself is 'first and original in his regard', the creature being valued only by consequence of its participation in that original loving act. For Edwards, God does love mankind, but as an unambiguously subordinate means rather than as his original ultimate end—only because in doing so he manifests his own glory. The conclusion is unavoidable: Edwards makes God's action primarily and ultimately self-centred. He reduces God's motive from love as it is commonly understood to something utilitarian, to something directed more towards self-gratification than self-giving, to an evaluation of the other as nothing more than a means to a self-serving end, even if that other happens to benefit as well—for on this logic it would make no difference to God's ultimate motivation if the same end were to be accomplished by destining all human beings to everlasting punishment.

This is no misrepresentation of Edwards' argument. He acknowledges this unabashedly, responding with three arguments for the propriety of self-centred action on God's part. First, on the basis of the PPR, it is 'fit and suitable that he should value himself infinitely

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[104] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 440-441.

more than his creatures'.[105] Second, unlike our experience in the human realm, God's self-interest cannot conflict with 'public welfare'.[106] Third, who else is worthy? 'Indeed', Edwards reminds us, 'he only is fit to be made the highest end, by himself and all other beings'.[107] I take no issue with Edwards on this point and in fact find it to be an important part not only of his glorificationist logic but also of the felicificationism which will be presented in the next chapter. God has every right to act 'selfishly', to make humanity happy only for the ultimate purpose of glorifying himself. Nevertheless, it is a different thing altogether to call it love for him to do so. For although God has the right to be self-centred, love is by definition other-centred.[108] While God is perfectly right to act for himself, therefore, it would be perfectly wrong to call it love of humankind.

Edwards offers a final attempt to reconcile this conclusion that 'what good [God] does, he does for himself, and not for them; for his own sake, and not theirs', offering a still more forceful equivocation of the two: 'Nor ought God's glory and the creature's good to be spoken of as if they were properly and entirely distinct'.[109] The rationale is clear enough: to the extent that the distinction between the two can be obscured, to say that God acts for his glory becomes the same as to say that he acts for human happiness—to affirm that God acts in love. Still, the legitimacy of this equivocation must be considered.

Appealing to the reality of transcendent mystery and human finitude, he asserts the 'probability' of this view in which 'it appears that God's respect to the creature, in the whole, unites with respect to himself. Both regards are like two lines which seem at the beginning to be

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[105] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 451.

[106] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 451.

[107] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 452.

[108] Even the eternal love attributed to God *ad intra* is understood not simply as God loving himself in the sense that a unitarian deity might be able; rather concerns subject and object within the triune Godhead, as one divine person loves another eternally. Augustine gives voice to one historical articulation of this understanding in *The Trinity* VIII.14, XV.5.

[109] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 458.

separate, but aim finally to meet in one, both being directed to the same centre'.[110] But this repeated recourse to the union of God's glory and human happiness is increasingly problematic. It seems to serve as a *deus ex machina* which is not only unfounded but, worse, depends upon a troubling conflation of two distinct realities; indeed, Edwards' argument threatens to fold upon itself when we consider the accompanying insistence that though the two are finally practically the same, the one must remain 'first and original'. Surely such an essential difference between the two as that between an original and a consequential end demands that the two are not, in fact, the same thing at all. The glorificationist must decide: either God's glory really is as chief as the position argues, and thus may not be conflated with the competing telos, or the two are really the same, and it is as actually no less proper to assert human happiness as the chief end of creation.[111] It would be better to embrace the categorical distinction between the two, conceiving of Edwards' 'two lines' not actually finally meeting, but rather, as Oliver Crisp has suggested, as an asymptote: a geometric relationship wherein a line and a curve approach each other infinitely; 'they grow ever closer together but they never meet'.[112]

To the credit of Edwards' argument, he does not actually depend upon the full extent of the equivocation between God's glory and human happiness. Instead, he continues on the more defensible ground that the two are merely compatible, arguing therefore that it makes no difference to the creature what God's final motive is. The benefit we derive is no less real, and neither should be our gratitude in response. But my concern is not so much for the obligation of the creature to respond in gratitude as much as for the object and sincerity of God's love. The question remains: is his action grounded in love for humanity, or for himself? Edwards'

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[110] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 458-459.

[111] Such a response would not only be a forfeiture of the glorificationist position, it would in fact be a form of the teleological dualism which we dismissed in the previous chapter as a viable option.

[112] Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards*, 167. This is not to deny the unity of the two realities in terms of God's *actus purus*, as Crisp himself also affirms (*Jonathan Edwards*, 86). Rather, just as it is both necessary and proper for us to distinguish between divine attributes while affirming divine simplicity, so it is necessary and proper to maintain distinctions of divine actions *ad extra* even while affirming God as pure Act.

explanation of God's delight in creation being properly a delight 'in himself expressed in them [the creature], and communicated to them' serves only to confirm the suspicion that inasmuch as God's motive may properly be called love, it cannot be his love for the creature. [113]

Perhaps the most likely reading of Edwards' equivocation, therefore, is to understand it as his application of a distinction he was careful to make in his introduction, where he argues that a 'subordinate end may be as much valued as the [ultimate] end' only 'when the ultimate end entirely depends on the subordinate, so that he has no other means by which to obtain his last end, and also is looked upon as certainly connected with it'.[114] That is, if a subordinate end within a given causal sequence is understood by the agent to be both necessary and sufficient for the accomplishment of its ultimate end, then the two may be valued equally by the agent. Therefore, if God sees that his love for humanity is both necessary and sufficient for the manifestation of his own glory, Edwards believes God may then value the former no less than the latter. This does seem to overcome the apparent insincerity of God's love for humanity as a means to an end. But does it really?

First of all, it is doubtful that such a scenario actually holds true—moreover, to whatever extent it is true within human experience, it may easily be attributed to human error, thus negating the application of the same to God. Beyond the question of human error, however, even the conclusion Edwards draws from the scenario appears inconsistent with the rest of his framework in that it introduces by necessity a category he has already expressly precluded (namely that of a chief end that is not an ultimate end). For the sake of the rest of his argument, it would be more consistent, then, to emend his definition of a chief end to parallel that of an ultimate end, as an ultimate end is one that is done for its own sake. Thus, a chief end must be one valued for its own sake. This follows from the principle of greater causality which Edwards

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[113] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 462.

[114] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 409.

himself evidently acknowledges, stating that 'a subordinate end has no value, but what it derives from its ultimate end'.[115] In this case, a subordinate end may never be as valued as the ultimate end to which it is subordinated, thereby securing Edwards claim that a chief end must always be an ultimate end. Such a correction is necessary in order to preserve the integrity of his overall argument, yet simultaneously is detrimental to this proposed reconciliation of his framework with divine love.[116]

Secondly, even if we were to grant Edwards' claim that a subordinate and ultimate end may both have the same value, the subordinate is still by nature of its subordination a means to an (ultimate) end. And because it is not finally the value, but God's final purpose, which is in question, this fact alone seems to set the framework once again in opposition to true love on the part of God. Of all God's actions in creation—the small and the large, from mundanities to the very accomplishment of the gospel itself—even those that benefit humankind are not in the end intended for humankind's sake; they are intended primarily and ultimately for God's own sake. Those acts which appear selfless are really at root self-centred. As Wessling has put it, if Edwards' glorificationism is true, then 'When it matters most … God is only charitable to others when it is in God's interest to behave in the relevant charitable manner'.[117] Does God have the right to act in such a way? Yes, Edwards rightly argues that he does. But that does not change the fact that even for God to do so cannot be called love for his creatures.

## 3.2 The 'Action Principle' in Edwards' Logic

The second objection to Edwards' glorificationism is that his logic, as summarized in the above syllogism, depends upon an unfounded premise. In particular, the veracity of his major premise, which we have followed Wessling in calling the action principle (AP), is doubtful. In

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[115] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 408.

[116] It could also be noted as yet another implication of this logic that such equal valuation of the subordinate end (in this case, human happiness) results in a violation of Edwards' own PPR.

[117] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 98.

the above summary of Edwards' argument, I introduced what seem to be the four most likely supports for the AP. The purpose of the present section is to demonstrate that each of those four approaches fails to provide satisfactory grounds for the AP. A syllogism depends for the veracity of its conclusion on the veracity of its premises; if the veracity of the AP, therefore, cannot be proven, then neither can Edwards' conclusion.

### 3.2.1 The 'Proportionate Regard' Approach

The first possible approach was based on the Principle of Proportionate Regard (PPR) and argues that because God is morally bound to value every given object in proportion to its intrinsic worth, God is therefore morally bound to act for the sake of that being whose worth is highest. The success of this approach seems all the more likely given that McClymond, who himself coined the term, evidently assumes its entailment of the AP.[118] Even still, that entailment is not assumed by all. In objecting to this approach, Wessling imagines a world in which Robert and Sam (respectively identified as a man and his dog) 'are the only sentient beings'. It is important to note here that this entails the omission of any deity from this imagined world, ensuring that Robert is the most valuable character in the consideration. In applying the PPR to this imagined scenario, he argues that 'it seems to follow…that Robert honours his own value appropriately only if he *always* refuses to put Sam's interests before his own. But we know that this cannot be right'.[119]

Is Wessling correct? It does seem to cut against the grain of the Christian ethic to prohibit the man to act selflessly. Presumably this is because at the core of the Christian ethic is love, or charity towards the other. To consider an example perhaps more relevant than the

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[118] As we saw above, McClymond, in explaining the PPR, writes that God '*is ethically bound to take into account and respect* the inherent worth of each of the entities he considers' and that 'God *in creating* is bound to give highest regard to what is highest in "worth",' which language seems to call for commensurate action. (McClymond, 'Sinners in the Hands of a Virtuous God', 7-8, emphasis added.)

[119] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 89.

relation between this man and his dog, let us imagine a different world, much more like our own, wherein there exist two men of perfectly equal intrinsic value (being derived, perhaps, by something very much like our own bearing of the divine image). In this scenario, for one to act sacrificially for the good of the other must be a transgression of such an application of the PPR. They are equal in worth, and therefore must be equal in value; and if equal in value, they must be equal in regard to the aim of a given action. Yet to this we must answer with Wessling, 'but we know that this cannot be right'.

The key word in Wessling's verdict seems rightly to be '*always*'. May God *never* choose to act benevolently towards an object of his love? Is it against his nature *ever* to act in any way not primarily self-centred? It is difficult to imagine that God adheres to such an application of the PPR in his redemptive work, and this for at least two reasons. Firstly, different individuals are said to receive different destinies despite the equality all human beings' worth.[120] Secondly, Christ, who being truly God is more valuable than any for whom he died, nevertheless prioritized their good in his cruciform action.[121]

### 3.2.2 The Allegiance Approach

The second possible approach is similar but emphasizes allegiance, depending upon a definition of allegiance which requires the loyal agent always to act only with a primary consideration for that to which he is loyal. Applied to humanity, such an understanding of

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[120] Crisp summarizes the importance of these differing destinies in Edwards' thought, especially as it related to God's purpose in creation: 'The sin of some sinners will be expiated in the person of Christ, whose work on their behalf means they are no longer held culpable for their sin. But Edwards also thinks that God must display the glory of his retributive justice in the created order as well as his mercy and grace through the work of Christ.' (Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards*, 178.)

