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JONATHAN EDWARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MORAL PHILOSOPHY

City University of New York PH.D. 1986

JONATHAN EDWARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MORAL PHILOSOPHY

by

MICHAEL E. ZUSS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1986

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

July 30, 1986
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

August 5, 1986
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Abstract

JONATHAN EDWARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY 18th CENTURY MORAL PHILOSOPHY
by

MICHAEL E. ZUSS

Adviser: Professor Gerald E. Myers

Edwards' philosophy, considered within two guidelines, chronologically and philosophically, reveals a new Edwards for there are no chronological and purely philosophical complete editions of his works from youth to maturity.

Edwards' works show philosophical awareness of the "moral sense" of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Locke's empiricism, Wollaston's and Tindal's natural philosophy, Hobbes' on self-interest and Hume on instinct and virtue in a philosophy reflecting Platonism's claim of an absolute truth. He does not mention Berkeley but his work reflects metaphysical idealism.

Edwards' pulpit style, like most ministers' in rural New England was designed to stir parishioners toward an anthropomorphic God which is currently out of fashion. Edwards packed philosophy into his sermons and often took months to preach them. Many, later revised, were published as his philosophical works, but usually in abridged forms.

The notion of Edwards as a "frighting preacher" originated late in the 19th century with Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God offered as the paradigm. A modern view was generated in the past 50 years: Edwards was a Lockean empiricist philosopher, and a mathematical scientist.

This dissertation claims: both views are extreme; Edwards realized Scripture was not sufficient against rational argument. He adapted Calvinism to metaphysical idealism expressed in the idiom that his parishioners understood but we find repugnant because of its anthropomorphic metaphors. In his other works his idealism is expressed in appropriate philosophical disputation. He was a philosopher but held no allegiance to any camp.

Edwards examined issues pertinent to his times and our own. He used psychological factors in his arguments and was among the first in the colonies to recognize the place, besides God's will, of psychology in mankind's general behavior. For this awareness and involvement and as a pioneer in recognizing the importance of psychology in human affairs, Edwards should be accorded a greater place of honor in American philosophy.

Preface

Almost 228 years have passed since Jonathan Edwards died of an infection from an unsanitary instrument used in a small-pox inoculation. He had lived but 55 years. He had entered Yale when he was but 13, and graduated four years later in 1720, and then studied theology there for two years. In 1722 he was elected minister of a small, new church in New York from which he resigned in 1723 for a tutorship at Yale. In 1726 he became assistant to his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, the "Pope" of New England clergy. Upon Stoddard's death Edwards was ordained minister of the Northampton church and devoted twenty-three years to his ministry there. After dismissal from the Northampton pulpit he served as missionary for six years at Stockbridge, and a few months as President of the College of New Jersey as Princeton was then known. He was the father-in-law of his predecessor at Princeton, Aaron Burr and thus grand-father of Aaron Burr (jr.) vice-president of the United States. Edwards, was the son of an eminent minister, Timothy Edwards, and at age 24 he married Sarah Pierrepont, the daughter of James Pierrepont, a prominent minister-educator and their union produced twelve children, some of whom went on to father or give birth to offspring that lead to eminent posts in universities like Harvard, Yale and Princeton. The family line has been a major contributor to America's intellectual and political development.

Jonathan Edwards himself has not fared so well. He has been the subject of extreme contention- the most apparent feature of current research on Jonathan Edwards. Prof. Holbrook documents this in Chapter One and the views of Profs. Faust, Johnson, Miller and other antagonists and supporters of Edwards are discussed there. Antipodal views of Edwards are often the case: i.e. Prof. Perry Miller, who it is generally acknowledged gave new life to a dying interest in Edwards with his biography of the latter, described him as a super-mathematician, a scientist equalling Newton and an empiricist surpassing Locke. Prof. Fiering, in Chapter 3 and elsewhere makes heated rebuttals to that contention. Profs. Faust and Tomas deny that Edwards was a scientist-mathematician in Chapter 1 and 5. Prof. Erdt however, finds Edwards to be as Miller claimed, a disciple of Locke and an eloquent exponent of empirical philosophy, but Prof. Schneider observes the brilliance and originality of Edwards' idealism and rejects Berkeley as its source. Prof. Bennett argues that human sympathy was a minor consideration to Edwards and that the latter's morality was "the worst thing about him"- worse than that of Heinrich Himmler's. These claims are documented and discussed in Chapters One and Six. Prof.Johnson makes the claim in Chapter 4 that "Edwards preached the revolution" and that his theology was inspirational material for the early democratization of the colonial mind.

A college outline describes Edwards as, "a mystic, a great logician, adept in science, psychology, philosophy; an idealist [who] glorified God, debased man." Contrary documentation that Edwards' "logic" was an adaptation of Ramistic logic and is the present tool of advertising and fundamentalists is submitted by Prof. Kimnach in Chapter Two. Prof. Tomas in Chapter 5 considers Edwards as a throwback to medieval philosophy but Prof. Elwood finds current relevancy in Edwards' theology as does Prof. Haroutunian who admonishes us not to overlook Edwards' meaningfulness which they claim can only be perceived through an understanding of Edwards' theology and philosophy. Prof. Kimnach however, claims that Edwards' theology was grist that was ground into philosophy. Edwards he submits, was the engine that drove a cottage industry, a sermon mill from which Edwards' sermons, distilled from religious content were re-worked into philosophical treatises. Documentation will be presented for these claims in the appropriate chapters relating to the subjects and topics.

There is need for the present interpretation because:

1. An interpretation of Edwards' philosophy based entirely on his mature and chronologically produced works and judged only as philosophy, apart from his religious beliefs has never been undertaken. Many interpretations of Edwards' works have used theological criteria to evaluate his philosophy. His

theological position and Calvinism itself changed in his own lifetime; his own interpretation of it and he himself was rejected by the parish he served whereas his philosophical utterances are pertinent and relevant to his time and ours.

2. A chronological unabridged edition of Edwards' works has never been published. The first edition of Edwards works edited by Samuel Austin in 1809 and the current effort by Yale University Press have no chronological plan.

3. Edwards' works are out of print or in broken editions. This has left adumbrated reprints of selected portions of his works. His college notes, not relevant to the present goal, will not be used in this dissertation. They are:

(a) Of Insects (also known as Spiders) written when he was eleven and under the direction of his father who wanted to display young Edwards to a British correspondent as an intellectual prodigy. It adds nothing to science and its conclusions are orthodox Calvinist theology.

(b) The Soul. Evidence shows that Edwards did not write this.

(c) Of The Rainbow, Of Being, Colours, are incomplete notes, some an obvious paraphrase of Newton; a display of an alert mind in a very young man. Written between 1714-26.

(d) Notes On the Mind are incomplete, disconnected jottings consisting of approximately nine pages. The original has been lost and what is available are copies and transcripts of the first publication in Dwight's edition of 1829.

(e) Diary, Sarah Pierrepont, Personal Narrative are personal and have no relation to this inquiry.[1]

1. There is a need for a definitive analysis of Edwards' philosophy to be achieved by examining subjects similar to those considered by his contemporary philosophers. This will give us a philosophical basis on which to judge him.

2. There is need to show that Edwards followed a consistent path as early as his short-term ministry in New York, in his theory of knowledge that expressed two means of perception: sense for the material world and an act of will to appreciate what conceptualization reveals of non sensible reality.

3. There is need to examine Edwards' reputation as a "frighting preacher."

4. There is a need to determine from his mature works what school of philosophy Edwards' represents.

5. Because extremes of disagreement and of interpretation is the rule, their elimination is the main objective of the present dissertation and new interpretation.

The scholarly credentials of the many eminent interpreters named above are prodigious, and their efforts and earnestness in uncovering for us so much knowledge of and about Jonathan Edwards do not need my citing here. Their laurels have been accredited by their peers and certified for value by time and relevancy. Even when expressed in disagreements it is evident that their views are pertinent enough to be cited and contested. To accomplish the above goals (1-5) it will be necessary to do the following:

I. To examine Edwards' works, letters, and correspondence that are complete and had philosophical relevance in his time and which were important philosophical topics to Edwards' contemporaries in the early 18th century: (a) Theory of Knowledge in Chapter 1. (b) Epistemology in Chapter 2. (c) Sources and Influences will be examined in Chapter 3. (d) Social and Religious Relations will be considered in Chapter 4. (e) Free Will and Determinism will be examined in Chapter 5. (f) Edwards' response to the question of virtue will be developed in Chapter 6. (g) Edwards' idealism will be considered in Chapter Seven,

interpreting Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God; claiming it a major repository of a mis-understood idealism and source of the current epithet as a "frighting preacher."

II.To adhere in this examination of Edwards' works to a strictly chronological order in which they were produced with the exception indicated above in (g).

1. Un-named sermon delivered in New York:1722.

2.God Glorified in the Work of Redemption.: 1731

3.A Divine and Supernatural Light.: 1734

4.A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections.: 1746

5.Freedom of the Will.: 1754

6.The Nature of True Virtue.: 1755

III. To compare Edwards' philosophy to other early 18th century philosophers and show how his treatment of important issues debated by them warrants consideration of Edwards as an original early 18th century moral philosopher.

1.A Divine and Supernatural Light has been considered by many as Edwards' claim that some "elect" few are blessed with a sixth sense. This will be examined in Chapter One.

2. Chapter Two will examine Edwards' transition from preacher to philosopher and the modification of his sermons into lectures and the treatises we are familiar with, some of which are examined in this dissertation.

3.The Nature of Religious Affections has generally been considered a theological definition of the requirements of piety and religious behavior and a ponderous, often abridged, tome. The present interpretation will show it is also a modest investigation of a very important philosophical issue of the early eighteenth century -man in nature. More important to us is that it was written with incisive psychological penetration. His use of psychological factors in philosophy was among the earliest in America and puts a perspective on Edwards that has not been fully developed as Chapter Four indicates.

4. Chapter Five, in examining Edwards' Freedom of The Will, documents the interpretation of what some consider the latter's "magnum opus." The accolades were earned but not for reasons generally given. Chapter Five will show that Edwards' arguments for his position was not based on Lockean empiricism alone, but that the psychological premises he used are more pertinent to us than the issue he attempted to resolve.

5. Edwards expressed a philosophy in terms that many moral sense philosophers like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson would have approved. His aesthetic assessment of moral values reflects the latter two moral philosophers, it will be claimed in

Chapter Six. However, his brilliant originality is often demonstrated in opposition to, as well as agreement with their views.

6. The awesomeness of the sermon Sinners In The hands of An Angry God has been over-emphasized and has led to gross mis-interpretation. Chapter Seven will claim it to be an example of metaphysical idealism made comprehensible to plain parishioners.

IV. Adhering to these guidelines, avoiding extensive speculation, and allowing as often as possible Edwards' words to express his meaning I hope to extract the real Edwards: a religiously imbued and intellectually alert man of his times; an original thinker with the skill, will and courage to re-state the Socratic-Platonic philosophy of truth, piety, virtue and perfection in an age of increasing materialism, scientific-mechanical application and pragmatic attitudes toward earlier accepted values.

1 Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. W. E. Anderson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) p.401.

Acknowledgments

To Ruth, my wife, who withstood the pressures that accompanied the writing of this dissertation, for her encouragement, for her assistance in every phase of its development, an expression of appreciation that has as its source "the sense of the heart."

To Prof. Gerald E. Myers, dissertation adviser and patient guide whose opinions were well received and not the substance of "received opinions," my deepest appreciation and thanks.

To Prof. Arthur W. Collins, Executive Officer, Philosophy Department, Graduate School, CUNY, "sage" adviser in development of my dissertation prospectus.

To Prof. John J. McDermott, formerly of Queens College, CUNY, Philosophy Department faculty for introducing me to the splendid notion that at least one "American" philosophized before there was an America.

To Prof. Wilson H. Kimnach, of the Yale and Bridgeport University faculty who gave me, at the expense of his own research time, invaluable observations and insights on Edwards, as the result of a chance but serendipitous encounter at the Beinecke Library at Yale.

To the many professors, past and present, of the faculties of the philosophy departments of Queens College and The Graduate School of CUNY, who made my passage through the minds and thoughts of some of civilization's greatest thinkers, a "thank you" that cannot be verbally expressed, but hopefully, understood.

To Ms Diana Yount, Special Collections Librarian of the Franklin Trask Library of The Andover Newton Theological School who graciously made available to me invaluable manuscripts of Jonathan Edwards.

To Ms Patricia M. Howell, Public Services Reference Librarian of the Beinecke Rare Book Library of Yale University for her help and suggestions in areas of research in the manuscripts of Jonathan Edwards in the Beinecke archives.

To the several young Yale student-aides at the Robert A. Taft Library of the Jonathan Edwards College of Yale University for their enthusiasm and help in efforts to gain access to the Taft Library with its small but impressive Edwardsean collection.

To Jonathan Edwards, may my efforts on your behalf help you to rest in peace in that Heaven in which you so firmly believed.

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Chapter One. Introduction.

It can be stated with little fear of contradiction that no two interpretations of Edwards' work bear more than superficial agreement.[1] His name evokes extremes of opinions often based on broad generalizations. J.G. Fichte described Edwards as "that lonely North American theologian." One observer gave thanks to God for taking Edwards at an early age thus sparing mankind the agony of reading any additional works he might have produced had he lived longer. Another thought that Edwards should have been incarcerated as a madman. One philosopher, Prof.Bennett recently "demonstrated" that Edwards' morality was lower than that of Hienrich Himmler.[2] Generally, much more is <u>believed</u> <u>about Jonathan Edwards from interpretations than is known</u> from internal evidence of any complete text.

Edwards has been described in many ways, often derogatory.[3] He <u>was</u> a theologian by faith, but he was a <u>philosopher</u> in the style of Shaftesbury, Toland, Hutcheson, Samuel Clarke, Tindal, Hume. He was a moral ethical philosopher with his own interpretation of the notion of moral sense. Edwards cannot be properly understood unless the philosophical statement he made within the sermon <u>A Divine and Supernatural Light</u> is thoroughly examined first. This sermon, one of the most controversial of Edwards' works, is also one of his least understood because another of his sermons, <u>God Glorified In Man's Dependence</u>, has not been generally recognized as the "twin" of the <u>Supernatural Light</u>. One cannot fully understand either unless <u>both</u> are examined from the same perspective. Though separate and seemingly

unrelated works, they signaled what was to be Edwards' procedural technique, -the melding of his philosophy within his theology over several sermon-lectures. As he progressed into philosophy his attention to sermonizing decreased and what he did in that genre, exclusive of perfunctory ministerial lectures, included heavy overlays of philosophy. Interpreting these essential ideas then, will be the goal of this paper. I propose to interpret Edwards' ideas by doing the following:

1. To examine those works, letters, and correspondence by Edwards, that are complete and have philosophical relevance.

2. To show that Edwards was, in his final years, less a theologian than he was a moral philosopher like other British philosophers, particularly the so called "moral sense" philosophers, in the early 18th century.

3. To show (a): that Edwards followed a consistent path, as early as his short-term ministry in New York, in his theory of knowledge that expressed two means of perception: sense for the material world and an act of will to appreciate what conceptualization reveals of non-sensible reality; (b): that this theory of perception led him to espouse a limited ethical relativism.

4. To compare Edwards' philosophy with some of his contemporaries and thus to show that his intellectual self was more like them than like his theological Calvinist self.

Edwards was plagued by vicissitudes that confronted many pastor-ministers in early 18th century New England. Inadequate housing and heating fuel was the rule, and although Edwards' pay-scale was relatively high, payment was often late and inadequate for a rapidly growing family.[4] By the fifth year of his ministry he had achieved international recognition for his published writing, which separated the parochial, litigious villagers from their world-famous pastor.[5] The coolness between pastor and parish began in 1738 following the publication of his Five Discourses on Important Subjects which was extremely popular in Scotland and England and the American colonies. Speculation and suppositions of what he might have accomplished had he lived longer diminish the clarity of what he actually did write. Speculation is productive but often leads to flights of extensive textual manipulation. Any effort to show that Edwards was well read in mathematical-physics is destined to failure. Newton's mathematics was not taught at Yale when Edwards was a student there and few people in America were capable of teaching it. Edwards himself cited this deficiency and weakness in mathematics to the Trustees of New Jersey College as a reason he should not accept the presidency they offered him.

> But this is not my main objection...in the way of accepting this office...I am deficient in some learning...particularly in Algebra...and higher parts of mathematics.[6]

By avoiding preconceived notions of him as a scientist, a physicist mathematician, a wunderkind or a madman, we find a consistent

philosopher and one whose philosophy was not dependent upon his dogmatic theology. We will find that Edwards accommodated his theology to his parishioners's capacity to comprehend his philosophy, and delivered it to them on levels that they could understand. Prof. Perry Miller however, in his celebrated biography of Edwards, Jonathan Edwards, says:

> Edwards did not understand Newton's fluxions...but read and accepted Newton's sublime geometry on Newton's say-so.(p.71) [He became] an empiricist after reading Locke and a mathematical-physicist after studying Newton. [and that] while he was receiving the vision of mathematical physics he was also granted the revelation of the sensational psychology.(Images,pp.28-29).

Distortion such as this of Edwards as some kind of Einstein super-mensch, transcending Boyle, exceeding Locke with an empiricism that would have astounded members reading "Transactions of the Royal Society", an intellectual prodigy that understood Newtonianism more acutely than Newton, and expressed that understanding in empirical terms more precise than Locke- ignores the central thrust of Edwards' faith and intellectualism. This must be made clear: Miller's enthusiastic biography of Edwards has more than its due measure of opinion allowable even from one of such unimpeachAble credentials. But Edwards was first a theologian-his epistemology was based on Scriptures, and recognized commentaries on it, and second an early 18th century philosopher, concerned mainly with morals as most of his contemporaries were. His most empirical and philosophically oriented work, described by many, as Edwards' greatest effort philosophically, and by Prof. Miller as Edwards' "magnum opus", Freedom of the Will, has

298 citations, quotes and examples from almost every section of the Old and New Testaments on 311 pages of text. This is strange evidence for "empirical" argumentation.

The effect of Miller's thesis cannot be underestimated in the general concept of Edwards. Prof.Scheick, in his Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards says that Miller's book is probably the most important recent work on Edwards and an indispensible reference for serious students. Prof. Fiering disagrees, saying that "In general, Miller's discussion of Locke and Edwards (on pp.52-68 of Miller's work) is probably the worst piece of writing he ever did, in terms of substance and interpretative accuracy." (Miller provided no notes or documentation.)7

The books that Edwards showed interest in are well documented in a Catalogue of Books that he maintained, and kept current for most of his adult life. Edwards lists over 700 books and pamphlets. Controversy exists over whether he owned, or even read all of these but from the terse but accurate abstracts and references he made in the Catalogue it is evident that Edwards was familiar with the substance of 580 works to which his comments referred. Books on religion are by far the major interest, and some few mathematics primers and introductory popularizations of Newton's physics.8 This decided preference in reading, which cannot be claimed as a conclusive insight into Edwards' intellectual profile, still is valuable as a source of some of Edwards' intellectual challenges.

Edwards had several contacts on the continent and in England he could depend upon for the latest books and pamphlets and he was

responsible for book acquisition for the Associated Ministers of Hampshire. His own library contained, at his death, 300 books and 536 pamphlets.[9] His grandfather Stoddard's library, to which Edwards had access contained 462 books, 491 pamphlets.[10] From these and the pamphlets that inundated America, Edwards acquired much of the intellectual background for his philosophy, which his Catalogue shows, was listed third after religion and history.

The names and the works of many philosophers familiar to us, and to Edwards are spread throughout the Catalogue- Cudworth, Hutcheson, Descartes, Berkeley, Shaftesbury, Locke and others. Many are referred to by the title of their work alone like Hume's Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and the Principles of Morals. The general subjects, evident from those listed, are moral and ethical studies which reflected Edwards' awareness, concern and involvement in the philosophic disarray that confronted early 18th century "moral sense" philosophers. To a great degree this intellectual foment was due to Hobbes' very disturbing philosophy that excluded religion and God's will from ethical theory.[11] Nature and science cannot be involved, Hobbes had argued, for they are neutral; sentiment cannot be a factor as that can be equally as vicious as beneficent. Ethical judgements must be based on emotion and desire. Locke's faculty psychology required some accommodation relating to knowledge of moral principles and philosophers of several schools attempted to provide it. It was into the ensuing philosophic debate that many early 18th century philosophers entered with Enquiries, Treatises, Critiques, Discourses, Essays, and the like. "This interest in moral philosophy has remained

one of the characteristics of British thought."[12] Cudworth's A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality was posthumously published in 1731. Wolaston had published his Religion of Nature Delineated. Francis Hutcheson had published his Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue in 1722 and in 1728 Essay on the Conduct of the Passions, With Illustrations Upon the Moral Sense. The effect of Shaftesbury's and Francis Hutcheson's philosophy on Edwards was profound, as will be documented and examined in Chapters Four and Six. He accepted their theory of a "moral sense" limited to material things and actions but rejected it as a definition of being, recognizable through sense perception. The allusions to aesthetic wholeness and perfection, private and public conscience and public benefit,- the exploration of how moral determinations are made- Edwards found their origin, but with modifications, in these two.

Shaftesbury held that moral judgments rise from a moral sense: God gave man the faculty with which to make moral judgments, through which moral judgments are made, not through revelation. A sense of benevolence, empathy toward people and society, a public conscience is the key to judgments of moral worth.[13] Francis Hutcheson argued that moral worth can be found in acts that advance other persons' interest besides one's own. Self-interest is not a vice if it promotes the general good or at least does not harm anyone else. These activities can be pursued without direction from God but with the guidance that a sense of propriety supplies. This comes from an internal sense based on aesthetic values such as harmony and balance within society and relationships between members which ensure peace and security.[14]

To these moral-ethical issues Edwards responded first with a slight allusion within a sermon he delivered while minister to his congregation in New York City in 1722. He restated it more emphatically at the Public Lecture in 1731 in Boston in God Glorified and then with a companion piece Divine and Supernatural Light in 1734. (These are documents that have made Edwards part of America's "ancestral memory" since 1734 -forty-two years before Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence.) It is the fundamental element and the lens through which Edwards' philosophy is focused. These, Edwards' statements, responded to a major issue of the day: how, if all knowledge occurs through sense perception, are moral values, responsibility, "good and evil" determined? Edwards' unequivocal answer was stated in the above three sermons: the un-named New York sermon ,God Glorified and A Divine and Supernatural Light. In these three sermons Edwards adheres to the Lockean, empirical philosophy of sense perception for the material, and as Edwards describes it, very practical world. For the ultimate truth, the perception of the "real" truth, the "real" world of everlasting values, the kind of truth Socrates sought and Plato wrote about, Edwards submitted the "Supernatural Light." He does not mention or compare his notions on this to the Platonic search for absolute knowledge but it is here that Edwards shows his philosophical heritage most clearly. The Boston lecture, God Glorified, was an expansion of his notions on perception and when Edwards wrote his explicit work on the subject, A Divine And Supernatural Light, he explained in detail his own theory on the perception of absolute and ultimate knowledge.

Edwards' language in these sermons expresses divine purpose in this process of knowledge and moral judgement. The present study however is not a "theological" interpretation; there have been such interpretations in the more than two hundred years since he died with our understanding of him still obscured. This study will show in Chapter Two that Edwards' theology although sincere and reflective of his faith, there is within it an adaptation of a rational philosophy tailored to accommodate the intellectual capacities of his audiences. His language, style and content were not in Northampton what they were in Boston or in print. The fire and brimstone was not unique to Edwards, but because Edwards was unique that we remember his use of this technique, which has been a major factor contributing to some of the hostile opinions of him. Those many fellow spouters of brimstone of his time, generally, have been forgotten let alone read or debated. By analyzing Edwards' background of theology in Chapter Two and analyzing his philosophical productivity in strictly chronological order it will be shown in Chapter Seven that the consideration of some of Edwards' works must proceed from a philosophical as well as a theological point of departure. He is remembered and so many of his contemporaries are forgotten. Had more objective interpretations of Edwards' work, stripped of theological language been a more general rule in the past, Edwards would long ago have been recognized as one of the earliest and finest of ethical and moral philosophers in America. Edwards' philosophy is considered here apart from his religion because it can stand by itself, and thus be acceptable as an intellectual enterprise for all, instead of a religious exercise for some few.15

Edwards' earliest published work, God Glorified, was written and delivered as a Public Lecture, in the style, somewhat, of a sermon, in 1731 when Edwards was twenty-seven -young for the fame it brought him. In it, like the earlier sermon preached in New York, and again more fully in A Divine and Supernatural Light, Edwards developed his theory of knowledge. He says in the work that men have convictions of moral responsibilities, arrived at through sense and reason but which is not ultimate truth. The awareness of "right and wrong" stems from the natural conscience of all mankind, and as it is an occasional agent, is therefore a judgement of sense. The supernatural light, however, is an "indwelling principle...of life and action."

We must first have some experience and knowledge of that which the "light" expands, Edwards said, demonstrating empirical conformity. He adds that this is not a passive process, but, as he was to repeat again in all of his philosophical work, a deliberate one, that requires an act of will and objective participation by the moral agent. This deliberate act of heeding the "light" is the means to measure real moral worth, not by judgments based on data supplied by the senses.

These elements of the Platonic tradition were welcomed by the clergy who recognized these notions as countering the rising empiricism resulting from Locke's philosophy and the materialism of applied science and mechanics. At a high point in empirical philosophy's fascination, particularly British, with Lockean principles of perception, Edwards dared suggest that the mind is an active agent and not a blank tablet but a faculty that combines sense perception with

processes that are independent of senses and adds, expands the knowledge those senses gather. This element in Edwards' psychology however, is overlooked in efforts to make this Divine and Supernatural Light (a small but seminal work) suggestive of a "sixth" sense or a "supra-sense." Prof. Elwood says:

> ...the familiar five senses...are not enough to account for the vivid experience...the heart's sense of the excellency of spiritual things... [Edwards] finds it necessary to posit a supra-physical sense...a special inward sense by which right, wrong, beauty and evil can be discerned... [16]

Another contributor to current opinion on Edwards is Prof. T. Johnson who observed that:

> [Edwards] first of all introduced the notion that to the natural faculties of men, the understanding and the will, there is added...a new sense...which he called the "supernatural sense," a new power ...a different kind from anything that men find within themselves by nature... . The supernatural sense gives to [some] a new kind of perception or sensation.

This is an instance in which the meaning of Edwards' words have had to give way to meaning given them by others. Edwards suggested no such new sense or expanded sense. He says in clear language "what this divine light is.":

> There are no new truths...propositions or doctrines...such as prophets and apostles had and some enthusiasts...pretend to. ...this spiritual light...teaches no new thing...it not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes the speculative notions more lively. It engages the attention of the mind with...more fixedness...to that object which causes it to have a clearer view of them...ideas that are dim...are...impressed with greater strength...so...the mind can better judge them...the powers of the soul...employ themselves...more fully and to the purpose. The natural faculties are the subject of this light: they are not merely passive recipients, but active participants in it.[17]

Edwards makes no inference of a supra-sense or a sixth sense, but he does follow a different path to knowledge from that charted by Locke. The human mind does not act as a "merely passive recipient" (tabula rasa) but actively participates in the process, increasing concentration, it improves judgement of the natural faculties. This is not a description of an extra sense, or an expanded sense but a description of the very same senses all mankind are born with, and how that mind operates if there is a disposition, a willing nature inclined toward the beauty and perfection of existence. It is the kind of mind, or soul as he refers to it, that is more like the mind Plotinus described:

> As it is not for those to speak of the graceful forms of the material world- men born blind-...those must be silent upon beauty of noble conduct and of learning and all of that order who have never cared for such things, nor...tell of...virtue who have never known the face of Justice and Moral-Wisdom beautiful beyond the beauty of Evening and Dawn. [this] is for those only who see with the Soul's sight- and...they will rejoice..for now they are moving in the realm of truth.
> Our interpretation is that the Soul-by the very truth of its nature, by its affiliation to the noblest Existents in the hierarchy of Being- when it sees anything of that kin, or any trace of that kinship, thrills with an immediate delight, takes its own to itself, and thus stirs anew to the sense of its nature and all of its affinity.[18]

These Platonic notions, expressed in the idiom of Plotinus describe more clearly the "super-natural light" that Edwards, like Plato, held was a gift that few humans enjoy or ever possess. These expressions of a two-level activity of the mind are the foundation on which Edwards' philosophy is erected. This sermon-lecture, A Divine And Supernatural Light effectively secured Edwards' position as an able

successor to his grandfather in the opinion of his audience and his future as a theologian was guaranteed by its immediate publication and distribution. Chapter Two will document and discuss in depth issues and problems that have centered on its interpretation.

The submission of a few quotes from Plotinus and inferences of similarities to Plato, of course does not prove at this point that Edwards was a Platonist. Further pursuit of the sources of Edwards' philosophic heritage must be deferred to later chapters. Although many problems such as this need resolution in the assessment of Edwards' philosophy, we are fortunate in one respect -the intellectual production of his comparatively short life is reflected in four distinct phases of his career from boyhood to maturation. This makes a chronological approach more relevant because the substance of his writing can easily be shown as mirroring problems and issues of each phase of his life and times.

Phase 1: From birth, October 5,1703, at East Windsor, Connecticut: He entered Yale College in 1716, and graduated in 1720 and then graduate theological study until he earned his Masters degree in 1722, age 19. He served a short term as minister at a small and new Presbyterian church in New York and resigned this for a tutorship at Yale. It was at this time that Edwards wrote those several youthful works discussed in the Preface. As stated there in the Preface, these youthful works while interesting and reflective of an alert young intelligent person, have no completed philosophical content and thus do

not fall within the purview of this inquiry.

Phase 2: His ministry at Northampton from 1726-1750, -twenty four years -during which all but three of his works were written. Fashioned as sermons, he converted many of them into sermon series that extended over several months. Some of these were reworked into lectures that he delivered at neighboring parishes when invited as guest minister. Many of these lectures and sermon series were used as the substance of his philosophical treatises, and then with modification of rhetoric and style were published in the colonies and Britain. He was 47 years old at the time of his dismissal from the Northampton pulpit, and his reputation as a theologian was acclaimed throughout the Colonies, Europe, England, Scotland, Holland and Denmark. It was during these years that he wrote most of his theological works. Two of these, A Faithful Narrative and Religious Affections will be discussed in Chapter Two, Theology as an Epistemological Base. In that discussion besides the philosophical implications in Religious Affections the hubris and confident elan Edwards expressed in A Faithful Narrative will be noted and contrasted with the subdued and critical Religious Affections. The former work, it should be noted, was written at the height and excitement of the Great Awakening, and the latter at the abatement and religious disinterested regression that followed. This sermon, known as Religious Affections at its inception, was preached in a series of Sabbath and mid-week services that lasted over several months from late 1742 into Spring of 1743. Revised as a treatise, it was published in America in 1746 and soon after in England, Denmark and

several other countries.

It was also during this phase that Edwards wrote and delivered the sermon that has been the source of so many of the negative views of him -Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God. It was as a guest minister at nearby Enfield, with the pre-determined goal and the urging of the more observant parishioners there that Edwards proceeded to exhort the less religious among them to take heed of God's wrath. Chapter Seven will show that the language, and style Edwards used in Sinners was not different from that of most rural preachers at the time, that it was in fact much milder than that which many of them regularly employed. It was also soon forgotten and a mere mention of it was made in the appendix of the first biography of Edwards in 1829. What makes this "Sermon" -Sinners in The Hands of An Angry God important to philosophy, Chapter Seven will claim and document, is that it was one of the rare occasions that Edwards expressed his version of philosophical idealism in terms understandable to what was a demonstrably plain and un-lettered congregation. It was not long after Religious Affections was delivered that severe differences developed between the preacher and the parish. The villagers of Northampton would not abide by Edwards' demand that commitment to a way of life, not attestations of faith or objectively performed acts of piety were evidence of virtue -virtue as part of one's nature. That Chapter, Seven, will claim and document that it was the villagers who sought to express their piety in old-time vigorous religion and that it was Edwards who wanted it to be expressed by them in a deliberately adopted way of life. History and interpretations, it will be shown, have placed responsibility for this

dissention on Edwards "sterness" and rigidity, a rigidity no more severe than Socrates'.

Phase 3: This period of Edwards' life, 1750-1758, during his service as missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge, allowed him more time for writing. It was here that he wrote several of his major philosophical works. Two of these, Freedom of the Will, and The Nature of True Virtue written in 1754 and 1755 will be considered in Chapters Five and Six.

