

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

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

May 16 - Reason I Chapter 1 §1-3

CHAPTER I. What Reason dictates concerning this affair.

SECTION I.	<i>Some things observed in general, which reason dictates.</i>	(6 dictates of reason)
SECTION II.	<i>Some further observations concerning those things which reason leads us to suppose God aimed at in the creation of the world.</i>	(4 things)
SECTION III.	<i>Wherein it is considered how, on the supposition of God's making the forementioned things his last end, he manifests a supreme and ultimate regard to himself in all his works.</i>	(in the 4 things)

The logic of these three sections

- §1 - If God can possibly be his own end in creation he should be, because he is the greatest possible being** 1-4
 - Whatever in the creation is valuable in itself, God sought for its own sake as the end of creation 5-6
- §2 - The emanation of God's fullness is valuable in itself** 1-4a
 - God made the emanation of his fullness his end in creation 4b
- §3 - God has made himself his end by making the emanation of himself his end** 1-4

Theological Premises (nuggets)

- ¶133 The creature receives its ALL from God, entirely and perfectly and cannot properly add to God.
- ¶137 God regards things according to the proportion of their worth.
- ¶148 If the world was never created certain attributes of God would have had no exercise.
- ¶151 Your knowledge of God is necessary and central to the fulfillment of your chief end.
- ¶153 Your delight in God is necessary and central to the fulfillment of your chief end.
- ¶162 God is first in his disposition to cause an emanation of his glory the creation is second or implied.
- ¶165 God is eternally inclined toward his glory being manifested.
- ¶167 God's glory and man's good are not in opposition but are implied in each other. But God is first and man second or implied.
- ¶169 The purpose of all knowledge is the knowledge of God. And the more you know God the more you are like Him (doctrine of sanctification).
- ¶151 God intends to increase his revelation of himself to you for all eternity! Thus making you ever more like himself.

Chapter 1 Section 1

Some Dictates of reason.

SECTION I. *Some things observed in general, which reason dictates.*

1. That no notion of God's last end in the creation of the world, is agreeable to reason, which would truly imply any indigence, insufficiency, and mutability in God; or any dependence of the Creator on the creature, for any part of his perfection or happiness.
 - **God's acting for the sake of his ultimate end can imply no insufficiency in himself**
2. Whatsoever is good and valuable *in itself*, is worthy that God should value it with an *ultimate* respect. It is therefore worthy to be made the *last end* of his operation; if it be properly *capable of being attained*.
 - **God's existence precedes his action and so can't be the end of God's action**
3. Whatever that be which is *in itself* most valuable, and was so originally, prior to the creation of the world, and which is *attainable* by the creation, if there be any thing which was superior in value to all others, that must be worthy to be God's *last end* in the creation; and also worthy to be his *highest end*.
 - **What is in itself most valuable and attainable by creation is God's ultimate end in creation**
4. That if God himself be, in any respect, properly *capable* of being his own end in the creation of the world, then it is reasonable to suppose that he had respect to *himself*, as his last and highest end, in this work; because he is *worthy* in himself to be so, being infinitely the greatest and best of beings.
 - **God's moral rectitude consists in his valuing the most valuable, namely, himself**
5. Whatsoever is good, amiable, and valuable *in itself, absolutely and originally*, (which facts and events show that God aimed at in the creation of the world,) must be supposed to be regarded or aimed at by God *ultimately*, or as an ultimate end of creation.
 - **What is valuable in itself in creation God sought as his ultimate end in creation**
6. Whatsoever thing is *actually* the *effect* of the creation of the world, which is simply and absolutely valuable in itself, that thing is an ultimate end of God's creating the world.
 - **What God attained in creating the world, he aimed at, and what he aimed at is his end**

Edwards' logic

1. No notion of God's end in creation can imply his dependence upon the creation for anything.
2. Whatever is *ultimately* valuable AND is capable of being brought about by an act of God should be God's aim.
3. Whatever was MOST valuable and in accord with #2 must be worthy to be God's highest aim.
4. If God himself IN ANY SENSE is capable of being made his end (#2), he is the most valuable thing and should be made his highest end (#3).
5. Whatever God ACTUALLY created which is *ultimately* valuable was his **ultimate** end in creating.
 - For its own sake (it was ultimate)
6. Whatever God ACTUALLY created which is *ultimately* valuable was his ultimate **end** in creating.
 - God did not merely get it, but consciously sought this as his goal, otherwise it would not have happened. We can know what God sought, by what happens.

Where's he going?

"To consider what thing or things are *actually* the effect or *consequence* of the creation of the world that are simply and originally valuable in themselves." (#5,6)

Where all those things are God-centered things (his glory) which were *possible to get* by creation (#2).

So he can show that God made himself his own ultimate end –by making his glory his end. (#4)

And in doing so showed a supreme regard for his own infinite value (#3).

Chapter 1 Section 2

What are the results of creation which are valuable in themselves?

To consider, what thing or things

are *actually* the effect or *consequence* of the creation of the world,
that are simply and originally valuable in themselves.