[121] It could be argued by the glorificationist that it was worth it for Christ to do this only because it was ultimately for his glory. Even so, the objector still must face at least these three difficulties: first, what of the two men in the example before? second, this argument makes the motivations attributed to the work of Christ almost, if not wholly, deceitful—are we to think—do the authors of Scripture intend us to think—of Christ on the cross as being motivated by self-interest? and third, does this not have Christ setting a poor ethical example, even if justifiable on the basis of unperceived motives? Sure, perhaps *he* can act in a manner contrary to the PPR, but only because of his divine motives; mere men must not, it would seem, follow the ethical example of Christ at the very apex of his saving work.

allegiance would require that the human agent's duty to the all-worthy God demands that every action done is done primarily for God's sake. Applied to divine agency, the conclusion is the same: every divine action must be done primarily for his own sake, lest he lapse in the allegiance owed to himself. But whence does this definition of allegiance come? On what basis do we select this demand of allegiance as opposed to any number of alternatives?

It could be argued that this definition is something of a golden mean among the spectrum of options. Calling it 'moderate allegiance', we might easily conceive of a 'strict allegiance' on the one hand, requiring that the loyal agent act exclusively for God's sake, or of a 'soft allegiance' on the other hand, requiring that the loyal agent never act in direct opposition to God's interest. Any number of other options could presumably be located between these points on the spectrum, but the strength of the proposed 'moderate allegiance' is that it appears to fall somewhere near the middle. As favourable as such a definition may be, and as unfavourable as either extreme admittedly seems, the burden remains on the supporter of the allegiance approach to provide some compelling foundation for the definition it requires. As Wessling writes, 'To avoid begging the question in favour of the action principle, though, one needs to explain why perfect allegiance to God entails the precise motivational structure captured within the action principle, and why even God Himself is bound by this principle when God chooses to create the cosmos'.[122] In short, the merit of this approach rests entirely on a tenuous definition which has yet to be sufficiently grounded.

### 3.2.3 The Eudaimonic Approach

The third possible approach to supporting the AP, drawn from eudaimonist ethics, argues for the plausibility of deriving divine motivation in creation from God's being justified in pursuing himself as the highest good. Moving beyond the contestability of analogizing divine moral obligations from human ones, and that of eudaimonism even among those, this approach is

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[122] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 89-90.

still doubtful. Wessling offers two arguments in particular against it. The first is to do with the move from justification to motivation. As has already been granted above, there is no argument for the necessity of this shift. But as this approach is meant to be one of plausibility anyway, Wessling's objection goes deeper, pointing out that, in the analogous case of human ethics, this move is not merely unnecessary, nor is it ethically neutral. Instead, it is seen to amount to 'undue egoism'. This element forces a turn in the analogy between divine and human ethics, weakening the logic of applying human experience to the divine.[123] With this in view, we shift from a doubtful analogy to an ethical disanalogy of the sort that threatens any meaningful analogical attribution of goodness to God.

Wessling's second response utilizes classical teleological thought. He writes, 'the classical eudaimonistic approach is built upon a natural teleology, according to which each human (and natural substance generally) seeks her own perfection or self-actualization. Assumed by this teleology is the obvious fact that humans do not yet possess their highest good'.[124] This imperfection, natural to humanity, is understandably something that must not be attributed to God—a challenge appreciated by Spinoza, who responded by denying any notion of teleology operative in divine action, writing that 'this doctrine takes away the perfection of God; for if God acts on account of an end, he necessarily desires something which he lacks'.[125] Edwards is not unaware of the challenge and emphasizes that 'no notion of God's last end in the creation of the world is agreeable to reason which would truly imply or infer any indigence, insufficiency and mutability in God; or any dependence of the Creator on the creature, for any part of his perfection or happiness'.[126] As Schultz explains, Edwards overcomes this problem by proposing that God's ultimate end 'is the pleasure he takes in his self-knowledge, holiness, and happiness

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[123] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 91.

[124] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 91.

[125] Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. and trans. G. H. R. Parkinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 109.

[126] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 420.

eternally increasing' in creation.[127] According to this view, there is no result of creation that does not flow finally from God himself, for creation is *ex nihilo*, thereby eliminating any notion of a lack on God's part. Wessling's argumentation is effective against attributing the eudaimonistic logic of self-perfection to God, thus disarming the third possible approach to supporting the AP, but it should not be mistaken as an argument against Edwards' larger framework.

**3.2.4 The Platonic Approach**

The fourth possible approach derives from Platonism and argues that all that can properly be called 'love' must actually be love for God, even if more proximally experienced in some aspect of creation. As seen above, the strength of this approach lies in that if it is true then the AP becomes an absolutely necessary consequence; the cost, however, is that it seems no agent—neither human nor divine—can be said properly to love anything but God. At the very least, this approach requires a forfeiture of the selfless aspect of love. As Wessling summarizes this cost, 'each finite person or thing should be loved primarily as a means of loving God in a manner that implies that the loving of finite persons is, in the final analysis, most centrally about loving God'.[128] Adams writes: 'love requires an interest in the beloved that is not merely instrumental. If someone desires my well-being only as a means to an ulterior end…she does not love me, because she does not desire my well-being for its own sake'.[129] Put differently, to love anyone but God is to make them a means to an end, and so really not to love them at all.

Of the four approaches, this comes perhaps nearest to the explanation Edwards would wish to offer—which should come as no surprise given the Neoplatonic elements of his thought, along with the similarity it bears to what we have seen already in Objection #1 above.[130] It does,

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[127] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 153.

[128] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 93.

[129] Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods*, 155.

[130] Crisp affirms the Neoplatonism present in Edwards (*Jonathan Edwards*, 95, 138-139). Schultz denies Neoplatonism in Edwards (*Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 127), but at a minimum the fact that he

however, provide yet another, slightly different argument which is worth briefly considering here. This view suggests that what God loves in humanity is only his own likeness. In this sense, the love God has for humanity is brought as near as in any other argument to equating to the more 'original' love he has eternally for himself. Thus, the first problem with this view is one we have already explored above: to the extent that God's love for us is a means to an end, it is not actually love for us at all. The second problem is similar but lies in love's orientation towards a real individual rather than an abstract category. 'Stated in theological terms', writes Wessling, 'the degree to which you love someone only because and insofar as she is made in the image of God, the less it looks as if you love *her*…'[131] That is, the true object of true love, even for God, can only be God. In the end, this approach obscures both the proper nature and object of love as attributed to God.

### 3.3 Edwards in the Aristotelian Model

The third objection to Edwards' glorificationism is to do with his presumed lack of awareness of Aristotle's two-telos model.[132] Had he taken this obscure categorical distinction into consideration, it may be that his dissertation would read quite differently. Absent the two-telos model, Edwards does not specify whether the telos he has in view is the end *towards which* or the end *for which*. When read in light of Aristotle's distinction, it is clear that Edwards' argument pertains to the end *towards which*—leaving it to us to consider the end *for which* and its implications on the rest of his argument.

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had to devote an entire chapter to doing so is evidence that Neoplatonic tendencies are at least not at odds with much of his work.

[131] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 96.

[132] This is no slight to Edwards—if we recall from Chapter 1, this lack of awareness has marked centuries of teleological thought until only recently.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Aristotle notes in a number of places a linguistic ambiguity which forces us to make a careful distinction between two types of telos. One of those places is in *Metaphysics* Book XII:

> That for the sake of which [the final cause] is found among the unmovables is shown by making a distinction; for that for the sake of which is both that *for which* and that *towards which*, and of these the one is unmovable and the other is not. Thus it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other moving things.[133]

To refer to 'that for the sake of which' is vague: by it one could mean the telos *for which* an act is intended or the telos *towards which* it intends. We will return to the rest of this passage shortly; for now, it is important simply to recall the nature of this distinction. As seen before, the end *towards* which is present in every teleology, whether intrinsic or extrinsic. An acorn, apart from any rational, intending agent, moves *towards* being an oak tree, its ultimate telos.[134] The end *for* which, on the other hand, is only and always present in the case of an external, rational agent. Our illustration of this was a compass, which is designed by a compass maker so that its needle will point *towards* north *for* the successful navigation of the hiker.

Aristotle elsewhere applies the same distinction (though in different language) to the external teleological framework of human agency:

> But a certain difference is apparent among ends, since some are ways of being at work, while others are certain kinds of works produced, over and above the being-at-work. And in those cases in which there are ends of any kind beyond the actions, the works produced are by nature better things than the activities.[135]

Here in the first paragraph of this *Nichomachean Ethics* he explains that, in those cases where both kinds of ends are present, '...the works produced are by nature better things than the activities'. So military success is a higher good than is the bridle-making necessary for the

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[133] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b.

[134] We might say that all that the acorn does it does *for* that end, but by that we clearly mean something different. In an intrinsic teleology, the motion of the acorn itself is constantly *towards* the oak. And end *for* which enters the scene only in an external model, as if we were to learn that a man planted that acorn, so that it would grow into an oak, *for* the ultimate purpose of creating a shaded area of the yard.

[135] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* I, 1094a.

cavalry that secures that success. Navigational success is a higher good than a needle that points in one direction rather than another. The end *for* which is higher good than the end *towards which.* Aristotle understands that real implications arise from this distinction as he, like Edwards after him, simply applies the principle that the cause is greater than its effect. The means is only valuable to the agent in so far as it accomplishes its end, which is to say it derives its value only from its service to the end. It is of lesser value than the end it serves. It follows, then, that in an extrinsic teleological model, in which both kinds of end must be present, the end for which a thing is done is supreme to the end towards which it is done. The question of the end for which God created the world is one of external teleology, and so any thorough answer to it must account for both the end *towards which* and the end *for which* (the latter being the ultimate end).

Yet Edwards' argument does not account for the distinction. Where his descriptions of his original ultimate end are most lucid, the end *towards which* is clearly what is on display.

> He would therefore determine that the whole universe, including all creatures animate and inanimate, in all its actings, proceedings, revolutions, and entire series of events, should proceed from a regard and with a view to *God*, as the supreme and last end of all: that every wheel, both great and small, in all its rotations, should move with a constant invariable regard to him as the ultimate end of all; as perfectly and uniformly as if the whole system were animated and directed by one common soul: or, as if such an arbiter as I have before supposed, one possessed of perfect wisdom and rectitude, became the common soul of the universe, and actuated and governed it in all its motions.[136]

'God, as the supreme and last end of all' is spoken of here not as the beneficiary of the movement but as the target of the movement; not as the one *for* whom all things are moving but the one *towards* whom all things are moving. The language of motion—of proceeding, or moving forward, of revolutions, of rotations—is important and closely associated with intrinsic teleology. Of course, Edwards does not understand the question of God's agency as one of intrinsic teleology, but he nevertheless seems to be operating on a largely intrinsic model. Compare the above passage from Edwards with Aristotle again in the Metaphysics:

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[136] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 424-425.

> That for the sake of which [the final cause] is found among the unmovables is shown by making a distinction; for that for the sake of which is both that *for which* and that *towards which*, and of these the one is unmovable and the other is not. Thus it produces motion by being loved, and it moves the other moving things.[137]

Here the importance of motion becomes clearer. For Aristotle, the intrinsic end *towards which* provides the explanation for all motion within that end's telic sequence. In this sense the essence of an oak animates, or moves, the acorn, full of potentiality, to actuality in its telos. On the grand scheme of the cosmos, Aristotle here conceives of an unmoved Mover, an end greater than which nothing exists, which is drawn towards nothing (except, perhaps, itself) but towards which all other things are drawn.