Phase 4. This comparatively short span of time covers his election to and assumption of the office of President of New Jersey College (later re-named Princeton) until his death four months later on March 22, 1758 following a smallpox injection. The phase also includes the posthumous publication of numerous treatises both theological and philosophical.

By arranging the present interpretation into these four phases we will more easily correlate his philosophical efforts to the context of his time and the efforts of other philosophers of the period. The two works mentioned above, Narrative of Surprising Conversions and Religious Affections are excellent examples of the propriety of a chronological investigation -we can understand more clearly why he says what he does, not only what he says. On the subject, Prof. A.E. Taylor observed:

To understand a great thinker is of course, impossible

> unless we know something of the relative order of his works, and of the actual period of his life to which they belong. What, for example could we make of Kant if we did not know whether the Critique of Pure Reason was the work of ambitious youth or of ripe middle age, whether it was written before or after the discourse on the Only Possible Demonstration of the Being of a God or the Dreams of a Ghost-seer? We cannot, then, even make a beginning with the study of [a philosopher] until we have found some trustworthy indication of the order of his works, or at least the most significant of them. Even when we have fixed this order, if it can be fixed, we need, for a more complete understanding, to be able also to say at what precise period of his life the most important [works] were written, whether in early manhood. in mid- life, or in old age, and again, whether they are an unbroken series of compositions or whether there is evidence of a considerable gap or gaps in [that philosopher's] literary activity.[18]

We are fortunate in respect to Edwards in several ways which Prof. Taylor deems essential to proper comprehension of a "great thinker." We know precisely the dates and periods of his life in which Edwards wrote almost every work he produced. Edwards was a careful catalouger and kept records on most of his manuscripts. We know what is the product of an ambitious youth- like his Spiders- and the error of ascribed authorship to him of On Souls. We know which of his works were transformed from sermons into treatises and we can compare the language there (style and metaphor) with what he used in the pulpit. We know if they are "an unbroken series" which they are, or if there are gaps in [his] literary activity. Still, rare is the edition that either gives any chronological presentation, or even complete copies of individual examples of his works. As an example the key to his theory of knowledge, A Divine And Supernatural Light joined as it is in content to God Glorified is often published separately, even though it was written three years after God Glorified. The unity, continuity and

development of his thought has been muted by two and half centuries of random editing. The productivity of Phase (2) reflects his immersion in religion and theology which will be shown to have been expressed to his parishioners in phrases and metaphors they could comprehend and would expect from a minister at that time and place. Works, like Religious Affections can be separated from others and examined also as a fine inquiry into psychological motivation, hysterical impulses, feigned or disguised illnesses and psychologically triggered mental and physical states. It is the response of an alert philosopher, relating to philosophical debates of the day -albeit not in terms of Plato's Republic or Hobbes' Leviathan -or Locke's' Treatises on Government. His response to "man in nature, natural man, state of nature" as he states it in Religious Affections is not incisive, even applicable in the sense of current acceptance, but when available to be read in its entirety and chronological context, enables us to better understand the ease of transit of a theologian into and out of philosophy. Several instances will be submitted in later chapters documenting how Edwards, thinking one moment as a theologian, would argue the next as a philosopher.

Read and studied as a whole unit, not as a boneless fillet, Religious Affections, it will be shown, that when considered in the context of the time he wrote it and its relationship to the excesses of the Great Awakening which he alludes to in the text, to be the sober reflections of a philosopher reviewing the gullibility of an over-enthusiastic, but now chastened minister. It is revealed as an intense inquiry into and analysis of the psychological motivations

toward religion. Generally, Religious Affections has been considered an apologia, or a descriptive of piety. The view here presented will document his awareness of the hypocrisy, deceptions, charlatanism, chicanery, pragmaticism, cunning, social and peer pressure, personal gain, self-deception, hysteria -and earnest truthfulness in some few -in the pilgrims of his parish during the Great Awakening and Revivals in New England. The Edwards that will be presented here is the more cynical, less eager minister who wanted to reject physical and oral manifestations of devotion to God and a semi-literate parish that understood nothing but bible thumping as true religion.

Freedom of the Will was the first major work that Edwards produced and published while at Stockbridge, and the first that was derived directly from efforts that were not originally sermons or pulpit lectures. This work, one most generally considered his "magnum opus" is also one that is most generally misread. It does not prove, or attempt to prove that man has free will, or that man has a will that is free and indifferent. Edwards' purpose was to prove that within a parameter defined by Edwards, man has a will that is determined by the choice of a rational mind toward that which it appraises as good and most agreeable. If, however, one is fortunate to read the work in an unedited, unabridged form it becomes clear that Edwards' goal was to demonstrate that a will that could be in any manner free -that is, "free" in the sense of being determined by man's independent choice -would be a confrontation between that independent will, or man, and God. This would be an impossible situation to Edwards and one which Edwards displayed much energy in this work to disprove.

Many interpretations of Edwards maintain, it will be shown, that his reliance on causal arguments, the concepts of cause and effect, efficient or constant conjunction (evident reliance on Lockean notions of will, choice, inclination) reveals Edwards as a champion of empiricism. Edwards, however, was not proving free-will but destroying Arminian heresies that demeaned God's omniscience by the implications in their belief in a will that is self-determining.

The legendary use alleged to be employed by Edwards of cause and effect ignores his acceptance of the concept of constant conjuction which was more fully developed later by Hume. Edwards embraced this position to support his argument to prove that man did not have a will independent of God's foreknowledge. These premises, besides his dependency on empirical philosophy are usually overlooked and although important to his argument is a kind of proof rejected by Hume and labelled as beyond proof by Kant. Almost totally ignored, excised or unrecognized as major premises to his argument are the fine definitions he supplies that read like a psychologist's clinical report, and which reveal him to be among the earliest and keenest of American philosophers to observe the mental processes that the mind performs in the exercise of "will." Metaphysics of course functions in Edwards' decipherment of the will, but a major element in that effort is his discussion of psychological terms. His argument does not rest, as is generally submitted, on "cause and effect" alone, but on a refined psychological analysis of the human mind in action.

The age was one in which "virtue" was a major subject in philosophical debate. All knowledge rising from sense experience left

no means for assessments of virtue within the empirical blanket -particularly in England -of Lockean sensationalism. Many British empiricists responded with theories of a "moral sense", similar to perceived aesthetic sensibilities of harmonious conditions of the physical world. This capacity of the rational mind to perceive and evaluate beauty, balance of shape and sequence of sound gave them grounds, they claimed, to indicate a "moral sense" as a human faculty and the seat of moral judgement. If one reads and accepts Edwards' Nature of True Virtue within some of the interpretations that abound there is little question why some scholars equate Edwards' morality below that of Heinrich Himmler.[19] Not Christian charity but simple textual evidence shows that Edwards did not despise mankind or find his capacity for "good" impossible, but that "doing", like Socrates pointed out to Euthyphro, is not the same as "being." Edwards, it will be shown, agreed with many claims made by the moral sense philosophers like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson but his philosophy indicates that he believed the senses do not supply the answer to the question- what is virtue ? -and that it can only be supplied by the "supernatural light." This is a response that Plato would have enthusiastically accepted and not an interpretation which one derives from a reading of the generally available reprints. The Nature of True Virtue by Edwards is not a primer to teach, nor an examination of man's capacity to be "good" but a philosophical examination of the difference between apparent empirical activity and ultimate absolute state of being. The "moral sense" is properly applied to the former, the "light" to the latter. Edwards can rightfully be described as being in both camps -that of a

moral sense philosopher, the philosophy of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and others only as it applied to the empirical. When, however, the issue is the actual "state" of virtue, he belongs to the Platonists. Virtue is a form, or a state of being, unobservable or apprehended by sense and only known by the possessors of the "light."

The work described in so many interpretations as being the source and proof of Edwards' misanthropy, Sinners in The Hands of An Angry God will not be examined in a chronological order as other of his works. This is deliberate. Evidence will be presented in Chapter Seven, that this sermon-lecture on which most of the negative views of Edwards are based, can be considered metaphorically, although written and delivered in 1741, as the the most recently produced of all of his works. As mentioned above, it was delivered at the behest of the parishioners at Enfield, and although it has been reprinted dozens of times, it did not get the reputation it has until the late 19th century and the fires alleged to be in it have been fanned even in the current century. It is not the reception given it in 1741 or the contemporary accepted style Edwards used then but the negative and adverse critical attitude that is current now that must be examined, as will be done and documented in Chapters Two and Seven.

Edwards believed in a philosophy that held God as the creator and caretaker -supervisor of the universe, a superior engineer so to speak as Chapter Five documents. The universe, Edwards describes, as one in which only God's will determines every existing second. He could not discuss those notions, relevant to a metaphysical idealistic

philosophy, with his un-schooled rustics. He said in context that will be documented in Chapter Five and Seven that we can speak of the universe and creation either as is "vulgarly thought" - the material substance of our perception, or as an ideal world and the object and means of God's communication of His ideas to us. When Edwards addressed the Bostonians, however, the Harvard clergy, his reading public in America and abroad, we see his language, his style, his metaphor controlled, the language is that of a reasonable and rational philosopher. Works like Concerning the End for which God Created the World and The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended, both published posthumously, also reveal his Idealism, and the structure and dependence of the material world upon the care and supervision of that same, but not as "angry" God. The good fortune we have in knowing when and under what conditions Edwards wrote his treatises has aided our understanding of them despite varied criticism -some positive, some negative, some completely misinterpreted or without proper documentation. This claim will be supported in subsequent chapters.

It is time to examine in chronological order the phases and periods of his personal, public, and literary life. Edwards will emerge as a preacher in the style of his time -fiery, bombastic, frightening but effective for the purpose and audience intended. He will emerge as an alert, early American philosopher, fully cognizant of the issues philosophically debated in his day. That philosophy will reveal his use of an empirical methodology, but only so far, because ultimately his conclusions belonged to the idealist- rationalist camps of thought like Plato, Augustine, Descartes and Berkeley. Careful exposition will show

Edwards at once capable of accepting the arguments of the "moral sense" philosophers and admitting the existence of a "moral sense" but that same analysis will uncover an Edwards whose theory of knowledge allowed his acceptance of a "moral sense" only as relating to value judgments of social behavior, acts and things. Understanding the concepts of being, virtue, good, piety -the power of understanding is reserved to possessors of the "light." Although Edwards accepts a "moral sense", it will be shown in Chapter Six, such moral sense applies only in evaluations of material and physical states. States of <u>being</u> virtuous, unlike doing virtuous deeds are beyond the purview of moral sense and can only be evaluated or known by the sense of the heart.

Chapter One: Notes to Introduction.

[1] Clyde A. Holbrook, "Jonathan Edwards and His Detractors," Theology Today XX, (Oct. 1953) 384-396.

[2] Ibid.

[3] W.J. Scheick (Boston: Hall and Co., 1980). See "J. E. And the Breck Affair."

[4] Ibid.
P. J. Tracy, Jonathan Edwards, Pastor (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1980) pp. 52-57; 79, 118-121; 160-164; ff.

[5] Ibid, Tracy, p. 122.

[6] T. H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," The Colonial Society of Massachusetts: Publications XXVIII (1931) 293-321.
Edwards' entries in his Catalogue reflect this deficiency: Dr.Halley's Newton's Mathematical Philosophy Made More Easy.; Grove's Introduction to Newton's Philosophy: The Mathematical Sciences Abridged & Made Easy to the Meanest Capacity.

[7] See Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards, (N.Y., Delta, 1948) of which Fiering says, "In general, Miller's discussion of Locke and Edwards (pp. 52-68 of Miller's Jonathan Edwards) is probably the worst piece of writing he ever did, judged in terms of substance and interpretative accuracy." p.36, n. 60. cf p. 128 n. 51.
cf Images or Shadows of Divine Things, Jonathan Edwards, ed. P. Miller, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1948) pp.28, 29.
The effect of Miller's thesis cannot be underestimated in the general concept of Edwards. Prof.Scheick says:

> Undoubtedly, the most important and influential book [on the subject]...is Perry Miller's Jonathan Edwards...during the last three decades, every serious student of Edwards' thought has referred to this work as a point of departure...current interest draws its energy from it. Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards (Boston, Hall and Co., 1980) p. XI.

For a discussion of Edwards as a scientist or a "modern philosopher" see also: C.H. Faust, "Jonathan Edwards as a Scientist," American Literature, I (Jan. 1930) 393-404. Vincent Tomas, "The Modernity of J. Edwards." New England Quarterly, XXV (March 1952), pp 60-84.

[8] J.S. Caskey "Jonathan Edwards' Catalogue" Chicago Theological Seminary. (1931). cf Catalogue of Books, typewritten copy of J. Edwards' list of books, Hammond Library of The Chicago Theological Seminary. Fiering claims Johnson and Caskey made many errors in their

analyses of the Catalogue but does not cite specifics.

9 Johnson, op cit.

10 Ibid.

11 Elements of Philosophy: The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, ed. W. Molesworth (J. Bohn, London, 1839-45), Leviathan, Works, ed. Molesworth Vol. III (1839) Part I, ch.6, pp. 7-8.

12 F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1968) pp 182-212. cf also an excellent chronology in: N.Capaldi, David Hume (Boston, Twayne Pub., 1975.)
Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart," Harvard Theological Review, XLI, (April, 1948) pp. 123-45.
Edwards said, (of Locke's Essay which he first read while at Yale,) that he derived more pleasure from reading Locke "than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold...from...newly discovered treasure..." Dwight, Works, New York, 1829, p.30.

13 A. A. Cooper (Shaftesbury) Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times, ed. J. M. Robertson, (London, 1900). Vol.II, p. 15; 28; 41-43; 77; 227; 436.

14 Francis Hutcheson, A System of Moral Philosophy, Glasgow, 1760, p. 1-5. Inquiry. II p. 3-7.

15 S. J. Stein, "A Notebook on The Apocalypse by Jonathan Edwards." The William and Mary Quarterly, (Oct. 1972) pp. 623-34. Attempts to show Edwards' theology relevant to our times is a battle in futility. His own parish rejected it. Few of us today would surrender our present political structures which so closely resemble Locke's philosophy of government to return to the absolutism and two class system implied in Edwards' Calvinism. The arguments for separation of church and state have not yet won the battle, and it is doubtful that western society is willing to return to a political structure that Edwards' theology reflects. The right to appeal is the power to legislate; there was no appeal in Edwards' theology, only a stern and often arbitrary God. Such was not Locke's God or government. Had Edwards been more of a Lockean, successive generations would have found Edwards' more acceptable to their own world views. Edwards never indicated that he ever read any of Locke's political treatises and his work contains little political philosophy or commentary. This in itself would add to the doubt herein claimed that Edwards was very little the Lockean he is generally perceived to have been. Referring to Apocalypse, Prof.Stein says, "This book has none of the reflective qualities of any other of Edwards' work. Edwards participated in an unattractive aspect of Protestant exegetical tradition...religiously sanctioned prejudice and anti-Catholicism."

[16] H. A. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1963) pp. 13-17.

Dialog Search: Philosopher's Index Database: Dec. 11, 1984. re: 1957-84. Dialog Retrieval Service. Dialog File 57. Graduate School/City University: CUNY.

[17] Edwards, Works. IV, 439-444.

[18] Jason L. Saunders, ed. Greek and Roman Philosophy after Aristotle, (London, Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1966) Plotinus: Ennead I, Sixth Tractate, p. 233. Ennead V, Eighth Tractate, p. 276, ff.

[19] Jonathan Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn," Philosophy, 49, No. 188, (April 1974), pp. 123-134.

Chapter Two: Theological Sources and Epistemological Theory.

Jonathan Edwards once observed that the term "Calvinist" had become a term of contempt intimating ultra-conservative fundamentalism in the face of reason.

> [It is]... .a greater reproach than the term 'Arminian', yet I should not take it at all amiss, to be called a Calvinist for distinction's sake: though I utterly disclaim a dependence on Calvin, or believing the doctrines which I hold, because he believed and taught them; and cannot justly be charged with believing in everything just as he taught.[1]

Edwards' orthodoxy was "home-made"; a child and man of theology. Members of his immediate and extended family- , including that of his wife were church people, not just people who went to church. Most of his male lineage were ministers, as were many of his descendants. Religion was the literature of the home. With such background those efforts that attempt to search out particular theological influences, schools, and thematic shading are bound to find success for Edwards was steeped in religion. His Catalogue shows that he read mainly works relating to religion. Instead of pursuing any particular influence, the interpreter's starting point should be simply that Edwards was a Calvinist Christian minister, whose intellectual and epistemological base was theology. The strains that follow by selectively chosen, over-edited and abridged supportative material distort our knowledge of Edwards. Prof. Miller's intellectual biography of Edwards is an example: the supporting documentation for the book is available only upon written application to the Beinecke Library at Yale University.

Prof. Fiering has the following to say on the problem:

> The most influential general book on Edwards in the last twenty-five years has undoubtedly been Perry Miller's Jonathan Edwards... . Rhetorically brilliant but utterly misleading in content, Miller's Edwards can only be judged an unaccountable lapse in the scholarship of one of the greatest of American historians. Miller appears to have relied primarily on intuition in writing about Edwards, rather than dogged research.

What Edwards wrote and published, or prepared with intent to publish was a response to theological and philosophical issues. As indicated earlier this phase of his life was one of intense religious activity and his writing efforts reflected it.

> Between 1736 and 1746 he led one party in the heated debate over the religious upheaval known as the Great Awakening. ...[later] he fought staunchly for the Calvinistic theory of the freedom of the will. ...[then] he was the recognized champion of the Calvinistic forces in the bitter controversy over the doctrine of the total depravity of man. Finally he plunged into the controversy over the nature of virtue and put on the Calvinistic armor in defense of the doctrine of election.[3]

The answer to the question, "Which particular theologians or dogma influenced Edwards?" is that all and any theology that buttressed his religious outlook and supported his beliefs were elements that he used.[4] Another observer says:

> Edwards' overarching concern was to reconstruct the framework of historic Calvinism along Neoplatonic lines...and he used Locke, Newton, Cudworth -others -if their views supported his own... . Like Berkeley, Edwards tried to counteract the materialistic tendencies of the disciples of Locke and Newton, particularly those tendencies most apparent in the views of the deists.[5]

This seeming singlemindedness is deceiving for even his arrival as

a devoted adherent of the stern religion of Calvin was not easily achieved. In a reflective moment of retrospection he was to write about a youthful torment:

> ...[God] brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell... after my recovery I fell again into...sin...I had great and violent inward struggles... . From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty...choosing [some] to eternal life...rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. ... God's absolute sovereignty and justice...is what my mind [is now] assured of... . Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.[6]

Edwards' first published work was a revised sermon he delivered at the Public Lecture in Boston in July 1731. He had been invited to deliver the lecture, he was aware, so that his worthiness as successor to his grandfather, "Pope" Stoddard, could be assessed by the Boston ministers and to give them the opportunity to examine the young minister, the product of Yale College's divinity education under a highly suspect tutor. The lecture "contained a repeated insistence that Faith (not man's merit) was the only true means to salvation. Faith is the sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption. In the face of Boston's increasingly liberal divines, Edwards asserted that 'those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God'...thwart the design of our redemption.' "[7] This was a serious call to the ministry to return to the fold of orthodoxy. Edwards who at twenty-seven had "inherited" his grandfather's pulpit (a relatively liberal forum where

the half-way covenant had been preached) now repudiated that inheritance by returning to a sterner theological interpretation. The elders of the Boston ministry ordered immediate publication of the lecture, with emendations.[8] A reaction followed that according to Prof. Miller suggests as comparable to a major seismic event:

> When Edwards rose to deliver the lecture it was as though a master of relativity spoke to a convention of Newtonians who had not yet heard of Einstein, or as though among nineteenth century professors of philosophy, all assuming that man is rational and responsible, a strange youth began to refer, without more ado, to the id, ego, and super ego... . Only those, who had read Locke and understood him could appreciate the import of the sermon to future generations, but in all North America not a handful could claim such understanding.[9]

Edwards has not been served well by rhetorical excesses as these, which leave us distanced from a balanced understanding of him. An opposing comment is frank, but with enthusiasm for the first assessment under strict control:

> In general [Miller's] discussion of Locke and Edwards...is probably the worst piece of writing he ever did, judged in terms of substance and interpretative accuracy. ... on several grounds this dramatic picture of the relationship between Edwards and Locke must be rejected. It is misleading to think of Locke himself as writing in isolation from the currents of thought in his day and during the preceding decades.[10]

The imprint of Miller's efforts has made his skewed description of Edwards an almost indelible one. Edwards' lecture to the Boston clergy was a call to the barricades he planned to erect against deism and Arminianism that had been spreading across New England and not an enunciation of empirical, scientific, or mathematical-physical

principles. This Boston Public Lecture, God Glorified In The Work of Redemption is steeped in fundamentalist theology, but does express, albeit within theological terms, that knowledge of ultimate and absolute reality is possible, but not through sense, or experience- a far from Lockean position. The disparate interpretations of this incident are elements that feed the misunderstanding of Edwards' efforts. Prof. Clarence Faust expressed reservations about Edwards' scientific inclination or interest. "There seems to have been a thin vein of scientific interest in the man," but religion colored and qualified, "every intellectual conviction he attained. ...that such a man was, or ever could have been, [as some say] 'a remarkable scientific observer' seems, despite his possession of some power of observation, highly questionable."[11]

Fiering adds to his earlier observations that, "Perry Miller, the great historian of New England Puritanism, has been the most influential purveyor of the tradition that has emphasized Locke's influence on Edwards. Before Miller, more balanced interpretations prevailed."[12] Science and empiricism was not the substance of Edwards' theology, and interpretations of Edwards that indicate the contrary must bear with them greater contextual verification or be consigned to the esoteric. "The subject of the sermon," says Ona Winslow, "was safely orthodox...the young preacher pleased his audience," she adds. Expressed within religious idiom, Edwards expressed the Platonic philosophical point of view: the contemplation of the perfect form as the means to attain happiness. "The redeemed have all their inherent good in God. Inherent good is two-fold. It is either excellency or

pleasure. Believers are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency. God puts his own beauty, that is, His beautiful likeness upon our souls. They are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy. They have spiritual joy and pleasure."[14]

Compare Edwards' words to Socrates' recitation of Diotima's teaching:

> ...for he who would proceed aright in this matter should...in youth visit beautiful forms...to love one form only -out of that he should create fair thoughts: and soon...perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another; and then if beauty of form in general is his pursuit, how foolish would he be not to recognize that the beauty in every form is one and the same [then] he will become a lover of all beautiful forms... .toward the end [he] will perceive a nature of wondrous beauty...a nature everlasting...absolute, separate, changeless, and eternal without comparison to any other. [15]

Had Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud been in the audience at that Boston lecture and heard this spirited assertion that knowledge of non-sensible reality is possible, they might have considered religious conversion, but would have found it difficult to equate their physics or psychology in any way to what the young man said. Certainly, Locke, had he been there, would have wondered how these "communications of excellency" or knowledge and attributions of immaterial objects are possible if they are not first in the senses or the understanding.

Prof. Schneider, commenting on the effects of the lecture says:

> When young Edwards preached to the Boston aristocracy on the theme 'God Glorified in Man's Dependence' the effect was sensational... . To have...Calvinistic orthodoxy...revived, ...not as a covenant for a holy commonwealth, but as an 'inward' or 'sensible' revelation...was both refreshing and disconcerting. When he and his followers...attempted to repudiate the

> popular 'Half-way Covenant'...to revive strict communion and public confession...they became an unpopular minority and ended by becoming a small sect of philosophically erudite but socially unfashionable Calvinists. 16

Prof.Johnson writes on this same issue, "...it [the Boston lecture] is said to have made a profound impression...probably because the subject was little known in America. It began Edwards' fame as a theologian."17 The conflict in these assessments is obvious and requires resolution which is relatively simple: not one of these interpretations have considered that Edwards had begun, as early as this, 1731, to produce sermons in series and parts often carried over into several weeks and this sermon -to be fully understood -had to be examined in the light of an earlier one and a subsequent one. Edwards, as was his custom, took a selection from the Bible, as an inspirational introduction to the text of his sermon; in this instance he chose I Corinthians. To this introduction he added a prefatory note: (in paraphrase) "Those to whom this epistle was directed dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute as the writer observes, 'The Greeks seek after wisdom.' Corinth was not far from Athens which had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning." Edwards was trying to impress the sophisticated Boston audience; a preface such as this would have been beyond appreciation by his Northampton parishioners. Prof. Aldridge says that:

> ... the main theme of this sermon was Edwards' favorite, the doctrine of God's omnipotence: this he presented in a somewhat academic manner using scholastic logic that attempted to define...objective and inherent good. The objective good -God -brings him happiness, and the inherent good is the soul's pleasure partaking of God's

> moral image. Here is undoubtedly a reflection of the Platonic concept of the effusion of God upon the soul -a concept which Edwards acquired from his profane reading rather than from the Scriptures.[18]

This highly debated sermon is complete only in the light of Edwards' next published sermon. That sermon, above in Introduction was published under the title given there, but delivered from the pulpit as, The Reality of Spiritual Light. This sermon, says Aldridge "was primarily epistemological...spiritual wisdom...was the highest gift...to man... . Reason perceives truth...the heart alone perceives excellency." The resolution of the dispute over this Boston Public Lecture -from Miller's rousing declaration of empirical profundity to Fiering's, Tracy's, and Aldridge's more conservative assessment -turns on the fact, that, to be completely understood, this sermon must be read as the second part of three on the same subject. To read or listen to one and not the other is the same as if one goes to a play and does not stay for the final act. Edwards wrote this way more often as time went on until his sermons evolved into sermon series, lecture-sermons and finally into Treatises. Even the last work published when he was living, The Nature of True Virtue, had a companion treatise, published posthumously,Concerning the End for Which God Created the World. This Boston lecture had two companion sermons and only through interpretation based on all three can an accurate assessment of Edwards' thought emerge.

Reason, according to Edwards can give truth of material things, but absolute truth can only be attained by inner expansion of

perception. Where some only see bricks mortar and stones, others see house, home and garden. Prof. Aldridge says, "in attempting to relate his philosophy to the prevailing notions of his age, one should rely on Edwards' own words rather than the schools of opinion which have grown up around him."[20] No sounder research advice could be given for if we follow that precept we read in Edwards:

> Of all kinds of knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important...religion is the great business for which we are created...on which our happiness depends...as religion consists in an intercourse between ourselves and our maker: and so has its foundations in God's nature and ours, and in the relation...to each other...therefore a true knowledge of both must be needful [for] true religion.

To express his conception of the structure of reality Edwards turned not to science, not to mathematical physics, not to empirical philosophers but to theology. It was there among the prophets and Apostles that Edwards can be found as an 18th Century Disciple of metaphysical idealism.

"Edwards was very much the son of Puritanism when he said that Scripture was the ultimate authority for his theological judgments. In a sense [Edwards'] Calvinism is now an anachronism, for it was cast in a form that is quite alien to twentieth-century modes of thought."[22] This view of Edwards expressed by Prof. Angoff, is opposed by Prof. Elwood. Edwards' goal, Elwood says, "theologically and philosophically" was similar to St. Augustine's, whose mystic style was similar to his own. Like the Saint, Edwards tried to synthesize ideas from the traditions of earier ages with those current. In Edwards' case the

results are more relevant to our modern times than to Edwards' own. Edwards, like Berkeley attempted to stem the influence of the deists and followers of Locke and Newton whose materialistic views were being increasingly accepted. Philosophically, however, Edwards, Elwood believes, was closer to Nicholas Cusanus than to Berkeley.

> Post-restoration Arminianism...now infiltrating New England...the first phase of the Age of Reason, allied with Deism...moralism...[moved Edwards] toward rationalism in religion. [Edwards responded by] collecting or reading works by "the most prominent Deists...from John Locke to Tyndal. [In an age of reason] Edwards dared assert that the principle of religious consciousness is in the heart not in the mind.[23]

But Calvinist doctrine, Elwood adds, which limits this expanded consciousness to an elect few, weakens Edwards' theological and philosophical position.[24] There are some flaws in Elwood's argument however. In what manner was Edwards a "mystic" or what exactly is a "mystic" as applied to Edwards? Elwood does not explain, but the adjective adds to the obscuration of Edwards' philosophy. Was it a moderation toward religion and a rationalization within philosophy that Elwood perceived in Edwards and not as he put it above ? (n.23) Modern religions, generally reflect the principles of a more "democratic" relationship with a gentler God, whose indulgence is attainable by good works, than the stern God that Edwards originally preached. It must be remembered that these parishioners had parents and siblings buried at Deerfield, massacred by Indians not many decades earlier -parishioners that tried to understand, as best they could, good and evil and the workings of an arbitrary God. His philosophy however, represents a more

reasoned, less passionate appeal to understanding instead of Testaments.

Edwards, may or may not, have read Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity or Four Letters on Toleration; entries in his Catalogue indicate he was aware of them. The spirit of liberal religion expressed in those works, however, and others like them, inspired many deists who did read them. If Edwards did read the theistic side of Locke's philosophy, as Elwood says he did, then he either ignored it or rejected that particular facet of Locke in his sermons or refutations of deism. If he did not read the relatively tolerant Locke, then he, Edwards, could not have been the disciple of Locke some claim Edwards to have been. Certainly none of Edwards' finished work or exhortations from the pulpit reflect this side of Locke's philosophy -but it is this side of Locke's philosophy that is relevant to us today. Edwards preached a theology not completely relevant to his own time when, after a period of comparative liberalism -considering the uproar that followed -he demanded more profound identity with Christianity than mere assertion of it. His relevance in philosophy is an entirely different issue.

Edwards' manuscripts do not indicate any deep interest in politics, the structure of governments, the relationship between the individual and the state, or in the subjects that Locke, Hobbes, Paine, Montesquieu and the pamphleteers considered so important. Some letters report the French threat and discuss problems with neighboring Indians. One sermon preached against the injustice inherent in the slave trade, but he and his family owned at least two slaves. In a scant few years

before hostilities at Concord, Edwards' was deaf to the rumbles that presaged war and rebellion.

This indifference to the political problems arising between the colonies and England negates Elwood's argument of Edwards' theological relevance, or Miller's claim that Edwards was a disciple of Locke for the following reasons: (1). Few of us would give up the present political structure which so strongly reflects Locke's philosophy of government and religious toleration for the absolutism that Edwards' Calvinistic theological system implies: predetermined election as saint or eternal perdition as damned. (2). It is doubtful that modern western society is willing to accept a political structure that Edwards' Calvinistic two-class theology reflects. It was that very effort, to make his theological notions relevant to an increasingly pragmatic society that eventually turned his parishioners against him, and subsequent dismissal as minister. He tried to impose an outworn notion of the primacy of religion over the lives of his parishioners and failed. (3) This Calvinist rigidity and stern relationship between God and man does not reflect the more moderate theology inherent in religions that offer hope of salvation to all. (4) Locke's theory of government, based on natural rights imparted to man by God reflected his concept of a gentle and reasonable God. Edwards' did not.

(5) Perhaps the most important reason in support of this claim that Edwards was not a Lockean is the following: the right to appeal is the power to legislate - there was no appeal in Edwards' theology, only a stern and often arbitrary God. Such was not Locke's God or government, nor of the deists, nor of an emerging democratic national

spirit. Had Edwards been more of a Lockean than evidence shows he was, successive generations including the present would have found Edwards' theology more acceptable. Our political structures embrace Locke's political notions more closely than that which Edwards' Calvinism suggested. Edwards did contribute to philosophy several notions with elements similar to Locke's theism. To trace this as Lockean philosophy is to negate the totality of Edwards' Calvinist background. It was not Locke that made Edwards think along the lines he did, but that theism in many respects expressed notions that Edwards could work with and find ambient to his Calvinism. The claim that he was a Lockean disciple is without substance; a few of his statements support it but even more clearly deny it. Prof.Haroutunian notes the following on the issue:

> [Edwards] preached and wrote all his life in terms of Biblical and Calvinist language. [To dismiss] the Christian language of the sermons and other writings of Edwards as 'traditional' and [imply] Locke and Newton as being the true texture of his ideas, slights Edwards' concern with the Bible. To do justice to Edwards, he must be considered as a Christian thinker. To explain Edwards, the Bible -not only Newton and Locke must be included. [Any work] that regards Edwards' language 'conventional' misleads and is deceptive to the true nature of his work. 25

Edwards' separation from the centers of philosophical activity on the Continent, in England and Scotland was not only geographic but it is also reflected in his philosophy. Although there were some philosophers and some philosophizing in the colonies, their numbers were few, and their names and works not well remembered. As stated above, (Chap.1) Edwards did own or have access to much of the philosophical literature current and debated in his time, however he

did lack association. Edwards did not have that close contact or personal relationships that other philosophers on the Continent and England enjoyed and pursued -Halley, Newton, Boyle, Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Spinoza, Leibnitz -the Philosophes, the Encyclopediasts their salons and societies. He was library secretary to the Association of Ministers of Hampshire, but that group, as the name indicates, had a membership of ministers and theologians of neighboring parishes. These were comparatively speaking, educated men, but educated in the divinities, not the humanities. If any philosophy did filter into their intellectual considerations, it was through their study of the Christian Church Fathers. Edwards' Catalogue of Books lists many of the early Platonists and the names Augustine, Philo Judaeus, Scotus, Plotinus. Shaftesbury, Henry More, Thomas More, Cudworth, Whichcote and others are frequently listed.

