

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 30 - Reason II Chapter 1 §4

Some Objections Answered

SECTION IV. *Some objections considered, which may be made against the reasonableness of what has been said of God making himself his last end.*

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1. Some may object against what has been said as being inconsistent with God's absolute independence and immutability; particularly, as though God were inclined to a communication of his fulness, and emanations of his own glory, as being his own most glorious and complete state.
 1. Many have wrong notions of God's happiness, as resulting from his absolute self-sufficiency, independence, and immutability.
 2. If any are not satisfied with the preceding answer, but still insist on the objection, let them consider whether they can devise any other scheme of God's last end in creating the world, but what will be equally obnoxious to this objection in its full force, if there be any force in it.
 3. The doctrine that makes God's *creatures* and not *himself* to be his last end, is a doctrine the furthest from having a favorable aspect on God's absolute self-sufficiency and independence.

 2. Some may object, that to suppose God makes himself his highest and last end, is dishonorable to him; as it in effect supposes, that God does every thing from a selfish spirit.
 1. Such an objection must arise from a very ignorant or inconsiderate notion of the vice of selfishness and the virtue of generosity.
 2. In created beings, a regard to self-interest may properly be set in *opposition* to the public welfare; because the private interest of one person may be inconsistent with the public good; at least it may be so in the apprehension of that person. That, which this person looks upon as his interest, may interfere with or oppose the general good. Hence his private interest may be regarded and pursued in opposition to the public. But this cannot be with respect to the Supreme Being, the author and head of the whole system; on whom all absolutely depend; who is the fountain of being and good to the whole.
 3. God seeking himself in the creation of the world in the manner which has been supposed, is so far from; being inconsistent with the good of its creatures, that it is a kind of regard to himself that inclines him to seek the good of his creature.

 3. To what has been supposed, that God makes himself his end—in seeking that his glory and excellent perfections should be known, esteemed, loved, and delighted in by his creatures—it may be objected, that this seems unworthy of God.

This objection is specious. It hath a show of argument; but it will appear to be nothing but a show, if we consider,

 1. Whether it be not worthy of God, to regard and value what is excellent and valuable in itself; and so to take pleasure in its existence.
 2. I would observe, that it is not unworthy of God to take pleasure in that which is in itself fit and amiable, even in those that are infinitely below him. If there be infinite grace and condescension in it, yet these are not unworthy of God, but infinitely to his honor and glory.
 3. As to what is alleged, that it is unworthy of great men to be governed in their conduct and achievements by a regard to the applause of the populace; I would observe, What makes their applause worthy of so little regard, is their ignorance, giddiness, and injustice.

 4. To suppose that God makes himself his ultimate end in the creation of the world, derogates from the freeness of his goodness, in his beneficence to his creatures; and from their obligations to gratitude for the good communicated.
 1. God and the creature, in the emanation of the divine fullness, are not properly set in opposition; or made the opposite parts of a disjunction. Nor ought God's glory and the creature's good, to be viewed as if they were properly and entirely distinct, in the objection.

Objection 1. God cannot seek his happiness in creation because he is unchangeable and could not **be made happier** by anything in creation in any way or for any reason.

Answer 1 - *God's happiness originates in himself not in the creature.*

1. God is made actually happier by his works in creation.
2. His delight is only ultimately a delight in himself and his own work.
3. His delight is eternal, because he has always seen it fully.
4. Thus God's happiness is wholly from himself and does not originate in the creation *per se*.

Answer 2 – *You cannot escape this problem.*

1. No matter what God makes his end it **makes him happier** to have it rather than not to.
2. Thus if God has any end, you run into the same problem of something **making him happier**.

Answer 3 – *Making God's creature and not himself his end makes him dependent.*

1. If anyone has an ultimate end they are dependent *on it*.
2. God is his own end and he depends only on himself – he is his own all in all.

Objection 2. God seeking himself as his end is selfish.

Answer 1 - *You have misunderstood the meanings of selfishness, and generosity.*

1. It is all about proportion of value. More people more value.
2. God is infinitely the best being and so must regard himself highest.

Answer 2 - *God's interest cannot be contrary to the good of the creature in general.*

1. God is the sole source of all good to the creature and all depend on him for everything.
2. It is impossible therefore that his good can be opposite their good.

Answer 3 - *God seeking himself actually is the entire good of the creature.*

1. God's regard for himself inclines him to diffuse himself.
2. This diffusing of his glory is the creature's good.
3. God's disposition therefore is to the creature's highest good.

Objection 3. God seeking his own glory seems below God.

Answer 1 - *God should value what is valuable in itself.*

1. If God made anything his end it must be worthy to exist.
2. The knowledge and love and esteem of God are worthy to exist.
3. If God loves holiness in himself he must love it in the creature and seek it, where holiness is esteem of God.

Answer 2 - *God should value what is valuable in itself, even if from infinitely lowly creatures.*

1. Condescension is a glorious attribute. The opposite of pride and haughtiness.
2. If God loves his creatures he must delight in their love and esteem.

Answer 3 - *Doing things for praise is only bad if the praise is cheap.*

1. Praise and applause is often based on silliness and unreasonable affections and is therefore not valuable.
2. Wise and just esteem is valuable.
3. To disregard wise esteem would be haughty.

Objection 4. God seeks himself and not the creature, so this is not genuine goodness.

Answer 1 - *God's glory and the creature's good are the same thing.*

1. God seeking his glory seeks their good because his glory IS THEIR GOOD.
2. This will be for all eternity and his glory will increasingly become their good.
3. It does not remove the goodness because
 - a. His happiness is in their happiness
 - b. God is not seeking gain from them, but gain in giving to them. He is self-moved.