Edwards' claim seems to be precisely this: that God, as unmoved Mover, must be the end *towards which* all of creation tends. Any remaining doubt should be satisfied by yet another passage from Edwards: 'What has been said shows that as all things are from God as their first cause and fountain; so all things tend to him, and in their progress come nearer to him through all eternity: which argues that he who is their first cause is their last end'.[138] Edwards could not be clearer than he is here. That 'which argues that [God] is … their last end' is that 'all things tend to him'. Excepting the first two objections, Edwards offers a compelling argument for the end *towards which* God created the world.

This amounts to the conclusion that all of creation moves towards God in much the way that a needle is drawn towards north. As true as that might be, it is no more complete a teleology of God's creation than to say that north is the ultimate end of compass-making. If we are to offer a complete account, we must also account for the end *for which* creation is designed, the benefit, the 'work produced' by this movement of creation towards God. And as with the compass or any other extrinsic teleology, that 'work produced', whatever it is, must be the greater of the two teloi, the supreme end for which God created the world. The fact that Edwards

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[137] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 1072b.

[138] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 444.

does not argue for this second and greater telos means that he does not in fact argue for the ultimate telos.

The upshot of all this is that if Edwards is right, then the glorification of God cannot be the ultimate end for which he created the world. It should be noted that although he was not operating in light of Aristotle's two-telos model, neither did he in any way preclude its application to his argument. Insofar as his argument for glorificationism is sound, it is perfectly plausible to accept it as an argument for the end *towards which* God created the world. In other words, the dissertation remains a fine argument for glorificationism as the penultimate end for which God created the world. Furthermore, it should be remembered that Edwards himself remained eager at every turn to harmonize his teleology with God's intention to make humans happy. It is entirely plausible that he would readily accept Aristotle's distinction as a way of reconciling the primacy of these two ends, as he so evidently sought to do.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Having considered the strongest available argument for glorificationism, we find that despite all its strengths and contributions it is not finally compelling. As an argument for God's ultimate end in creation, it fails in at least three ways. First, making God's glorification his ultimate end forfeits the selfless nature of divine love, and thus, in light of the Christian view of love surveyed above, the sincerity thereof. Second, the very logic of Edwards' argument for glorification as God's ultimate end is built on a premise for which no grounds we have yet been able to find. Without legitimate support for his major premise, his conclusion cannot be validated. Third, whatever Edwards does succeed in demonstrating in his dissertation, it concerns only the end *towards which*, an end which must categorically be subordinate to a still greater end in the extrinsic teleology of God's purpose in creation. Taken together, these weaknesses render the dissertation's argument for glorificationism finally uncompelling.

However, we should note that the first two objections hold only in regard to Edwards' argument for glorification as the *ultimate* end of creation. If his work is read as an argument for

glorification as a subordinate end, as suggested by the third objection, then the argumentation becomes entirely effective. Whether this means that Edwards' thesis has long been misunderstood or that he simply ended up proving something other than he intended is immaterial to this discussion. Either way, his *End of Creation* becomes for us a helpful argument for two conclusions. The first and most direct of these is that the glorification of God is in fact the *penultimate* end for which he created the world; the second, which follows from this in light of the two-telos model, is that the *ultimate* end for which God created the world must follow as the result of that glorification.

Allen once wrote that 'The great wrong which Edwards did, which haunts us as an evil dream throughout his writings, was to assert God at the expense of humanity'.[139] I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter that the great glory of felicificationism is to assert a God who, though worthy of expending all humanity, chooses instead to expend himself *for the sake of humanity*.

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[139] Allen, *Jonathan Edwards*, 388.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF AND NATURAL ARGUMENT

FOR FELICIFICATIONISM

Having surveyed glorificationism in Chapter 2 and found it wanting in Chapter 3, we are ready now to examine the felicificationist view and determine how it compares. We are not able to do so by evaluating the argument of a definitive proponent of the view, as we were with glorificationism, for there is no such proponent of felicificationism to date. But this is not to say that there is no precedent for acknowledging the final causality of human happiness in God's design. The Thomist doctrine of beatitude, for example, holds that 'God's activity *ad extra* rather aims at the communication of divine happiness of others.'[140] Regarding the end of humanity, Thomas writes, 'Now, the ultimate end of man, and of every intellectual substance, is called felicity or happiness, because this is what every intellectual substance desires as an ultimate end, and for its own sake alone,'[141] and elsewhere that 'God is indeed the last end of a rational creature, as the thing itself, but created Happiness is the end, as the use, or rather enjoyment, of the thing.'[142] Calvin affirms in the *Institutes* that 'it was chiefly for the sake of mankind that the world was made'.[143] As we have mentioned already, the Westminster divines similarly included humanity's everlasting joy in the Catechism's teleology.[144] Even still, there is little, if any, precedent for the felicificationist view as I seek to present it in this chapter: the teleological framework in which human happiness is the ultimate end for which God created the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the superiority of felicificationism as a Christian teleological framework according to arguments from nature (delaying arguments from Scripture until the next chapter). In the first section we will see what criteria must be used in

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[140] Hütter, *Bound for Beatitude*, *9.*

[141] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III 25.14.

[142] Aquinas, *ST* I, Q 26, Art 3, Ad 2.

[143] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I.16.6.

[144] WSC 1.

judging the framework's value, each being drawn from previous chapters. In the next section I will present a more detailed view of felicificationism than has been given so far, followed by a consideration of how it fulfils each of the criteria from the first section. In doing this, I aim to show the superiority of felicificationism as a framework that comports with teleological expectations and as well as is strong where glorificationism was shown to be weak.

## 4.1 Criteria for Felicificationism

The preceding chapters have not merely provided an overview of teleology and an assessment of glorificationism; they together have provided us with a clearer set of expectations we must have in our current assessment of felicificationism. If we are to find felicificationism to be the preferable teleological view, it must be on the basis of its fulfilling these several criteria. The purpose of the present section is to gather and present with utmost clarity these criteria which all must be met by the felicificationist view.

### 4.1.1 Teleological Requirements

From our survey of teleological thought in Chapter 1 we gleaned three teleological requirements, each of which must be met by any viable Christian teleology. The first of these is that the Christian teleology of creation must consist of a rational agent (God) whose purpose in creating is marked by beneficence. As Plato's Timaeus reasoned, because the craftsman is good, the reasoning goes, whatever intentions he has must primarily be beneficent.[145] In Chapter 1, we saw the consistency between this rationale and Christianity. What is more, we see in William Bates' 1674 *Harmony of Divine Attributes* (well before Wolff's 1728 *Preliminary Discourse*) exactly the same rationale, here applied to the Christian God:

> Infinite goodness shined forth in the creation. This is the leading attribute that called forth the rest to work. As there was no matter, so no motive to induce God to make the world, but

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[145] Plato, *Timaeus* 29d-30a. In comparing this passage to Christian doctrine, we must note that the word translated 'jealousy' here is not the same as is ascribed to God in the Christian Scriptures. The word is φθόνος, lit. 'ill-will'. Even still, we will see below that the felicificationist view accounts for the jealousy of God.

what arose from his goodness; for he is an all-sufficient being, perfectly blessed in himself. His majesty is not increased by the adoration of angels, nor his greatness by the obedience of nature; neither was he less happy or content in that eternal duration before the existence of any creature, than he is since. His original felicity is equally incapable of accession, as of diminution. It is evident therefore, that only free and unexcited goodness moved him to create all things, that he might impart being and happiness to the creature, not enrich his own.[146]

Indeed, Edwards too affirms the same line of reasoning in his Miscellany entitled 'End of the Creation': 'God is really happy in loving his creatures, because in so doing he as it were gratifies a natural propensity in the divine nature, viz. goodness. Yea, and he is really delighted in the love of his creatures and in their glorifying him, because he loves them, not because he needs. For he could not be happy therein, were it not for his love and goodness.'[147] Such beneficent agency, recognized by all sides, is the first criterion felicificationism must be expected to meet.

The second is a consistency with Aristotle's distinction between the end *for* which and the end *towards* which. This two-telos model, which we have already reviewed in detail as part of our evaluation of glorificationism, has received little scholarly attention in modernity and was evidently unknown to Edwards, but it is not new to Christian thought. It appears in Aquinas' work, albeit in different terms and only related application. Citing Aristotle as his source, Aquinas affirms that '"End is twofold namely, objective and subjective," as the Philosopher says, namely, the thing itself and its use… Accordingly God is indeed the last end of a rational creature, as the thing itself, but created Happiness is the end, as the use, or rather enjoyment, of the thing.'[148] Though he opts for language of 'object' and 'subject' rather than *towards* and *for*, and applies the concept to the end of humanity rather than of all creation, the distinction itself is the identical.

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[146] William Bates, *The Harmony of Divine Attributes, in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of Man's Redemption* (New York: Jonathan Leavitt, 1831), 16-17.

[147] Jonathan Edwards, '271. End of the Creation', in *The 'Miscellanies': (Entry Nos. a-z, aa-zz, 1-500)*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 374.

[148] Aquinas, *ST* I, Q 26, Art 3, Ad 2.

Aquinas' use of the two-telos distinction amounts to more than merely a demonstration of its use in, and consistency with, Christianity. Reinhard Hütter explains, 'This distinction results from the ultimate ontological incommensurability between the transcendent first cause, who is subsistent being itself, and the contingent creature that receives its existence and its essence from another.'[149] Applied to the relation between God and creation, the distinction is not merely consistent, it is a necessary implication of the Christian faith. Hütter continues, 'While God is indeed the *objective* ultimate end of the rational creature, the subjective ultimate end cannot be the uncreated absolute beatitude of God, but must be a created participating beatitude, the fruition of the *objective* ultimate end in the human soul, in short, the beatific vision'.[150] While God himself must in some sense be the end of creation, there must also be another sense in which he is not. If felicificationism is to be adopted as the Christian teleology, it must do justice to this reality.

Our third criterion is related to the second in that it entails the same tension between the sense in which God must be yet cannot be the end of creation. Edwards' requirement of 'original' ultimacy states that God's ultimate end in creating must be valuable to God 'on its own account, *simply* and *absolutely* considered, and is so universally and originally, antecedent to and *independent* of all conditions, or any supposition of particular cases and circumstances.'[151] That is, whatever the ultimate end of creation is, it cannot in any way derive its value to God as a consequence of creation. This does not mean, however, that the end is not to be accomplished by creation—indeed it must be if it is to be the end of creation. The requirement of originality demands that the end be simultaneously valuable apart from creation and yet not accomplishable apart from creation.

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[149] Hütter, *Bound for Beatitude*, 18.

[150] Hütter, *Bound for Beatitude*, 18-19.

[151] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 411.

Edwards' glorificationism met this requirement by distinguishing between God's eternal glory, which did not remain to be brought about by creation,[152] and the manifestation of his glory, which both requires creation and, being dispositionally grounded in his eternal nature, is supremely valuable apart from creation.[153] On this view, God's eternal, intrinsic glory is dispositionally oriented to emanation; its outward manifestation is its natural exercise.[154] This emanative disposition of God's glory requires creation for its exercise, thereby motivating God to create. If felicificationism is to prove equal to or greater than glorificationism, an equally adequate explanation of original ultimacy will have to be given.

**4.1.2 The Weaknesses of Glorificationism**

Our analysis of Edwards' glorificationism in Chapter 2 sheds still more light on what must be expected of the felicificationist view, especially by highlighting three considerable weaknesses which must not be attributable to felicificationism if it is to prove stronger. Thus the fourth, fifth, and sixth of our present criteria correspond directly to the first, second, and third objections to glorificationist raised in the previous chapter.

