Chapter 6: “The Scope of Redemption”

**THEME:** Was the Cross of Jesus Christ directed at the redemption of the whole pie (creation)?

**Biblical Foundations**

Romans 8: 19-23 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

John Wesley (7 June 1703 – 2 March 1791) was an English cleric and theologian who, with his brother Charles and fellow cleric George Whitefield, founded Methodism.

Human beings are able to obey God. Animals are able to obey human beings. When human beings lost their ability to obey God, animals lost their ability to be what God made them to be. (See Figure 1)

This disruption in access to God however, does not preclude that animals will not be made “whole” at the end of the age (see passage from Romans 8 above).

*Wesley is wrong to think that humans are the only animals that are capable of obeying God: the whale commanded by God to swallow Jonah is one of many examples discussed in Chapter 2 where other animals do God’s bidding. (Clough p. 136)*

Wesley concludes that at the end of time brutes will return to their natural immortal essence and humanity will have to give an account of their treatment of other animals. (Clough p. 136)

Ephesians 1:10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
Opposing Views:

Descartes:

“Non-human animals are irrational automatons”. “Our (human) soul is of a nature entirely independent of the body (cf. St. Paul in the Romans 8:23) and that, consequently it (soul) is not subject to die with it (body); since one cannot see other causes for its (soul) destruction, one is naturally led to judge from this that it (soul) is immortal” “Animals are like clocks; mechanisms without mind that behave in certain ways because of the way their parts are arranged”. (Clough p. 137-138)

“If G/d had a reason to create, G/d also has a reason to preserve...”

Acts 3:21 21—who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets (i.e. Hebrew thought and revelation).

C.S Lewis (29 November 1898 – 22 November 1963) was a British novelist, poet, academic, medievalist, literary critic, essayist, lay theologian, broadcaster, lecturer, and Christian apologist.

“The beasts are to be understood only in their relationship to man, and through man, to G/d1.” (in this Lewis agrees with John Wesley).

...the (new creature) exists in the new creation for the same reason that it existed in the old, because G/d willed it to be so, and because “it” contributes to the magnificence of the whole for “it” to be present rather than absent2.

Solipsism (/ˈsɒlpɪzɪzəm/); from Latin solus, meaning 'alone', and ipse, meaning 'self') is the philosophical idea that only one's own mind is sure to exist. As an epistemological position, solipsism holds that knowledge of anything outside one's own mind is unsure; as in “I never heard/knew that!!!

Theodicy (from Greek theos, “god”; dikê, “justice”), explanation of why a perfectly good, almighty, and all-knowing God permits evil. The term literally means “justifying God.”

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1 Clough p. 146
2 IBID
Why is the discussion important?

“If we recognize that G/d will wipe the tears from the eyes of other-than-human animals (in the life to come), redeem them from death, sorrow and pain, we may be encouraged to imitate G/d’s mercy and ‘soften our hearts towards the meaner creatures, knowing that the LORD careth for them’, that none of them is forgotten in the sight of our Father who is in heaven’ and therefore to ‘habituate ourselves to look forward beyond this present scene of bondage, to the happy time when they (non-human animals) therefrom, into the liberty of the children of G/d’.”

“How broadly one conceives of the scope of G/d’s redemption of creatures, strongly influences ethical judgements concerning appropriate modes of relationship between human and non-human creatures. This is a concern of practical import and theological interest.”

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3 Clough p. 152