SECTION II. *Some further observations concerning those things which reason leads us to suppose God aimed at in the creation of the world.*

1. It seems a thing in itself proper and desirable, that the glorious attributes of God, which consist in a *sufficiency* to certain acts and effects, should be **exerted** in the production of such effects as might manifest his infinite power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, &c.
2. It seems to be a thing in itself fit and desirable, that the glorious perfections of God should be **known**, and the operations and expressions of them **seen**, by *other beings* besides himself.
3. As it is desirable in itself that God's glory should be known, so when known it seems equally reasonable it should be **esteemed and delighted in**, answerably to its dignity.
4. As there is an infinite fulness of all possible good in God—a fulness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty, and of infinite happiness—and as this fulness is capable of communication, or emanation *ad extra*; so it seems a thing amiable and valuable in itself that this infinite fountain of good should **send forth abundant streams**.

Edwards' logic

To consider, what thing or things are *actually* the effect or *consequence* of the creation of the world, that are simply and originally valuable in themselves.

- A. It is valuable in itself that God's attributes should be **exercised**.
- B. It is valuable in itself that those exercises of God's attributes should be **known**.
- C. It is valuable in itself that those known exercises of God's attributes should be **valued** and enjoyed.
- D. It is valuable in itself that the fullness of God **flow forth** as above.

A→B→C→D

Where's he going?

Thus it appears reasonable to suppose, that it was God's last end, that there might be a glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fulness of good *ad extra*, or without himself; and that the disposition to communicate himself, or diffuse his own fulness, was what moved him to create the world.

Therefore, to speak strictly according to truth, we may suppose, *that a disposition in God, as an original property of his nature, to an emanation of his own infinite fulness, was what excited him to create the world; and so, that the emanation itself was aimed at by him as a last end of the creation.*

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In the last section I observed some things which are actually the consequence of the creation of the world, which seem absolutely valuable in themselves, and so worthy to be made God's last end in his work.

I now proceed to inquire, how God's making such things as these his last end, is consistent with his making *himself* his last end, or his manifesting an ultimate respect to himself in his acts and works.

SECTION III. *Wherein it is considered how, on the supposition of God's making the forementioned things his last end, he manifests a supreme and ultimate regard to himself in all his works.*

1. Now, with regard to the first of the particulars mentioned above—God's regard to the *exercise* of those attributes of his nature, in their proper operations and effects, which consist in a *sufficiency* for these operations—it is not hard to conceive that God's regard to *himself*, and value for his own perfections, should cause him to value these exercises and expressions of' his perfections; inasmuch as their excellency consists in their relation to use, exercise, and operation.
- 2-3. And with respect to the second and third particulars, the matter is no less plain. For he that loves any being, and has a disposition highly to prize and greatly to delight in his virtues and perfections, must from the same disposition be well pleased to have his excellencies known, acknowledged, esteemed, and prized by others.
4. And with respect to the fourth and last particular, *viz.* God's being disposed to an abundant communication, and glorious emanation, of that infinite fulness of good which he possesses, as of his own knowledge, excellency and happiness, in the manner he does; if we thoroughly consider the matter, it will appear, that herein also God makes himself his end, in such a sense, as plainly to manifest and testify a supreme and ultimate regard to himself.
 - a. One part of that divine fulness which is communicated, is the divine **knowledge**.
 - b. Another emanation of divine fulness, is the communication of virtue and **holiness** to the creature:
 - c. Another part of God's fulness which he communicates, is his **happiness**.
 - d. And it is farther to be considered, that what God aimed at in the creation of the world, as the end which he had ultimately in view, was that communication of himself which he intended **through all eternity**.

Edwards' logic

I now proceed to inquire, how God's making such things as these his last end,
is consistent with his making *himself* his last end,
or his manifesting an ultimate respect to himself in his acts and works.

Because it is agreeable to the dictates of reason, that in all his proceedings **he should set himself highest**; therefore,
I would endeavour to show,

how his infinite love to and delight in himself,
will naturally cause him to value and delight in these things:

or rather,

how a value to these things is implied in his value of that infinite fulness of good that is in himself.

Where's he going?

Remember section 1:1-4 That if possible God should make the highest possible and most valuable thing his end? God is the highest and most valuable thing, and therefore he should make himself his end if possible. How could he do that since he cannot seek an end that would make himself or make himself better? He can make himself his end by making these manifestations of his infinite glory (which he already has) his end. That is, God sees that the final resulting state of affairs (end) of having his glory displayed and loved in the universe as the greatest possible attainable good, and he seeks it.

If you asked God what is good? He would say, that BEING GOD ENJOYING GOD is the highest POSSIBLE good. There is not a possible good greater than this. Thus if God is good, and he longs to overflow in goodness, then he would seek to replicate what he experiences as his own greatest good, namely, the state of being God enjoying God. Therefore, He makes beings like himself, and gives them himself to enjoy. There is no higher state of being, and there is no greater good. You could not imagine a greater good or a better life. Thus God's overflowing disposition to DO GOOD is thus satisfied.

This all clearly manifests the glory of God because God is seen to be the highest good, and the most desirable object. His own incalculable value is therefore most clearly manifest both in those who gain it and those who lose it. Thus God's own value for himself (which is subjectively perfect, and objectively accurate) is revealed. God values himself most highly and everything else only consequentially upon his value for his own original value. The valuableness of God is that alone which gives all other things value, and is the only reason they exist. Thus God is all in all, and to him be glory forever.