This separation and the lack of association had an effect on him that is a major problem to us today. Edwards could read their books but he could not read their minds; he could absorb the contents of their treatises, but he could not absorb fine nuances of their thoughts. He could understand what Locke said, but having never met him, could not determine why he said it. Edwards was in a position far from the centers of European culture, and out of the perimeter of easy contact with American centers in Boston or New York. Travel to these cities was a tiresome two-day affair and not to be taken without due regard to the responsibilities at home.

Edwards could get ideas, trends, and developments of older notions, but as Fichte, (quoted earlier above) referred to him in

another context, he was a "lonely North American theologian." He had no opportunity to "be" an empiricist, a rationalist or an idealist nor personally mix with the makers and propounders of thought. The most his small arena allowed him was to absorb ideas until he could skillfully utilize them in philosophical arguments that supported his religious position. We cannot categorize Edwards for the convenience it offers us in attempts at interpretation.

Edwards' philosophical works, embedded in several sermons have contrasts in tone, which do not duplicate that of his distinctly theological sermons. He stated early in his career in the unfinished Notes on The Mind his allegiance and reliance on Bible, (to which he adhered throughout his life) when he proposes to speak and write "in the old way," not in the language of idealism.:

> When we say that the World...exists no where but in the mind, we have got to such a degree of strictness and abstraction, that we must be...careful... . The human body, and the brain itself, exist only mentally, in the same sense that other things do... . For to find out the reasons of things, in Natural Philosophy, is only to find out the proportion of God's acting. Though we suppose, that the existence of the whole material Universe is absolutely dependent on Idea, yet we may speak in the old way, and as properly and truly as ever. 26

Edwards, speaking or writing to a learned audience or in sermon material that was to be published, used carefully reasoned controlled language without the passion of his sermons, a style he sometimes defended in the same enthusiastic vein. "Some people talk of it as an unreasonable thing to fright persons to heaven, but I think it is a reasonable thing to fright persons to heaven away from hell..... Is it

not a reasonable thing to fright a person out of a house on fire?"[27] On the requirements of being an effective preacher with the technique necessary, Edwards advised that, "the main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression [that is] made on the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterward by a remembrance of what was delivered."[28]

His language was adapted to his audience. There were two Edwards in effect: the intellectual-philosopher Edwards and the country preacher Edwards. This duality in Edwards' modes of expression becomes with time more distinctly apparent as his sermons became mere reworked homilies. His language was conventional, contrary to Prof. Haroutunian's contention (above, n.25). in the sense that other preachers, currently and before him, used such vivid "brimstone" language. His use of language was not traditional however, for there were few if any ministers in the Colonies at that time who used language as he did. He used it not only to lead the parish in their religious devotions but also to influence the thinking of church leadership in more sophisticated centers like London, Glasgow, Boston and New York where his works were well received. His parishioners were plain, mostly unlettered folk to whom the price of fur and fish was as important as the price of avoiding hell or the admission to heaven. The burden of a dowry was as great as the burden of sin and the means of getting the former more difficult than paying for the latter. These were people whose parents hung witches, they themselves exorcised demons with incantations and pitchforks and lived in fear of hell and Satan. The language for such a world view required an adjustment in

style that Edwards as minister-teacher knew was necessary when he addressed them. Edwards' thought is not expressed to these plain and limitedly educated folk in a Platonic mode nor in the Socratic method: Edwards declared in dichotomous terms his premise and claimed much of that as truth. He moved from the particular to the general and called the issue proved, when, having submitted evidence from Testament as arguments for support, he rested his case.

Edwards paid less attention to this sermon form as time went by as he began to revise his pulpit productions for more sophisticated audiences, -the treatises we now know as his philosophy. He pointed to his philosophical efforts as one reason why he should reject the offer of the Trustees to become the president of Princeton. The wall that once separated Edwards' theology and philosophy did not exist in his maturity when he turned directly toward philosophical creativity. After being "dismissed" from his pulpit in Northampton, he produced several works written directly as treatises. He revised them as a matter of necessity knowing full well that the language and repetitious appeal to Biblical text would not carry the weight of his argument in the cultural centers where his works were sold, consulted and translated.

The pressure of deistic and Arminian notions -the concept of a gentler more approachable God -preached by many ministers in neighboring parishes forced Edwards while still at Northampton to suggest in his sermons that through prayer and works his parishioners could help themselves attain salvation. He knew full well that Calvinism's tenets held that good works or attestation of religiosity

would not interdict perdition or detour a smooth passage to heaven. "Preaching steps they could take was a tactic to encourage piety and a way of enforcing at least a minimum of community morality.[30] These modifications in his preaching assuage the rising hostility that had taken root in Northampton. This compromise, which he later regretted, with his religious principles, was not reflected in the firmness with which he held his philosophical notions; it was only a moderation, not the rationalization that Elwood perceives (n.25) above.

Edwards responded to the demands of his parishioners by a conciliatory return to the "half-way" covenant that had been introduced and preached by his grandfather Stoddard but repudiated by Edwards soon after his own ordination as minister of the church. The requirements for church membership and participation in meaningful ritual was less rigorous and the community welcomed the return to the earlier ways.[31] Edwards and many other Puritan ministers in that time and place presented their theology in "hell-fire, damnation" metaphors, a form of fundamentalist religion the parishioners expected, understood and appreciated. The premises of these sermons were generally not based on experience, were not founded in fact, and presented within a system of argumentation remote in its resemblance to modern academic logic. "The burden of proof is carried by the ministerial <u>voice and that of the Word of God.</u> The so-called logic is in reality a methodical formal structuring of the argument and the proof can be compared to "the associational logic of modern advertising." The technique was "of one trained primarily in the Ramistic technique of exposition through

dichotomization and particularization."[32] The proof is generally dependent upon rhetoric and poetic utilization, and careful editing for color, drama, image making coupled with careful phrasing.[33]

The contents of his sermons dealt with biblical exegesis, application of themes from Bible to daily life, inspiration lectures, reprimands to parishioners about wayward behavior with corrective recommendations.[33] "The business and labours of a minister of the Gospel," Edwards said, "is to explain and apply the word of God to his hearers so that it might be fitted for use."[34] Edwards became constrained by the sermon form and took steps to change it. Although he still preached the standard call for church attendance, diligence in prayer and piety in thoughts he began to include some ideas that reflected his mature reading and metaphysical inquiries by presenting longer sermons and delivering them over several church meeting days. These often came to three, four or more preaching days, and soon became sermon series, then instead of a topic preached issues were propounded, and explored. Of the sermons preached in 1738, Charity and Its Fruits took 16 sermon dates to complete, and the topic A History of the Work of Redemption delivered in 1739 consisted of 30 sermons and almost as many weeks to deliver to completion. The "sermon" A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections was preached before it was published "as a sermon series in 1742 and 1743."[35]

Unlike the constancy with which he held his philosophical principles, Edwards showed a remarkable willingness to mute his sermon language and subdue his metaphorical style to make it suitable for publication. The contents of his sermons reflect this moderation in

tone, style and perspective. In 1741 he preached the sermon, Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God, which needs little in the way of description at this point. Its contents reflected what was probably the height of Edwards' use of hyperbole of Testament, graphically committed to the truth of the New England "Great Awakening." The contents of the work A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, published just five years after Sinners shows Edwards willing to accept and explain away that great endeavor -"The Great Awakening" not as a failure of religious commitment as he might have done at an earlier date but with gentle understanding that reflects his appreciation of the psychological factors involved in the apathy that followed. To the degree that within the few years from the time that Edwards could express himself in terms as explict as Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God and then after seeing and experiencing the recidivism and disappointment of the "Awakening's" productivity,- to proceed and produce from sermons the chastened contents of the Nature of Religious Affections Edwards demonstrated a moderated attitude toward his religion and a more mature understanding of human capacities in the demands he set in his interpretation of it.

Edwards' transition from theologian to philosopher has not generally been as clearly delineated as it has been by Prof. Kimnach who describes how Edwards, in maturation, evolved from theologian to a moral ethical philosopher.:

> Before the climax of his preaching career [Edwards]...in 1730...began to experiment...with the sermon form [which] can be described as efforts to enlarge its metaphysical scope...by simply expanding the form. Edwards began to write sermons of greater length than he could preach even

> within the two-stage Sabbath service...a single sermon had to be divided into three or more preaching units... . As the years passed, the tendency to pack more and more thought into his sermons resulted in longer and longer sermons -literary forms that have no correlation with the unit of pulpit oration.[36]

Many observers have noted that Edwards' work must be considered in its scientific and empirical context as well as its theological foundations. which is a sound observation except that it implies that Edwards produced works that could be considered scientific or empirical. Edwards, as he moved from assistant to his grandfather, to ordination as minister never returned to the scientific or empirical interests he displayed in his school days.[37] His interest in philosophy increased, but some Edwardsean scholars have nourished the notion that Edwards was a physicist-scientist, misplaced in the pulpit of a rude but God fearing community.[38] For example, Prof.Buranelli says, "henceforth anyone who rejects [this view of Edwards] will be intellectually bound to show why. Doing so may well become a definite tributary to the mainstream of American thought for the rest of this century".[39] This view of Edwards as scientist-physicist is not supported by the evidence which indicates that Edwards followed a completely different path. Edwards' logic in his sermons, in contrast to that of his philosophy, cosmetically resembles the associational logic of modern advertising -it was not a rigorous logic resembling any formal, Aristotelian,or syllogistic system. Edwards committed many elementary errors of debating technique such as begging the question, using the Bible to prove the Bible. It survives currently as a method

for revivalist theology and popular religion.[40] It is not the questing for knowledge of an Augustine or a St.Thomas,. providing investigatory, propositional, procedural "proofs" of God. or consideration of social problems. It did not pursue the Scholastic propositions the Church Fathers examined, investigated and "proved". Edwards accepted as "fact" all of the Bible and used it as premise and epistemology.

Edwards was not a theologian in the sense of a Maimonides who believed in the absolute efficacy of the Bible but taught that Bible is a document to be studied for the establishment of a society albeit a theocratic one.[41] Ockham, whose love of the Testament was no less than Maimonides' or Edwards' did not hesitate to criticize interpretations of Biblical text.[42] Theologians such as these analyzed, debated, and created a dialectic that Socratically analyzed and examined concepts beyond empirical investigation. Edwards, in early career, did not express himself in analytical discussions resembling the "Socratic method". He may have been inspired by Platonism but he did not engage in a style of argumentation like the Socratic method when he preached "fundamental truths" in his sermons and used "incontestable premises" in his epistemology. As a preacher he was intellectually bound to the Scriptures; it was through philosophy he achieved a greater measure of freedom by changing the structure of his sermons, revising them, and then abandoning the language of the country preacher when he addressed a sophisticated public. He spent years producing and delivering sermons, grinding rote often perfunctorilly prepared, many "cannibalized" or excised and reworked, many cut to freshen them for relevance to current community events and popular consumption. When

called to a neighboring parish as a guest he often repeated a sermon that he had delivered from his own pulpit:

> [He ran a] sermon mill that operated like a cottage industry. Edwards' career as a composer of sermons (as opposed to that of an effective preacher) reached the vanishing point upon his departure from Northampton.[43]

Edwards must be considered in his religious context, but that context was not stoked by "hellfire" throughout his life, as some suggest.[44] Whatever we respect in Edwards today did not originate in his theology or science. His theology produced no trends, dogmas, schools, or lasting contributions to Christianity or religion. Edwards was an advocate of theology, not a maker of it. Edwards used theology, but the theology of his philosophy did not carry the weight of the argument. In his philosophical works he does cite chapter and verse very often but in that philosophy his technique is more modern and recognizable as the language of philosophy, and the dichotomy of Ramism is absent.

For instance the style and method of arguing is apparent if we look at two separate works and select a portion of each: a sermon The Excellency of Christ, preached in 1734 and published in 1738. The assertion of facts and the suggestion, either implicit or implied that these are facts; the implication that the argument is truth itself before the completion of the sermon is apparent at the outset. The constant repetition of these facts and the errors within contrary assumptions and the travail that follows the acceptance of those contrary positions are clearly outlined at the beginning. The benefits of accepting the stated position is repeated. This almost drumbeat of

benefit contrasted to woe weighs heavily on the listener and psychologically leads him to seek happiness through belief in the text.

> There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another. ... Christ is a divine person, or one that is God; and therefore has all the attributes of God. The difference there is...is chiefly relative...those that...are most diverse, do meet...in Christ.
> I shall mention two instances.
> 1.There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all... .higher than the kings of the earth:...he is King of kings, Lord of lords...higher than the heavens and higher than the highest angel of heaven...the Creator and great possessor of heaven and earth: he is sovereign Lord of all: he rules over the whole universe, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him... .
> There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace. [he] is a divine person...infinite holy...hating sin...Judge of the world [who] will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty. And yet he is one that is infinitely gracious and merciful.
> Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept him, and close with him as your Saviour. His fulness and all-sufficiency as a Saviour gloriously appear in the variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.
> Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery...helpless in it...a poor weak creature...but Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he is strong, though we are weak. To induce you to accept Christ as your Saviour, consider two things: 1. How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God. ... 2.If you do come to Christ, he will appear as a lion, in his glorious power and dominion to defend you.[46]

This unavoidably lengthy example of Edwards' sermon style contrasts sharply with the style and language change that came over him as he matured. The sermon quoted above was in mid-career as a minister when he was 35 years old. The following from Freedom of the Will when he was at Stockbridge as missionary to the Indians and settlers in the area, when he was about 48. This is the opening paragraph and some

following material. It has none of the dichotomous Ramistic technique of argumentation displayed above. Here Edwards presents an issue: why there is a need to explore the problems of "will." He shows quickly that he thinks the problem is real and in a short paragraph- an admirable abstract of less than five lines-tells us what he thinks "will" is, what it does, and how it does it. He writes directly to the issues: no excesses in language, no appeals to emotion, and although the work does contain many references to Testament the argument as will be seen in Chapter Five does not rest on an appeal to Biblical authority. Implicit too, is the recognition that there exists a rational opposing view, with which he disagrees but which must be recognized and proved false. Such an attitude was not expressed in any manner in the sermon; here in Freedom of the Will it is recognized and treated intellectually, not emotionally, to show the errors in that opposing view.

> It may be possibly thought, that there is no great need of going about to define or describe the "will" ; this word being generally as well understood as any other words...: and so perhaps it would be, had not philosophers, metaphysicians, and polemic divines brought the matter into obscurity by the things they...said.
> I observe, that the will (without any metaphysical refining) is plainly that, by which the mind chooses anything. The faculty of the will is that faculty or power or principle of mind by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice.
> If any think 'tis a more perfect definition of the will, to say, that it is that by which the soul either chooses or refuses; I am content with it. ...So that whatever names we call the act of the will by- choosing, refusing, approving, (etc.-) all may be reduced to this of choosing. For the soul to act voluntarily, is evermore to act electively.
> With respect to that...inquiry...it would be tedious...to enumerate...all...opinions, which have been advanced.

> ...But it may be necessary that I should a little explain my meaning in this.[47]

The language Edwards used to express himself became more temperate, reasoned and "logical." Edwards' "later sermons degenerate into outlines...[he] paid less and less attention to the sermon and took his preaching less and less seriously, even several years before he left Northampton." His treatises, Prof. Angoff adds, are the repository of his philosophy "most meaning and useful...in them we have a freer development of the thought and rhetoric."[48] This modification of style and content is also apparent when we compare his Faithful Narrative of Surprising Conversions, with the sober appraisal of the Revival implicit in Edwards' later work A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections -(a series of sermons that he converted to a Treatise) published in 1746, when the Revival had waned. The controlled tone of the Treatise, the philosophical analysis of what makes a genuine attestation of faith, contrasts with the hubris and the unquestioning success reported in the earlier Narrative. A selection from that work follows and demonstrates this change.:

> Persons are brought off from Inordinate Engagedness after the World & have been Ready to Run into the other Extreme of too much neglecting their worldly Business & to mind nothing but Religion... Persons Lately have thronged [into Church], so that there are very few adult Persons left out...the town seems to be full of the Presence of God; our young People when they Get together instead of frolicking as they used to do are altogether on Pious subjects;... at weddings and at all occasions.[49]

The paragraph immediately above was written in 1736, at the height of the Great Awakening. Ten years later Edwards was moved to write the

following in his A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections.

> many in the late extraordinary season appeared to have great religious affections...and run into many errors...many...soon [had] come to nothing...and some returned like a dog to his vomit... .Thus we run from one extreme to another.[50]

Edwards obviously was less certain about the lasting effect of the Great Awakening, or the effectiveness of his preaching toward permanent conversions. Prof. Stenerson notes that a report on a group of women whose sexual phantasies and promiscuity is evident in several "early births." Reversion to old habits and behavior caused many New England ministers, Stenerson says, among them Edwards, to have second thoughts about the value of the Awakening and passing attention to religion.[51]

However one modern observer, Miller, expresses himself in no such uncertain terms.

> ...the radical achievement of the Narrative--no anthropologist ever reported more objectively on the fertility rites of a jungle tribe... . He [Edwards] was as empirical as Boyle or Huygens and wrote the Narrative as though for the Transactions for the Royal Society [of London].[52]

This "anthropological report" contains details on the conversion of a four year old girl, and another part detailed the turning from sin and the acceptance of God by an obviously psychologically disturbed young woman. Edwards had no interest other than to prove the power of faith and the efficacy of prayer. Science was not Edwards' concern but what he believed was God's work in the parish. It was not what the Royal Society would have found interesting, but a New England Bishop, Dr.Benjamin Colman, pastor of the prestigious Boston Brattle Street

Church, recently returned from London and with status sufficient to reject the Presidency of Harvard, who deemed the Revival news most interesting and worthy to inquire and ask for a full report. The prompt report to this eminence, particularly when it was at the request of the Bishop himself, was devoid of empirical considerations, but copious with inspirational details of God's productivity. Phrases like the following are throughout the work: "This work (the conversions) seems to be on Every account an Extraordinary dispensation of Providence," "the abundant measures in which the Spirit of God has been Poured out on many Persons," "the extent of it, Gods spirit being so Remarkably Poured out on so many Towns at once...from Place to Place. Some...under terrours of Conscience...and spiritual discoveries have had Livelily Impressed Ideas of Christ shedding his blood for sinners, his Blood running from his veins...some have trembled & han't been able to stand, they have had such a sense of divine wrath."[53]

Miller's interpretation is but another instance in which Edwards' own works and words are not considered, but that of interpreters substituted instead. When Edwards turned his skill in argumentation to the problem of Deism, the "theology" of the Age of Reason, a new personality began to emerge. In his The Insufficiency of Reason he did not ransack the Bible for support or claim faith as the measure of truth, but argued calmly and reasonably. Matthew Tindal was the target:

> Men are praised or blamed by the...universal sense of mankind...in all ages...which moral sense is included in what Tindal means by reason and the law of nature. To say that the law of nature is perfect...is no more than to say that what is fit and right...in its nature is right."[54]

It is a waste of time to observe that the order of nature meets a measure of propriety or fitness of what is- if it is, then it is and it is right- it cannot be other than it is and other than right and true. The natural order cannot be other than natural and right. Honey is naturally sweet and apples grow on trees, and that is the natural order of things; if they had been contrary- salty and dug from bog pits- they would be still right, proper and fit in <u>that</u> natural order of things. This is empirical, drawn from experience, direct observation.

> If Tindal, or any other Deist...would urge...that the light of nature is sufficient to teach mankind what they <u>ought</u>, or need to be...then all education is needless and also all the pains the Deists take in talking and writing to enlighten mankind is wholly needless and in vain.[55]

The whole of nature is about us. What purpose does ethical teaching serve? If the Deists are right we can learn our morality and ethical relations by observing nature. Why waste time, and energy in these copious teachings, treatises and polemics? Deists claim that morality can be learned by reason, then why all the pamphlets, books and debating? Edwards of course was defending his epistemological base, revelation and faith, but his skill in reduction to the absurd, the calm approach to the obvious, demonstrated his philosophy taking the full weight of the argument instead of theology. As Hume was to ask more than a decade later -how does one get "ought" from what is?[56]

The moderated approach becomes more apparent in his references to the "mind body problem." His unstated but apparent frustration in not finding a rational answer, which in his pastoral encounters would have

presented him no difficulty is expressed in this controlled eloquence, so unlike a country preacher.

> Our senses support our belief that mind and body are united, and no sense experience can support or falsify that idea, but how reason in any way can imagine that a solid mass of matter...should have perception...understanding...exert thought, volition, love, hatred...to say that spirit acts upon matter, or that God established some means by which this phenomenon works is still inconceivable, for we have no concept of any way or manner, in which God, who is pure Spirit, can act upon matter or impel it. 57

Edwards asked the question that once he answered by reference to Scriptural chapter and verse, but not with such temperate consideration of the issues. As a philosopher, he wondered why and how, whereas as a preacher he had answered as he learned from the Book of Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? Declare if thou hast understanding." Where he would have once responded and pointed to page and text, he now admitted that one must wonder how reason can respond adequately to the question.

> But if...the sensible world has existence only in the mind...then the organs of sense...have no existence...but in the mind: and those organs...have no existence but what is conveyed into the mind by themselves, for they are part of the sensible world...and it will follow that the organs of sense owe their existence to the organs of sense and so are prior to themselves...a seeming inconsistence with reason...that reason cannot explain. 58

There are darker sides to Edwards' "theology". The theme of Edwards' unfinished and unpublished work, History of Redemption is an accounting of the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy in which the Papacy is identified with the anti-Christ, the destruction of armed ships and forces of Catholic rulers. The notes to this work, Apocalypse, reports

the capture of French ships, destruction of guns and lists the total of men captured or killed; it tells with undisguised enthusiasm of successes against the Indians, Turks, Russians and Jews and applauds the imposition of taxes against the clergy by the King of Spain. An entry, an example of many others in similar vein reads:

> A Jew known for his great knowledge of...Hebrew and Chaldee languages...was after a proper confession of faith, publicly baptized at the meetinghouse.[57]

Prof. Schieck, says of the notebook in which Edwards kept clippings and data for History of Redemption:

> ... the Apocalypse (as the notebook is called) is the product of 35 years of study..,[most scholars] do not acknowledge the existence of the manuscript...Edwards persisted in this until his death...a citation tells of the eventual overthrow of the anti-Christian...Papal forces... . The first section of the Apocalypse is unmatched by any other...exegetical writing in Edwards' corpus.[58]

"The book has none of the reflective qualities of any other of Edwards' work and Edwards participated in an unattractive aspect of Protestant exegetical tradition...religiously sanctioned prejudice and anti-Catholicism." A theology that develops from or supports ideas such as these is not a theology more relevant today than when Edwards expressed them. A greater degree of ecumenical applicability can be found in Edwards' philosophy than that of his theological bigotry. Had Edwards been more of a Lockean disciple he would have followed his master's precepts of tolerance but Edwards' theology was heavy handed, absolute, the epitome of a fundamentalist preacher. There is one other Edwards however,- Edwards as a philosopher, an early 18th century moral philosopher. This Edwards, a man of reason in an Age of Reason, is

relevant and applicable in any age. The picture that persists is that of Edwards as preacher, minister, fiery pulpit sermonizer. The fact is the latter: Edwards the philosopher lives on and is remembered for that. When Edwards died his theology died with him.[59] We should remember him for his philosophy which is considerable.

Chapter Two: Notes

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2 Emily S. Watts, "The Neoplatonic Basis of Jonathan Edwards' "True Virtue." Early American Literature X, 1975. T. H. Johnson, op.cit. Although Neo-platonism is an acknowledged element in Edwards' philosophy, Watts gives no attention to a more basic source of his Platonism -Plato.

3 C. H. Faust and T. H. Johnson, eds.Jonathan Edwards, Representative Selections, (New York; Hill and Wang, 1966) Int. p. XV.

4 Ibid.

5 Douglas Elwood, The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1960) p. 1-11.

6 Works, Austin, p. 31-48.

7 Patricia J. Tracy. Jonathan Edwards, Pastor, (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1980) p.75 S.Morgan, "The Great Awakener," N. Y. Times Book Review, July 13, 1980. P.J. Tracy, "The Pastorate of Jonathan Edwards", Massachusetts Review XX (Autumn 1979.) Emory Elliott, Power and the Pulpit in Puritan New England (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), 66-68.

8 Ibid.

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10 Norman Fiering, Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context, (Chapel Hill: N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1981) n.p.38. p.373.

11 W. J. Schieck, Introduction in Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards, ed. W. J. Scheick (Boston: Hall and Co.,1980) p. XI. C. H. Faust, "Jonathan Edwards as a Scientist," American Literature, (Jan. 1930) pp. 393-404.

12 Fiering, op. cit. p. 36.

13 Ola E. Winslow, Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758, A Biography, (N.Y:, Macmillan, 1940) p. XVI.

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16 Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1963) p. 17.

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19 Watts, op. cit.

20 Aldridge, op. cit. preface.

21 Edwards, Freedom of the Will, p. 135.

22 C. Angoff, Jonathan Edwards, His Life and Influence--A Symposium, ed. C. Angoff (N.J.: Assoc. Univ. Press, 1975) cff Conrad Cherry.: Imagery and Analysis: Jonathan Edwards on Revivals of Religion pp. 19-28. W. H. Kimnach, "The Brazen Trumpet: Jonathan Edwards's Conception of the Sermon", p. 37-38. Robert L. Stuart "Jonathan Edwards at Enfield", American Literature, XLVIII (1976).

23 Elwood, op. cit. p. 1-11.

24 Ibid, p. 37.

25 J. Haroutunian, "Perry Miller's: Jonathan Edwards," Theology Today, (1951) p. 554-556. John E. Smith, "Jonathan Edwards: Piety and Practice in the American Character," Journal of Religion, LIV (1974).

26 Faust and Johnson, op. cit. pp 28-29.

27 Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sereno Dwight, (New York. 1829). Vol.1, pp. 568-71.

28 Wilson H. Kimnach, Jonathan Edwards, His Life and Influence--A Symposium, ed. Angoff, op. cit. pp. 29-44.

29 Ibid.

30 Tracy, op. cit, p. 74-75.

31 Ibid.

32 Kimnach, op. cit. Ibid.

33 Angoff, p. 31.

34 Kimnach, pp. 29-44. cf. "Jonathan Edwards' Early Sermons," Journal of Presbyterian History LV, 1977 pp. 255-66.

35 Kimnach, p. 42. 36 Ibid.

37 T. H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," The Colonial Society of Massachusetts: Publications XXVIII (1931) pp. 293-321. Vincent Tomas,"The Modernity of Jonathan Edwards." New England Quarterly XXV (March, 1952) pp. 60-84. Scientific and Philosophic Writings of Jonathan Edwards ed. W. E. Anderson, (New Haven,: Yale University Press, 1980) Introduction. N. Fiering, Early American Philosophy vs Philosophy in Early America, Charles Peirce Society, Transactions, (1977) pp. 216-237.

38 Miller, op.cit.

39 Vincent Buranelli, "Colonial Philosophy," William and Mary Quarterly, third series, XVI (July, 1959), pp. 343-62.

40 Kimnach, op. cit. Symposium.

41 Moses Maimonides, The Eight Chapters trans. Joseph Gorfinkle, (N.Y.:AMS, 1906. Columbia University Oriental Studies. pp 87-92. Guide To The Perplexed trans. M. Friedlander, (N.Y.: Dover, 1956) part 3, Ch. 28. Mishneh Torah, Book of Asservations, (New Haven.: Yale University Press. 1967) Int. p. xxiii.

> [The Divine Code] has some bearing on our opinions, our social relations, the removal of injustice, and the teaching of morals. [After an] acquisition of many kinds of knowledge we are led to an understanding not only our duty to God, but also to men. (Guide, Pt.3, Ch. 28)

42 William of Ockham, ed. trans. Ph. Boehner, Collected Articles on Ockham, (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.; Nauwelaerts, 1958) p.445. Dial 1.

> [If the Pope] intervenes in temporal affairs, he is considered to put his sickle into another's harvest...those things done by a judge are null and void if they do not belong to his office... .[The papacy was] instituted...so that its powers [ought] extend only to things necessary to the salvation of believers.
> ...It is the Prince's duty to exercise civilian authority, the Priest's to be man's minister... .(De Imperatorum et Pontificam Potestate, Preface, Ch.1,2.7,9.10

43 Kimnach, "Jonathan Edwards' Sermon Mill," Early American Literature X, 1975. pp 167-73

44 Peter Gay, in Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment (Lex., Mass.,: DeHeath, 1969).

45 Clyde A. Holbrook, "Jonathan Edwards and His Detractors," Theology

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46 Angoff, Symposium op. cit. Works, IV, p. 227-29;-32.

47 Works II, p. 1-2.

48 Douglas C. Stenerson, "An Anglican Critique of the Early Phase of the Great Awakening in New England: A Letter by Timothy Cutler" William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Ser, XXX (1973). Angoff, op. cit.

49 Works, III, pp. 70-71.

50 Works, III.

51 Stenerson, op. cit.

52 Miller, op. cit.

53 Works, Narrative, op. cit.

54 Works, vol. VIII, The Insufficiency of Reason, p.202.

55 Ibid. 56 Ibid. cff.

57 C. C. Goen, "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure In Eschatology," Church History, XXVIII (March, 1959) pp. 25-40.

58 Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards ed. W. J. Schieck, (Boston,: G. K. Hall, 1980) "A Notebook to the 'Apocalypse' "

59 Prof. Mark A. Noll, in "Moses Mather (Old Calvinist) and the Evolution of Edwardseanism," Church History, Vol.49, Sept. 1980, No.3 makes an excellent case for this. Moses Mather, a severe critic of Edwards, and grandson of Cotton Mather adhered to the more liberal half-way covenant of church membership- that which Edwards' own grandfather preached and which Edwards repudiated a few years after he took over his grandfather's pulpit. Noll indicates that the pressures toward moderation were great and even Edwards finally noted that allegorical comparisons, and metaphorical allusions to Israel, Zion, Chosen People, Canaan, "were passe' and no longer applicable. Every state earned its own place in God's estimation of its people and the good example and leadership of its rulers." This, for Edwards was one of the rare statements by him of a political nature.
Noll details how Edwards' closest colleagues and supporters when he was alive and in the pulpit, Timothy Dwight, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, heirs to the thought and spirit of Edwards himself "preserved the essence of Edwards' thought but not without making subtle changes in it " after he died.
Since Noll is speaking from a theological perspective to a church forum his statement following may seem unduly harsh, but it must be observed that Noll makes clear he means "theological legacy" and does not

include Edwards' philosophical contributions, thus his statement supports the present argument, that Edwards was not in the forefront of theology, but was a major contributor to the philosophy of his day and ours.:

> If Jonathan Edwards' self-conscious theological heirs eventually assumed positions substantially similar to the ones held by Mather, an opponent of Edwards, the problematic nature of Edwards' theological legacy in American history again comes into view. The possibility must exist that Edwards and his reconstruction of Calvinism were mutants in the evolution of American theology, that he was in the end no more than a gigantic object of curious awe to later generations- condemned to the intellectual insignificance of those who have proved themselves unfit for the American environment by failing.

This is a brutal assessment, but as stated above it is confined to theology, and it makes clear the mistake of saying that Edwards' theology is significant for our times. It was a theology that was rejected even by his associates, contemporaries and even friends that survived him- and which has dulled the meaning and significance of his philosophy.