The fourth criteria, then, is that felicificationism must be compatible with divine love. As Charles Hodge has written, 'We must adhere to the truth in its Scriptural form, or we lose it altogether. We must believe that God is love in the sense in which that word come home to every human heart.'[155] Lest our teleology tug at the very fabric of the Christian faith, we must expect felicificationism to accord entirely with the received doctrine of divine love. Fifth, we must be able to demonstrate both the logical validity and the veracity of the argument for felicificationism. This goes without saying, but it is nevertheless necessary in order to improve

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[152] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 421.

[153] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 433-434.

[154] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 46, 141.

[155] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (1872; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), I.429.

effectively on the glorificationist framework. If we are to find felicificationism superior to Edwards' glorificationism, it must not merely be valid but demonstrably veracious as well.

Our sixth criterion is based on our assessment of Edwards' glorificationism. If my conclusion regarding its identification of the end *towards* which is accurate, we should expect the full teleology of creation to fulfil the two-telos model in a manner consistent with that finding. Note that this criterion is not quite the same as the second. It does not merely require that the felicificationism employ Aristotle's distinction; it requires that in employing that distinction it offers an end *for* which that is in every way complimentary to the end *towards* which that we have already accepted. Since we have seen from Edwards' argument that God himself must truly be the end of creation in the sense that his internal glory is that *towards* which all creation tends, felicificationism must not only offer an end *for* which God created, it must in fact show that end *for* which to compliment the ultimacy of God himself as the end *towards* which.

## 4.2 Felicificationism Considered

We now have established a clear set of six criteria that must be met by any Christian teleological framework that is to be preferred over glorificationism, felicificationism included. In the remainder of this chapter, I seek to provide a thorough consideration of the felicificationist position and how it fares according to these criteria. First, I seek to shed more light on just what felicificationism is and is not, since understanding that will be crucial to the rest of our work. After that I will relate the particulars of that view to each of the six criteria in turn.

### 4.2.1 Definition

We have defined felicificationism already as a Christian teleological framework which posits human happiness as the ultimate end for which God created the world. In order to avoid confusion in moving beyond this basic definition, it will be helpful to understand felicificationism in relation to two other views that it is not: glorificationism and amorism. The

first of these we have considered already, but the second we have not. Wessling has this to say about each in relation to one another:

> Note what the paradigms of glorificationism and amorism are not. These two viewpoints are not in competition about the *telos* or fulfilment of creation. Advocates of either position can hold that all of creation finds its completion in a right relationship to God… Instead, these two paradigms compete to explain why, ultimately, God creates and relates to creatures, specifically humans. The defender of amorism maintains that God creates humans for the ultimate purpose of relating to them in love, whereas the glorificationist looks to God's self-interest or self-focus as that which God ultimately seeks to achieve in human creation.[156]

By now we have seen ample evidence that glorificationism is in fact a teleological framework, whether the amorist agrees with its proposed telos or not. As such, it is categorically in conflict with the teleological framework that is felicificationism—but this conflict does not make the two mutually exclusive. To affirm glorificationism alone does amount to the rejection of felicificationism; to affirm felicificationism in full, however, is to affirm the teleological contribution of glorificationism and more. We have concluded already that the argument for glorificationism should be accepted insofar as it proves the glory of God to be the end towards which all things tend. The felicificationist accepts this in full, yet having done so he maintains that human happiness is a still higher, more ultimate telos. Felicificationism, therefore, is a teleological framework alternative to glorificationism; but not as a denial of it so much as an extension of it.

The second position mentioned in the above quote by Wessling is amorism. This is Wessling's own position, in which he argues that 'God created the world out of love.'[157] This position differs from glorificationism, he writes, in that it holds that 'God primarily creates to love creatures, not principally to delight in Himself loving creatures.'[158] We observe two things about amorism in the above comparison. First, Wessling does not intend it to be a teleological

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[156] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 82.

[157] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 109.

[158] Wessling, *Love Divine*, 110.

framework. Regarding the telos of creation, he is eager simply to agree with the glorificationist that the telos of 'all creation' is 'a right relationship with God.' Second, he nonetheless has in mind a position inherently concerned with causality: 'to explain why, ultimately, God creates and relates to creatures, specifically humans.' Despite the apparent teleological import (to which we will return) of this amorism, it is intended only to be broadly aetiological.

Together with Jonathan C. Rutledge, Wessling sheds further light on the scope of amorism in a subsequent paper the two wrote in response to Mark Murphy's 'Holiness Framework for Divine Action.'[159] In this paper, entitled 'God of Holy Love', Rutledge and Wessling shift to calling *amorism* the '*agapist framework'* for divine action, a model they say 'aims to render intelligible some facet of a motivational structure that God necessarily has.'[160] Thus it becomes clear that the aetiological interest of amorism has more to do with God's *motivation* than his *purpose* in creating; it is more interested in the efficient cause than the final cause. Much as Murphy seeks to ground divine action in God's holiness, so too Wessling is focused on what it is of the divine nature *ad intra* that moves God to create *ad extra*. To appeal to our vernacular, amorism inquires as to the *cause* rather than the intended *effect*. But we have seen by now how intertwined the two are—the intended effect, or telos, is called the final *cause* simply because it does, in this important sense, contribute causally to the action. Even still, we must recognize the distinction between what it is in God's eternal nature that motivates him to create and what effect of God's temporal creation is his aim in doing so. For this very reason we must not confuse felicificationism with Wessling's amorism: they each focus on different sides of God's operation, the one on his telos and the other on his motivation.

These observations help to make it clear what the felicificationist view does and does not claim. The framework is best understood as a necessary extension of the robust iteration of

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[159] Mark C. Murphy, *Divine Holiness and Divine Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[160] Rutledge and Wessling, 'God of Holy Love', 438.

glorificationism espoused by Edwards, an extension which affirms the best of the glorificationist argument while insisting that it does not tell the whole tale. Similarly, it is closely related, and perhaps even complimentary, to amorism. It does not, in and of itself, refer to the position that God's action is motivated by love, but it is nevertheless marked by such a compatibility with, even dependence on, the doctrine of divine love, that the two may easily be confused. Indeed, it seems that these two also tell different parts of the same story.

### 4.2.2 How it Fulfils the Teleological Requirements

As we saw above, the first three criteria felicificationism must be expected to meet are the teleological requirements from Chapter 1. Here I will show how it satisfies all three.

#### 4.2.2.1 Criterion #1

First, does it provide an extrinsic teleological model consisting of a rational agent who acts for the accomplishment of good? Of all the criteria we have to consider, this is the one perhaps most obviously answered in the affirmative by felicificationism. The rationale may be broken down into three components. In the first place, felicificationism affirms the extrinsic, rational agency required by this criterion. It is by no means unique in this regard, for like glorificationism, it is an expressly Christian framework, and so takes as axiomatic that the God who creates is a conscious being who does so with a purpose. There is room within the Christian pale to disagree as to what that purpose is, but not of whether it is. As a theory of the end for which God created the world, the view necessarily entails such rational agency. Secondly, felicificationism affirms that this rational God acts in order to secure a good. This quality too is shared with glorificationism, the logic of which was seen to rest on the inherent value of God's glory as a good worthy of divine action. Felicificationism similarly affirms that the telos which God seeks to accomplish in creation must be an inherent good in order to merit divine action. In this latter case, however, the good in view is not God's glory. Felicificationism holds that human happiness is itself a good worthy of God's creative action. This brings us to the third component, which is the beneficent nature of this good. The accomplishment of this good serves not to

gratify God but humanity. This is not properly required by the first teleological requirement as stated, but highlights the compatibility with classical expectations of extrinsic teleologies, such as represented in Plato. The felicificationist agrees with Plato that God, being a good God, wanted his people 'to become as much like himself as was possible', and that 'this, more than anything else, was the most preeminent reason for the origin of the world's coming to be.'[161] He agrees with Bates that such a God of such eternal perfection and felicity must create in order 'that he might impart being and happiness to the creature, not enrich his own.'[162] The felicificationist view is nothing if not a model of extrinsic teleology in which a rational agent acts for the sake of good, and moreover for the good of creation.

### 4.2.2.2 Criterion #2

Secondly, is felicificationism consistent with the two-telos model? As seen above, it is nothing less than the extension of glorificationism according to that very model. The felicificationist position proposes the following telic sequence: God creates in order to manifest his great glory, in order that by enjoying that glory his people might experience everlasting and unsurpassable happiness. At first glance this basic summary of the telic sequence appears to acknowledge only one telos, namely, human happiness. But in fact human happiness assumes for its accomplishment another telos. For as Aristotle recognized, it does little good to confess happiness to be the ultimate end if we do not know in what that happiness consists.[163] And what is happiness if not, as Aquinas said, 'the attainment of the Perfect Good'?[164] Human happiness depends on the attainment of some good—and the greatest happiness depends on the attainment of the greatest good—the telos *towards* which all things tend.

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[161] Plato, *Timaeus* 29e.

[162] Bates, *Harmony of Divine Attributes,* 17.

[163] 'But perhaps to say that the highest good is happiness is obviously something undisputed, while it still begs to be said in a more clear and distinct way what happiness is', writes Aristotle, before beginning his consideration of what it is that leads to happiness. (Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 1097b.)

[164] Aquinas, *ST* I-II, Q 5, Art 1.

But must this 'good' necessarily be in any sense the telos? Aristotle and Aquinas both answer in the affirmative. The former famously declares that 'the good is that at which all things aim'[165] In other words, the good is the purpose, or telos. Likewise, Aquinas writes that 'each thing is ordered to a good as its end,'[166] and, 'It is, consequently, apparent that all things are ordered to one good, as to their ultimate end.'[167] Felicificationism posits as its ultimate telos human happiness, which requires the accomplishment of some good, which in turn must be an end.

Two objections to this are worth brief consideration. The first is the suggestion that divine glorification as the means to happiness (and thereby an end) might be replaced with an alternative means, something less ultimate. Any number of examples might be offered of this approach, such as the suggestion that God created for the ultimate end of human happiness by means of vesting the oxygen we breathe with the properties of laughing gas, thereby accomplishing human happiness apart from glorifying himself. But this, or any equivalent example, depends on a lesser view of happiness. Alasdair MacIntyre has described this popular view of happiness as 'a state of only positive feelings…a state of freedom from unsatisfied desires…'[168] Such a view may in fact be the predominant notion of happiness in our culture today, but it is not what was meant by the interlocutors in this project, whether Aristotle or Edwards. The felicificationist has in view happiness in the greater sense described above. Such an approach, therefore, would alter felicificationism beyond recognition.

The second objection seeks to reframe the above rationale, submitting instead that happiness, rather than requiring some good, *is* the good, and therefore is the sole telos. Though at

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[165] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 1094a.

[166] Aquinas, *SCG* III, 16.3.

[167] Aquinas, *SCG* III, 17.1.

[168] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 196.

face value it looks as though this is plausible, it is merely another sly slip into a muddled notion of happiness. We have seen that the achievement of happiness for which felicificationism posits God created the world depends on the securing of one or more means. To declare happiness 'the good' does not change that, it only displaces the burden one spot in the telic sequence. Whatever means is necessary for the securing of that 'good', when pursued, becomes an end—not just an end generally but particularly an aspect of the end *towards* which the action tends. Unless we are then to sacrifice the extrinsic nature of the telic framework, that end calls for the accompanying end *for* which. This is exactly the two-telos model.