Chapter Three: Philosophical Sources. Separation of Philosophy From Religious Theology

It is generally accepted that Edwards had philosophical roots in Plato, the classical ancients, several of the medievalists and the empiricist British philosophers of the 17th and 18th century. Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Locke are of particular pertinence.[1] The literature on this is extensive and with the exception of the over emphasis Miller placed on Newton and Locke, questions of degree, not of fact are debated. How much, however, was there an agreement with his own epistemological theory and his theology? To what degree did the philosophy that he expressed reflect that theology? If it can be shown that Edwards' philosophy was sufficiently different than his theology, perhaps the description of him as a brimstone preacher can be laid to rest with other myths about him. And, if it can be shown that Edwards' philosophy was unlike Calvinistic theology, and more like that of the moral philosophies of the early 18th century, then the case will have been stated and supported that Edwards was a philosopher of morals and ethics, and not a fiery country preacher who sometimes philosophized.

As noted above, Edwards' later years were spent producing sermons that evolved essentially into treatises. These were of considerable length and often months of sermonizing were required for pulpit or public delivery. The "sermon mill", as Kimnach called it, that Edwards ran, functioned until his dismissal from his post at Northampton. At Stockbridge the most Edwards did in this area of "pulpit" literature was to re-write his earlier sermons on a level to fit his Indian and

frontier parishioners.[2] His attitude toward his parishioners in general is expressed, to some degree, in these words, in which he seems to be defending his technique and tactics, which he modified and designed for effectiveness based on his estimate of his audience's capacity to understand.[3]

> [God speaks in such terms to]...the more unthinking people, such as husbandmen and the common sort of people. ...in the more knowing and thinking men, the Holy Spirit makes use of rational deductions.[4]

This short statement is not merely defensive but also demonstrates an objective awareness that he was required to express himself differently to his parishioners than in the manner expected by his reading public. More important however is that it shows that he was objectively aware that "rational deductions" used even by "the Holy Spirit" is the means of communicating with "knowing and thinking men." Edwards was aware of when he was a religious theologian and when he was a philosopher. In the phrase above it would seem he is not only making an observation on communication technique but that he may have had in mind an observation made earlier by Lord Shaftesbury,(who is mentioned several times in Edwards' Catalogue with obvious admiration) in some of the latter's philosophical works. Shaftesbury, in this context through Philocles, said:

> Nor could God witness for himself, or assert his being any other way to men, than by revealing himself to their reason, appealing to their judgement, and submitting his ways to their censure and cool deliberation. The contemplation of the universe, its laws and government

> [is] the only means which could establish the sound belief of a Deity.
> ... As if our Religion was a kind of Magick, which depended not on the belief of a single Supreme Being. Or as if the firm and rational Belief of such a Being on Philosophical grounds, was an improper Qualification for believing anything further, Excellent presumption for those who...incline to the disbelief of Revelation...[5]

Edwards did not agree with Shaftesbury to the degree that these two quotes might suggest. To the former, Holy revelation was truth; for the latter it was not, but the issue here is not their theological difference but their unanimity that reason and rationality and philosophy were also roads to ascertaining understanding. Man is rational and is endowed with the power to reason and make judgements based on his observations of nature and his environment. Which of these two Edwards should we accept? The difference between the Edwards the religious theologian and Edwards the philosopher is apparent.:

> [People] inquire what they shall do to be saved...they are brought to see that they deserve no mercy of God, that all their Prayers & Pains are exceeding worthless and polluted & that God, notwithstanding all that they have done, or can do, may justly execute His eternal wrath upon them... .[6]

When the reasoning philosopher Edwards speaks he repeats, subjectively, the many proofs of God that his training instilled in him. The confirmation of revelation implicit in the following from Edwards' Images of Divine Things is not a substitute for faith as it may be for Shaftesbury but it is an admission by Edwards that truth can be at least implemented by reason. The senses are not the source of truth but a guide toward instruction in truth.

> If we look on these shadows of divine [types] things as the voice of God purposely...teaching us these...divine things... . Agreeably and clearly it will tend to convey instruction to our mind, by that we may...have God speaking to us. ...And it will abundantly tend to confirm the Scriptures, for there is an excellent agreement between these things and the holy Scripture.[7]

Nature can be a guide but not a teacher; God is the teacher and it is through his craftmanship and our observation of the intent behind his work that man can better understand divine purpose. This is a reasonable interpretation of the classical proofs of God. It shows Edwards' to some degree in the mode of Aquinas who found in the perfection, purposes, changes, and effects in nature pathways to what all men call God. In this work, Images of Divine Things, is the rational and Thomistic interpretation that Edwards, and many before him made of the phenomena of nature. Prof. Miller did not see it that way: Edwards had plans for a project that would discover out of nature, "evidence of the truth." From Newton, Miller says, Edwards learned that nature could be slighted "only at our own peril..." Man, stupid as he may be, enabled himself to read the three laws of motion and the ten commandments. "Spiritualizations of nature," Miller continues, "were phantasms, but the Principia were not. Edwards dreamed of making Images of Divine Things into a book "that would have been the crown of his system." These notations, the book Images of Divine Things would set forth the spiritual universe "just as Principia set forth the material." To this end Edwards bent his efforts. "The problem was not theological but scientific, and this investigation of images was a

series of experiments." [8].

It is difficult to determine how Prof. Miller came to these conclusions. It was shown in Chapter One that Newton's mathematics and physics were not taught at Yale when Edwards was there. No one was capable of teaching it, Miller said, and it has been shown that Edwards' library held only primers and elementary texts on Newton. If what Edwards proposed to do in Images of Divine Things included "a series of experiments" then Miller has re-defined the word "experiment." However, the impact and acceptance of his conclusions has been vast.

Edwards was not, in his own time, considered a "leading light" in American theology. His theology was closer to the Calvinism of earlier times than that which other local theologians preached or the populace sought.[9] Although his notions on subjects like faith, virtue, religious affections were applauded by the clergy, the clergy that applauded were of second rank in Scotland, England and America. Often, too, Edwards' theology was that of earlier vintage than the more current notions he expressed in his philosophy. At times he opposed in his philosophy what he defended in the pulpit. His A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections published in 1748, offers some hope and suggests that man has a natural love within him. It is a love that leads him to seek the good, and infers that change, even forgiveness is possible. This is a philosophical notion alien to the sterner religious theology of Calvinism. Love is an inclination, a disposition toward God and man, which in itself is affectionate love. Religion, Edwards says here, consists in great part in the affections and it is from love that we learn to oppose things that stand in our way of attaining happiness.

It is from love that we learn to hate evil and sin and from love we learn all other affections- grief, joy, gratitude. We learn from vigorous love of God all other affections- not only an "intense hatred and abhorence of sin" but also "a fear of sin." This affection of love, Edwards maintained, builds a feeling of gratitude toward God, "a joyful hope...and in like manner, from a fervent love to men, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men." 10

These are positive sentiments: love, he is maintaining here, is part of man's nature and through this part of our psychological nature we learn to seek out the good and the proper. From this loving attitude toward others we learn the other inclinations but most important we learn to abhor, hate and fear sin, and through love and its display all the virtuous affections desirable among men will develop. Edwards is telling us here what we do and feel, how we act and also how we should act to attain results- beneficial results- that do follow from such behavior. On a human side, Edwards spoke of the fulfillment of "hope" that mankind can entertain- a consideration that has no place in Doctrine of Original Sin.

The stand Edwards took in his Doctrine Of Original Sin Defended written and published in 1758, sixteen years after A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections is completely different. There is no hope, man is corrupt and filled with sin from the moment of birth to death. (It is this that gives certainty to the claim in this paper that Edwards' philosophical efforts on ethics and morals must be separated from his religious- theological work in those areas.) At the very outset of Doctrine Of Original Sin Defended he says:

> All Mankind do constancy in all Ages, without fail in any one Instance, run into that moral evil which is...their own utter and eternal perdition...in total Privation...and suffering [God's] wrath.
> It has been demonstrated,...to be in effect...that every individual of mankind comes into the world in such circumstances, as that there is no hope or possibility of any other than their violating God's holy law (if they ever live to act at all as moral agents) and being thereby justly exposed to eternal ruin.[11]

This defense of a religious- theological position was behind the times in pertinence as Prof. Johnson noted. Deism had reached a high level of acceptance and the issue was not one that concerned many people.[12] Dr.John Taylor had in 1738 published The Scripture-Doctrine of Original Sin, a copy of which Edwards acknowledged (in a letter) as having received from his friend in Scotland, John Erskine in 1748. However in that letter he said that he had "before borrowed a copy, " and that (the book) "if I should live may probably be of great use to me."[13] It evidently was of use to him, as his views in Doctrine of Original Sin Defended are in direct opposition, clearly stated at the outset, to Taylor's and Dr. George Turnbull's. Turnbull's Principles of Moral Philosophy was published in 1740 and Edwards' Catalogue of Books lists it. Edwards did not respond to the issue until- at the very least- 16 years had passed from his reading of these works. The difference between the views expressed in An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections and The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended is self-evident. The former was written (and preached in sermon form) in 1742. The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended was written and published (posthumously) in 1758- sixteen years later. Edwards' philosophy was

separate not only in content, but also in time from much of his theology. If the content of Religious Affections- much of which is a philosophical work rationally defending religious practices- is judged by views expressed in The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended (a defense of a purely theological tenet of Calvinism) a distortion of Edwards' intellectual perspective is the result. This, the present interpretation maintains has been all too often the case.

In his philosophy, on the one hand Edwards suggests that man can learn, try, through love to avoid sin, recognize what leads to sin, to hate anything sinful. In effect he speaks of man as a creature with choice and the ability to judge and act in a manner that is virtuous and leads to a virtuous community. In his Calvinist theology Edwards depicts a helpless creature doomed to a life of corruption at the moment of birth and destined- no matter what he does- to a life without hope or redemption.

There are other instances that demonstrate this separation of Edwards' intellectual pursuits- Calvinist theology and philosophy- with the former far behind the currency and comparative modernity of the latter. Edwards had his hobbies and found pleasure where he could and one of these was a concern for eschatology which he pursued for over thirty five years. Too much is made of the fact that he submitted a project "in progress", The Apocalypse- if a thirty-five year span can be called "a work in progress" - to the Trustees of New Jersey College as a major reason he was reluctant to accept the presidency of that institution. Considering the comparative speed with which other of his works were written and published, reservations must be made if this

work was intended to be published- ever- by Edwards. Another of his works, Freedom of the Will was written and published while he was at the mission at Stockbridge, after dismissal from Northampton within three years, 1751-1754. The work is considered by some as the finest piece of philosophy Edwards ever wrote. (Discussed in Chapter Five.) The contents of Apocalypse, however, and the technique, the conclusions, were far from the substance of the documented histories, reports and treatises on civilization coming off the presses at the time. Hume's histories, Gibbon's works on Rome, archeological papers and finds in lands of Biblical antiquity, written and researched within historiographical techniques based on epochs, nations in ascendancy and detailed accounts of conquering kings, economic and military disasters and successes were published and presented before learned societies. These made anachronisms of Edwards' efforts at a "new historical" approach as he termed it.[14] Filled as it was with prophecy, and heavily dependent on an almost verbatim interpretation of The Book of Revelation, it is doubtful that Edwards did not know that such a work as The Apocalypse was intended to be, would not withstand critical appraisal. It has no historiographic technique recognizable as an intellectually certifiable approach or theme, except that there is a design to all history, that the world was created with several epochal periods designed by God toward the millenium. That it was never finished is not surprising, for it probably was never intended to be finished but intended for his private edification and personal pleasure. It was an expression of theology based on a religious theme almost 1700 years old, the Book of Revelation, as a point of departure.

Edwards' ethical and moral philosophy was more current and reflected the concern that was demonstrated by secular philosophers of the times for those problems that formerly were the almost exclusive province of religious theologians. In this effort he displayed an intellectual modernity in his moral-ethical philosophy, and although he moderated his theology in response to the inroads of deism he often expressed himself in terms that seem designed to indicate separate epistemological theories. The examples that can be presented to document this claim are abundant but few as clear, or more important to this issue than Edwards' interest in the phenomenon of the rainbow. In his youth and as a student at Yale Edwards displayed some interest in natural philosophy and wrote several small essays, some merely in note form and never finished. (Listed in Preface.) One of these is On The Rainbow. In that work, written when he was between 13- 17 years old he says:

> We shall give a full account of the rainbow...such...as will be satisfactory to any body if they are...satisfied [with] Newton's. ...Reflexability and Refrangibility of light...and if not we refer him to [what] he said about it. ...what we call rainbow is... reflection from...drops of rain [indicating types of weather conditions] not on clouds...(this can be proved by) spirting water from the mouth (against the sun's rays) there will appear a compleat rainbow [or in] sawmills ...upon the the drops of water dispersed...by the violent concussion of the waters of the mill...next what should cause the reflection to be circular...or cause the reflection to be Just at such a distance everywhere from the Point that is opposite the sun, and no reflection at all from the Drops that are within or without that Circle... . The next Grand Question is what...Causes the Colours of the Rainbow...[14]

Approximately 18 to 20 years later, instead of a continuation of this precise reasoning, based on empirical observation, Edwards weaves a phantasy of his observations in the physical realm to his religious beliefs and adds interpretations that only a man with his faith in God could fully appreciate, let alone accept. In Images of Divine Things he says:

> 'Tis a pleasant sweet light [the Rainbow] in a cloud which is the Symbol of the Divine Presence & Especially of God manifest in the flesh or the Human nature of X. (Edwards' shorthand symbol for Christ.) & therefore fitly Represents the pleasant Grace & Sweet Love of God as appearing in X God man the Light of the Sun is more beautiful & pleasant to our weak Eyes appearing thus in a cloud where the Dazzling brightness of it is Removed. ...
> 'Tis a pleasant sweet Light in the Bosom of a dissolving Cloud that is wearied with watering and is Spending itself from the Sake of men & in order to Shed down its fatness, its Nourishing, benign Refreshing influences on the Earth and so fitly represents the beauty nd Love & Excellent fullness of Christ as it is manifested in his Dying for men. ...
> ...in the Rainbow the Light of the Sun is Imparted to and Sweetly Reflected from a cloud that is but a vapour...and then vanishes away...an empty unsubstantial thing...with the wind that is far from having any Light...of its own...being in its own nature dark... .15

The product of Edwards' mature efforts proves Prof. Stein's statement that, "Edwards ceased to write observations of a purely scientific nature after [an] early period, but he did not abandon an interest in such 'philosophical inquiries'." Stein looks upon this effort as a "combination of science and theology" but adds that it was a "private" investigation. Stein does not note that if this privacy is intelligible only to the author it is esoteric and of no worth toward

understanding of the physical world, and scientifically meaningless. It is an excursion into theology by allegory, exceeding the naive extremes of Philo Judaeus. Nowhere does Edwards allege that these are allegorical readings but on the contrary that they are typological signs, physical indications of God's direct plan of creation. "He felt the world had been created for such interpretation," Stein adds, "he did not regard a union (of physics and theology) as illicit." [16] This is clearly stated by Edwards, "That the works of nature are intended and contrived of God to signify and indigitate spiritual things is particularly evident concerning the rainbow by God's express revelation." [17]

"Edward's interpretation of the rainbow is not typical of biblical exegesis in his day. ...Protestant exegetes tended to focus upon the literal sense of the text...Sensus litteralis became the watchword. [Other approaches] had contributed to the perversion of...theology and had fostered error by fanciful, imaginative interpretations of Scripture. Allegory was a special object of attack."[18] Edwards was aware of the controversies over Biblical exegesis, his work and his Catalogue of Books indicate an awareness of them. He could not have been umaware of the contents of Toland's Christianity Not Mysterious.... or Tindal's Christianity as Old as the Creation... both of which completely denied the allegorical excesses of other theologians and decried attempts to link Testament prophecy to historical or current events. Anthony Collins, and William Wollaston after him, strongly criticized prophecy and biblical translations, fulfillment of prophetic and miraculous events in the New Testament,

and attempted to make of the Bible a rational account of events and people. Edwards was aware of this, his polemics against the Deists indicate it. The fact that his Apocalypse or History of Redemption were not published in his lifetime, or completed as treatises is significant- it indicates temerity to publish, that this was not the public and intellectual Edwards, but the private theological Edwards. This is not the philosopher Edwards, but the theologically energized Edwards.

Stein says, "Biblical studies functioned as an essential supportative mechanism for his work. Edwards spent an immense amount of time...writing private (my emphasis) commentary on the texts of Scripture but this feature of his work has not emerged from the shadow of more prominent public accomplishments." This is evident as it is in the essay Of the Rainbow, and others to follow as he matured, the results- not controlled by religious theology are philosophically erudite, intellectually direct and clear, and an Edwards emerges that is unrecognizable as the theological Edwards.

Stein says that, "All of the major treatises published...contain extended exegetical discussions [which] frequently appear...as salt sprinkled on meat...seasoning unrelated to the substance of his concerns. That view...distorts Edwards' intentions [and] his own perspective as a theologian... ." This may have merit when Edwards wrote and spoke in support of or application of a theological position, but it has been shown above that he made a clear distinction in the usage of language when he was a philosopher examining issues of current concern and when he was "frighting husbandmen." Continuing Stein's

metaphor- what makes the sandwich- the meat or the bread? True, all of his treatises are sprinkled with Biblical exegesis. As pointed out above, Freedom of the Will has hundreds of Biblical references within fewer pages. That is why so much difference rages concerning Edwards. He was not theologizing so much as using his epistemology- Scriptures- which he held as fact and truth as premises in his philosophical expositions.

The similarity of Edwards' philosophy to Shaftesbury's, Hutcheson's and other philosophers of the early decades of the 18th century is made more convincing by considering what Edwards considered "religious affections"- the inclination toward religion. Apart from what he so thoroughly explicated in his treatise on that subject, or in his sermons was he the stern and forbidding theologian that by tradition we picture him, or was he in his application of that theology somewhat more bending and gentle? There is evidence that strongly suggests the latter. He encouraged "prayer bids "- slips of paper on which the parishioners wrote in their limited command of language requests for special prayers by the congregation. These prayers were personal requests for health, prosperity, safety in travel, childbirth, fertility of wives, supplications for help and guidance. Edwards collected these prayer bids and included them into the services of the congregation, and in his sermons. These prayer bids requested divine intercession and "were consistent with recommendations made repeatedly in his (Edwards') sermons and treatises." [20] A sampling of a few of these bids shows the intensity of Edwards' conviction, and the success

he attained in the implanting of that conviction in his parishioners, that God can be considered more gentle than that generally awesome Deity that traditional Calvinism suggests. More importantly these "bids" which he encouraged indicate that Edwards' subjective, day-to-day view of God was closer to the reasonableness that the deists claimed than the stern arbitrariness Edwards preached in his theology.:

> ...mose parsons togather with his parents desier the prayers of the congregation that Gd wd sanctify his holy hand unto them in taking away his wife and datter in deth...thay also desayer for the child that is sick...Lyman and his wife [seek prayers] for their Negro tht is dangriusly sick...Widow Southwell Being Sik of a Feavour desires the prayers of the Congregation. ...[21]

It indicates Edwards' personal belief and the hope nurtured by his parishioners that God is a merciful God, patient, and a deliverer of deserving treatment to some through entreaty. This is not consonant with Calvinist theology of predeterminism and closer to the deistic concepts held by so many of his contemporary philosophers. It reflects a reasonableness of attitude toward God that is not apparent when Edwards preached. This concept of a more approachable God that can help the deserving entreater is an appropriate "affection" as we will see in the examination of his Treatise Concerning Religious Affections." This "belief" was not in evidence, as his theology in A Warning to Professing Christians makes plain.:

> "... public prayer...preaching are divine ordinances [there] we are in the special presence of God...instituted to direct us in faith...God...ordained them. When the Word is preached by authorized ministers they speak in God's name.

> God's ordinances are profaned by living in wickedness which shows contempt for God. .. There are no sinners with whom God is so provoked and are so guilty as the profaners of his ordinances. [22]

Another of these energized sermons tries to introduce some interpretive definitions and accommodations to new science and adjustments to the constant criticisms of Biblical translations. His effort to explain and rationalize Divine justice within traditional interpretation is modified to, "punishment is intended to be such that the punished are aware of the meted torments according to their guilt" and "this is true because it was promised by God, and would not have been promised unless it will be fulfilled." These are not overwhelming expressions of flexibility in religious stance, but they are less rigid and are to some degree accommodating to a more current world view: promises to the governed must be kept and justice must be consonant with the crime.

> Eternal punishment is not contrary to Divine justice...or his mercy. Sin is infinitely evil and...God punishes it with infinite eternal hate. Eternal death is extreme suffering and pain--not annihilation--which is reasonable to understand as punishment is intended...that the punished are aware of the meted torments according to their guilt. This will be their future without end not merely of long duration. The end not only of temporal things, but beyond and opposite that of those who will be eternally happy after...the present earthly existence. This is true because it was promised by God, and would not have been promised unless it will be fulfilled.[23]

When Edwards addressed the learned and the literate he expected to reach in his A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections (published in 1746) the philosopher Edwards emerges, and the resemblance to his peers

is evident. A great difference in style and language is apparent, Faust says, "when Edwards was not intending a sermon for publication."[24] The rising threat of Deism, the attraction of reason and the materialism of science made the emotional religion, "the rhetoric of sensation" (Miller's description of Edwards' theological style) a major bulwark, with Edwards a principal strategist in the battle against proponents of religion within the bounds of reason, or experimental religion as it was also called.[25] The technique of literal translations and fanciful embellishments depicting exquisite torments for sinners and delights for regenerate saints was common among clergy in small towns in New England, away from the more sophisticated, generally better educated congregants of Boston churches. This was a major difference between the supporters of Edwards' position and that of deists in opposition, led by the minister of the First Church in Boston, Charles Chauncy. Time and intervening evidence have shown a measure of truth in Prof. Johnson's view that "the core of their differences (was) the question of the place of emotion, of the passions or affections in religion which "caused Edwards to write his Treatise Concerning Religious Affections." The Rev. Chauncy, Johnson says, emphasized that "religion ought to be primarily a matter of reason, that 'an enlightened mind, and not raised affections' ought to be the guide in religion as in all other things." [26]

Interesting as was this personal controversy that raged between them- Chauncy had inferred that Edwards was out of his mind- other factors were more effective in leading Edwards to write this philosophical analysis of the psychological elements in religious

tendencies.[27] Moses Mather, a member of one of New England's most venerated families, and minister of the Middlesex Church was one of Edwards' most voluble opponents, a severe critic and opponent of Edwards' revivalist techniques.[28] This was a man who preached, instead of Edwards' strict Calvinist doctrine of predestination, a reinterpretation "in terms of God's passive permission instead of his active choice."[29] This, Mather defended against Jonathan Edwards' Calvinism as an "eye of reason" and "perfectly rational, perfectly consistent with the perfections of God, and the nature of man, considered as a moral agent." This stroke of near genius on Mather's part made reasonable one of the most difficult problems confronting Calvinism- if all is predestined man is not a responsible moral agent but a mere puppet who acts as a higher power ordained. But if God passively permits, then God is aware of every act of man and the choice is man's. Edwards was becoming isolated in his attempts to uphold the older absolutism, and it was in response to such liberalized interpretations that he was moved to write on the general topic, An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections.

What Prof. Weber refers to as "the ascendant moral philosophy-Harvard's entrance into modernity"- compelled Edwards to modify his style of expression to the modes of the day. It was not a gradual change, particularly as it affected Edwards, Prof. Weber says, but an "intellectual maelstrom." Edwards vigorously tried to maintain the Christianity of his theological tradition but his exposure to English and Continental thought was extremely intense. In addition to this confrontation with modern thought Edwards struggled with "an almost

unbelievable child-like simplicity and even naivete in his attitude towards the Bible," which was part of his intellectual nature along with...knowledge of philosophy..." Weber adds:

> He never rested his case on biblical considerations alone, but repeatedly entered the philosophical arena where he sought to clinch his case by showing that reason and experience support his view against rival alternatives. At times, one has the impression that Edwards was well aware that views other than his own could be given scriptural support and therefore, that the appeal to reason was meant to do more than make a biblical position intelligible; it was required to supplement and to clinch an otherwise incomplete argument.[30]

This two sided intellectual personality of Edwards,- the pastor theologian Edwards and the reasoning philosopher Edwards, is also noted by Prof.Smith, who at times had the impression that Edwards sealed off part of his mind, separated all material knowledge from theological. Even so, Smith adds, although Edwards held an almost absolute trust that the Scripture had passages applicable to every worldy event, Edwards did not believe that anyone can justifiably believe themselves to be the "recipient of a special divine communication."[31]

Despite claims to the contrary, the Revival in New England had peaked by 1746, excesses were easily described and many saints had fallen into disgrace from high places. This treatise was as much a definition of religious inclinations, a research into the religiosity of the masses as it was an apologetic and psychological catharsis for Edwards himself. He had to defend his support of revivalism but he knew he could not do it using Biblical injunction only. As Smith said above, Edwards maintained that no one is a recipient of a private Divine

communication, how then could the latter claim that his word was that of a special gift? Reason, the new by-word, and sense experience the new source of "revelation", was not an obstacle to Edwards; he was versed in both theology and philosophy and he would use one to support the other.

However, that An Inquiry concerning Religious Affections was a response to Chauncy, as Miller alleges, makes of an outstanding piece of philosophy and psychology a niggling argument between local squabbling ministers. This in itself should be corrected. There are several important reasons why this cannot be considered merely an argument between Edwards and Chauncy as so many interpreters suggest.[32] It is true that Chauncy's views were examined and argued against, but those views of Chauncy's were the views of the "in" group of Bostonians, those of the Harvard stripe. Edwards knew he could not attack these Bostonian intellectuals directly without jeopardy to his own future. The loudest duck is not always the leader, and men like Benjamin Colman, and the Mathers, were higher in Edwards' concern than the named Chauncy. The opinion of Dr.Erskine in England, of friends in New York in Scotland, and other countries was at stake too. Edwards had to find a structured argument within the realm of reason and expressed in the current language of philosophy as it concerned religion -psychology. Diligently it must be done too, because that was the paradigm at the time of composition. The major reason was that Locke's psychology was the psychology of Harvard and of the intelligentsia in Boston to whom Edwards was addressing this work.

However, he could not abandon the orthodoxy of his Calvinist

position. Although tempered and liberalized by the pressure of the new science, the Deists, the effect of the presence of ordained ministers with direct connections through teachers, fathers and family to Cambridge Platonists, the clergy still looked upon itself as heirs to the orthodoxy of Puritanism, albeit a modified Calvinism. He could not embrace the outright empiricism and theism of Locke or the deist and moral position of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson in toto but what he did do was a restatement of those positions. He used the basics of his first published work, A Supernatural Light, first alluded to in a sermon while pastor in New York, then reaffirmed, and clarified in that famous guest lecture at Enfield, God Glorified In Man's Dependence.

Edwards' publishing reputation and following in Scotland, England, Boston and New York was also at stake. He could not commit himself in a treatise that would be published and read, in its early days, in much of the English speaking world to an argument with a clergyman whose opinions were hardly known beyond the precincts of New England.

Edwards' vast reading enabled him to embrace notions, ideas and views of thinkers in many schools of thought. It was noted in the previous chapter that he drew ideas from many schools and periods, but was a member of none of them. He was as comfortably at home, intellectually, in the empiricism of Locke as he was in the idealism of Plato that considered sense experience second to ultimate absolute truths. He believed in God, but could scoff at those who rationally proved God; he believed everything material was created by a divine craftsman for two particular purposes: to teach us and for our use. Nevertheless he could rail at those deists who could find moral purpose

in their "natural philosophy."

Prof.Smith observed that there are at least two factors that must be considered in an interpretive study of Edwards. The most obvious of course is the theological background which being so extensive includes Tertullian, Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin. The philosophical influences, Smith adds flow from Plato and Aristotle to Locke and Hume."[33] It is not possible to disagree with this observation but one would wish that Prof. Smith had observed his own guidelines. Prof.Smith as editor of the Yale University edition of An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections should have treated the work as one concerned with philosophical issues as well as those of religion. Chapter Four of this paper will show and substantiate this. One wishes that a professor of philosophy would have let the consideration of religion to the theologians and concerned himself more with the secular implications of the philosophical and psychological observations that are within this work. He submits a biographical digest of 16 Puritan divines which he abstracted from the Dictionary of Biography, but there are few references or discussions of contemporary philosophical issues or to that emerging discipline- psychology. There is an analysis by Smith of twelve theological problems but no observations on the mother-lode of early American philosophy and applied psychology that is within this Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections.

The argument of Religious Affections meets these problems and omissions; the result is a display of Edwards' skill, his reliance on ideas he synthesized from others but made his own by stamping them with his individualized application. The argument is addressed to those who

believe in God- Arminians, deists, but are advocates of "experimental religion"- religion based on reason; this is not an exhortation to the godless or the lax. It is an argument in defense of active participation in religion and a vigorous expression of it. The ideas in our understanding are our own, Edwards says, formed from those impressions received from the material world through our senses. Whether or not those ideas correspond in any manner with the object perceived cannot be determined. Conforming, in some measure to the psychology of Locke, Edwards anticipated Hume and Kant and expresses in passing the notion that the human will is not indifferent and passive but an actively involved faculty. He will pursue this in his Freedom of the Will which will be examined in Chapter Five. Here he says:

> ...the soul [has] two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns and views things which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul...is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers...to them, or ...averse from them: or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent (my italics) unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names...sometimes the inclination and as it has respect to the actions that are...governed by it, is called the will: and the mind, with regard to the exercise of this faculty, is often called the heart."[34]

The use to which Edwards puts these inclinations, affections or "springs of action" as he sometimes called them is an instance in which Edwards moved away from Lockean psychology. Edwards described the human

mind not as an automatic recorder of external events but as a probing instrument that seeks out what it approves and rejects what displeases it. It is not "an indifferent unaffected spectator" but an active faculty which he identifies as the will.

What the source of mental experience is, cannot be known. We do not know what causes our minds to entertain the ideas that enter it through our senses' perceptions of what we call "vulgarly" substance or the material world. How then can claims of knowledge of the nature of divine things which is all spirit be known through natural religion, or sense experience? Sense experience is not even an exact representation of reality of material things. Something else is necessary to bring the human understanding and notions of divine things into harmony. This follows through the affections, the inclinations which are determined by the will and the mind, when involved with this faculty is called the heart.[34] It is called "the heart" he adds, because when man becomes excited or depressed the heart's activity is always increased. "True religion consists (therefore)...in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart."[35]

The limitations of the degree to which Edwards followed Locke's psychology is underscored when he uses Locke but only to go beyond him. Locke says:

> To discover the nature of our ideas...it will be convenient to distinguish them, as they are ideas or perceptions in our minds, and as they are modifications in the bodies that cause such perceptions in us; that so we may not think (as perhaps usually is done) that they are exactly the

> images and resemblances of something inherent in the subject; most of those of sensation being in the mind no more the likeness of something existing without us than the names that stand for them are the likeness of our ideas..." [36]

Edwards went beyond Locke by denying substance; Locke had implied acceptance of the limitations of sense perception in the process of attaining knowledge of the physical world. Edwards, however, observed that if empirical observation is inadequate relative to material questions then it is even less so in matters spiritual. In doing so he extends man's capacity to know by linking and unifying knowledge of the material to the same source as the spiritual. Therefore, knowledge of the world- spiritual or material- all coming through Idea "is constant and regular." He might have added "true"- believing as he did that all idea coming from God cannot be other than true.

> If colour exists not out of the mind, then nothing belonging to Body, exists out of the mind but Resistance, which is Solidity, and the termination of this...is Figure...and...the communication of this Resistance from space to space which is Motion. Therefore there is nothing outside the mind but Resistance...and not that neither, when nothing is actually resisted. Then there is nothing but the power of Resistance [which] is nothing but...the actual exertion of God's power... . The world is therefore an ideal one: and the Law of creating and the succession of these ideas is constant and regular.[37]

The above quote was written early in Edwards' career but the consistency of his thought is demonstrated in the following from An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections. In this observation Edwards maintains that it is not the material world (which he termed merely a series of ideas) but the mind with its sensations and affections that

incline man toward religion. Ordinary, plain men or as he termed those without inclinations, "natural men" are "blind" to this experience, just as are men who being born blind cannot sense the color of a rose, or not having never tasted honey claim experience of its sweetness.