When the logical implications of the claim that human happiness is the ultimate end for which God created the world are carefully considered, the necessary presence of these two kinds of telos becomes evident. Unlike the glorificationist framework, which can be conceived as a single telos model, felicificationism fundamentally requires the two-telos model.

### 4.2.2.3 Criterion #3

The third criterion is Edwards' requirement of original ultimacy. Is felicificationism able to fulfil this requirement while claiming the happiness of creatures to be the ultimate telos? In order to do so, it must satisfy both components of Edwards' definition: it must be accomplished by creation, yet be valuable apart from creation. *Prima facie*, the happiness of the creature fails the second of these components. But if we allow Edwards to set the terms for this requirement, we must remember that his framework fared no better on first reading: the eternal glory of God, which in some sense he understood must be ultimate, fails the first component, for it does not remain to be accomplished by creation.[169] Edwards' solution to his own dilemma is instructive in solving that of the felicificationist framework as well.

We saw in the previous chapter that Edwards answers the problem by distinguishing between God's eternal glory and the temporal manifestation of that glory in creation. Because

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[169] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 421.

the former fails the first component of original ultimacy, he shifts his attention to the emanative nature of God's glory and proposes that its manifestation must be the ultimate end of creation, for it is both accomplishable by creation and valuable on the basis of his eternal nature, apart from creation. In this model, it was God's eternally justifiable desire to manifest his glory that motivated him to create for the accomplishment of that purpose. In short, Edwards satisfies the requirement of original ultimacy by a system founded in the eternal nature and culminating in the end of creation.

I submit that nothing prohibits the application of this same reasoning to the felicificationist model. Like Edwards' glorificationism, it seems at first not to satisfy one of the components of original ultimacy; and like Edward's glorificationism, the problem may be solved by grounding the culminative end of creation in the emanative eternal nature. Human happiness, on its own, cannot meet what is required of an original ultimate end. When understood as the culmination of the emanation of God's eternal love, however, it meets the requirement as effectively as Edwards' own solution.

So why did Edwards not adopt this framework? Evidently, because of the object-oriented nature of love, which believed must presuppose the existence of the object(s). As he explains,

> love in the most strict and proper sense presupposes the existence of the object beloved, at least in idea and expectation, and represented to the mind as future. God did not love angels in the strictest sense, but in consequence of his intending to create them, and so having an idea of future existing angels. Therefore his love to them was not properly what excited him to intend to create them. Love or benevolence strictly taken presupposes an existing object, as much as pity, a miserable suffering object.[170]

The exercise of God's love for humanity cannot be the original ultimate end, he reasons, because it necessarily requires for its very conception (and therefore for its value to the agent) the existence of that creation itself, thereby violating the second component of original ultimacy. But did we not see that this issue is resolved, according exactly to Edwards' own logic, in the

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[170] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 439.

paragraph above? Here the felicificationist must be careful. Per Edwards' objection, we cannot say that God's eternal love emanates into a love for humanity, thus motivating him to create those whom he loves. Edwards is correct that this would negate the claim to original ultimacy. What the felicificationist can say, however, is that God's eternal love is dispositionally emanative, on which grounds he freely chooses to create in such a way as to exercise that love; only then, according to a properly 'original' felicificationist model, does he design humanity in such a way as to be most receptive to that love (the *imago dei*) and the rest of creation in such a way as to facilitate that love (by manifesting his glory) for the delight of his beloved.[171] God creates not because he loves humanity but in order that he can love humanity, which, given the nature of love (which is further affirmed by Edwards' identification of love and benevolence in the above quote), is but another way of saying that God creates in order to share happiness with humanity.[172]

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[171] This solution finds a shared voice in Wessling's own response to this challenge from Edwards, who 'argues that God cannot create creatures out of love for them.' He responds, 'Perhaps it is better, then, to understand 'creation out of love' along the lines of 'creation for the sake of love.' (Wessling, *Love Divine*, 101).

[172] The legitimacy of this solution rests largely on the precision of its parallel to Edwards' own rationale for admitting the manifestation of God's glory to the category of original ultimacy. If the two are indeed parallel, we should see mirrored not only the argument for but also the argument against. That is, Edwards' argument should be subject to the objection analogous to the one he levied here. Is it? I believe we can see that it is in the following paragraph, in which I have emended Edwards' objection little more than to replace 'love' with 'glorification'.

*Glorification* in the most strict and proper sense presupposes the existence of the *subject glorifying (or at least the means of that glorification),* at least in idea and expectation, and represented to the mind as future. God *was not glorified by* angels in the strictest sense, but in consequence of his intending to create them, and so having an idea of future existing angels. Therefore his *glorification by* them was not properly what excited him to intend to create them. *Glorification or the manifestation of glory* strictly taken presupposes an existing object, as much as pity, a miserable suffering object.

This exercise is not meant to deny the qualification of divine self-glorification as an original ultimate end; it is rather to demonstrate the inefficacy of Edwards' argument against love, and therefore against felicificationism.

### 4.2.3 How it Improves the weaknesses of Glorificationism

The next three criteria we must expect felicificationism to meet are drawn from Chapter 3. If it is to be a superior teleological framework, it must at least be strong in the three areas where glorificationism is weakest.

#### 4.2.3.1 Criterion #4

The fourth criterion requires that felicificationism is consistent with the doctrine of divine love. Much can be said about the doctrine of divine love, and not all of it is marked by consensus in Christian theology. There are, however, at least two key points with which we should expect felicificationism to fit. The first of these is that in referring to divine love we speak of the very essence of God, for as John wrote, 'God is love' (1 John 4:8). This entails God's love for himself as shared eternally between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Second, God loves his people benevolently. This is famously taught in John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.' As this verse further makes clear, God's love for humanity is the cause of at least some divine action. 'God loves us,' writes Augustine, 'and Holy Scripture frequently sets before us the love He has towards us.'[173] But what does it mean to say that God loves us? Augustine holds that there are only two options: he loves us either by 'enjoying' us or by 'using' us. He cannot properly be said to enjoy us, Augustine argues, for that would entail some imperfection or indigence in God: 'if He enjoys us, He must be in need of good from us'.[174] For God to love us, then, must mean that he uses us. But in what sense and to what end? Augustine answers, 'That use, then, which God is said to make of us has *no reference to His own advantage, but to ours only*…Now this is our highest reward, that *we should fully enjoy Him*, and that *all who enjoy Him should enjoy one another in Him.*'[175] According to Augustine, God's love

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[173] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* I.31.

[174] Augustine, *Christian Doctrine* I.31.

[175] Augustine, *Christian Doctrine* I.32. Emphasis added.

for humanity can mean nothing if not benevolence to humanity. John 3:16 affirms nothing less, showing that it was that love that motivated Christ's earthly work, and that for the benefit of those who believe.

Felicificationism is not merely consistent with this doctrine, it is based on it. The telic sequence of the framework begins with a God who eternally is love *ad intra*; God then chooses to exercise that love *ad extra*, and so creates a world in which he can optimally do so. At the pinnacle of that creation is to be humanity, who, made in the *imago dei*, is able to love and to be loved; all the rest of creation serves as a beautifully diverse array of means by which God may exercise that beneficence to his people, and all of providence serves to manifest the various aspects of God's glorious nature to them. For to love man is to pursue his happiness, and there is no greater happiness than to behold the glory of God. Calvin affirms the same of creation and providence when he calls the world a stage and the history of redemption the play that unfolds upon it, all for the display of the glory of God.[176] The felicificationist simply adds that the play is produced for the enjoyment of the viewers, because God loves them.

### 4.2.3.2 Criterion #5

Fifthly, felicificationism should be arguable on the basis of sound logic. There are many ways of arguing for felicificationism, but here we will consider one basic syllogistic argument. To ensure that its terms are understood correctly, it will be helpful to revisit the important distinction between *glory* and *glorification*. The former refers to God's eternal and immutable glory. It is who he is. The latter, on the other hand, is what creation does (or, seen differently, what God does through creation). We have seen already (under Criteria #3 above) that God's glory cannot properly be a part of a telic sequence; rather, it can enter into a series of actions only as an action itself—as the exercise, or manifestation of the eternal attribute—as *glorification* rather than *glory*.

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[176] Calvin, *Institutes* I.14.20.

This allows us to refine our understanding of the two-telos model's implications. In Chapter 1, I went as far as to determine that in an extrinsic teleology the end *towards* which must be teleologically penultimate to the end *for* which, which alone is properly ultimate. Our example was that the compass points *towards* north *for* the hiker's success, a causal relationship that can be sensibly ordered in only one way. (It does not make sense to say the hiker succeeds in order that the compass might point north but that the compass points north in order that the hiker might succeed.) The end *towards* which is penultimate to the end *for* which. But here we must refine what we mean, for north does not technically enter into the telic sequence at all. North exists before, after, and entirely apart from any notion of compass or hiker. Properly speaking, it is the needle's *pointing* north that is part of the sequence as a means subordinate to the hiker's success. Similarly, God exists in eternal glory entirely apart from any notion of creation or human happiness. Thus as north is penultimate as regards the telic sequence of the compass, so God's glory is penultimate *as regards the telic sequence* of creation. God's glory is not subordinated to anything; only glorification, the manifestation of his glory may be subordinated in a telic sequence, as the tendency of the needle towards north. North is a greater reality than navigation, yet is penultimate in its teleology. God is infinitely greater than all of creation, yet is penultimate in its teleology.

With this in clearly in mind, the following syllogism represents one way of arguing for the felicificationist framework:

Premise 1: *In a given extrinsic telic sequence, the end* towards *which is teleologically penultimate and the end* for *which is teleologically ultimate.*

Premise 2: *God is the end* towards *which of creation.*

Premise 3. *Human happiness is the end* for *which of creation.*

Conclusion: *Therefore, human happiness is the ultimate end of creation.*

Whereas the logic of Edwards' glorificationism was rendered weak (though not necessarily false) by an unfounded premise, the legitimacy of each of these premises has been demonstrated throughout this and the previous chapters. Unless one is false, the conclusion cannot be avoided.

### 4.2.3.3 Criterion #6

Sixthly, one of the great strengths of felicificationism is that it accounts for Aristotle's two-telos model—not in a manner that conflicts with the truths of glorificationism but rather by extending the glorificationist model in such a way as to include what it lacks. The central claim of felicificationism is that God glorifies himself in creation in order to achieve the happiness of his people. Indeed, there is no other way to achieve happiness in perfection. The greatest happiness must be participation in divine happiness; God cannot love us better than to give to us the greatest happiness, and there is no greater happiness than to delight in what God himself delights in—his own glory. As Aquinas writes,

> The Happiness of an intellectual nature consists in an act of the intellect. In this we may consider two things—namely, the object of the act, which is the thing understood; and the act itself, which is to understand. If, then, Happiness be considered on the side of the object, God is the only Happiness; for everyone is happy from this sole fact, that he understands God… But as regards the act of understanding, Happiness is a created thing in beautified creatures; but in God, even in this way, it is an uncreated thing.[177]

The eternal happiness of God rests in knowing the glory of his own nature. The perfect happiness of humanity can rest in nothing else. If God is to love his people by making them supremely happy, he must demonstrate to them his glory.