> ... spiritual and gracious affections are attended with and do arise from some apprehension, idea or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different from all that can be in the mind of a natural man and which the natural man discerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of...and conceives of no more than a man without the sense of tasting can conceive of the sweet sense of honey...or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.[38]

The mind cannot ascertain any more than impressions that the physical world presents to the understanding, and the external world is not reflected in the mind as a mirror correspondence of those impressions. The external world exists as far as our minds can perceive as Idea from an all seeing, knowing Mind. This does not limit us in physically examining that world within these limitations and making do with whatever we ascertain in that direction but that route is not a pathway to understanding spiritual or divine things. To understand spiritual things or Ideas one must be inclined toward such ideas-willfuly move and seek them for spiritual Idea is not apprehended or impressed on the mind by the senses but by the "heart."

Edwards does express what has been viewed as idealism, but his purpose was not to demonstrate the insufficiency of empiricism but the insufficiency of natural philosophy as a route to true knowledge and practice of religion. It makes no difference how the material world is

examined, God made the world and maintains its constancy and stability. The physical sciences, natural philosophy only confirm God's precision in creation. Edwards took Locke's empiricism, Locke's admonition against assuming an exact correspondence of sense perception with reality and declared them to be but mental and useful ideas that aid us in measuring the material world but only as ideas and not actual ultimate truth:

> ... the principles we lay down do not infer...[nor] will it be found, that [this]...make[s] void Natural Philosophy, or the science of the Causes or Reasons of corporeal changes;...to find out the reasons of things, in Natural Philosophy, is only to find out the proportion of God's acting. [It]...is the same...whether we suppose the World only mental, in our sense or no. Though we suppose, that...the whole material Universe is absolutely dependent on Idea, yet we may speak in the old way, and as properly as ever. God...created such a certain number of Atoms...which maintain and always will...such a motion...direction...velocity...from which arise all the Natural changes in the Universe, in a continued series. ...what advantage is there in observing such a series. ...it is just all one, as to any benefit or advantage any end we can suppose...as if the material Universe were existent in the manner as is vulgarly thought. ...the corporeal world is to no advantage but to the spiritual; and it is exactly the same advantage this way as the other...it is all one, as to anything...in the mind.[39]

"Natural Philosophy" the "science of Causes or Reasons of corporeal changes" (the study of physics) the reasons of things only leads back to God. They lead back to God because all our impressions which arise from sense experience "is only to find out the proportion" of God's actions. If we believe our senses report to us the actual picture correspondence of the world it still brings us back to the

spiritual world for the "corporeal world" serves only for the "advantage" of the spiritual.[40]

Edwards makes some reservations; our senses may report to us ideas from which we may rationalize- correctly- that there is a God, but "he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion." One is pleased and happy when we hear of positive news in science, but when we get Ideas from the creator of all the Universe how overjoyed and enraptured should we be, he exclaims. This display of joy is true religion, but proving God exists- "doctrinal knowledge and speculation"- is not. In a subtle attack on the classical, rational proofs of God so favored by the advocates of religion through reason,- arguments of design, purpose, perfection, cause and effect, omnipotence, he said, "There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of those things that are infinitely great and important...and all that is heard is wholly ineffectual upon them." Others hear of "the glorious perfections of God...his power...boundless wisdom...infinite majesty [averse to] evil...iniquity..." others "hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power...the admirable manifestations of these perfections...yet they remain as they were without no sensible alteration in them...either in heart or practice...because they are not affected with what they hear." "Never," Edwards asserts, "had any person been affected in mind or conversation of things of a religious nature by anything he read, saw or heard...unless first his heart was moved by the affections." Doctrine, proofs, sciences are but "fire without heat." True understanding does not derive from physical or

intellectual inquiry alone but also from the willing for knowledge of things spiritual through the religious affections. Scientific, materialistic observations of the heavens and earth can but give credence to some kind of proof.[41]

Instances of omniscience through reason and rationalism can be submitted as proof, other proofs can be based on cause and effect, but knowing why things occur is not the same as believing why they occur, or engaging in the beauty of its existence and its perfection in occurring. Understanding is different from knowing Edwards says. There is a "twofold understanding or knowledge of good...that man is capable of." Returning to his argument in Divine Light Edwards presents again a purely psychological analysis of how "good" is determined, expressing with consistency his own early theory of moral evaluation and knowledge in contrast to that of the "moral sense" philosophers.

> The first [understanding], that which is only speculative and notional; as when a person speculatively judges...which by the agreement of mankind is called good or excellent...to advantage...suitable. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of beauty...amiableness, or sweetness of a thing; so that the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight...in idea of it. In the former is expressed the speculative...the understanding...in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will or inclination, or heart, is mainly concerned.[42]

The basis of all mankind's action is the will or inclination; his is not a life of indifference, but a creature that is moved to action by love, hate, desire,and the like, which engage them in their pursuits...,"their worldly business...it is affection that engages the

covetous...the ambitious...the greedy...the voluptuous...but take away all affection, and the spring of all this motion is gone...and as in worldly things...so in religious matters...the spring of their actions is very much religious affection." Edwards agrees that we cannot learn anything at all unless we have some experience about what we are trying to understand: prior sense experience is necessary for we cannot think of, or from, nothing. This, however, is not the passive mind that receives messages from the outside, sorts and stores information, but a mind that takes what it chooses and separates it from other sense experiences and actively deciphers it and converts it into information that God wishes us to have.

This may not be the sequence that Edwards follows in his delineation of Religious Affections but it covers the thrust of his argument. Orthodoxy is saved, God is aware of all things, Locke and the empiricists are acknowledged but exceeded, sense experience is utilized, and a future path for subsequent inquiry is charted, the challenge assumed by Kant.

Edwards succeeded philosophically perhaps, but not practically in his argument against the liberal wing of the clergy. We read and debate Edwards but Chauncy, ostensibly the object of this treatise is mentioned but not read. Edwards' argument was that religion dependent on revelation is the necessary means for ascertaining truth. Natural Philosophy is hardly adequate for the empirical world, and thus reason is no substitute for the Testaments. The platitude suggesting that Edwards was engaged in a debate with Chauncy, who as spokesman for the

"new lights"--the Bostonian, Harvard trained liberals is not complete or accurate and does not show Edwards within the larger dimensions his activities encompassed. The facts are more compelling than the parochial position some historians like Prof. Miller have placed him. It must be remembered, as previously stated, that Edwards had a following in America, Great Britain and the Continent,- Chauncy was hardly known beyond New England. Edwards had a reputation to uphold, Chauncy was seeking to establish one. Historians may narrow the question to a dispute between two men, but philosophers must see it as a contest of ideas, that questioned the very foundations of empirical thought. Edwards dared ask, If all our ideas are sense impressions, and all knowledge is first in the senses, from whence comes that Idea and what is the source and means of obtaining that knowledge that is contained in that statement ?

It is not that Edwards did not submit an all encompassing answer, but that he did enter the dispute and did submit able answers to the same issues that Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Locke, Hobbes and others had raised. Among these questions, so important to philosophers in those decades was the meaning of the term "nature" and "natural." The opinions of Hobbes, Locke, Shaftesbury can be examined directly in works on the subject but Edwards' views must be determined through analysis of his use of the terms. Chapter Four will be concerned with Edwards' efforts in that direction.

Chapter Three: Notes

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11 Works, II. pp. 311-489. Johnson, op cit The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards.

12 Faust and Johnson, op. cit p. 426.

13 Stephen J. Stein, " 'For Their Spiritual Good' : The Northampton, Massachusetts Prayer Bids of the 1730s and 1740s" William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, (Jan. 1980), pp. 261-285. "Jonathan Edwards and the Rainbow: Biblical Exegesis and Poetic Imagination," New England Quarterly, XLVII. No.3 (September 1974), pp. 450-458. Works, Dwight, Life, pp. 29, 30. Daniel B. Shea, "Jonathan Edwards : The First Two Hundred Years": Journal of American Studies, Vol. 14, No. 2, (August, 1980) pp. 181-197.

14 Works, Dwight, Appendix.

15 Miller, Jonathan Edwards' Images of Divine Things Image No. 348.

16 Stein, op cit, "Jonathan Edwards and the Rainbow."

17 Edwards, Images.

18 Stein, op.cit. Schieck, op cit.

19 Stein, op.cit, "For Their Spiritual Good."

20 Ibid, p. 261

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid, p. 280-84.

23 Sheldon B. Quincer, Edwards' Sermon Outlines, (Grand Rapids,: W. B. Erdmans, 1974) pp. 80-84.

24 Faust and Johnson, p. xxiii.

25 Shea, op.cit. p. 182

26 Johnson, Printed Works, op.cit.

27 Edwards, Works, Dwight, III p. 336. IV pp. 492-496.

28 Noll, op cit. Gura, op cit. Rabbi Hillel, challenged to tell the contents of the Bible while standing on one foot, answered, "Love mercy, do justice and walk humbly with thy Lord. All the rest is commentary." Gura has tried to outdo Hillel for it seems he wrote this article without any of his feet on the ground, at least he doesn't seem to have a leg to stand on for some of his views in this "review" of the Yale University edition of the works of Edwards, which to date is comprised of six volumes, separately edited by Paul Ramsey, John E. Smith, Clyde A. Holbrook, G.C. Goen, Stephen J. Stein and Walter E. Anderson, under general editorship of Smith. To dispose of 2907 pages of introductory comment and Edwards' text within less than six pages reflects the superficiality of his observations which is typical of current appraisals of Edwards. His view is speculative, not factual, completely devoid of analysis and with a perspective rooted in Perry Miller's gospel on Edwards. Playing it safe he writes "... in the next decade...Edwards will not so much be harnessed to drive our own philosophical engines, as used to lead us more accurately to the intellectual center of eighteenth century American mind." Equally less profound is Gura's observation that it is not the controversialist who "answered Taylor...on sin...sparred with Chubb...and Whitby over freedom of the will, nor the objective psychologist who in Religious

Affections...so accurately described...religious experience...rather Edwards emerges as a man who devoted countless hours...to bring ...the kingdom of God to earth...it was [Edwards'] faith in America's redemptive role that Edwards bequeathed to...disciples...Bellamy, Hopkins, Austin and Stiles." America did not exist until 21 years after Edwards died, and Edwards said that it made little difference to him if he lived in America or Scotland, where he was offered a post, except that the cost of moving there and the disruption to his own and family's life was too great. Further, it was documented in this chapter how far Edwards and his disciples after him left the camp of strict Calvinism and modified their preaching closer to that of Moses Mather's comparatively liberal stand.

29 Noll, op. cit. p. 275.

30 Donald Weber, "The Question of the New England Mind", New England Quarterly LV. No. 2 (June 1982) 285-292. Despite some muted one-handclapping for excavation into uncharted caverns of Edwardsian thought, Weber still exudes the Miller thesis, suggesting that little can be done to diminish the paradigm that has been erected by Miller on Edwards. He says that Edwards' place in 18th century thought "loses the dimension of Perry Miller's best intellectual history: the dynamic interaction of mind and culture, the exciting interplay between history and ideas." It is true that Edwards' life reads like fiction and it most certainly would make an excellent plot for a play, but history is not supposed to be fiction and philosophy attempts to replace myth with reason. Weber like so many other scholars, bred and nurtured on Miller's intellectual history of Edwards is offended by Fiering's criticism of Miller's portrait of Edwards. Fiering levied severe criticism of Miller's over-dramatic effort to make of Edwards a Lockean--Newtonian physicist empiricist.
Weber's blind spot and deference toward Miller can be understood: "his Perry Miller and the Recovery of Jonathan Edwards serves as the introduction to a recent reprint of Miller's Jonathan Edwards." (p.292 of review article)

31John E. Smith, The Spirit of American Philosophy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963) pp. 18-19; 186-195. Works of Jonathan Edwards, (New Haven,: Yale University Press, 1959) pp. 306-07.

32 Weber, op. cit.

33 Edwards, Religious Affections, ed. John E. Smith, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) p. 96.

34 Ibid, p. 99.

35 Ibid, p. 101.

36 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, in two volumes, 1690. ed. John W. Yolton, (London, England; Everyman's Library,

1967.) Vol. II, p. 103-104 Ch. III. Sec. 7.

37 Edwards, Works, Dwight, Vol.I pp. 668-700.

38 Edwards, Religious Affections p. 215

39 Faust and Johnson. n. p. XXVII. Fiering, op. cit. p. 39. Elwood, op. cit. p.169, n. 51. Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, (Claremont, CA.: Columbia University Press, 1963) pp. 1-36.

40 Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart." Harvard Theological Review, XLI (April 1948), pp. 123-145. Terrence Erdt, Jonathan Edwards: Art and the Sense of the Heart, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980) pp. 3-42.

41 Smith, "Jonathan Edwards as Philosophical Theologian", op. cit. p. 310. Edwards, Religious Affections op cit, p.215.

42 Ibid.

Chapter Four: Definitions and Differences. Edwards and Shaftesbury

As Edwards' concern for political affairs was negligible he produced very little substantial or explicit work on civil and political problems.[1] Considering the wars with France to the North, difficulties with the Spanish to the West and South, the political turbulence that raged about him and exploded a mere 18 years after he died, there is cause for wonderment. Much has been made of the influence of Locke on Edwards' thought, but scholars found very little in his published works or residual mass of manuscripts on definitive, objective considerations of society or political structure.

Definitive expository delineations of "social contracts" have not yet been revealed in the philosophy of Jonathan Edwards. But these topics and problems were unquestionably a major concern of philosophers that impacted upon the thought of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, including Jonathan Edwards. The factors that made an immanence of the American and subsequent French revolutions could not have been insufficient to pass un-noticed by Edwards. How could Edwards consider himself a "philosopher", particularly one of the Lockean stripe, so admired by the "new lights" in Boston without a fine, and exact delineation of some sort of "social contract" or a definition of "self?" Hobbes had indicted man's nature and Locke had defended it. Generally it is agreed that Edwards never wrote on political or social matters but the last sections of his Religious Affections has been looked upon as a guide for determination of true religion. A careful examination will show that it was written for the determination of

"true religion" but it also carefully traced the psychological origins of religious inclinations and the authenticity of the rights to participate in the privileges of membership. It also was consistent with the thrust of his philosophy that asked what is an authentic member- are attestations of allegiance indications of true religiosity? Edwards was aware at this time of the many deceptions employed by otherwise honorable parishioners to secure a position of respect in the church.[2] It was not lost on Edwards that scoundrels also lurked in the pews of his church, as did so many in high places in his community and hierarchy of the ministry.[3]

Edwards was familiar with Shaftesbury's work: a note he wrote as a young man reads, "Often times it suits the subject and reasoning best to Explain by way of objection and answer after the manner of Dialogue like the Earl of Shaftesbury." Edwards'' knowledge of Locke is confirmed by Edwards himself. Edwards' awareness of Hobbes' is evident from his Catalogue and references in his work. The many pamphlets that passed through his hands and library must have had adequate references in them for Edwards to know the political temper of the times.[4] However, any works of Edwards that can reasonably be called political, react more to the views of Anthony Collins, Earl Shaftesbury and that of Francis Hutcheson and reflect, to a degree, that of Thomas Hobbes.[5] It is with this reservation -"reasonably be called"- without putting philosophy "on its head" that a consideration of Edwards' "political science" implied or actual be considered.

The terms "nature" "state of nature" "natural state" "natural law" and compound derivatives abounded in 17th and 18th century

philosophy. A list of the philosophers- moral, social- or otherwise- that analyzed these terms and used them as a fulcrum for founding social theory is extensive. Many philosophers that we know beyond reasonable doubt that influenced Edwards on other subjects also submitted in passing and within the contents of other works, definite social and political statements. Hobbes and Locke, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson are echoed in Edwards' work. The latter two never wrote definitive treatises on the subjects, but included observations in their philosophy. Hobbes and Locke wrote unmistakably definitive views on political structure and social establishment. Edwards, as did Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, expressed his views within the structure of other major ideas, but unlike Shaftesbury or Hutcheson it cannot be stated that he objectively determined to do so. In Edwards' case it was Divine Light as the basic element and Religious Affections as supplementary documentation.[6]

Shaftesbury used the term "natural" in at least five different ways.

(1) The "underlying structure...distinguished from changing...as born with, as instincts: this includes "characteristics...normal for a member of the species...as in man...the need for fellowship...universal to...members of a species..."

(2) "...a habit or trait which becomes habitual...ingrained by habit...[from] environmental factors [affecting] personality.

(3) "...'natural' may be opposed to 'artificial'...meaning what [develops] without human [intervention] and spontaneity of human behavior...closely related to (1) " but with a nuance of difference.

(4) A primary meaning of "natural"...is "rational"; often they seem to be "synonyms. "Natural truths" are those that conform to reason...objectively valid...rooted in the eternal and immutable structure of Nature. ..."

(5) "...the meaning of Natural...in Shaftesbury's philosophy...is the Good or the Ideal. ...to living creatures...realizing...true ends...characteristic and highest capacities...natural affections." 7

These meanings often fuse into one another; often "natural" to Shaftesbury is the same as "good" or "ideal" or even "rational". But it can also mean "average" as when "Nature and the ideal pattern of things...which would always be the truly natural [is] the best possible in the structure of [the] finite".8 To Edwards "natural" meant "average" the general run of men, and laws of "nature." Shaftesbury's highest "Natural" is an Aristotelian "Natural", a creature that reaches the "Good", realizing true ends, characteristic of its highest capacities. This is the acorn that actualizes its potential to become an oak tree. Shaftesbury, demonstrating his belief in a social structure, of basically genial and well intentioned members says:

> We know that every creature has a private good and Interest of his own; which Nature has compelled him to

> seek... . We know that there is... a right and a wrong state of every creature...and his right one is by Nature forwarded...and by himself...sought. There being therefore in every Creature a certain Interest or Good: there must be also a certain End to which...everything must naturally refer...if anything in his Passions, appetites, or Affections be not conducing but the contrary: we must of necessity own it ill to him...in this manner...to himself as he certainly is with respect to others of his kind...when such Appetites... make him...injurious to them...[9]

This, almost a paraphrase of Aristotle [10] underscores Shaftesbury's belief that man is a social being, a cooperative one, that left alone, and unspoiled by external corruptions will remain essentially a decent creature:

> ...where can we fix our standard...or regulate ourselves...but with regard to Nature...beyond which there is no measure or rule of things? Now nature may be known from what we see of the natural state of creatures, and of man himself, when unprejudiced by vicious education.[11]

He speaks here of a simple state of nature, of "the natural state of creatures, and of man himself" and this way introduces the notion of man, as a good being in a state of nature, and that it is society that can corrupt man by a "vicious education." Man is naturally good, as are other creatures and would stay that way if it were not for the influences that lead to evil. From an observation of man and creatures we can learn what is good and what is not.

> ...to deserve the name of Good a creature must have all his Inclinations and Affections...suitable and agreeing with the good of his kind, or of that System in which he is included, and of which he constitutes a Part. To stand thus is Virtue...contrarys is Depravity...and Vice. ...[I]n the passions and the

> Affections of particular creatures, there is a constant relation to the interest of a Species or a common nature.[12]

To Shaftesbury, the measure of "good" and the certification of membership in a society as a "good" person is what is natural (5 above) but to Edwards a "natural" person was not the rule of measurement. Shaftesbury held that by nature mankind has an inclination toward the betterment of his society and people within it. The individual seeks the good of all not of himself alone. It is these natural men that make the "system" suitable and good and from which he himself earns the identification of being virtuous or vicious. This is a notion held by the "natural philosophers" a position Edwards argued against.

The virtue and enlightenment that one has by being endowed with the "light" which is limitedly understood by natural man is the measurement, says Edwards.[13] Edwards' man out of the state of nature is a creature on a higher ontological level and his capacity to comprehend truth itself is higher than that of the creature man in the state of nature. Nature itself, and natural men in a natural condition, subject to natural principles will only move or change according to its nature and their nature. Conscience for instance "is a principle natural to men... the work ...doth naturally...is to give an apprehension...of right or wrong." It is this conscience that all men have that tells us or prompts us to do the good that judgement leads us to believe is good for society in general and ourselves too as we are part of that society too. Like Shaftesbury above (3) Edwards says that

"things wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of like kind in the soul by nature...if they are caused to exist in the soul habitually...according to a stated law that lays a foundation for exercises in a continued course...is called a principle of nature..."[14] If there is not a principle within the nature of individual man to act virtuously he cannot act other than within the principle he does possess- conscience. Divine principles may be perceived by natural men (the average person) but upon the elect this principle becomes part of their nature. One knows occasionally, through the mind, divine and spiritual principles, but the elect do so through their nature which affects their natural sense capacities.[15] This is a principle operating upon the natural foundations, and within "the minds of the Godly...in the exercise of their faculties. Men can thus not only believe rationally, but know "a vastly higher kind, and a more sublime nature than in other things.[16]

Man's mind is "naturally full of prejudices against the truth of divine things" against...arguments that prove their truth. The natural faculties, the senses, are utilized for "...[God] deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature and makes use of his human faculties." [17] Then according to Edwards, God, and man, knowing that man is a rational creature also know that man can only move within his "nature." God has not let into everyone's soul this inclination but only some select or elect few.

This is a meaning of "natural" not listed above or used by Shaftesbury. This is a means of knowing truths that are not attained by birth, education, or experience. It is part of the nature of some very

few, other than the natural masses of humanity. Edwards expresses an elitism in his theory of knowledge: those who know what is absolute, the sublime excellency, the perfection of being, in the material world are inferentially better equipped to understand this material existence because they are out of the state of nature and thus equipped to better understand the supernatural. Our concepts of God (natural man's) are no more like God, than are our sense-founded ideas of the natural world, therefore we need affections, inclinations, to urge us to understand both.

That Edwards was a disciple of Locke is as unfounded as the arguments that Edwards' philosophy is an echo of Shaftesbury's. Shaftesbury reflected a predeliction toward Aristotle, reflecting his Politics and Ethics. Edwards presents a theological interpretation of Plato: it is not that Shaftesbury influenced Edwards but that some of the subjects that Shaftesbury wrote on were those that interested Edwards. Religious Affections is a strange book but not an enigmatic book. Edwards did not write in a manner mysterious, suggesting but witholding some of his meaning.[18] On the contrary, Edwards stated his case in explicit terms and developed his argument within the framework of classical Platonism, which had been expressed more objectively by other philosophers, particularly the Cambridge Platonists like Henry More, whom Edwards read and admired, as his Catalogue of Books and other evidence (presented later) show. The work Religious Affections is an exposition by a religiously oriented person, but to put it aside as part of esoteric arcane writing, or the expression of a "brimstone" preacher is to discard pearls because they are more difficult to chew

than oyster meat.

Edwards made very clear that the only way one could "know" the truths that exist is if one is endowed with the expanded knowledge of a "spiritual light." Edwards did not mean this to be more than Plato meant that philosophers should be kings, or that only those who are philosophers are worthy enough to be kings. He meant that those who had seen beyond the material, and ascertained the intrinsic, the essence, the values that such men as they, Plato and Edwards, placed stock upon were those that were no longer "natural men" but "saints", who know "the supremely excellent nature of divine things...the original foundation of true saints."[19] Edwards is not speaking here of saints with halos radiating from their heads but of saints that walk the land among us, that have found truth as a way of life and virtue. He speaks of "saints" simply as those (he makes clear there are very few of them) who make of a spiritual life a way of life because that is the way to be. The most cursory comparison to Plato's Symposium- involving oneself in that which the gods do as course, is inescapable. There is no way to know if one is a "saint", there is no way to become a "saint" and the signs sought after by the "natural man" are elusive and all too often less than sincere efforts. These can be fine meaningful goals but they are often not authentic, often hysterically and psychologically induced. Edwards had learned from experience that one does not become a "saint" or the possessor of knowledge by mere protestation, or as Sophists did in Socrates' estimation, by mere claims to knowledge.

The Great Awakening and the religious revivals had waned and with the cooling of religious consciousness a return to old ways, practices

and habits followed. Edwards' arguments seem to have been certified by society's experience as being more perceptive of human nature and thus more applicable than Shaftesbury's: the quality of virtue must be in the individual, it cannot be learned from society or the observation of nature.

Edwards had often remarked upon the limited capacity of language to express the precise meanings he intended to convey. This is evident in Religious Affections. The word "affections" to Edwards means inclinations and he is very precise in explicating the meanings of the terms he employs. In several instances he says, "here for the sake of the common people I will explain... ," [20] or "Here for the sake of the more illiterate reader..."[21] Edwards was not speaking to illiterate readers, or explicating for the benefit of the "common people," in the publication generally called Religious Affections. Few people in his parish could understand the philosophical content of the treatise.[22]

Much of Edwards' philosophy was so embedded in expression of his religion that Parts II and III of Religious Affections are often excised or completely eliminated from major works and anthologies. Others ignore or pay cursory attention to that part of the work.[23] That is unfortunate for philosophy, as these remarks elucidating for the benefit of the "common people" or the "more illiterate" is only a cloak for his real intent, attacking the advocates of "natural religion,"- the Deists, and the liberal clergy in Boston and Harvard, New York and London. The year was 1746, and the dissension that would lead to dismissal from Northampton had begun; Edwards had to be careful whom he

offended and curry to those he pleased.[24]

The seemingly endless concern for religion, testament and gospel in this work makes for some an excuse to escape to lighter fare and for others to abridgment. Prof. Smith says:

> Affections is a masterful treatment of a basic theological problem; it is also a work of remarkable literary power. We are grasped by the earnestness of the author, by his concern that we understand him aright...we cannot overlook the fact that many readers have found the Affections difficult going, nor should we ignore what is implied in the activity of the many editors who thought it necessary to rewrite the text. It is admittedly an exacting work; ...nothing is...gained by bringing [Edwards] down to a more facile plane in order to make him say what we would like to hear.[25]

Although Religious Affections treats abundantly "a basic theological problem" as Prof. Smith says, it is, besides being a theological work, also a deeply analytical work that explores the nature of virtue, good, psychological problems, society and the levels within it. This facet of Edwardsean investigation has been overlooked. Although Smith's edition is useful for presenting a complete text of this particular work it considers only the theological implications and none of Edwards' philosophy in general. Prof. Smith did not investigate the usually excised portions of the work in which Edwards enters the "moral sense" controversy. He observes that many people have the notion that the mental state of benevolence of a moral agent can be ascertained by the object of that state because of the magnitude and greatness of the moral agent's emotional state. Such a notion, Edwards says is not founded in Scripture nor in reason.

> I would say something to a strange notion some have...of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in...by their love flowing out...in an extraordinary manner...their love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be...true...and cause their love to flow out towards such a person... This notion, of certainly discerning another's state, by love overflowing out, is not founded on reason or Scripture; which says not a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this....[27]

Virtue is not discernable by the senses. That which is commonly called virtue, observing the generally accepted rules of human conduct is but accommodation to the rule of reason and is only physical activity and part of any reasonable creature's way of life, without a willful affection toward virtue "...[which]...arise from...the heart... .There are 'natural men, and carnal men.' Natural men cannot ascertain the spirit of absolute knowledge, as does the spiritual man. The natural man, being sensual can only know material things, whereas the spiritual man can know things that are "spiritually discerned." Natural men are subject to many influences but such influences are not spiritual as they are to men who have within their nature an inclination toward right action as a "principle." The "natural man" does good, but not from inner control or "domination" but from the natural flow of causal principles. Water will flow down hill, and light will reflect from a surface because that is what light and water do, but a virtuous man does what he does because of the principle within him that <u>distinguishes</u> him from the sensual or "natural" man.[28]

Edwards' philosophy is often linked to Shaftesbury[29] but the

latter never expressed the Edwardsean distinction that natural man can distinguish virtue, but not with the clarity and finiteness of truth that is the nature of the "saint." Shaftesbury says that man with a natural principle, much like other senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, upon finding a thing or an act agreeable or "Beautiful, with Grace and harmony", accepts it. Edwards submitted a distinctly opposing notion: virtue, good, can be known and appreciated as a fact, as a truth only by some few who are "spiritual"; the masses who are not "spiritual men" but "natural men" can do good only because that is the behavioral order of the society in which they live and to which they accommodate themselves. They would act otherwise, if such were the nature of good in another society. "Natural men" act morally not because of nature, but in a fashion their society dictates, and not because of knowledge of morality. Shaftesbury, however observed :

> I am ready to own...there is in certain Figures a natural beauty which the eye finds as soon as the object is presented to it. ...[if there is] a natural beauty of figures...[then] is there not as natural a one of Actions? [as soon as] the eye opens to figures, the ear to Sounds, then straight the beautiful results and grace and Harmony are known and acknowledged...no sooner the human affections and passions discerned...than straight an inward Eye distinguishes, and sees the Shapely, the Amiable, the Admirable...from the deformed...the foul...the odious...the despicable. How is it possible therefore not to own that these distinctions have their foundations in Nature, the discernment itself is Natural, and from Nature itself? 30

Here as in so many other instances Edwards analyzed, considered the worth of, and took what he wanted from the philosophers of his age, modified and altered it to make his own mark and stamp upon it. Edwards

rejected this attempt to link what is called man's "aesthetic sense" to man's reason and judgement of good and evil. What makes the "eye" or the "ear" the guardian or guide to virtue ? How can man's natural love of balance, harmony, equality give him information about virtue ? In a different work, but with contextual relevance Edwards had said:

> ...it is said by some...there is some other principle concerned in exciting the passions of gratitude and anger besides self-love, viz a moral sense, or a sense of moral beauty and deformity, determining the minds of mankind to approve of, and be pleased with virtue...to disapprove of vice.

He added that "authors of views that hold that a moral sense consists in a sense of beauty which arises from a principle of public benevolence are wrong...if considered correct...men would love inanimate things...that were pleasing, and hate those that were not, in the same sense that men hate or love one another." To love or hate men and not things "cannot rise from a moral sense of benevolence" or from a moral sense arising from public affection. Such a moral sense implies that man delights in public good and is adverse to public evil." The sun and regular rains do public good, but storms and flooding streams do harm but we do not love the sun or hate the river.[31] Judgements of morals may "call an ill horse vicious...[but] never a good one ...virtuous," said Shaftesbury. echoes of Shaftesbury are audible, metaphorically, within Edwards' work, nevertheless the differences and originality, in intellectual fairness to Edwards, must be underscored. Edwards objectively observed that values are placed on those actions relative to the society in which the judging agent

exists. However, the assessment of true virtue can only be made by those who are spiritual. Judgements made by those who are not spiritual can only reflect what the society generally has certified as proper. These can vary from society or from one period of time to another, depending upon how beneficial particular behavior is assessed..