According to the felicificationist framework, God ordains to demonstrate his glory in creation—a world in which all things tend towards his glorious nature—for the purpose of making his people happy. This does in fact subordinate divine self-glorification to human happiness. It does not, however, subordinate *God's glory* to human happiness. For God's glory is an eternal reality and thus cannot be made part of a telic sequence. Ultimately, this amounts not only to a two-telos model (as has already been seen above), but to a two-telos model that is consistent with the truth in glorificationism. At its best, glorificationism argues that the eternal glory of God is the tend *towards* which all creation is drawn. In recognition of the distinction between glory and glorification, the felicificationist goes on to say that in *tending towards* God's

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[177] Aquinas, *ST* I Q 26, Art 4.

glory all things *manifest* that glory, thereby bringing about the end *for* which God created these things to tend towards him—the happiness of his people.

### 4.3 Conclusion

By this point it should be clear that felicificationism offers a superior account of Christian teleology to that of the glorificationist framework. In this chapter I have shown that felicificationism satisfies every criterion we have come to expect the proper Christian teleological framework to meet. It is in every way a proper and thorough teleological system, as shown by its complete fulfilment of all three teleological requirements: it posits a rational divine agency working in creation to bring about the accomplishment of a real good, namely the human participation in divine happiness; it understands the telic sequence to consist of a harmony between two *teloi*, God's eternal glory and humanity's everlasting happiness; and the original ultimacy of this human happiness is every bit as defensible as Edwards' divine glorification.

I have further shown that felicificationism excels in the very areas glorificationism was seen to be weakest. Whereas glorificationism places critical stress on the doctrine of divine love, felicificationism rests upon its consistent outworking: it is *because* God is love that he created in order to love a people by causing them to share in his happiness. What is more, felicificationism is also arguable on the basis of sound logic: Given the relationship between the two ends in an extrinsic teleology, if God is the end *towards* which (as Edwards proved) and human happiness is the end *for* which (as I believe I have shown), then human happiness *must* be the ultimate end for which God created the world. Furthermore, the two-telos model which this logic assumes, and which teleological precedent requires, is adopted by felicificationism in such a way as to affirm the great truths of glorificationism while at the same time extending its logic to its final conclusion. Because felicificationism not only qualifies as a teleological framework but also corrects glorificationism's weaknesses, I argue that it is the best framework for understanding the end for which God created the world.

# CHAPTER 5: ARGUMENTS FROM SCRIPTURE

Up to this point we have considered only the natural arguments for glorificationism and felicificationism. In order to establish a teleological framework that is thoroughly Christian, however, we need also to consider the testimony of Scripture as it pertains to both views. In this chapter I will evaluate the scriptural arguments for both positions, again allowing Edwards to represent the glorificationist perspective. In the first section, I will provide an overview of Edwards' scriptural argument for glorificationism as broken down into three main parts. The merits of his scriptural argumentation will be evaluated in the second section, where I will argue in light of the conclusions of previous chapters that his examples actually offer more evidence for the felicificationist view than for his own. In the third and final section, I offer further evidence for the scriptural basis of felicificationism, aiming to show that the view is a doctrine derived organically from Scripture rather than a philosophical invention that may be imposed upon it. In all, I aim to show in this chapter that not only nature but also Scripture attests to the superiority of the felicificationist view over the glorificationist.

## 5.1 Edwards' Argument from Scripture

The first part of Edwards' argument consists of a set of Scriptures which speak of God as the telos of creation. In Edwards' words, 'The Scriptures speak, on all occasions, as though God made himself his end in all his works: and as though the same Being, who is the first cause of all things, were the supreme and last end of all things.'[178] In support of this point Edwards quotes several texts. In Isaiah 44:6, God says, 'I am the first and I am the last'. In 48:12 he similarly says, 'I am he; I am the first, and I am the last'. In Revelation 1 John records, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty' (v. 8), 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last' (v. 11, KJV), 'I am the first and the last' (v. 17); and later, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end'

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[178] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 464.

(21:6); and again, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end' (22:12). Edwards reads these texts in light of Aristotle's four-fold causal framework, writing that 'what is meant (or at least implied) is, that as he is the first efficient cause…so he is the last final cause for which [all things] are made; the final term to which they all tend in their ultimate issue.'[179]

Second, he marshals another set of texts which he calls 'parallel passages' to those above, and which confirm this interpretation. This second set consists of four different verses which, when considered together, seem to pose a still greater challenge to the felicificationist position. In Romans 11:36, Paul writes 'For from him and through him and to him are all things', and in Colossians 1:16, 'For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.' Hebrews 2:10 states, 'For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist…'. Drawing also from the Old Testament, Edwards writes 'In Prov. 16:4 'tis said expressly, "The Lord hath made all things for himself."'[180] While the first set of Scriptures above are said to imply to God final causality in general, this second set appears clearly to apply to him the end *for* which. The felicificationist framework will need to demonstrate its consistency with these passages especially.

The third and longest section of Edwards' argument from Scripture consists of twelve 'positions' which for our purposes may together be summarized in the following four propositions: (1) the ultimate end of providence must be the ultimate end of creation, (2) the ultimate end of humans (and of angels) must be the ultimate end of creation, (3) the ultimate end of any of God's works, if it be worthy, must be the ultimate end of creation, and (4) the ultimate

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[179] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 464.

[180] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 464.

end of Christ's saving work must be the ultimate end of creation.[181] Edwards assumes each of these four propositions and argues from a number of Scriptures that God's self-glorification is the ultimate end of providence, humanity and angels, and of Christ's work, concluding therefore that, per these terms, the same must be the ultimate end of creation. This argument too must be answered from the felicificationist framework if the perspective is finally to be adopted.

## 5.2 Answering Edwards

As mentioned above, Edwards' Scriptural argument for the glorificationist position has three main parts. By his first grouping of texts, he seeks to demonstrate that the Scriptures declare God to be the last end of creation.[182] These passages share in common the divine self-ascriptions of 'end', 'Omega', and 'last', from which Edwards surmises the implication that God is the last end of creation. Granting Edwards this surmise, we must nevertheless note the ambiguity regarding which kind of telos these texts claim that God is. The ascriptions to him of final causality do not specify whether he is the end *towards* which or the end *for* which. If we are to make sense of this ambiguity in light of our above conclusions, including the necessity of the two-telos model, there is only one option. When God himself is said to be the telos, it must be in the sense of the end *towards* which.[183] As such, the testimony of these texts is in perfect agreement with the felicificationist position.

Edwards' second set of texts calls for closer consideration. Taken together they appear to be more specific in declaring God to be the end *for* which of creation—at least in English, and so seem to overcome the ambiguity (even tendency towards felicificationism) of the first set. Paul uses the same language in Romans 11:36 and Colossians 1:16, writing, 'For from him and

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[181] This portion of his argument spans from pages 469-502. The 12 positions correspond to these four propositions as follows: proposition #1 (positions 1, 3, 5, and 6); proposition #2 (positions 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11); proposition #3 (position 2); and proposition #4 (position 12).

[182] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 464. (These texts again are Isaiah 44:6, 48:12; Revelation 1:8, 11, 17; 21:6; 22:13.)

[183] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII 1972b; Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 421.

through him and *to him* are all things' and 'For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and *for him*' (emphasis added). 'To him' and 'for him' are both translations of εἰς αὐτὸν. The preposition εἰς is typically taken with the accusative to mean 'into, in, toward, to', or even 'to indicate the goal' of a thing, as with 'the vocation, use, or end indicated'.[184] In other words, it can indeed carry teleological import, and principally conveys the idea of movement into, or *towards* something.

It can also be translated as 'for', as in Greg Welty's reading that 'According to Romans 11:36, all things are not only from God and through God, but for God.' This reading does lend itself to the glorificationist position, as Welty goes on to explain, 'So nothing that occurs in God's universe is ultimately for us, even when it is for us. This means that each thing in God's universe is already a means, a means to God's glory.'[185] But to make this point, Welty had to deviate from the commonly accepted translation of εἰς as 'to'. Thomas Schreiner reflects this more common reading in his commentary, reading it as meaning that 'Not only is God the source of all things and the means by which all things are accomplished, he is also the *goal* (εἰς) of all things. The purpose for which the world was created is God's purpose. It is fitting, therefore, that the text ends with an acclamation of God's glory.'[186] Schreiner further notes Paul's use of the same construction in Col. 1:16 attributing the same significance to Christ.[187] J. B. Lightfoot agrees with this reading of Col. 1:16, affirming its translation as 'unto Him' and its

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[184] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and aug. F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 228-229.

[185] Greg Welty, *Why is There Evil in the World (and so Much of It)?* (Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2018), 191.

[186] Schreiner, *Romans*, 637-638. Emphasis added.

[187] Schreiner, *Romans*, 638.

teaching that 'All things must find their meeting-point, their reconciliation, at length in Him…The Word is the final cause as well as the creative agent of the Universe.'[188]

Similarly, Hebrews 2:10 has been translated as, 'For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist…' Here the language is δι' ὅν. Διά with the accusative is said to be 'used of causation which is not direct and immediate in the production of a result, *on account of, because of, for the sake of, with a view to*'.[189] It is no stretch, then, to understand this verse as speaking in causal terms. Does it pose any difficulty for felicificationism to say that creation exists 'on account of' Jesus? Certainly not. What of 'for the sake of' Jesus? Given the phrase's likeness to Aristotle's epithet for both kinds of end, it is unclear that any difficulty would arise for the felicificationist if this were indeed what is meant by the text. And yet even that is doubtful. Philip Edgecumbe Hughes' reading is every bit as legitimate, that 'All creation flows from God and all creation *flows to God*.'[190] This reading clearly shows that the language may be read in terms of the end *towards* which creation moves.

Of the texts in this grouping, the one that at first appears most troublesome to the felicificationist position is Proverbs 16:4. Edwards' quote from the Authorized Version reads, 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' Translated this way, Proverbs 16:4 looks like just the verse for proving glorificationism over felicificationism. But of 'for himself', לַמַּעֲנֵהוּ, in this verse, F. Delitzsch writes, 'Everywhere else מַעֲנֶה means answer,' but here it means 'end'. Put differently, the translation 'for himself' could hardly be further from conveying the literal meaning of the Hebrew. The meaning of the proverb, Delitzsch writes, is

> that all is made by God for its purpose, *i.e.* a purpose premeditated by Him, that the world of things and of events stands under the law of a plan, which has in God its ground and its end, and that also the wickedness of free agents is comprehended in this plan, and made

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[188] J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Revised Text with Introductions, Notes, and Dissertations* (1879; repr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 155.

[189] *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 90.

[190] Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 98. Emphasis added.

subordinate to it… thus making His holiness manifest in the merited punishment, and thus also making wickedness *the means of manifesting His glory*.[191]

When read carefully, this verse too falls short of declaring God or his glorification to be the end *for* which he created the world. These verses certainly do assert the final causality of God. But if they lean nearer to one of the two kinds of telos it is just as certainly not the end *towards* which. The texts come much closer to affirming God as the end *for* which, paving the way for felicificationism. At a minimum, these verses, like the first set, affirm nothing beyond what felicificationism affirms.

Most of the remainder of Edwards' argument consists of 12 positions which, as explained above, I summarize in four propositions.[192] He argues from Scripture that divine glorification fulfils each of these, in effect forming a set of syllogisms which conclude, individually and together, that that glorification must be the ultimate end of creation. The first, for example, may be stated as follows:

Major Premise: *The ultimate end of providence must be the ultimate end of creation.*

Minor Premise: *Divine self-glorification is the ultimate end of providence.*

Conclusion: *Therefore, divine self-glorification is the ultimate end of creation.*

A parallel syllogism corresponds to each of the other propositions as well, and the logic of each is equally valid. Because I accept the legitimacy of each of the four propositions (each major premise) and Edwards focuses his argumentation on proving divine self-glorification to be the ultimate end of each (each minor premise), it will be sufficient for our purposes to answer only

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[191] F. Delitzsch, *Volume VI: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 336-337. Emphasis added. More recently, Bruce K. Waltke affirms that 'end' does not refer here in any sense to a final cause, preferring 'answer' and 'counterpart' as nearer English translations. Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 11-12. Regardless of how מַעֲנֵה is understood, another commentary notes that 'What God's purpose is in creating the wicked for punishment the proverb does not say,' further supporting this text's lack of evidence for the glorificationist model. William D. Reyburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Proverbs*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000), 348.

[192] Stated again, the four propositions are: (1) The ultimate end of providence must be the ultimate end of creation, (2) The ultimate end of humanity (and of angels) must be the ultimate end of creation, (3) The ultimate end of any of God's works, if it is worthy, must be the ultimate end of creation, and (4) The ultimate end of Christ's saving work must be the ultimate end of creation.

his exegetical case for each minor premise. Given the considerable overlap between textual support for each of the four propositions, I provide here the several strongest texts marshalled by Edwards in their support.

Edwards' claim that divine self-glorification is an ultimate end of creation is supported by Psalm 104:31, which, after the psalmist has surveyed a variety of marvellous providences, prays, 'May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works'. Indeed, Edwards is not alone in understanding from this verse that God intends creation to display, to manifest, his glory. Delitzsch points out the special relevance of God's creative act to this psalm, writing that 'The Psalm is altogether an echo of the heptahemeron (or history of the seven days of creation) in Gen. i. 1-ii.3.'[193] Having reviewed the wonders of God's creation, the psalmist 'wishes that the glory of God…may continue for ever, and that His works may ever be so constituted that He who was satisfied at the completion of His six days' work may be able to rejoice in them.'[194] The telic flow of the psalm is one in which God's marvellous creation gives rise to doxology—but the felicificationist recognizes that it does not stop there. The doxology in turn gives rise to joy. So much does this psalm assume the termination of creation in the joy of God's people that Delitzsch continues, 'When the Psalmist…seeks on his part to please God and to have his joy in God, he is also warranted in wishing that those who take pleasure in wickedness…may be removed from the earth…for *they are contrary to the purpose of the good creation* of God…and *mar the joy of His creatures*.'[195] In short, Psalm 104 does attest to the final causality of God's self-glorification, but not to the exclusion of the final causality of the happiness of his creatures.

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[193] F. Delitzsch, *Volume V: Psalms*, trans. M. G. Eastman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 3.127.

[194] Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3.136.

[195] Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3. 136. Emphasis added. A more recent commentary supports the same claim, noting Psalm 104's 'key motif of joy', by which he understands 'both a wish that the prayer-song be *pleasing* and acceptable to the Lord, but also an emphatic statement that the song itself gives delight to the singer', making the psalm itself an example of the manifestation of God's glory ultimately causing human joy. Rolf A. Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 780.

Another key text in Edwards' argument is Ephesians 1:3-14:

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶*to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved*. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of *him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory*. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, *to the praise of his glory*.

From this passage Edwards draws evidence for divine self-glorification as the end of providence as well as of redemption, providence's crowning achievement. Its emphasis on God's glory is evident from the doxological refrain which recurs in vv. 6, 12, and 14. The relation of God's providence to this doxology is drawn especially from vv. 11-12, where Paul says God works 'all things…so that [believers] might be to the praise of his glory.' The causality here seems sufficiently clear for Edwards' point. Of the connection between God's providence and 'the praise of his glory', John Eadie writes 'εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης is therefore not the proximate purpose, but the ultimate result.'[196] The causal relationship between redemption and doxology is evident as well, as seen in that our adoption into Christ is said in verse 6 to be 'to the praise of his glorious grace,' and the final possession of that salvation resulting, per verse 14, in 'the praise of his glory' as well. In these places too, Eadie acknowledges the 'teleological' import of vv. 6 and 14, which he describes as 'designating the final end of the process'.[197] 'The proximate end is man's salvation,' he writes, 'but the ultimate purpose is God's own glory, the

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[196] The phrase to which Eadie refers, 'εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης' is translated, 'to the praise of his glory…' John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1883; repr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 61.

[197] Eadie, *Ephesians,* 35, 71.

manifestation of his moral excellence.'[198] He continues, with direct reference to Edwards' *End of Creation*,

> This, then, was His great and ultimate end, that the glory of His grace should be seen and praised, that this element of His character should be exhibited in its peculiar splendour, for without it all conceptions of the Divine nature must have been limited and unworthy. And as this grace lay in His heart, and as its exhibition springs from choice, and not from essential obligation, it is praised by the church, which receives it, and by the universe, which admires it. Therefore to reveal Himself fully, to display His full-orbed glory, was an end worthy of God.[199]

Linguistically, Eadie (and Edwards) are correct: providence and redemption are both shown in this text to be intended by God to result in the praise of his manifest glory. Yet the glorificationist interpretation does not follow—indeed, Eadie seems gradually to turn from commenting on Ephesians to commenting on Edwards. What he says does not follow from the text, for our *praise* of God's glory is not the same as the *manifestation* of it. The one requires the other, for we cannot praise what we do not know. The praise of his glory must follow from that glory being made known to us. In fact, the praise itself which results from the manifestation is little different, if at all, from our delight in it; what is true worship if not our delight in God's glory? This relationship of praise and delight is further evidenced in the first instance of the refrain (v. 6), as Paul says God has 'blessed us' with that praise.[200] Thus this passage, in all three of its doxological refrains, sets our praise—our delight—to be the ultimate end of providence and creation. The manifestation of God's glory is but a step along the way, the means why which we are enabled to see and delight in it.

What, then, does this text say happens in the telic fulfilment of providence and redemption? It is not that God works marvellously to save his people in order that they might be happy in that salvation, in order that their happiness might contribute to the manifestation of his

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[198] Eadie, *Ephesians*, 35.

[199] Eadie, *Ephesians*, 36.

[200] The word used here is ἐχαρίτωσεν, the language of grace reinforcing the idea that God intends this *for our benefit*.

glory. All this is true, and the present text does not preclude any of it. But it has more to say: rather, God works marvellously to save his people in order to manifest his glorious grace, in order that his people might see that glory and rejoice in it.

Edwards demonstrates that the ultimate end of humanity is to glorify God by appealing to texts such as Philippians 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 10:31. Philippians 2:10-11 shows the fulfilment of that telos as it relates to the culmination of all redemptive history, saying, 'so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' 1 Corinthians 10:31 supports the claim that humanity's ultimate end is the glorification of God as it relates to our moral obligation on a daily basis. 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God', writes Paul. But neither the indicative statement that at the culmination of history every human being will glorify God nor the imperative obliging every human being to do so in the mundanities of day-to-day life can be taken to prove that glorification to be humanity's ultimate end. The only reason why man's ultimate telos is not taken to be the bowing of our knees in Philippians 2 is presumably because that action is followed by yet another end to which it tends; but the felicificationist holds that that confession of God's glory may itself be followed by another end, namely, the happiness of his elect. Similarly, Paul's command in 1 Corinthians 10 no more renders its obedience to be the ultimate end of humanity than his imperative in verse 13 of the following chapter renders the ultimate end of humanity to be judging whether it is 'proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered.' Despite the faulty argumentation, the felicificationist agrees that humanity's end is to glorify God. But, in keeping with the implications of Aristotle's two-telos model for extrinsic teleology, this end is penultimate rather than ultimate, for in this orientation of ourselves to the end *towards* which all creation tends we achieve the end *for* which it tends: our happiness.

Edwards offers a stronger argument from Psalm 115:1, writing that 'When the church says, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Jehovah, but to thy name give glory," it would be absurd to say, that she only desires that God may have glory, as a necessary or convenient means of their

own advancement and felicity.'[201] This surely packs a rhetorical punch, but it fails to take into account the context of the verse and purpose of the psalm. He does not mention that the psalmist immediately follows this plea with, 'Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"' (Ps. 115:2). Delitzsch describes this psalm as a 'call to the God of Israel, the living God, to rescue the honour of His name', because the psalmist's concern is that God reputation should be sullied among the nations.[202] He appeals to God for help not because Israel deserves it, but because God 'cannot suffer the reproaching of His holy name to continue long. He willeth that His name should be sanctified', and so in the verses that follow compares the 'God who is in the heavens' and 'does all that he pleases' with the useless idols of the surrounding nations.[203] What then is the telic sequence envisaged in Psalm 115:1? It could hypothetically be that God helps Israel in order to achieve her 'advancement and felicity' for the ultimate purpose of bringing greater glorification to himself. But not only is this only one possible suggestion, it demands the further question of why God cares to sanctify his name. The felicificationist answers that a more likely telic sequence is that God helps Israel in order to sanctify his name, which in turn serves to bring about his glorious grace in an internationally reaching gospel in which people from every tribe and nation will rejoice.[204]

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[201] Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 483.

[202] Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3.209. A more recent commentary calls even the first point into question, noting that the opening verse is concerned not with *for whose benefit* God acts, but rather on account *of whose worthiness*; '*Not on account of us, … but on account of your name*' is said to be a 'better translation'. She, too, locates the interprational key of the psalm in v. 2: 'Why the question? The remainder of the psalm provides the answer.' Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 854-855.

[203] Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3.210-211. See also, more recently, DeClaissé-Walford, *Psalms*, 855.

[204] The same argument applies to Isaiah 48:11, in which God says, 'For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.' Edwards is as rhetorically strong in commenting on this verse, writing, ''Tis pretty evident here that God's name and his glory, which seems to intend the same thing…are spoken of as his last end in the great work mentioned, *not as an inferior subordinate end, subservient to the interest of others.* The words are emphatical. The emphasis and repetition constrain us to understand that what God does is ultimately for his own sake…' (Edwards, 'Concerning the End', 475. Emphasis added). Though this appears to pose a significant threat to the viability of felicificationism, it is representative of exactly the same mistake as I have described of Psalm 104:31. Because it is therefore answered in the same way, we will not take any more space than this to address it.

Turning now to the ultimate end of Christ's saving work, Edwards maintains that it too is the glorification of God. He appeals to several passages from the gospel of John. One of these is John 12:23, where Jesus says of his upcoming death, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified'. He appeals also to John 17:1, where Jesus similarly prays, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you'. But as with other texts already considered, these texts are neither determinative of ultimacy nor, if they were, specific with regard to which kind of telos is intended. The support for glorificationism drawn from passages such as these is therefore tenuous at best. Any number of Scriptures could as easily be put against it which give as much or more reason to believe that Jesus saw his saving work as culminating ultimately in the benefit of those he came to save. Earlier in the same gospel, for example, Jesus says, 'I came that [my sheep] may have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10). Again in the gospel of John, he describes his act of love on the cross as one in which he 'lay[s] down his life for his friends' (John 15:13).[205] Given the preponderance of such testimony, it should be no surprise that Edwards himself elsewhere claimed that Christ's work on the cross 'Twas only that we might be happy.'[206] Scripture testifies no more to glorification as Christ's ultimate aim in his saving work than it does to the happiness of his people.

Romans 9:22-23 sheds light on all four propositions. With quite an overarching scope, Paul writes, 'What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory'. Three distinct purposes for divine action are noted here: (1) to manifest his wrath, (2) to manifest his power, and (3) to manifest the riches of his glory. Schreiner explains that in verse 22 'God's intention in

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[205] John Owen, though not wholly representative of the felicificationist position, offers a number of further examples in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ,* 208-211. (John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ,* in *Volume X,* in The Works of John Owen 10, ed. William H. Goold [repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009].)