Edwards comes somewhat closer to Shaftesbury in his delineation of aesthetic values within moral judgements but Edwards places a stricter definition on what morality is:

> Here, for the sake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by moral excellency...the word moral is not to be understood...according to the common and vulgar [as] when men speak of morality...moral behavior...outward conformity to...moral law...such virtues, as proceed from natural principles, in opposition to those virtues that are more inward and spiritual as honesty, generosity...of many heathen are called moral virtues in distinction from faith, love humility. 32

Edwards does not see morality derived from nature or natural functions and relationships although in a society of natural men, most of whom are not saints, such relationships are necessary and proper. True morality is derived from the spiritual apprehension of the beauty and perfection of existence as such. "The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being is more immediately seated in the heart or will of moral agents. That intelligent being whose will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent."33 It is not by reason or rational discernment that morality is known, but by a heart and will that is open to accept the perfection, the harmony, the beauty of propriety. Such morality embodies justice, charity -a total

appreciation of propriety.[34] This is not a morality that develops from sense perception, or evaluation from reason and judgement but a morality that stems from a willful spirit to accept the absolute. Shaftesbury's aesthetic is inclusive of general mankind, less restrictive than that of Edwards. "... mere goodness," Shaftesbury said, "lies within the reach...of all sensible creatures...that which is called virtue or merit...is allowed to man only... ." Shaftesbury then adds:

> The mind ...cannot be without its eye and ear, so as to discern proportion, distinguish sound...scan sentiment... . It feels the soft and the harsh...agreeable and the disagreeable in the affections...foul and fair, harmonious and dissonant...truly as musical numbers or in outward forms...the heart cannot remain neutral...but takes part one way or other...it finds the difference...and accordingly...must approve in some measure of what is natural and honest and disapprove what is dishonest and corrupt.[35]

Shaftesbury speaks of the "we"; Edwards speaks of the common man, the man in nature who seeks to participate in the accepted behavior, understood by natural man as the morality of his society. Shaftesbury and Edwards agree on an aesthetic sensibility affecting an assessment of morality but in Edwards' philosophy true knowledge of morality is reserved for the few, and practicing morality is abided by the masses. Shaftesbury maintains that sense perception, empirical observation of deeds and thoughts, consequences are determined among other means by the relationship of those actions to our sense of balanced beauty. We must consider important the following:

> Now there is such a kind of taste of the mind as this, which philosophers speak of, whereby persons are guided in their judgement of the natural beauty, gracefulness, propriety, nobleness, and sublimity of speeches and actions, whereby they judge by the glance of the eye, or by an inward sensation, and the first impression of the object; so there is likewise such a thing...in the hearts of saints...whereby they are in like manner led and guided in discerning...the true...beauty of actions...[such] taste will enable...to determine what actions are right...speedily and exactly.[36]

Natural man can discern, by that which pleases the senses, an approximation of ethical values but only in "saints" is the discernment "true" and "right." Spiritual virtue has been described as a balanced and moderated expression of passions and emotions; an esthetic symmetry, a knowledge of proportion relative to the condition and requirements of the particular issue and situation. Zeal, hatred, love and desire, like the requirement of natural limbs, branches, storms, are such that meet the needs of the moment time and place. Aristotle's Golden Mean are, part of the prudence within aesthetic values that Edwards expressed here.[37] But to Edwards it was plain, as it was to Plato, that acts of socially accepted worth are not morality. Morality has no shape or figure, cannot be noted by the nose, has no taste, or distinctive sound and does not appear in a particular color; morality cannot be learned or taught from "nature" as the advocates of "natural religion" claimed with misleading arguments. The most that natural man, in his state of nature could hope for was to practice a form of acceptable behavior in conformance with the norms of his society and seek after those very few who have the inner light of the

principle, within their nature, of true morality. There are no absolute signs indicative of having this principle, and even those who have it never know it, but it is they that are super-natural men because they have come up and out of the state of nature that is the lot of mankind in general.

It would be simplistic to infer that Edwards' intent in Affections was to write a political testament or express opinions on secular government.[38] Edwards was almost apolitical and his indifference to the rising turbulence in social and political affairs of colonial America and Europe is underscored by the vast amounts of pamphlets, treatises, and essays on government that were written in those years. From his Catalogue of Books we know he owned and read Hobbes, and although an entry indicates Complete Works of John Locke the latter's political views were published only anonymously until sometime after his death. Whether or not Edwards ever read Locke's political works is not clear, but that he held views extremely different from Locke's on social and political levels is fairly evident. Like a full-length mirror that reflects embarrassing bulges as well as pleasing curves Religious Affections reveals more than Edwards' intense religiosity and refutes again the notion that Edwards was a Lockean disciple. A more balanced view of Edwards is in order.

To Edwards "natural" means average man informed by senses alone through which he gets all his knowledge of the state of nature in which he exists. In this state of nature natural man may practice the many virtues that tradition, religion and society approve; he does so

because of his society's dictates. The true moral man is over and above the natural man; the truly moral man is one who acts from principle, from an inner knowledge of moral worth revealed to him through the sense of the heart. The natural man is a being dependent upon sense perception for all his knowledge and as all knowledge, derived from sense perception, is a matter of individual ideas, it is not precise or absolute truth that "natural man" perceives.

Edwards in Affections maintained that the natural man is the "average man" and within the state of nature he existed had no way of knowing who was a chosen or elected man. Those few who were chosen and elected did not know that they were bearers of the truth or more fully understood morality in itself than the less chosen who only knew what their mere five senses told them. Thus the masses and those whose sense of heart penetrated into the reserved bank of truth are in effect, similar,unidentifiable. After a long and thorough examination of twelve signs Edwards concluded that at best we can only conform to that which our society has deemed to be proper; in some societies and ages the very things we think proper may have been immoral or even abhorent. The natural man in Edwards' moral philosophy would determine only by his senses what is the norm, what is done here and what is acceptable as good. The meta-ethical Edwards, however, maintained that over and above what the natural man perceives or knows, there is an absolute rule that exists as a universal law of moral rightness that only the few, the elect, know not as an empirical fact but as part of the structure of reality which their gift of enlightenment enables them to perceive.

The social structure which Religious Affections reflects is not so

much a Lockean democracy as an adjustment to a Hobbesian state of nature. In Edwards' state of nature all men, at least most of them, are natural men dependent on the senses for knowledge. This is inadequate and limited for it is by mere idea that we proceed and no means are available to us to absolutely know morality as morality has no figure, shape, odor, color or sound; we are in effect insensible to true morality. It is not empirically observable phenomena. Edwards would have had to agree to the following implications if we accept his arguments:

1. Natural man lives in a state of nature as Edwards describes, not by an act of his own will or preference but by accident of birth and God's will that he is not one of the "elect."

2. Natural man can do nothing to rise above that state of nature and cannot by any effort or good works rise above and out of that state. (It must be noted that to some degree Edwards wavered on this issue as demonstrated above in an earlier chapter his encouragement of "prayer bids" suggested that piety could bring Divine intercession.)

3. Natural man at best can only act as though he were one of the "elect" and emulate what is morally and ethically considered proper without ever knowing if such action is, in an absolute sense, ethically and morally proper.

4. Natural man has no means or signs available to him so that he could

choose as leaders those who are elect, as even the elect do not know that such is their state.

5. Whatever moral state the world is in is due to the objective decision or inclinations toward propriety of the masses.

Therefore, from Edwards' philosophy on "man in nature" we would have to disagree with him to some extent. Considering that most human beings are ordinary people who adapt and adopt the values that their communities consider worthy, they are the source from which any morality that does exist has in fact been actualized.True,the moral state that Edwards speaks of has not been realized but "natural man" has made some effort in that direction.[39] The masses of humanity may not live in that perfect state that Plato's state describes, but neither does it live in the total state of war claimed by Hobbes.

If An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections is read in the form that is generally available, abridged and accompanied by commentaries derived from theological interpretations, the work and the man, Edwards, emerge in grotesque guise. One publisher of college books describes the work "had as a thesis that men are governed by passions...so the best affections should be instilled in them by conversion which bestows [on them] a new spiritual sense." Prof.J. Bennett said of Edwards, "I may be injust to him but my concern is only with the worst thing about him--namely his morality, which was worse than [Heinrich] Himmler's." [40]

Religious Affections has been interpreted, as Prof. Smith says,

through the centuries as primarily a work concerned with piety [41], but he adds that, "To understand and to judge what he wrote we must follow the argument in detail and even underplay the social setting within which it was written." [my italics] Then, contradicting himself, in a footnote he recommends two works by Perry Miller for the purpose of supplementing the social history and philosophy of Edwards' work. This is indicative of the degree of original thought expended by Smith in this job of editorship as it does of the degree of intellectual independence from Miller's thought. Affections may not be another Leviathan or be regarded as the "Third" Treatise on Government, but it does express, mild as it is, a political view, albeit far from the details of the Republic or reasoned arguments of Politics. It does demonstrate however that Edwards was aware of the current debate on "state of nature", man in "nature, "natural man" and leaving the "natural state."

That he did not choose to write more explicitly on political subjects underlines his oft repeated observation that life in the next world was of greater concern to man than this one. It also underlines the present argument that Edwards was no Lockean. Locke's man in nature could and did do something constructive about his condition of life- he bettered himself, and contrived to eliminate those who would destroy his peace and way of life, security and productivity. Edwards' man in nature can do nothing but accept his lot in life.

Religious Affections demonstrates Edwards' participation in another important arena of social concern: Hume alluded to it as the "science of man."[42] In this effort Edwards expressed insight into an

emerging intellectual discipline, psychology. The subject is not discussed in Smith's introductory text, and the word itself is not even listed in the Index. Contrary to Smith's dismissal of contemporary history, and diametrically opposing the latter's total disregard of the subject, Prof. Johnson says:

> Religious Affections begins with a careful analysis of the operations of the human mind, an analysis which, while resting firmly on Christian tradition, obviously reflects contemporary notions of psychology, and which can only be fully appreciated in the light of them. [my italics.] [43]

There is no effort here to deny that Edwards was engaged in a dispute over Church membership and eligibility, but underlying his arguments for, or against candidacy for membership he did produce a rational inquiry into prerequisites. Were he a mere fundamentalist preacher why would he attempt to determine a difference or "distinction between true religion and false religion ?" Religious Affections shows "he was as ready to condemn much of the religious enthusiasm of [the Great Awakening of the few prior years] as were its bitterest opponents." [44] Edwards was not impressed with those whose affections [inclinations] toward religion "is very high," or "raised to an extraordinary pitch" as this could be but the result of "a great deal of true religion in the hearts of [other] men." The excitement of religious activity raises the level of religious inclination and such display of religious interest is not a sign of true religion. (It should be noted in passing that this observation by Edwards is a rebuttal to those who believe that the latter considered

meaningful the moaning and groaning of his own parishioners in the grip of his rhetoric.) "Our text speaks of...high affections...rejoicing...joy unspeakable and...glory." He adds that evidence in text and tradition supports this unbounded joy on religious contemplation and although it may be a sign of authentic religion of the heart, it is not evidence that such displays are spiritual or religious just because they are great and claimed to be so inspired. On the contrary they are often vain, self-serving and even designed to deceive, and so are false and worthless.[45]

It is not true religion, says Edwards, just because "they have great effects on the body... ."

> So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its fluids...attend the motions and exercises of mind, that there cant be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them. [It is] questionable, whether [one] ever so much as thinks one thought...but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration...in some degree...in some part of the body... . Universal experience shows...the affections...[have] a tendency, to some sensible effect upon the body. And...all affections have some effect on the body [and] the greater those affections be...the greater will be the effect on the body. ...and consequently these effects are not signs, that the affections that they arise from, are of one kind or another. Nor...do I know of any rule any have to determine that [real and gracious affections] equally strong and vigorous cant have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from reason.[46]

The above quotation lends little support to the picture of Edwards as a passion whipping priest but to one of a clinical psychologist. Edwards did not believe in passionate protestations of regeneration accompanied by heightened emotions and bodily contortions as signs of

"true" religion. The stern levels of proof he demanded were extreme to his parishioners; that very cynicism he displayed toward physical and audible manifestations of religiosity, however, was a major element in the case against him that led to dismissal from Northampton's pulpit. It was Edwards conservative assessment of religious attestations, not the vigorous shouts of belief from the pews that caused the split: the parishioners wanted him to believe that tears, noise, songs -breast beatings- was religion not the dry and clinical case-patient like reports of Dr. J. Edwards. It was Edwards that rejected religious enthusiasm, physical displays of bodily reactions, loud singing and noises and contortions attributed to religious affections: and it was Edwards who judged such super-activity in a most critical and cynical manner. He was willing to accept joy, song, eagerness toward prayer, as responsive activity of religiosity, but not as demonstrable proof of attainment of true knowledge,- knowledge attainable only by some very select few.[47] Edwards refused to allow in the future, membership in his church to those who would use it as a means to shout and sing their way into heaven. It was not Edwards that was the "bible thumping fundamentalist" but his semi-literate parishioners that rejected his more sober analysis of the substance of true religion. He saw through the psychological impulses, motivations, and less than authentic claims of gestation, religiously, that were the basis of many "rebirths" that were regularly proclaimed. Edwards was no fool, and was less a gullible pastor:

'Tis no sign that affections are truly

> gracious...or...not, that they cause those that have them, to be fluent...fervent and abundant...in talking of...religion. Many are prejudiced against them...as hypocrites...others see this...ignorantly...that they are true children of God...[who] speak free.,,[particularly if] they are affectionate and earnest. But this is the fruit of little judgement...as [recent] events (the Awakening and Revivals) do abundantly show.[48]...this is but religion of the mouth and of the tongue. [People] disposed to abundant talking...of religion...may be from a good cause and it may be from a bad one .[Possibly] because of religious affections...not holy [but] out of the abundance of the heart. ...it is very much the nature of the affections...to dispose persons to [speak of their involvement] earnestly and fervently. A person may...overful talk of his own experiences...it is rather a dark sign than a good one. ...false affections are much more forward to declare themselves than true.[49]

Edwards continues describing self-induced delusions of religion, condemning unfounded claims of spiritual enlightenment but not rejecting its possibility. He admits and accepts the possibility of multiple and divergent religious impulses which may be authentic and true, but also "counterfeit".[50] "...men in a state of nature, are capable of a resemblance of all kinds of religious affections, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together."[51] Edwards speaks with reserve about those who after "regeneration" make claims of abundant joy and comfort in their new state- it is possible, and to be expected but too often it is but a working of imagination as induced either deliberately or falsely. Some of the transgressions they claim to have "been guilty of in the course of their lives" are false confessions designed either deliberately or by fired imaginations to impress the hearers. These so-called regenerates gain admiration and respect by telling of their prior "hard hearts...dreadful load and sink

of sin...black and loathsome filthiness [that was once] within them" and other such untrue self-debasement "when...the matter is carefully inquired into...they have...not anything wherein the corruption of [their] nature...consist." People, he said, will often lie about their sinning past, when in truth they could never have done any of the evils they presently repent of.

Nor "...have they any thought of...anything wherein their hearts are sinfully defective or fall short of what ought to be in them," he says, of corruption or sin. Many think or believe that they have sinned who "truly have not."[52] Excessive attention to religion, heightened self-confidence, periods of terror, may be manifestations of true religion, but often are either false, designed deliberately or for the public impression that follows, or mentally induced. The statement of these psychologically induced symptoms, manifesting themselves as "religion" demonstrates that Edwards was far removed from the caricature of a "hell-fire" preacher he is made out to be. It was Edwards that demanded authenticity and saw false displays in excesses of physical and mental behavior and rejected them when submitted as "true" religion, but which was insisted upon by his parishioners. It was <u>they</u> who wanted "hell-fire" religion and <u>he</u> that wanted authenticity. The year was 1746 and soon Edwards was dismissed.

The claims made by Edwards as to what is true religion is carefully discussed in final chapters of the work; in that sense Smith's claim that this is a theological work is true. However the astute observations of psychological motivations make of this work a clinical

text and a classic description of religiously induced behavior. Properly interpreted, we see Edwards as more than a country preacher, but also an enlightened philosopher concerned with the new discipline-the science of man.

Chapter Four: Notes

1 Samuel Hux, "Self-Election of the Elite." Dissent, (Winter, 1984), p.127-141. Paul Johnson, "The Almost Chosen People," The Wilson Quarterly, Winter, 1985 Vol. IX, No. 5, pp. 78-89.; Erasmus Lecture, Jan. 1985.
Prof. Johnson, as have so many others, expresses a point of view, then draws from Edwardsean observations notions to support the theme of his lecture. From what he says in this article, one could believe that Edwards was the inspiration for the American revolution. What Johnson says is in total correct enough, but stated as it is within a lecture or a passing paragraph it is an example of the distortion laid upon Edwards by unsupported statements. To say, as Johnson does, that "The man who first preached the Revolution, Jonathan Edwards...etc. etc." mixing metaphor with fact, attaching opinion sequentially within the same sentence with selected Edwardsian notions, lends little to scholarship and misrepresents the subject.
The following, for example: "The American Revolution was...the political and military expression of a religious movement, the Great Awakening... those who inspired it and carried it through believed that they were doing God's will. The man who first preached the Revolution, Jonathan Edwards...believed strongly that there was no real difference between a political and a religious emotion, both of which were God-directed. The right kind of politics, for him, was no more than realized eschatology. The disciplined community...could work...toward a better world. Edwards...saw no reason that God should not "establish a constitution "whereby human creatures [would co-operate]. Edwards saw religion as the essential unifying source in American society. ..." Considering Prof.Johnson's reputation, on hearing or reading such a statement, it would be easy to conclude that it was Edwards who fired the first shot at Concord. Edwards never "preached the Revolution" and this is a dissolution of history and a display of psycho-history moving beyond the fact with a substitution of research goals for textually demonstrable history leading to a mis-reading of Edwards' philosophy.

2 Boswell, Life of Johnson, Vol.1, p. 547.

3 Tracy, op cit pp. 187-194. Charles E. Jones "The Impolitic Mr.Edwards: The Personal Dimension of the Robert Breck Affair", New England Quarterly, pp. 64-79, (March 1978.)

4 Johnson, op cit, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading".

5 A. Owen Aldridge, "Edwards and Hutcheson," Harvard Theological Review, XLIV, (Jan. 1951) pp. 35-53.

6 Prof. Smith made no reference to Shaftesbury or Hutcheson in this volume in text, introduction or index although it is generally accepted that these two English philosophers were major influences in Edwards' philosophical development.
7 Stanley Grean, Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics,

(Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1968) pp. 142-43.

8 Ibid.

9 Anthony Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, ed. J. M. Robertson, (London, 1900) Vol.1, p. 15-16.

10 Aristotle, Works, ed. R. McKeon, (N.Y:, Random House, 1966) p. 935-949, 1094-1104.

11 Robertson, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 325.

12 Ibid p. 77-78

13 Johnson, op. cit. p. 212

14 Edwards. Works, IV. p. 103.

15 Ibid p. 104-105.

16 Ibid p. 106-107.

17 Johnson, op. cit. p. 109.

18 Moses Maimonides, Guide For The Perplexed, ed. and trans. M. Friedlander, (N.Y.: Dover, 1956) Int. p. 1-3.

> The [Holy Book] must not be fully expounded even in the presence of a single student unless he is wise and able to reason for himself, and even then you should merely acquaint him with the heads of the different sections of the subject. You must, therefore, not expect from me more than such heads. And even these have not been methodically and systematically arranged in this work, but have been, on the contrary scattered, and are interspersed with other topics... My object in adopting this arrangement is that the truths should be at one time apparent, and at another time concealed. Thus we shall not be in opposition to the Divine will...which has withheld from the multitude the truths required for the knowledge of God... .

Miller reads into Edwards a deliberate obscurity, such as above in Maimonides. This is due to Miller's insistence that Edwards was some strange mixture of empiricist-scientist caught in the hair shirt of a Puritan minister. A simple re-focus of the man leaves no obscurity.

19 Smith, op. cit. p. 240.

20 Ibid p. 210.

21 Ibid p. 254.

22 Johnson, Printed Works, p. 33. Tracy, op cit.

23 Ibid. Religious Affections has been "among his most frequently published works...all of which appeared in approximately thirty editions..." Int. p. viii. However, this is misleading for the most recent edition of the complete work was in London, in 1898 with a reprint in 1902. Anthologies, collections of his works give abstracts, usually of Part I, relegating the rest of the work to the archives and leaving Edwards in fathomless limbo. In this respect Prof. Smith, and Yale University have paid deep tribute to this graduate of their college with the class of 1720. The Yale edition of Religious Affections is probably the beginning of the first complete American edition since those in America and England in 1898 and 1902. The most recent American edition was in 1833, "frequently reprinted. By 1875, 75,000 copies had been distributed" but even this was "Somewhat abridged" or "slightly abridged, and with some emendations..." by the editor. It is just such tampering with Edwards' work that has resulted in a false picture of the man; the "emendation" and "abridgments" have distorted our knowledge of his thought. The unavailabilty of a complete Religious Affections adds to the depth of shadow that cloaks Edwards reputation. Greater access to complete copies of this work would have helped dispel the sulfur fumes reputed to have been stirred by Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God. The select editing of Edwards' works, abridgments, emendations have been major factors in this problem.

24 Tracy, op cit.

25 Smith, p. 8.

26 This paper uses Prof. Smith's edition of Religious Affections because in most early American editions, although complete, the presence of intrusive notes by the several editors, diminish the clarity of the work. It becomes, if care is not taken, an effort to determine if these notes are Edwards' or the editors', an unwelcome and added obstacle toward that end. There are also several errors in these editors' notes: attributing a letter from Lord Home to David Hume, and Bayle's' Dictionary to Boyle. But this editor, Prof. Smith, seems to have become enmeshed in the tendency of many editors of this work who saw their objective to be that which promoted their philosophy instead of Edwards'. This lessens the value of Smith's efforts, who as a Professor of Philosophy at Yale University should have noted that Religious Affections was more than a theological work only, but also an early example in America of the degree that psychology affected philosophical speculation.

27 Smith, p. 187-189.

[28] Ibid, p. 108-205.

[29] Fiering, op. cit. pp. 70, 195, 356.

[30] Robertson, Vol. I, p. 137.

[31] Edwards, Works, II, p. 254.

[32] Smith, op. cit. p. 254.

[33] Ibid. p. 255. [34] Ibid. p. 255-266.

[35] Robertson, op cit Vol. I, p. 252.

[36] Smith, op. cit. p. 283. [37] Ibid.

[38] Hux, op. cit. Paul Johnson, Wilson Quarterly (Winter, 1985) op.cit.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Robert Lowell, Jonathan Edwards in Western Massachusetts, poetry, repeating notions of Edwards as a fundamentalist preacher. An outline series distributed by a major book dealer, Barnes and Noble, states in part, "Edwards: theologian, mystic... felt that sudden conversion was a sign of election...Family poor sold lace and painted fans, and embroidery....mystical, a great logician...was adept in science, psychology, and philosophy...an idealist...spent much of his life glorifying God and debasing man. By promoting the Great Awakening, he exerted a liberalizing political effect, since the uneducated were more likely to have emotional experiences than the rich." To cap this, it adds that Religious Affections had as a thesis that "men are governed by passions...so the best affections should be instilled in them by conversion which bestows a new spiritual sense." American Literature, (N.Y. Barnes and Noble College Series, 1976) pp. 14-17. These transgressions and distortions of Edwards' philosophy are mild compared to that of Jonathan Bennett, who in his paper, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn," published in Philosophy, 49, No. 188, (April 1974) pp. 123-134 said:

> In the conflict between sympathy and bad morality...the victory may go to sympathy...as ...Finn...or to morality as in...Himmler. Another possibility is that the conflict may be avoided by giving up, or not ever having...sympathies which might interfere with one's principles. That seems to have been the case with ...Edwards. I [may be injust to him but] my concern is only with the worst thing about him -namely his morality, which was worse than Himmler's.

If any response was made to this assault on the intellectual integrity and honesty of intent of Edwards, this researcher has not found it.

Thus such desecrations on the reputation of an early American philosopher go un-noticed and unchallenged, accepted, and disseminated in college texts to unknowing and accepting students thus perpetuating the myth of Edwards' decadent philosophy and misanthropic nature. There was something more than the worst in Edwards for a philosopher to investigate and perpetuate.

41 Smith op. cit. p. 1.

42 Nicholas Capaldi, David Hume, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975) p. 38. The name Hume, the words psychology, science of man or the like is not to be found anywhere in Smith's book.

43 Faust and Johnson, op. cit. p. xxiv. 44. Ibid. p. xxxiii.

45 Smith, op. cit. p. 127-31. 46 Ibid. p. 132. 47 Ibid. p. 135.

48 The phrase "recent events" is reference to the problems after the "Great Awakening" that swept New England in the 3 or 4 years prior to the writing of Religious Affections. The work embraced among others an assessment of the value of the "Awakening" and a sober appraisal of the depth of true religion of the multitudes that professed conversion and regeneration. His conclusion was that much is psychologically induced and other demonstrations objectively motivated.

49 Smith, op. cit. p. 136-138.

50 Ibid. p. 142-147. 51 Ibid. p. 150. 52 p. 157.

Chapter Five: Magnum Opus: Edwards and "Freedom of the Will."

There is some acceptance of the notion that Edwards was an "empiricist".[1] Prof.Ramsey connects Edwards to Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, and as one who supported a view of determinism that embraced the principle that man as an agent has the power of freely willing as his own understanding, and volitions lead him to elect.[2] It is man that wills, says Edwards, not a free will that wills itself. It is man that determines, by judgement, choice, habit, disposition or otherwise decides what he will elect to do, and not an independent will that is self-determining by uncaused, free and contingent impulse. How closely did Edwards, called by some the "first American empiricist"[3] hold to this attributed view?

In the effort to clarify this issue it will be necessary to:

1. Consider closely his arguments and definitions.

2. Consider some earlier elements of Edwards' philosophy.

3. In so doing, we will find that: (a) Edwards was not concerned with free-will but with choice, and (b) was not intent upon proving that man has free-will for (c) such power in man would be diametrically opposed to Edwards' understanding of cause and effect and (d) his firm belief in the sufficiency of God's will.

Edwards begins his treatise, generally referred to as, Freedom of the Will, with a careful analysis and examination of the basic terms

used in discussions on free-will. His definitions stay within accepted meanings in most cases of general usage and common speech and remove much of the contention involved in such debates. Edwards unwraps, so to speak, the inner differences and demonstrates an excellent example of analytic philosophy by stripping vague extensions of meanings from terms used. We must remember that this work, unlike all of his earlier treatises, is not an adaptation of a sermon or public lecture. Although it was written while he was pastor at the mission to the Indians at Stockbridge after his dismissal from Northampton, the language, and subject content was targeted, obviously to a sophisticated public other than the local Indians in his "parish."

> The will is plainly that by which the mind chooses anything...that faculty or power or principle of mind by which it is capable of choosing; an act of will is an act of choosing or choice...all may be reduced to this of choosing. For the soul to act voluntarily, is evermore to act electively.4

Any name applied to this faculty to refuse, accept, demand, and the like, may be reduced to this act of choosing. Edwards' goal is to refute the Arminian position that the will is a self-determining indifferent faculty. This position implies that the will operates free of human desires or motivations and that the will acts indifferently free of any external cause other than its own determination. To be free a will must be uncaused and not reactive to prior causes: an agent without such a will is not a free moral agent but one who is compelled to react by prior events. To be considered free and morally responsible agents, not creatures following the dictate of cause and effect,

rational and morally responsible beings have a will that is free and self-determined.

The will is determined by the soul (mind), Edwards argues. "To talk of the determination of the will supposes an effect which must have a cause. If the will be determined there must be a determiner." 5. To Edwards, the notion that the will or the soul chooses or acts indifferently is a contradiction. A state of indifference implies a condition lacking in any preference, or to use Edwards' term, "preponderation" toward any choice or direction. A state of indifference implies a will in equilibrium somewhat like Buridan's ass starving to death at identical crossroads with a bale of hay awaiting decision. Edwards did not use this metaphor but his meaning is plain: a will in a state of indifference cannot choose, nor for that matter, he adds, can a mind in such a state. Many philosophers contend, Edwards says, "...not that the will chooses one thing before another concerning which it is indifferent before it chooses, but that the will is indifferent when it chooses..." 6 Edwards dismissed this as an obvious contradiction; it would require the faculty, mind or will, to be in a dual state at the same time.7

Edwards' use of "causal principles" is evident in his definition of "determination." That strongest motive as the mind sees it to be determines the will, creates the motive that "...moves, excites or invites the mind to volition." The will in effect is determined by the mind's observation of what is the most apparent good, or most agreeable through observation and weighing of the choices. We can observe his almost rote-like emphasis on cause and effect in, "...the will is

always determined by the strongest motive, or by that view of the mind which has the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite volition." 8. Edwards held that "necessity" in a philosophical sense is "really nothing else than the full and fixed connection between the things signified by the subject and predicate of a Proposition which affirms something to be true..." 9.

He adds, "...when the subject and predicate affirms the existence of anything, either substance, quality, act or circumstance, have a full and certain Connection, then the thing is said to be necessary in a metaphysical sense. And in this sense I use the word Necessity." This in our present mode of expression would be termed analytic propositions.[10] Important to his argument is the emphasis he placed upon a distinction between natural necessity and moral necessity. A man can drop a piece of chalk because it broke under pressure; a man can walk because his physical capacity enables him and often requires him to do so, and the physical world is such that these physical activities are rationally possible. Such acts, performed within the physical requirements of life and nature, he says, are acts of natural necessity. However, a man can choose to sit, to run or go to sleep, pick up another piece of chalk and let the broken scraps lie on the floor; these are moral decisions, choices, and examples of moral necessity.

Men can be involved in acts of natural necessity because of causal principles, the basic efficient cause that precedes the appearance of any material phenomena without which the effect is impossible; if one event occurs another event always follows, or is produced by the prior

event. Edwards asserted repeatedly this was axiomatic: what is must have a cause, the reason and explanation for its very being and that nothing ever happens, comes to be or is unless some prior event caused it to come into existence. He did however, stray from adherence to this chain of efficient causality, to one of constant conjunction when the argument required it. However moral necessity are events that when man, with his own understanding perceives what, to him, is the greatest good, chooses good. In that choice, the subsequent volition, the appreciation or determination of the greatest good, and the act, Edwards sees a process of causal sequence, of cause and effect as applicable to volition, and will as constant as that sequence in the physical world.

Within this process Edwards asserts, but does not prove, that efficient cause and effect applies to acts of will and mind. Up to this point in his argument Edwards had not considered the question, nor did he objectively do so, in this work. However, in a later section, as will be indicated, he obviously takes such premise for granted when he proves what he considers the power of God. Thus in a negative sense, he submits that mental phenomena are subject to causal principles, efficient or constant conjunction, but proof is not submitted within present context. The strongest dominating motive will cause the will to move or act in accord with that motive. As every event, mental or material, must be caused by some agent, an act of volition is caused by the mind's assent to what is best. The will following the conviction the mind makes of what is right, good and agreeable, and as this only is the mover of the will without any contradiction, then by necessity

this is true and the case in every instance of choosing, or deciding for or against an act. The will does not determine itself, but in every act of determination it is dependent on, and necessarily connected with some antecedent cause.[11] Moral necessity can be the "bonds of duty and conscience" and it might be "the apparent connection of things...the ground of moral evidence..." distinguished from absolute fact or infallible certainty..." which is much the same as "...a high degree of probability...ordinarily sufficient to satisfy and be relied upon... ." Moral necessity also means "...that necessity of connection and consequence which arises from moral causes as the strength...of inclination or motives...between these volitions and actions. And it is in this sense that I use the phrase 'moral necessity' in the following discourse."[12] He submitted the next definition in confident and unequivocal language, and we must examine it carefully:

> The plain and obvious meaning of the words freedom and liberty in common speech, is the power, opportunity, or advantage, that any one has, to do as he pleases. And the contrary to liberty...is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being necessitated to do otherwise.[13]

Edwards relied, to some degree, for the strength of his argument on the generally accepted notion of "cause and effect." A close examination shows however that he had begun to modify his concept of efficient cause: that effect B owes its manifestation directly, and as a result and product of preceding agent A. He had moved closer to the notion of "constant conjunction" and the inferential mental association derived from the regularity of the sequence observed that

the subsequent event was "caused" by the preceding event; a notion that was more fully developed by Hume.[14] Edwards did not hold rigidly to that concept of causation- efficient causation- that Hume criticized. Edwards' views on "cause" was to some degree more like that which Hume supported, than the classical Aristotelian statement of it.[15] Hume's concept of causation suggested that, psychologically, from an inference based on our experience of the general regularity of events in the past, we conclude that the same regularity would occur in the future, but no empirical evidence supports such a conclusion. It is not the purpose here to demonstrate the degree of similarity or the priority of expression, or independent accomplishment, but to prove again the currency of Edwards' philosophical thought. A fresh view, a new interpretation is the goal, and to be viewed as modern a philosopher as any in the early eighteenth century, including one of its most respected, David Hume. Some of the basic propositions involved as expressed by both indicates this general similarity. Edwards states:

> I would explain how I would be understood, when I use the word Cause in this discourse...I shall have occasion to use it in a sense...more extensive than that in which it is generally used. [It] is often used to signify a positive efficiency...to produce a thing or bring it to pass..(my italics) [he adds however that] I sometimes use the word Cause, in this enquiry, to signify any antecedent, either natural or moral...[which] so depends, that it is the ground and reason why it is...rather than otherwise;...or in other words any antecedent with which a consequent Event is so connected, that it truly belongs to the reason why the proposition that so affirms that Event is true or not.[16] (my italics)

In the above, Edwards indicated his use of the term "cause" in

its positive and "generally used sense...to signify a positive efficiency...to produce a thing...or bring it to pass." Edwards modified that preceding interpretation to "any antecedent...natural or moral...that it is the ground and reason why it is...any antecedent...with which a consequent event is so connected, that it...belongs to the reason [the] Event is true..." This was part of his philosophy as far back as his college years, in 1720:

> "things are where they seem to be...nothing changes or makes void Natural Philosophy" or the science of corporeal changes. God created such a specific number of Atoms, of such a particular structure so that they will always maintain the motion, direction, and velocity He imparted to them: from that...all the natural changes in the universe follow forever in a continued series. If a ball of lead were...let fall from the heavens [unseen until] ten rods from the ground...then its motion and celerity discerned, if...not for the imperfection and slowness of our minds, the perfect idea of the rest of the motion would...arise in our mind [as] were our thoughts comprehensive enough, our view...would excite in us a perfect idea of all past changes.16

This passage, a statement of Edwards' Idealism is also his view that cause is a predeterminable series of events that <u>follow</u> one another in a constant sequence. Cause and effect is not present in this concept but series, constant conjunction is evident "if it were not for the imperfection and slowness of our minds."