[206] Jonathan Edwards, 'Glorious Grace', in *Sermons and Discourses: 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 394.

making vessels of wrath and tolerating them was so that he could manifest his powerful wrath in the day of judgment.'[207] But, he writes,

> verse 23 informs us that the display of this wrath has a larger purpose. When the vessels of mercy perceive the fearsome wrath of God upon the disobedient and reflect on the fact that they deserve the same, then they appreciate in a deeper way the riches of God's glory…Thereby God displays the full range of his attributes: both his powerful wrath and the sunshine of his mercy.[208]

In other words, the two purposes noted in verse 22 are means to a greater end. God manifests his wrath and power in order to manifest the fulness of his glory. 'God's ultimate purpose is to display his glory to all people.'[209] The felicificationist once again agrees; he only asks the further question of why God wishes to display his glory in this way. The answer seems to be provided without leaving the text, for Paul writes that God seeks 'to make known the riches of his glory *for vessels of mercy*, which he has prepared beforehand for glory'. If one asks Paul, 'Why does God display the riches of his glory?' it seems he would answer, 'For vessels of mercy,' or, put differently, 'for his redeemed.' It is for the good of God's people, in perfect harmony with felicificationism.

### 5.3 Further 'Felicificationist' Texts

Felicificationism is not a merely philosophical position to be placed atop Scripture if possible; it is a Christian teleology derived as much from Scripture as is glorificationism. In this section we will consider just a few further examples of Scriptural support for the felicificationist perspective. Though one might assume that because the Scriptures are God's revelation of himself to humanity, they are so theocentric as to give ample attention to God's glory rather than to human happiness. On the contrary, we will see that Scripture has much to say about human happiness, in the imperative as well as the indicative.

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[207] Schreiner, *Romans*, 523.

[208] Schreiner, *Romans*, 523.

[209] Schreiner, *Romans*, 523.

First, the Scriptures place a high priority on the joy of God's people through exhortation and commandment. The Psalter is full of such exhortations. Psalm 32:11 says, '*Be glad* in the LORD, and *rejoice*, O righteous, and *shout for joy*, all you upright in heart!' (emphasis added). We have the same exhortation in Psalm 48:11, 'Let Mount Zion *be glad*! Let the daughters of Judah *rejoice* because of your judgments!', Psalm 118:24, 'This is the day that the LORD has made; let us *rejoice and be glad* in it', and Psalm 149:2, 'Let Israel *be glad* in his Maker; let the children of Zion *rejoice* in their King!' (emphases added). But this is not unique to the Psalter. It appears throughout the Old Testament, as in Joel 2:21, 'Fear not, O land; *be glad and rejoice*, for the LORD has done great things!' and in also in the New Testament, as in 1 Peter 4:13, where Peter tells suffering Christians to '*rejoice* insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also *rejoice and be glad* when his glory is revealed' (emphases added). Perhaps the best known of these comes in Philippians 4:4, where Paul writes, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.' One commentator has said of this verse, 'The fact that "rejoice" is followed by "always" and is repeated ("*again* I say rejoice") makes it one of the most emphatic directives in Scripture.'[210] The presence of these and other commands to God's people to rejoice and be happy does not prove their happiness to be the ultimate end of creation; still, it does remind us that inasmuch as imperatives are to be weighted in favor of one teleology or the other, felicificationism is not lacking.

Second, the Scriptures indicate in many places the priority of human happiness in God's purposes. This may first be seen in its emphasis on love, both implicit and explicit. Why does God redeem humankind from his sins and trespasses? Paul answers, 'because of the great love with which he loved us' (Eph 2:4). We have seen already Edwards' appeal to John 17:1, where Jesus relates his glorification to that of the Father. But what of John 17:19, where later in the same prayer Jesus says of his people, 'And for their sake I consecrate myself'? It is clear

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[210] Alcorn, *Happiness*, 18.

from passages such as these that Jesus, in addition to others already considered above, that Jesus understands his purpose on earth as being the benefit of his people, 'that [their] joy may be full' (John 15:11, 16:24).

Consider also the continual emphasis of the blessedness, or happiness, of God's people throughout the Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy 33:29 declares, '*Happy* are you, O Israel!' The Psalter begins with the words '*Blessed* is the man' (Psalm 1:1), promising that '*Blessed* are all who take refuge in him' (Psalm 2:12). Isaiah says, 'Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; *blessed* are all those who wait for him' (30:18). In all these texts (and countless others) the words 'happy' and 'blessed' which I have italicized are translations of אֶשֶׁר, which literally means 'happy'. Derek Kidner writes, 'Preferable to *Blessed*, for which a separate word exists, is 'Happy', or 'The happiness of…!'. Such was the Queen of Sheba's exclamation in I Kings 10:8, and it is heard twenty-six times in the Psalter.'[211] The language of blessing in the New Testament also conveys happiness, even when obscured by translation. As Kidner continues, 'The Sermon on the Mount, using the corresponding word in Greek, will go on to expound [the sober doctrine of happiness] still more radically.'[212] That 'corresponding word in Greek' used repeatedly for 'blessed' in the Beatitudes is μακάριος, of which R. T. France says 'blessed' carries 'too theological a connotation in modern usage'.[213] 'Happy' is preferable, he says, 'but for its 'too psychological' connotation. 'Makarios does not state that a person *feels* happy', writes France, instead searching as far as Australian and Welsh idioms for a means of capturing a more objective sense.[214] But 'happy' is the right word, even if somewhat obscured by

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[211] Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 47. The twenty-six appearances of this word he lists as follows: Psalms 1:1; 2:12; 32:1,2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4, 5, 12; 89:15; 94:12; 106:3; 112:1; 119:1,2; 127:5; 128:1,2; 137:8,9; 144:15, 16; 146:3.

[212] Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, 47.

[213] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 161.

[214] France, *Matthew*, 161.

our vernacular, for as we have already seen, the happiness spoken of in the great conversation is that greater, more objective happiness France seeks.[215] Scripture clearly teaches that the happiness of his people is God's end in redemption—not necessarily *the* ultimate end, but certainly *an* end.

These Scriptures do not prove human happiness to be the ultimate end of creation any more than those of Edwards prove glorificationism. They do render felicificationism plausible, if not probable, though, especially in light of the ways even the texts cited by Edwards turn out to nod in the felicificationist direction.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In the end, Scripture alone leaves us to conclude that both glorification and human happiness are both in some way ultimate ends of creation. This alone is reason at least to suspect the superiority of the teleological framework which makes a place for both ends acknowledged in Scripture (felicificationism) rather than the one that denies ultimacy to one of them (glorificationism). Scripture is ambiguous as to which is subordinate to the other, however, so that a consideration of its necessary implications demands philosophical foundations of the sort that we have discussed in the chapters before. While the scriptural testimony may lean in favour of felicificationism, therefore, it is only by applying the natural argumentation to the scriptural testimony that we may come to a determinate conclusion. In doing so, as the previous chapters have shown, the felicificationist framework makes the most sense of the information we have been given.

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[215] This is further supported by Ulrich Luz's commentary, 'Μακάριος, in Greek originally a term reserved for the gods, in Koine can hardly be distinguished any longer from εὐδαίμων [Aristotle's term] and means "happy" *in the fullest sense of the word*.' (Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch and ed. Helmut Koester [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007], 190. Emphasis added).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this work has been to determine what is the end for which God created the world. Did he choose to create for the ultimate purpose of glorifying himself? Or did he choose to create in order thereby to glorify himself for the ultimate purpose of bestowing happiness to his people? We began the inquiry in Chapter 1 by establishing three criteria which must be met by any satisfactory answer to this question. In Chapter 2 we analysed Jonathan Edwards' argument for the glorificationist position and noted its dependence on the belief that divine action must be primarily intended for the sake of what is most valuable. Because this 'action principle' is far from self-evident, we sought to strengthen Edwards' argument by surveying four possible arguments for its legitimacy. Upon further examination, we concluded in Chapter 3 that the glorificationist position nevertheless falls short—not only because none of those four defences of the action principle held up to scrutiny but in two other independent ways: its incompatibility with divine love and its failure to account for both kinds of telos required by the second teleological criterion from Chapter 1.

Felicificationism, on the other hand, does fulfil all three teleological criteria, as seen in Chapter 4. As a proper and complete teleology, it holds that God, as a rational agent, acts in order to bring about an objective good, that while the manifestation of God's glory is the end toward which the happiness of his people is the end for which he accomplishes that manifestation, and that that shared happiness is an original ultimate end. That felicificationism fulfils all three teleological criteria, whereas glorification only fulfils two, is sufficient to demonstrate the superiority of the felicificationist model; but more than that, we saw also in Chapter 4 that felicificationism actually excels where glorificationism falls short. It is naturally compatible with the doctrine of divine love, it orders the relation between divine self-glorification and human happiness in such a way that the penultimate end may properly redound to the ultimate, and it affirms the great truths of the glorificationist model while also extending them to their logical conclusions.

In Chapter 5, we submitted these analytic findings to the testimony of Scripture. On its own, Scriptural testimony is largely ambiguous as to which of the two is the ultimate end of creation. Felicificationism seems only slightly preferable, if at all. But on this point we must read the testimony of Scripture in light of nature. We do this already when we interpret the text on the page by the categories of natural grammar and syntax, or when we arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity by subjecting various passages to basic rules of natural logic. In much the same way, to read these otherwise ambiguous Scriptures in the light of nature's teaching on teleology leads clearly to felicificationism. Indeed, natural analysis and Scriptural exegesis together lead to one conclusion: that God glorifies himself for the sake of his people's happiness.

If this is true, it should prompt further research contributions in a number of areas. Schultz said of Edwards' dissertation that 'If Edwards is correct, then these concepts of God's end and motivation in creation—these issues that Edwards had so painstakingly argued for— should play a role in contemporary biblical, systematic, and philosophical theology.'[216] Similarly, if Edwards is *incorrect* and the felicificationist model is in fact true, then it should play a role in contemporary biblical, systematic, and philosophical theology as well. The implications are far-reaching, but it is not difficult to imagine the benefits of applying these concepts in a few key areas. In practical theological studies of preaching and counselling, for instance, one might find profound benefit in helping the parishioner to understand his or her relationship to God not as one in which their suffering is worth it for God's sake but one in which God has ordained their suffering primarily and ultimately for their own maximal happiness. Another area of interest is that of eschatology, especially regarding how the purpose of suffering in Hell and/or Purgatory might be informed by human happiness as God's purpose for creation as a whole. Thirdly, in current anthropological and theological studies into the meaning of life, it should be of great help to approach the purpose of humanity not merely in an

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[216] Schultz, *Jonathan Edwards' Concerning the End*, 25.

empirical effort to interpret what is intrinsically teleological in human development but consider also such data as these, gleaned from the extrinsic teleological interpretation of divine action.

In these and other areas of inquiry, felicificationism may prove to be a worthwhile addition to current conversations. In any case, and in any area of application, if it is applied properly it should increase, not decrease, our estimation of God and his inestimable glory. It is a wonderful thing to understand that God has every right to create the world for himself; but it is more even more wonderful to see that such a God has chosen instead to create the world for his people. Such a doubly counterintuitive vision uniquely befits the strange beauty of the Christian gospel, and it serves to impel beneficiaries of God's amazing grace to love and delight in him all the more.

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