Edwards' work can be compared to Hume's, "...cause to be, an object precedent and contiguous to another and so united with it in the imagination that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other..."[17] In his <u>Enquiry</u> Hume supplemented this, "...the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of the

mind from one to another, and finding that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary actions we may be more easily led to own the same necessity common to all causes."[18]

Edwards had not abandoned the notion of efficient causality, but expressed an ambivalence about its universal application, and in other works suggested the notion of constant conjunction, series and sequences and the part the human mind plays in discerning change. Herein lies his major dilemma: if "efficient cause" is replaced, so to speak, by "constant conjunction" on what premises can any moral principles be based? If man's acts are contingent then man has no part in motivating or determining his acts. If man's acts are part of a constant chain of conjunction, then again he is forced to act without motivation, and by a pre-determined series of constant events. But if man has true, independent free will, how is the notion of God's omniscience accommodated? Or, if God is aware of man's choices, and motives, how can such a will be called free and the agent subject to blame or praise, called to account morally or legally?

These were the problems Edwards faced and which had to be resolved within the ministerial challenges from the scions and sons of Cambridge Platonists that found sinecures in the pulpits of New England parishes.It had to be resolved within the world view of the new wave of the enlightenment and the philosophical world view that Hobbes, Locke, Newton, Boyle, Bayle and Berkeley bequeathed to philosophy.[19]Edwards did not retreat into mysticism or call up from arcane sources proofs of an un-popular, even among many fellow Calvinists, Calvinist principle-predestination. He did seek to support this tenet of his faith by

putting his skill into the then current early eighteenth century philosophical debates on free will, virtue, natural religion, psychology, theory of knowledge, moral sense and other issues.

We will consider some of the arguments, or lack of them, that Edwards had submitted in his thesis on free will. Changing the order, somewhat, in which Edwards presented them let us consider his statements on cause and effect.(above) He had said that the causal chain is as relevant to mental phenomena as it is to material experience. The will follows the understanding's assent of the greatest good, by necessity, motivating a volition toward that good. Nowhere in his exposition, definitions or subsequent argumentation does Edwards submit proof of any kind that that phenomena he referred to variously as understanding, will, soul, mind, or acts of those faculties, or functions attributed to them, like thinking, accepting, rejecting, deciding, or the like, are subject to cause and effect. So certain is Edwards that such is the case that he never stopped to prove directly this essential point but took it for granted that it is only a matter of ordinary observation that is required to assent to his assumptions. Before he can assert that the will operates in a certain way, he must first prove that the will operates other than in the manner the Arminians had claimed. He cannot logically describe or claim contours or relations of "objects" in the "non-material" world until he establishes that the agent or faculty he claims exists, does "in fact exist" as he says it does. One cannot claim that angels fly in a certain pattern until one proves the existence of angels and then their

possession of means and capacity, even inclination, to fly. To assert and claim is not to prove, and this point is essential to his entire claim that acts of will are by necessity the causal factor or agent that motivates acts into motion. In the following he repeats this assumption:

> ... it is as repugnant to reason, to suppose that an act of will should come into existence without a cause, as to suppose the human soul, or an angel, or the globe of the earth, or the whole universe, should come into existence without a cause. If once we allow, that such sort of effect as a Volition may come to pass without a Cause, how do we know but that many other sorts of effects may do so too ?[20]

Edwards traded on our psychological tendency of assuming that all events have a cause and extended that assumption to mental events too. Surely, argues Edwards, assuming everyone believes in human souls and angels and that these must have a cause just as the "globe of the earth, or the whole universe " does. Of course more people in Edwards' time accepted as part of their faith the existence of angels and souls, but to equate non-material "objects" with processes in the material world repeats the error of Descartes who "located" the soul near the pineal gland. The assumption that cause, efficient or constant conjunction, is applicable to mental events may be true, but Edwards at this juncture had not proved it to be so. That "it is repugnant to reason" begs the question for no one ever witnessed "the globe of the earth, or the... universe...come into existence"; to argue that there is a "cause" to these events is a claim to knowledge beyond the limits of proof. Science cannot provide grounds for:

1. Believing in the existence of "non-material objects" like, angels, and souls.

2. Assuming that "non-material objects" like souls, and angels are like mental phenomena, hence subject to the same causal "laws" of physics.

3. Concluding (a): that the causal "laws" of physics that apply to material objects also apply to "non-material objects" as defined in 2 above.

4. Concluding (b): that if it is allowed that events such as mental phenomena "came to pass without a cause" that "other sorts of effects may do so too," or that all phenomena in the material world must follow the "laws" on this earth or abide only by those we understand.

5. If the Arminian position were true, that the will is un-caused and indifferent, no conclusion could be made that events physical, and non-mental, could or could not be or ever have "come to pass without a cause."

The argument above by Edwards, who was a master of reductio ad absurdum should not be taken as one in support of the proposition that man has free will but that the will that man has is caused. This interpretation has been generally overlooked and rarely, if ever, considered. Edwards cannot allow man free-will; to do so would deny the absolute, total omniscience of God, a proposition Edwards would never entertain, and even less likely attempt to prove. He had to this point retreated somewhat from a fast acceptance of efficient cause, telling us that, "it truly belongs to the reason why the proposition that so affirms ...is true or not..."[20] Examination reveals his ambivalence. In the immediate preceding passage he had stated that at times he would

use the term cause "...to signify a positive efficiency...to produce a thing or bring it to pass..."[21]

Explanation of this problem lies not only in this work on freedom of will, but in part also in an earlier work, Notes On the Mind. Essentially. Edwards embraced a form of Idealism, as extreme as--some say, more than--Berkeley's, an outgrowth of his acceptance and extension of Locke' sensationalism.[22] He said:

> If we only had the the sense of Seeing, we would not be as ready to conclude the visible world to have been an existence independent of perception, as we do; because the ideas we have by the sense of Feeling, are as much mere ideas, as those we have by the sense of Seeing. But we know, that the things that are the objects of this sense, all that the mind views by Seeing, are merely mental Existences; because all these things, with all their modes, do exist in a looking-glass, where all will acknowledge, they exist only mentally.

"Colors are not in things," he added, "no more than pain is in a needle..." which may not be completely original, but definitely within the temper of the thought of those philosophers most current to his times. Anticipating where such thought leads,- the complete dissolution of matter, substance and with it causal principles attributable to material objects, Edwards observed that everything that our senses present to our minds is nothing but Idea. God's original creation was such in its relation to what we call substance, and the motions of change, modifications and the series of changes that followed and continue to follow from that original creation are all within that original Divine will. These changes and modifications may seem to us less than perfect but it is within God's will and understanding that

everything that does occur does so in the manner he originally determined that it should. The question he added, "how these things exist there? I answer ...[it is] His determination...his design...that Ideas shall be...just so...and in such a manner...agreeable to such a series. "Further," he added, "it makes no difference how we talk about it as though things really exist", or as if the material world is the world our senses perceive or whatever our senses perceive and present to our minds "is but Idea, it is all God's communications to us."[21]

Whatever Edwards surrendered in cause and effect he gained in constant conjunction. It adds certainty to all Ideas, constitution to matter from perception of those Ideas, continuity to all events past, present and future. If efficient cause must be modified to constant conjunction then we have gained by the underwriting of those changes as <u>messages</u> of God's will. Edwards, was able to embrace a fully respectable empiricism of those British contemporaries he admired, but managed to place his own epistemological foundation in a God that gave certainty to his perceptions and ideas. Since <u>all</u> is Idea, and it is God that gives these Ideas their constancy and regularity, Edwards found it incumbent, not to prove that mental phenomena are subject to causal principles, but that it is through causal principles that God functions as he does, and is able to pursue his station as God. It is in this effort that Edwards felt that he had demonstrated the proposition he held without meeting it head on, that mental phenomena are subject to necessary and efficient causal principles. Certainly, by extension, if all is Idea, and we receive our understanding of the world though God's will and determination, a God who knows <u>our</u> will, no

particular proof of applicability of causal principles is needed as they affect man's mental activity. We must observe Edwards' elegant proof of God's capacity to function as God only because he knows our moral acts and choices in advance. The certitude this gives God is the font of necessity and constancy of causal principles in man's moral considerations and choices.

Edwards had written his treatise in a tight, formal style of the time. With the exception of detailed tables of contents and elaborate chapter headings the text is much like any current philosophical exposition, but a sudden change in style should be apparent to the reader in Section II. This change has been overlooked, but must be considered: Edwards attempted from here on to prove "that God has certain foreknowledge of the voluntary acts of moral agents...and the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that the volitions of moral agents are not contingent...without necessity of connection and consequence."[23] His style changed to the "geometric method"[24] and with no reference to the style change, he launched into propositions, arguments, corollaries, conclusions- a style-change that meant to Edwards what it meant to others that had used it. Prof. Copleston described the use of the "geometric method" by Spinoza: " [he] did not regard his geometrical method as infallible...[but] he regarded the logical deduction from clear and distinct ideas as providing an explanatory account of the world, as rendering the world of experience intelligible. And this point of view involves the assumption that the causal relation is akin to the relation of logical implication. The order of ideas and the order of causes are the same...it is arguable of

course...that knowing the effect gives us knowledge of its cause or that, the causal relation is akin to the relation of logical implication..." Edwards did not explicitly state this, but he did imply that knowledge of effect gives us knowledge of cause.[25] This is not an inconsistent position on Edwards' part. He had stated (p.139, n.16) that he often uses the word "cause" in its generally accepted sense of "efficient cause" but adds that "all natural changes in the universe follow forever in a continued series," by God's determination. Further, since Edwards believed that "all is idea" then these "ideas" are effects (God's communications to us) and knowledge of their cause confirms our knowledge of God. Edwards, like Spinoza, felt that demonstration in the "geometric method" was an actual description of the way "it is." In a most astounding metaphor, Edwards gives us God, who although being

> ... a very able mathematician and astronomer [who] with great exactness calculated the revolutions of the heavenly bodies [would be incapable and] could foresee nothing or foreknow no events [than his own making] that come to pass in the natural material world...[motion. nature]...unless [he], God does most exactly and perfectly foresee the future of acts of men's wills.[26]

In a negative sense, Edwards provided the causal principles he needed for his thesis. Unless God knew in advance what men will do, God is prevented from knowing the state of the world or the creatures within it. This hapless mathematician-astronomer, who with "great exactness...calculates the greater wheels of the machine of external creation...", had he not been able to "foresee and foreknow" He could

not have interposed himself to make those events come to pass that He did so order to happen- the great deluge, the exodus of the Hebrews, the destruction of the Egyptians. If God had no certitude of the moral choices of man, God could act in such ways that such ignorance would cloud God's discernment of conditions. God could even be in a state of repentance and remorse, for having done certain acts, or not acted when necessary because of his lack of the facts and knowledge about man's volitions and decisions. God, according to Edwards, works within the natural laws of the material world that He himself, God, created, and willed. It is because of this orderly sequence of affairs, and the obvious limitations the absence of such conditions would place upon God's ability to function as God, that gives Edwards the guarantee of necessity absent in the more earthly, mundane series and constancy of conjunction with its potential contingency.

Unless circumstances were such that God knew in advance the moral acts of man, and his volitions and choices, the very continuity of the material world would be a questionable state of affairs. God would know even less "... than even [that] which might be calculated by a good astronomer. For the moral world is the end of the natural world. The course of things in the latter is undoubtedly subordinate to God's design in the former... God has seen cause from regard to things in the moral world, extraordinarily to interpose, to interrupt and lay arrest on the course of things in the natural world; and even in the greater wheels of its motion, even as to stop the sun in its course..." Unless God knows, "...the volitions of men, and so knows something of the future state of the world" he could not know in the future as we are

certain he knew in the past, how to interpose his will into the affairs of the material world.[27] Because God operates within those principles of cause and effect the affairs of mankind in the material and non-material world in the future will be as dependably constant and predictable as they have been in the past. This obvious detour from Hume's position cannot be claimed as direct response, although Edwards admits reading some of Hume's works. It is possible however, as Hume's position, stated as early as 1739 in his Treatise and again in the Enquiry in 1748, antedated Edwards' expression of it in 1754, by several years. Edwards, feeling that he had "proved that God has a certain and infallible foreknowledge of the voluntary acts of moral agents,"[28] moved on to his next chapter to show that such proof has a logical consequence, "...a Necessity of connection" (It is interesting to observe an almost museum like curio Edwards used in his proof of such necessary connection involving Bishop Usher's calculation of the year of creation.[29])

To further his argument he added that to assume that moral agents and future volitions of those agents can be thought of as contingent and not necessary is an inconsistency of reason. That God knows all future events, "...carefully and without conjecture, knows that a thing will infallibly be, ...at the same time he knows to be so contingent that it may possibly not be, is to suppose his knowledge is inconsistent with itself... ." [30]

A major issue that must be considered is the importance that it is assumed that Edwards placed, for the reasonableness of his argument, on causal principles. Even a superficial reading of his work, it would

seem, makes a positive response the most likely one. Care must be taken however before a dogmatic assertion is made that such is, in fact, the case. A curious, almost enigmatic question is raised by Edwards himself, who in anticipation of possible cavils, and objections by his readers, framed a series of just such "evasions" as he called them. He wrote in one:

> If it should be said, That...if the soul determines its own volitions, it must be active in so doing, and the determination of itself must be an act, there is no need of supposing this act to be prior to the volition determined, but the will or soul determines the act of the will in willing; it determines its own volition, in the very act of volition...[this] must mean...That the determining act is not before the act determined,...nor is truly distinct from it but that the soul's determining the act of volition is the same thing with its exerting the act of volition...the mind's exerting such a particular act is its causing and determining the act. Or that volition has no cause, and is no effect; but that comes into existence, with such a particular determination, without any ground or reason of its existence and determination.

Responding to his own "evasion" or potential objectors, Edwards replied, "...the thing in question seems to be forgotten, or kept out of sight, in darkness and unintelligibleness of speech; unless such an objector would mean to contradict himself...I say it must be by some antecedent act... ." It must be emphasized, that it was Edwards that framed the objection in perfectly reasonable language and grammar of the time, and that it was Edwards who argued later that the way the question was stated is indistinct, unintelligible and not the way people should think on the subject. Prof.Ramsey, commenting on these passages, suggests that in response to his own "evasion" Edwards

"simply demands that the self-determinist not speak in this way...he must continue to make the same separation between volition and action as when speaking of the soul's being conversant about an external action... ." Ramsey continues:

> Of three possible interpretations of...this objection, the second has some merit: 'that the soul's determining the act of volition is the same thing with its exerting the act of volition'. Obviously such a viewpoint approaches Edwards' own...his answer to this suggestion seems singularly weak...there is nothing in Edwards' account of an act of free, responsible volition, which precludes it from being independent and self-moved...it is misleading to suggest that the presupposition of its (Edwards') argument is that all events, including moral events, have their causes and occur by some sort of necessity. But this was not and ought not to have been a primary postulate introduced at the beginning or in the course of the argument, since this is precisely what Edwards set out to do. Thus we owe to Edwards himself the suggestion of a type of self-determinism which may be able to withstand the onslaught of his own attack; and which he was better able to formulate as an objection than his opponents were able. So far as moral and volitional experience are concerned, and on Edwards' own penetration of these matters...there may be self-determination <u>in the willing</u>.33

Although Edwards held the opinion "from which he never wavered" that all events are caused, Ramsey points out that Edwards did not argue only from that premise primarily or place all weight of its worth on any theory of causation but on his definitions of liberty, his analysis and nature of volition, and his interpretation of an agent's responsibility for an act "when his will is in it."

1. He claims that in "evasion two", above, Edwards had opened the door to the possibility, however slight, that "the soul's determining the act of volition is the same thing with its exerting the act of

volition" thus describing a kind of self-determination.

2.Ramsey disagrees with Faust who says that, "...both divisions [Part I and Part 2] of Edwards' work, rest upon one fundamental postulate- namely that every event must have a cause."[34] "An act of will, like every other event, must have a cause," [35]

Prof. Ramsey demurs, observing that Edwards wrote, "...if the volition comes to pass by perfect contingence...without any cause...it is certain...no act of will, no prior act of the soul was the cause...Edwards succeeds in refuting self-determinism if this means that in a preceding action the soul determines to determine or chooses to choose."

From exuberant accolades like Faust's to restrained critiques like Ramsey's the consensus is that Edwards pursued a fairly successful argument for free-will if the definition of that term means that man as the agent-possessor of a mind that motivates the will toward the most agreeable and good- as the mind perceives agreeable and good to be. Volitions and moral decisions are the result of the mind's understanding of the good that follow through necessity. Cause and effect, most observers agree, is the foundation of Edwards' argument.[36]

In this consensus I claim no part, as I contend that this Puritan minister and philosopher was not concerned with proving that man has free will in the sense stated immediately above, as such a successful proof would be as much an affront to his metaphysical foundation as would a contingently self-determining will. It would defeat his theological need for a basis for moral accounting of praise and blame,

reward and punishment. The primacy of God and the certification of meaning to past events would be in question. Confidence in the regularity to the present and certainty to our expectancy that future events will within reason resemble the past would be undermined. A will, free to be determined by that being's own mind and judgement of the most agreeable and good, which sets in motion volitions followed by moral acts, would have been as abhorrent to Edwards as a will that does the same, unhindered by the mind, but is an agent unto itself. Such an agent, or the possessor of such a faculty that wills itself, is beyond that basic metaphysical relationship that Edwards posited as certainty. Within this fresh point of view we will examine this work and some of the problems that such a claim evokes.

Edwards was not pursuing proof of the freedom of man's will, as it is generally assumed, but was intent on buttressing the claim that man is responsible for his acts. I suggest this error is due in part to the commonly accepted title applied to Edwards' work on will,--Freedom of the Will-- a title he did not give it and never saw in that style when it was published for the first time a few months before his death in 1754. Attention is drawn to the importance of this actual title of the work because it presents a potent clue.:

A CAREFUL AND STRICT ENQUIRY into the MODERN PREVAILING NOTIONS of THAT FREEDOM OF WILL Which Is Supposed To Be Essential To Moral Agency, Virtue And Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise And Blame.(caps, italics, sic) This eloquent title, not too different from the general style of the time is indicative of the path Edwards intended to take,- an investigation of notions of a kind of freedom of will which is

supposed essential in considerations of man's moral responsibility for his acts. He does not announce in this title that he will investigate, least of all prove, whether or not man's will is free or that man is free to will, but that he will investigate a kind of will supposed to be essential to moral agency. In the section devoted to proof Edwards submitted an argument in support of the difference he maintained exists between natural and moral necessity. The order of events in the natural world follow one another and the necessity of that order is supplied by reason. Moral necessity is that causal chain that follows when the understanding determines the most agreeable and the greatest good causing a volition toward or away from the act in the will. Edwards does not discuss will in the plain manner he pledged he would "without any metaphysical refining," (n.37 below), but acknowledges that there are psychological factors that can make the choice agreeable to the mind. We will see that Edwards saw a difference between "will" itself and "choice," albeit an ambivalent position.

In the opening paragraph Edwards stated that "philosophers, metaphysicians, and polemic divines have brought the matter into obscurity by the things they have said of it." In the next paragraph he proceeds to do exactly what he had said others had done, re-define the word "will". He says, "...therefore I observe, that the Will, (without any metaphysical refining) is, That by which the mind chooses anything. The faculty of the Will, is that power,...of mind, by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the Will is the same as an act of choosing or choice."[37] We have seen earlier that Edwards was as concerned with proving or maintaining principles relative to the

material constancy of the world as he was with the moral responsibility of man, a section that "occupies scarcely one-tenth of the work." Edwards' theology required that he show as heretical the Arminian concept of will, i.e. contingent, indifferent and independent of a prior or external to-itself cause.[38] The necessity of man's acts are due to God's foreknowledge of the acts man will choose. Edwards showed that God can only interpose himself into the affairs of men because he has foreknowledge of our choices. He can only function in the manner he does because he knows what we will choose to do. Edwards believed and thought he had proved, that God regarded man's moral activity his end and purpose in the natural world, and that all events and course of things in that material world are consonant with God's plans, and subordinate to God's design for the moral world, the world ascertained not by sense but by "light." Edwards maintained that such a will would even be unknown to God, who would be ignorant of all men's choices, and thus hamper his capacity to function as God. I state that Edwards was not arguing that man has a will that he himself controls when he chooses to do what his mind has determined to be the good and most apparent agreeable. No, such a will would lead to a confrontation between man's choice to act as he wills and God's will that man chooses what He wills. Despite Edwards' disclaimer that his definition would be free of "metaphysical refining", on the contrary, he has led us on a path guided by forms of efficient causal chain and constant conjunction. He supplemented that with his own version of Idealism to establish some sort of sufficient and necessary reason to certify man's moral acts, which required Edwards to satisfy the question, stated in

the title of this work, how such acts could be "essential to moral agency, reward and punishment, praise and blame" ? If all these ideas are from and "foreknown" by God, then God and civil law cannot hold man accountable. Such a will and relationship between God and man resembles more closely the stand of the Arminians than that of Calvinist Edwards.

The weak response Edwards made to his own "evasion" is not just that which Prof. Ramsey claimed it to be. It is not that Edwards framed a form of self-determination that his opponents could not, or that Edwards realized that some sort of self-determination could even be thought of, but that Edwards was not interested in such kind of will, one in which the volition is the determination. Edwards' concern is with a kind of will in which man could be brought to account or earn reward. However, Edwards has not reduced the metaphysical problems, but expanded them. Is choosing, or the power of choice synonymous with freedom; can we accept Edwards' definition that an act of choice is the same as an act of will?Is the process of choosing or making a choice the same as doing or acting ? That there is great difference we can learn from Edwards himself for in this work he says:

> I say "in or about the mind's view of the object which causes it to appear most agreeable" because what has influence to render an object in view agreeable, is not only what appears in the object viewed, but also the manner of the view, and the state and circumstances of the mind that views. Particularly to enumerate all things pertaining to the mind's view of the objects of volition, which have influence in their appearing agreeable to the mind, would be a matter of no small difficulty, and might require a treatise by itself, and is not necessary to my present purpose. (Edwards' italics)[39]

Edwards said, (above) that "Will, is that power...of the mind by which it is capable of choosing...an act of Will is the same as an act of choosing or choice." and in the quote immediately above he says to describe the process of choice would in itself "require a treatise" to describe adequately in addition to the ... "manner" and "the state[s] of circumstances" that choice might be made. An act of will in other places would simply be following the last dictates of the mind as to what is good. This is ambivalent for Edwards later added, "...it is not true that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. Such a dictate of reason is quite a different matter from things appearing now most agreeable ...that dictate of reason has concern in the compound influence which moves the Will; and should be considered in estimating the degree of that appearance of good which the Will always follows." Reading Edwards' words and reasoning it is apparent but never noted that he had introduced a second kind of "dictate of reason" all of which affect "choice."

1. A "dictate of reason" that appraises acts and decisions, "things now most agreeable," and
2. A "dictate of reason" which is quite a different matter (from 1. above) " and which has concern in the compound influence which moves the Will.

In Edwards' description of the psychological process of will there is an appraising reason that makes a choice, and an approving reason that estimates the quality of that choice. The latter kind of reason, is the dictate of reason that motivates the will. Therefore, a difference exists between "choice" and "will", "choosing" and

"willing." Edwards' own words confirm this but Edwards evidently did not proceed or objectivly acknowledge that difference,- nor have two centuries of philosophers. And later he states that Liberty can be defined in the same way he had defined freedom of the will, and that he is not concerned with preceding events. "Liberty [is] that power and opportunity to conduct and do as he will...according to his choice; ...without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether...without a cause... . Let a person come by his choice anyhow."

Which Edwards asserted a supportable position ? The Edwards that claimed that the "manner... the state...the circumstance [or] all things" affecting decision making supports his "present purpose" in his thesis? Or that "Liberty (is) that power and opportunity to conduct and do as he will...according to his choice...without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition...whether...without a cause... . Let a person come by his choice anyhow." Edwards avoided the issue, raised by Lord Kames. He answered that critic that liberty is "...the power...to do as he pleases, conducting in any respect, [and]... pleasure, without considering how his pleasure comes to be as it is... ."[40]

This "evasion" avoids the issue. "Edwards plainly admits...that whether a man is determined in his choice by some prior cause or by no cause at all does not enter into the the definition or the experience of freedom..." Prof. Ramsey notes, adding that Edwards did not set

aside "his belief in divine determination, or what causes the strength of motives, or his confidence that all events, even moral events, have their causes."[41] A major goal in this work was to show that man is a moral agent that experiences the opportunity, under specific conditions to select or choose a course of action. Edwards calls this a moral choice not dictated or controlled by natural necessity and thus free choice and determination of the greatest good. He does argue however that God must have foreknowledge of these choices or God could not function as God, and God's foreknowledge provides the necessity of events to the series of events in the chain of conjunction. There are several difficulties in this argument:

1.His faith that "God" is a factor in this issue of human will can be understood as a "fact" to Edwards and to his times, but the assumption holds no logical legitimacy otherwise.

2.If we overlook the problem 1. above, and accept Edwards' submission of God's participation in continuous conjunction, and his need of foreknowledge to function as God, then man is not a morally responsible agent as his determination is foreknown and dictated by divine necessity that gave order to the series.

3.There is a difference in choosing and willing. When I am compelled by natural necessity to choose between the destruction of the world or my loved ones I am <u>compelled</u> to make a choice; I cannot ignore the issue, I <u>must</u> choose, I have no <u>alternative.</u> It is not an arbitrary liberty

as Edwards explained, "To do as [I] please; without considering how [my] pleasure comes to be as it is..." If I could, I would will that I were not confronted by such a choice. When my life is threatened by natural necessity of a depraved act of another, I am compelled by natural necessity to make a moral choice, to defend myself, and to do something. If my will were the same as my choice, I would will that such choice never came my way and do nothing. Natural necessity compels me to eat, breathe, work and sleep to stay alive. I am forced by the nature of my being to make decisions and choices at every turn. If to stay alive requires decisions, and every decision is a moral choice, then I have not the freedom of choice that Edwards proclaims. I must choose and if I must choose I am under some compulsion to determine what is most agreeable but not with the "Liberty" that Edwards defines. The question is a metaphysical one and one not likely to be satisfactorilly answered. However, these problems must be considered:

(a) whether or not compulsion to choose is compatible with the experience of freedom;

(b) whether the limitations on the numerical choices presented are or are not restrictions on freedom;

(c) whether the conditions under which the agent makes the choice are or not valid factors in making the choice;

(d) whether denial of alternative and awareness of consequences for

good or harm are valid factors determining liberty: i.e. freedom to choose, freedom from choosing;

(e) and whether or not the omission and avoidance of these issues can stand as they do, unanswered, and the assertion still be made that Edwards proved that will, choice and liberty are one and the same;

Compulsion and freedom are antonyms. Edwards assumed (b), (c), (d) are answerable by presentation of examples of the act of choosing but excluded as factors in that choice any preceding conditions or alternate possibilities. Within that arena Edwards limited the parameters of investigation- off limits, so to speak- and thus controlled his premises and dictated his conclusions.

God, it has been shown, was Edwards' all-encompassing energizer to his concept of the structure of reality. He started with this assumption and his faith in its truth would not allow him to consider God's role as that of an absentee Lordship. In this respect Edwards can be compared to another philosopher whose every effort seemed bound with the metaphysical and ontological priority of being, God. What Prof. Copleston said of Spinoza seems equally applicable to Edwards that:

> If we...start with God and proceed to finite things, assimilating causal dependence to logical dependence, we must rule out contingence... . It does not follow...that the finite mind is capable of deducing the existence of particular things...if the causal dependence of all things on God is akin to logical dependence, there is no place for free creation, nor for contingency in the world of material things, nor for human freedom. Any contingency which there may seem to be is only apparent...if we think that some of

> our actions are free, this is only because we are ignorant of their determining causes.[41]

On the small stage that Edwards allowed man to exert his will, choice and liberty, Edwards showed that man is a free but directed actor. Edwards' arguments in other arenas in this same work are, relative to modern problems, of increasing applicability but overlooked and ignored. The value of this work does not rest on his success or skill in proving features of will or other metaphysical issues. Any accolades he deserves in this effort, and there are many, must come from an examination of the work from a different perspective. What compelling value is the work, what does it contain other than a notion with which not every one agrees, on a topic that is not seriously debated in philosophy as it once was ? This work on <u>will</u> rests on premises that Edwards elucidated as philosophical premises but are also in fact psychological descriptives. They read more like text book psychology or outlines for legal argumentation and responsibility.

Some interpreters insist on its merits as a work on "will " but Ola Winslow warns of this error:

> Modern students should keep in mind [the treatise's] title, which imposes limitations on a complete study... . This limitation is largely responsible for the lukewarmness of later scholars for whom the battle of the will has greatly changed with the centuries. ...the treatise should be judged in the light of its main purpose and against the background of 1754. This was late in the day in the long battle.[42]

Prof. Faust, however makes the mistake of hailing it as an excellent example of an argument in the philosophical controversy on

"free will," when he said of it, "The work must give Edwards a high place in letters if only because it is one of the few great books in English theology: it discusses the neglected subject of the human will." [43] Edwards had come late to the battle; the greater shots had been fired almost a hundred years earlier in the Bramwell-Hobbes debates, and Clarke long ago, as had Locke, had had their say. Even Hume in 1739 had done so too and by 1758 had made a final revision of his views.[44] The treatment of the topic by then was to eliminate the metaphysical and concentrate on the psychological aspects of the issues as Hume had done in 1739:

> I desire it may be observ'd, that by the will, I mean nothing but the internal impression we feel and are as conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind. This impression...it is impossible to define...for which reason we will cut off all those definitions and distinctions, with which philosophers are wont to perplex rather than clear up this question...and shall examine that...question concerning liberty and necessity which occurs so naturally in treating of the will.[45]

Kant, in 1785, had decided not to argue the issue at all, but took as granted that proof of freedom of the will is for practical reasons irrelevant. Everyone assumes that they are masters of their will and no route towards "proof" can in fact lead to a change in that belief.

> Freedom must be presupposed as the property of the will of all rational beings. It is not enough to ascribe freedom to our will, on any grounds whatever, if we do not have sufficient grounds for attributing it to all rational beings. ... Now I say that every being that cannot act otherwise than under the idea of freedom is thereby really free in a practical respect. That is to say, all laws which are inseparably bound

> up with freedom hold for it just as if its will were proved free in itself by theoretical philosophy. ...we must grant that every rational being who has a will also has the idea of freedom and that it acts under this idea [and] in such a being we think [is] a reason which is practical...which has causality with respect to its objects. ...we cannot conceive of a reason which consciously responds to a bidding from the outside with respect to its judgements.Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles, independent of foreign influences; consequently. as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must regard itself as free.[46]

Prof. Aldridge observed that:

> The aspect of Edwards thought most widely known in America and England, is of course his [Freedom of Will]. [William] Godwin cites Edwards in the section of Political Justice...it is purposeless to speculate on how much of his argument for determinism Godwin derived exclusively from Edwards. That it was considerable we may infer from Godwin's citation of Edwards (three times) and from the esteem with which Englishmen regarded Edwards' essay a few years after its publication. In so far as Godwin is concerned, we may safely assume that Edwards' theories...were...influential... .[47]

Prof.Shea assents, "Edwards was known for a long time, almost exclusively, as the author of The Freedom of the Will because so many of his major works were not published until decades after his death. Some are still in manuscript form, waiting for editing and publishing--perhaps the Yale edition will accomplish what time has not." Shea notes Samuel Johnson's remark relating to Edwards' work, "All theory is against freedom of the will, all experience for it." and adds that,"actually and symbolically, Edwards dominated discussions of the freedom of the will until the language of scientific naturalism obviated his metaphysical vocabulary."[48]

Shea's view is technically but not historically or philosophically correct within that which may be called the "history of ideas." If any part of Edwards' total work is worth saving, and in particular any of Freedom of Will, "scientific naturalism" did not obviate all of his vocabulary for so much of it was not "metaphysical". In Part 1, Sections 1 through 5 Edwards placed in simple, concise language a series of definitions, terms, and meanings as careful and clear as though it were a treatise on semantics, psychology and philosophy. We may not agree with those definitions but these are not metaphysical, these are not ascriptions to Divine omnipotence but definitions that could serve psychology students and law and social agencies could use to advantage. Edwards' makes observations on motive, responsibility and determination of action, inducement, tendency or refusal and on passive, active, forced participation. The comprehension of consequences in conformity with or against community standards are examined. Compulsion, the capacity of the imagination to excite or deter action is discussed. Possibilities of success or failure to accomplish will's objective, reward and punishment is defined and assessed. Terms like "good, agreeable, inclination, pleasure, beauty, pleasant, repugnant, desire" are clinically examined, defined and filed for later use in his arguments. Consideration is given to human judgement, degrees of that affirmation, considerations of future satisfaction with those judgements are considered in a fashion most unlike that which a fundamentalist preacher is generally pictured to do.

The capacity to consider the psychological factors that influence

the deed, weighed in the balance of his past experiences at Northampton did not escape this psychological review. This review is often glossed over, if at all acknowledged, not examined, leaving us inadequately informed about the author's intentions because of the lack of available text or hostile theological or academic goals. As Edwards said, "My idea of the sun, when I look upon it, is more vivid, than when I only think of it. Our idea of the relish of a delicious fruit is usually stronger when we taste it, than when we only imagine it." Too many have followed a path of distortion: somewhat as Samuel Clemens' in equating his reading of Edwards work on Freedom of the Will to a "three day tear with a drunken lunatic" and his estimate of Edwards' logic that of "... a resplendent intellect gone mad."[51] It cannot be alleged that Edwards anticipated the particular Clemens, but was probably more than aware of general Mark Twains.

Edwards anticipated the role that "states of mind" plays in contests of will and recognized psychological processes as contributory factors. Edwards must no longer be judged under rules acceptable in earlier struggles of religious rivalry, but by the degree that his views anticipated and contributed to current world view. If Edwards did not objectively express modern psychology or behavioral science, his intellect guided him to discuss behavioral problems in terms as current, as applicable, as modern psychology. To his credit, Edwards' psychology, although an early expression in the new "science of man" as Hume called it, is a pertinent one and has to be reckoned with. Edwards will be judged not on his success of proving or disproving the freedom of will,-who cares any way-, as Kant claimed.

Edwards will be judged on what he contributed to current thought: a propensity to include in philosophy psychological definitions as premises that he recognized as important to his argument as the causal chain, efficient or constant conjunction. His argument is a wholesome invitation to the new science and modes of thinking, and added a new dimension, psychology, to philosophical speculation. Edwards will no longer be examined on a balance sheet that emphasizes his deficiencies or excesses in religion, but on the sum of what he did say that concerns,- and of what value it is to- us. He will not be judged on excesses in an all but irrelevant Calvinist theology but on his contributions to current thought and values as an early eighteenth century philosopher. In Freedom of the Will this kind of philosopher can be found.

Chapter Five: Notes

1 Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, (New York: Macmillan, 1972). Edwards, Jonathan, by Armand Maurer, p. 460-62, vol. 2. Norman Fiering, Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context, (Chapel Hill: N.C., Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1981) Int. pp. 1-15.

2 The Works of Jonathan Edwards, ed. P. Ramsey, (New Haven; Yale Press, 1966) Freedom of The Will p. 12, 13, 34-5, 47-8, ff.

3 Images or Shadows of Divine Things, Jonathan Edwards, ed. P. Miller, (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1948) Int.

4 Works of President Edwards, edd. E. Williams and E. Parsons, (London, 1817, reprint: N.Y., Burt Franklin, 1968, No. 271.) Vol. 1, p. 131. To avoid confusion this edition will be used as standard under listing as Works. Although the current project of the Yale University Editorial Committee for the Works of Jonathan Edwards is very useful, the decision to start publication with the last of Edwards' efforts, one that was published in 1754, only four years before his death misrepresents him chronologically and distorts any true picture of his development and maturation. One would have hoped for a correction of this scholastic transgression by Edwards' own alma mater. Also, the effort although generally of a high quality, is excrutiatingly slow, either because of a shortage of funds or scholars, and to date, twenty-nine years after its beginning the work is still quite unfinished and much of Edwards' work is still in manuscript in the Beinecke Rare Book Library archives at Yale University, at Andover Theological Seminary, or at Princeton and elsewhere. Even more important, so much that is in the edition used here- Williams and Parson's- has not yet reached the presses of Yale University, and so much that Yale has published inordinately emphasizes Edwards' theological output. Thus, to maintain consistency, only when particular editorial material is referred to, Prof. Ramsey's excellent Yale University Press Freedom of The Will be used here.

5 Ibid. 6 Ibid.p. 179. 7 Ibid.p. 180 8 Ibid.p. 138. 9 10 Ibid.p. 140

11 Ibid. p. 200. Up to this point in his argument Edwards has not considered the question whether a causal chain, efficient or of constant conjunction applies to acts of wil nor does he objectively do so in this work. In a later section, as will be indicated, he takes such a premise for granted when he proves, at least to his satisfaction, what he considers the power of God. Thus, in a negative sense, he submits that mental phenomena are subject to causal principles but such proof is not submitted within the present context.

12 Ibid. op.cit. p. 146.

13 Ibid, p. 152.

14 T. H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," The Colonial Society of Massachusetts Proceedings (Dec. 1931) pp. 193-223.

15 Works, Part II, Sect.III, p. 165. Faust and Johnson, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), pp. 27-37.

16 Ramsey, p. 15. H. Schneider, ed, A History of American Philsophy, (New York. Columbia University, 1963) p. 20.

17 Treatise of Human Nature, David Hume, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960) p. 172. Nicholas Capaldi, David Hume, (Boston; Twayne Publishers, 1975), pp. 95-129.

18 Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding David Hume, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) p. 92, ff.

19 Faust and Johnson, op.cit. pp xliii. Ramsey, op.cit., pp. 1, 47, 97, 164, ff; 34-5, 389, 430, ff.

20 Works, Part II, Sect. III, p. 165-170.

21 Works, I, p. 668-670.

22 Faust and Johnson, op cit. pp. xliii-l. Philip F. Gura, "Seasonable Thoughts: Reading Edwards in the 1980s ", New England Quarterly, LIII, No. 3, (Sept. 1980) pp. 388-394. Andrew Hudgins, "How Will The Heart Endure ?". Robert Lowell on Jonathan Edwards, South Atlantic Quarterly, No.4, (Autumn, 1981) pp. 429-440. Samuel Hux, "Self-Election of the Elite". Dissent, Winter, 1984. pp. 127-141. Wilson H. Kimnach, "Jonathan Edwards' Early Sermons: New York, 1722-1723" Journal of Presbyterian History, Vol. 55, 1977. pp. 255-66. Mark A. Noll, "Moses Mather (Old Calvinist) and the Evolution of Edwardsianism." Church History, 49 (September, 1980) pp. 273-285. Stephen J.Stein, "The Quest for the Biblical Sense: The Biblical Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards." Harvard Theological Review, 1977. Daniel B. Shea, "Jonathan Edwards: The First Two Hundred Years", Journal Of American Studies, Vol. 14, No.2, (August 1980) pp. 181-197. Emily S. Watts, "The Neoplatonic Basis of Jonathan Edwards", Early American Literature, X (1975) pp. 179-189.

23 Works, p. 217-248.

24 Edwards' attempt is strange as he had submitted, in a letter to the Trustees of New Jersey College at Princeton, on his selection and election by that institution to the Presidency of that College, a modest disclaimer of his qualification because of his deficiency in "...Algebra and the higher parts of mathematics..." Letters, Works, 568-71.
Note: I have not been able to find in my research, in text, critique or comment any observation of this change to the "geometrical method", a change that had obvious epistemological value to Edwards. The change in

style has gone un-noticed, as far as I can determine probably because this work, like so many of Edwards' works, except for very early editions which are out of print, is rarely published in its entirety. Prior to the Yale edition published in 1957, it was last published unabridged in the U.S. in 1903, and before that in England in 1855. An excellent collection of Edwards' works, by Faust and Johnson, while providing an incisive commentary on the work, that commentary is not a substitute for Edwards' own opinions to which they allot a mere fifty pages representing a severely abridged and adumbrated Freedom of The Will. Ola Winslow, who won the Pulitzer Prize for her biography of Edwards in 1940, allots one third of a page for introduction and twenty six pages of abridgement of the work. There seems to be no work that so many "know" so much about and on which they hold such firm opinions, but of which they read so little. The abridgements, emendations, textual editing and exclusion has colored and distorted this work and added to the misconceptions generally accepted by an uniformed public that cannot easily obtain the text as written by the author, but as edited to fit a publisher's budget.

25 A History of Philosophy, F. Copleston, (N.Y.: Image, 1963) Vol.4, p. 217-18. Capaldi, op.cit. pp 95-129.

26 Works, pp. 228, ff.

27 Ibid.

28 Works, p. 235.

29 By implication, accepting Bishop Usher's calculation of the date of creation of the world, (Oct. 23, 4004 BC, 9 A.M.) Edwards says that if "five thousand seven hundred and sixty years ago...and then this world...all at once starts out of nothing into being...takes on a particular nature...all in absolute contingence...without any concern of God, or any cause...or any connection with the foregoing, I say...that there was no evidence of that beforehand...there was no evidence of it to be seen in the thing itself; for the thing itself, as yet was not..." Since there was no evidence before that this event would happen, he concludes, there was no reason why the event should happen. The thought that the world could create itself contingently and without God's knowledge of it, of course, is abhorrent to him, but here he claims that because there existed no prior cause, condition, evidence, connection, or evidence that the world would be created in his hypothetical example, there was no reason why it should have happened at all. This quaint and somewhat naive argument is submitted as an example of how easily Edwards moved from science or philosophy to theology and his conviction that if science has any fundamental or absolute truths in it that truth comes from God.

A careful calculation of Edwards' arithmetic indicates that he seems to have accepted Usher's general calculation, but not final addition. Using Edwards' figures, the world is 2 years older than the Bishop said it was-- a bold assertion for one who admitted his "deficiency in Algebra and other parts of higher mathematics." (see n.24, above.) Time

will tell which of these two could add better.

30 Works, p. 238.

31 Works, II, Sect.II, p. 161-62.

32 Ramsey, p. 25.

33 Ibid, p. 23-27.

34 Faust and Johnson, p. xliv.

35 Ibid, pp. xliv--xlivii.

36 Conrad Cherry, The Theology of Jonathan Edwards (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) p. 133. A. O. Aldridge, Jonathan Edwards, (New York; Washington Square Press, 1955) p. 82. Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards, (New York; Delta, 1967) p. 254-263.

37 Works, p. 127.

38 Aldridge, op.cit., p. 81.

39 Works, Part 1, Sect. II, pp. 133-135.

40 Works, Vol.1. Remarks on Lord Kames' Essay, p.454.

41 Ramsey, p.16. Copleston, op.cit., Vol.4, p. 219.

42 Winslow, op.cit. p. 196.

43 Faust and Johnson, p. 425.

44 Hume, op.cit, Treatise, Enquiry.

45 Hume, Treatise, p. 398.

46 Immanuel Kant, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Lewis Beck, ed. Robert Wolff (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969) pp. 75-76.

47 Alfred Owen Aldridge, "Jonathan Edwards and William Godwin on Virtue", American Literature, Vol. XVIII, Jan. 1947 pp. 308-316.

48 Daniel B.Shea, "Jonathan Edwards: The First Two Hundred Years." Journal of American Studies, Vol. 14, No. 2, (August 1980) pp. 181-197. Donald Weber, "The Question of the New England Mind," New England Quarterly, LV, No. 2, June 1982 pp. 285-292.

49 Ibid.

50 Works.

51 Shea, op.cit.

Chapter Six: The Moral Sense. Edwards and Hutcheson.

The influence of Francis Hutcheson on Edwards' philosophy, particularly that in ethics, aesthetics, virtue and morals is generally uncontested. Edwards referred to Hutcheson favorably several times in his major treatise on virtue The Nature of True Virtue, and the thrust of both philosophers' notions run parallel to a great degree. Edwards' views in this area of philosophy and his position, respectively on moral sense and other elements in Hutcheson's philosophy were quite similar, "making it literally a commentary on Hutcheson, have not been generally recognized," as Prof. Aldridge noted.[1] These are words of praise but leave a cloud over the originality of Edwards' philosophical work. Edwards wrote The Nature of True Virtue somewhat as a rebuttal to Hutcheson's argument for a "moral sense," Edwards rejected "moral sense" as a term describing a means of perceiving a state of virtue. He gave some credence to such a "faculty" as it plays a part in value estimations relating to the physical display of virtuous acts which are in accord with accepted societal norms. Hutcheson was the named philosopher, but others who maintained the capacity of a "moral sense" to ascertain that ultimate, Platonic state of virtue, were subject to this analysis too. The degree of similarity to Hutcheson's views has been over-stated and Edwards' originality overlooked.

The treatise [The Nature of True Virtue] has "not [been] widely read [but] it has been said to have few peers in the field of ethics; it is a philosophical work of great originality... and ...deserves to be ranked with anything written on the same subject by any of the more

recent American philosophers [Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey. and Santayana]." But even the praise that Prof. Frankena expresses about this work, a work that has been buried in obscurity too long, becomes muted plaudits when he adds, "For the rest of Edwards' relevant views we must look to other [of Edwards'] writings." [2] Frankena then enters into an analysis of Edwards' Calvinist theology thereby obfuscating the thrust of this treatise which is essentially a work of moral philosophy. Edwards bases his argument on his epistemological theory that virtue like other moral qualities can be ascertained not through the sense faculties but only by an "inner light." The Bible, revelation and Scriptures (which he refers to, often, in the work) to Edwards was of course fundamental truth and so, he chides his intellectual opponents (like Hobbes) who had removed Divine purpose from their moral arguments. This is, however, a philosophical work, and the freshness of his arguments is crisp and the roots, Platonism, in which they are imbedded, are deep.

It has been demonstrated in earlier chapters of this paper that the Edwards of pulpit theology was not the Edwards of print and publication. When he was at Stockbridge where he wrote The Nature of True Virtue his theology was a pallid melange of his pulpit statements at Northampton. To understand Edwards' philosophy we must read Edwards' philosophy as philosophy and not in the light of, or an explication of, or an extension of, his Calvinist theology. This theology, it has been shown was rejected by his parishioners in 1748 and whatever was left of his Calvinist legacy was modified either by Edwards himself in maturity or by his colleagues and pulpit heirs, spearheaded by Moses Mather and

other Harvard trained Calvinists. This was discussed in previous chapters. It is a time, long overdue, that Edwards be examined for what he wrote philosophically and to judge him on that scale, as in this philosophical treatise on The Nature of True Virtue.

Edwards' Calvinist theology, it can be noted from the previous chapter of this paper, had undergone a decided moderation. Whereas he had earlier preached a rigid predeterminism, in his later years at Stockbridge in his Freedom of the Will he argued closer to the theistic view that God had "foreknowledge" of what man does. This is a view much closer to Moses Mather's theology that God "permits" not so much as He pre-determines. It is time to bury Edwards' "evil" with him and remember his good.

An example of the gross distortion that follows from judging Edwards on the basis of his reputed theological stance must, however, at this juncture be presented before further analysis of Edwards' philosophical views on virtue are considered. The subject of this chapter is Edwards' stand on virtue, and the clearest expression of that stand is in his treatise The Nature of True Virtue. Not only is Edwards' philosophy mis-represented in the article which is examined in the following, but his moral character itself is maligned. The author of the article used as a basis of judgement not Edwards' philosophical text but abstracts from his sermons. Quoting from William Shirer's The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich Prof. Bennett extracts the following from a speech by Heinrich Himmler to his SS troops and generals:

> ...what happens to a Russian or Czech, doesn't interest me in the slightest...good blood types we will take...by kidnapping their children...[That]

> nations starve...to death like cattle interests me only as we need them as slaves...on...the extermination of the Jewish race...you know what it means when 100 corpses, 500, 1000, are lying side by side...[and for us to still remain] decent fellows...that is what made us hard...a page of glory in our history..."[3]

Then, to weigh Himmler's morality against that of Edwards' Bennett makes his judgement on the following abstracts from Edwards' sermons but first observed that although Edwards "himself did not torment the damned...the question arises of whether his sympathies didn't conflict with his approval of eternal torment."

> The seeing of the calamities of others tends to heighten the sense of our own enjoyments. When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state...when they shall see...their torment...and hear their dolorous shrieks...and consider that they...are in the most blissful state...how will they rejoice.

If this does not convince one to "suspect misanthropy" in Edwards, Bennett submits this abstract from the same sermon:

> The heavenly inhabitants...will have no love or pity to the damned...for they will know it is not fit they should love [the damned] for they will know then, that God has no love to them, nor pity for them. (Torments of The Wicked in Hell, Works, London, 1817, IV pp, 507-508, 511-512; 509 respectively.)

Bennett concludes his evidence against Edwards with the observation that "one can adjust ones feelings of pity so that they conform to the dictates of some authority -doesn't this suggest that ordinary human sympathies played only a small part in Edwards' life ?"

Bennett used a compilation of several editions "revised and corrected" by the Rev. C.E. DeCoetlogon in 1788 and 1789, and another "abridged" version in 1789. Prof. Johnson says of this London edition of Edwards' works, "the complication in the details [of publication] is so great that a summary of the confusions [is] necessary. ...Almost none of the sets...is accurately made up." [4] Jonathan Edwards was dead thirty years when this version reached the press in 1788, and in his grave for almost 60 years when the confused publications were issued in London. Some measure of doubt may be entertained as to the authenticity of the implied intent or if Edwards' meaning was accurately conveyed by the Rev. DeCoetlogan in his "revisions, corrections, abridgments and re-alignments" of Edwards work but no doubt exists as to the authenticity of the following words Bennett quotes Himmler:

> It is the curse of greatness that it must step over dead bodies to create new life. Yet we must...cleanse the soil or it will never bear fruit. It will be a great burden for me to bear."

Bennett adds, parenthetically "This I submit is the language of morality... . The conflict may be avoided by giving up, or not ever having, those sympathies which might interfere with one's principles. That seems to have been the case with Jonathan Edwards...my concern is only with the worst thing about him- namely his morality, which was worse than Himmler's." [5]

In support of this position Prof.Bennett submits none of Edwards' philosophy or philosophical commentary by others and does not consider the circumstances under which Edwards and Himmler spoke. It cannot be

denied that Bennett quoted Edwards' words, and it is a non-argument to imply that his intent was perverted by editorial ineptitude, however, this paper has referred to, in several places (Ch.1,2 n.15, 57 and elsewhere) and stated that there was a "dark side" to Edwards' theology. Himmler spoke from a conqueror's need for justification of deeds he himself committed and ordered others do. Edwards spoke in support of justice meted to observers and transgressors by what was generally accepted in his times as the highest judge. In Ch.3, n.23 he said, "Eternal punishment is not contrary to Divine justice or inconsistent with his mercy...The end not only of temporal things...beyond and opposite that of those who will be eternally happy...This is true because it was promised by God and would not have been promised unless it will be fulfilled."

Prof.Bernstein observed:

> Images of hellfire...trouble[d]...Christians in the New World...Jonathan Edwards...pictured a fierce Almighty...dangling sinners...over...the mouth of Hell...Yet our hells lack one crucial ingredient of the Biblical Hell: justice. ...Hell was sought by the psalmist as a weapon against the tyrant...against oppression. We have only feeble mechanisms to punish the creators of concentration camps or the instigators of large-scale suffering. Only when human society can justly punish every evil will Hell be forgotten.[6]

The nature of True Virtue has only until recently been available in anything but old editions dating back to the early decades of the 19th century. Prof. Frankena's efforts in the volume he edited has probably gone a long way to militate against this neglect. He adds however to the cloud shadowing the reputation of Jonathan Edwards when in his Introduction to this work, he includes a summary of the more

odious tenets of Edwards' theology, and thus adds to the attitude of uneasiness so many readers have when faced with the latter's philosophical efforts. We no longer measure the Scholastics by the degree, or lack, of their devotion to God and the Index Liborum Prohibitorum kept few scholars from the books listed there. Edwards was a moral-ethical philosopher to that degree of determining the worth of empirically observable acts and behavior. For the state of virtue, the being of virtuous, Edwards returned to his theory of knowledge expressed in his early years at Northampton in A Supernatural Light. In what amounts to almost a repetition of the very words he used in that earlier work he says, "True virtue consists in BENEVOLENCE TO BEING IN GENERAL. Or perhaps, to speak more accurately, it is that consent, propensity and union of heart to being in general, which is immediately exercised in a general good will." A few paragraphs later he expands this, still in the idiom of Supernatural Light

> When I say, true virtue consists in love to being in general, I shall not be likely to be understood, that no one act of the mind or exercise of love is of the nature of true virtue, but what has being in general, or the great system of universal existence, for its direct and immediate object, has anything of the nature of true virtue. But, that the nature of true virtue consists in a disposition to benevolence towards being in general...no affections towards particular persons or beings are of the nature of true virtue but such as arise from a generally benevolent temper, or from that habit or frame of mind, wherein consists a disposition to love being in general.(Edwards' caps and italics) [7]

Edwards is saying that true virtue is not a particular display of a generous or loving act, or a passing attitude of mind, but a total

state of being disposed by "temper...habit or frame of mind" to love all existence, creation, life in general. "No one act" or a generous and benevolent gesture is the mark of true virtue. Those are but the doing of approved or good deeds; Edwards says that "true virtue" arises from the very nature of the individual- the heart and habitual disposition of a good will.

Within a list of 90 questions in a section of one of Edwards' notebooks he asks in Question No. 66, "Is there no virtue in the exercise of natural conscience, the moral sense, natural compassion and generosity ?" As an after-thought and an answer Question No. 67 says, "Is not self-love the root of all virtue ?" [8] In The Nature of True Virtue he responds in detail to the questions he posed above, and examines several arguments submitted by moral sense theorists. Self-love he defines as self-interest and includes in it such pleasures as are encountered in daily life. He adds an identity, in grief or happiness, with that which others experience, and introduces an aesthetic element that the mind immediately apprehends in the perception of harmony, uniformity, beauty, proportion and balance that certain actions excite in our senses. This is, he says, an awareness of "excellency of being." The opposite effect, the disagreeableness and the disharmony of relationships in general that contrary conditions and acts cause have equal influence on our judgement. These views are close to Hutcheson's who said:

> IX."the word beauty is taken for the idea raised in us, and a sense of beauty for our power in receiving this idea. Harmony also denotes our pleasant ideas arising from composition of sounds...a power of

perceiving this pleasure...

X. It is of no consequence whether we call these ideas of beauty and harmony perceptions of the external senses of seeing and hearing, or not. I should rather choose to call our power of perceiving these ideas an internal sense...[9]

Edwards, whose "commentary" indicates general agreement, cautions however, that the emotions that rise from such perceptions are not from benevolence, but from self-interest, and all immediately determined by sense perception of that which is agreeable or disagreeable. An extension of self-interest, loving those who love us, seems to be but is not axiomatic; many instances of natural relations can be cited that do not follow such axiomatic sequences. Filial devotion or parental affection is not always a fact of life and many deviations exist. The facts of life show, Edwards argues, that any kind of love for others rises from the same emotion that makes us hate those who hate and harm us or show kindness and love to us. A man's disposition to hate those who hate him rises from self-love as does loving those that love us and giving thanks for kindnesses.[10]

In this he had differed with Hutcheson who said the opposite:

> the author perhaps suppose[s] a greater agreement of mankind in their sense of beauty than experience will confirm ; but...he is solicitous...to show that there is some sense of beauty natural to men...which all agree to be natural [then] it will be no difficult matter to apprehend another superior sense, natural also to men, determining them to be pleased with actions, characters, affections. This is the moral sense...[11]

Edwards rejects that the "moral sense" is applicable to appreciation of the good or harmony or pleasure that ensues from a principle based on love of public benevolence or general public good. If such sense was in fact part of man's faculties man would love trees, rivers, rain and inanimate things in the same way we love living things. Trees, rivers and rain do contribute to public good.

> ...it is said by some...there is some other principle concerned in exciting the passions of gratitude and anger besides self-love, viz a moral sense, or a sense e of moral beauty and deformity, determining the minds of mankind to approve of, and be pleased with virtue...to disapprove of vice... . ...authors of views that hold that a moral sense consists in a sense of beauty which arises from a principle of public benevolence are wrong...if considered correct...men would love inanimate things...that were pleasing, and hate those that were not, in the same sense that men hate or love one another.[To love or hate men and not things] cannot rise from a moral sense of benevolence, [or] from a moral sense arising from public affection. Such a moral sense implies that man delights in public good and is adverse to public evil...Why do we not experience gratitude to a garden, or a fruitful field? And why are we not angry with a tempest, or blasting mildew, or an overflowing stream?[12]

Shaftesbury, it should be remembered, as indicated in an earlier chapter said almost the same. Some of Edwards metaphors and language on this issue read almost as a paraphrase of Hutcheson's.[13] Although there is a high level of agreement between Edwards and Hutcheson, Edwards showed much originality in several areas and differed with Hutcheson on three major issues.:

1. Hutcheson (and other philosophers of the time) argued that the

natural world and man's perception and appreciation of it could have been other than it is; a natural order other than that pertaining would be as natural to reason as that which actually presently exists. Man could have loved the opposite of what he now generally admires and do what he now abhors. (Edwards disagrees. Many societies in the past and presently do what we abhor, and vice versa we hate many of the acts other societies hold sacred.)

2. Although man has faculties and the capacity to appreciate virtue endowed by God, Hutcheson claimed, not all acts to be virtuous must be directed toward God, but may and often are directed toward fellow man and creatures. (Not so, maintained, Edwards; only that which is direct love of "being" itself is true virtue.)

3. Hutcheson, believing as he did in 1, above, as an arbitrary act of God, from the state of nature and the appreciation of it one can determine what is true virtue. (Not so, maintained Edwards. What is arbitrary, is not God's capricious act but the inability of mankind throughout history and society to determine what virtue, good or evil are.) These contesting views are examined in the following pages.

Hutcheson's and Edwards' discussion of the former's views could be the substance of a philosophical dialogue. Hutcheson maintained there was Divine arbitrariness in the nature allocated to man's aesthetic and moral sense. We would be agreeable and receptive to other regularities and harmonies had we been so constituted by "the Author of our Nature."

On this issue Hutcheson said:

> I. There seems to be no necessary connection of our pleasing ideas of beauty with the uniformity or regularity of the objects, from the nature of things, antecedent to some constitution of the Author of our nature, which has made such forms pleasant to us. Other minds may be so formed as to receive no pleasure from uniformity, and the same regular forms seem not equally to please all...let us make [a] supposition...that the constitution of our sense ...to approve uniformity is merely arbitrary...an infinity of tastes...of beauty possible...it is plain that from the perception of beauty in any one effect we should have no reason to conclude design in the cause; for a sense might be so constituted as to be pleased with such irregularity as may be the effect of an undirected force.14

Such a position is untenable to Edwards for three reasons:

1.Any arbitrariness in God's design is not thinkable, for, as discussed in Freedom of the Will, God's foreknowledge of the physical universe and the acts, thoughts and motives of the creatures in it are essential prerequisites to his omniscience, and omnipotence.

2.Beauty is not, to Edwards, a creation of man's appreciation of the natural order of the physical world. "Beauty does not consist in discord and dissent, but in consent and agreement. And if every intelligent being is some way related to being in general, and is part of the universal system of existence; and so stands in connection with the whole; what can its general and true beauty be, but its union and consent with the whole?" 15

Further, the beauty Hutcheson speaks of, is the secondary beauty, the

beauty of material things and particular things, "which appear beautiful when considered only with regard to its connection with...some particular things...within a limited...a private sphere...a general beauty is that by which a thing appears beautiful when viewed most perfectly, comprehensively and universally, with regard to all its tendencies...its connections with everything it stands related... ." With this definitive aesthetic view of beauty Edwards makes a direct assertion of his concept of virtue, which Hutcheson's position of arbitrariness does not allow. "That only," Edwards adds, "therefore is what I mean by true virtue, which belonging to the heart of an intelligent being, is beautiful by a general beauty, or beautiful in a comprehensive view, as it is in itself, and as related to everything with which it stands connected."16

3.The third and most telling reason Edwards gives for disagreeing with Hutcheson's position on this issue is also a demonstration of Edwards' power of argumentation and originality. If we could have had an aesthetic or moral sense that would have agreed with a different order of physical things, this would imply:

(a) that our own nature would have to agree with things that are not only hateful, but also things that are loved.

(b) which means we could love and hate God at the same time, or that God would want us to hate him as that would be the inference to the contrary of the present human nature.

(c) it is absurd to believe that God, who agrees with himself, and ordained an order of events in nature that he himself established would order a form of nature that he himself would hate or that his creatures would do so.

(d) it is an accepted notion that all men agree with themselves, and function agreeably within the motivations of their own dictates and reason. Had we been recipients of a contrary nature, and loved what we now hate and hate what we now love, we would have to hate ourselves and disagree with ourselves but since we would have a contrary nature than we have now and the newer nature was our lot, we would have to disagree with that disagreeable nature and approve that which we now approve. "Which is absurd."

> The manner of being affected with the immediate presence of the beautiful idea, depends not on any resonings about the idea, after we have it, before we can find out whether it is beautiful or not; but on the frame of our minds, whereby they are so made, that such an idea, as soon as we have it, is grateful, or appears beautiful. therefore, if this be all that is meant by them who affirm that virtue is founded in sentiment, and not in reason...this is certainly true. But if thereby be meant, that the frame of mind, or inward sense given them...whereby the mind is disposed to delight in the idea of true virtue is given arbitrarily, so that a contrary sense and determination of mind, which would have agreed as well with the necessary nature of things, this I think is not true, ...to assert this would be a plain absurdity.[17]

A second and major area of disagreement between Edwards and Hutcheson is the latter's claim that although virtue, the moral sense

and other faculties involved are endowed by God, all acts to be considered virtuous need not be directed to or in consonance with God. Man has the moral sense, Hutcheson says, to determine virtue and can discern and direct his acts and love to man, directly, and be considered virtuous. Hutcheson observed:

> If we may suppose real Beings distinct from God, that their Affections are not God's affections...if our moral Sense is determined to approve kind Affection, and our Love or Benevolence must arise toward what we approve; or if we find an Instinct to desire the Happiness of every sensitive Nature, we cannot avoid loving Creatures, and we must approve any kind Affections observed in others toward their Fellows...we must approve...Affections toward the Deity...but still Affections toward Creatures, if they be distinct Natures, must be approved.[18]

Edwards' response is circuitous, and depends upon the sanctity endowed it by St.Anselm's "proof" which it resembles, the rationalism of Aristotle's potential of matter and Descartes' rationalism in his awareness of "perfection." God being primary, and intuitively the greatest of all beings is the object of the greatest share of possible human love:

> ...if BEING...be the first object of a truly virtuous benevolence, then that object that has the most of being...the greatest share of existence...will have the greatest share of...affection of the heart. Pure benevolence is being's uniting consent [toward] the general highest good...to each being...consistent with the highest general good, in proportion to the degree of existence* (foot note indicated, follows): * "in proportion to the degree of existence" because one being may have more existence than another, as he may be greater than another. That which is great has more existence, and is further from nothing, than that which is little... an Arch-angel must be supposed to have more existence, and to be... further removed from

> non-entity, than a worm. It is evident, that true virtue [is] LOVE TO GOD; the Being of beings... .whether we consider the primary or secondary ground of virtuous love.
> There seems to be an inconsistence in some writers on morality [who] do not wholly exclude [the] Deity out of the schemes of their morality but yet mention it so slightly that [I] suspect they esteem it less important and subordinate [to] true morality; and insist on benevolence to the created system in such a manner [to lead] one to suppose they look upon that [as] the most important and essential part of their scheme.19

Edwards thinks we should love the maker of the system and learn from Him, not the system or from the system he made. Edwards makes a vigorous dissent to Hutcheson's claim that from the orderly system of nature and the regularity of events within it, mankind derives (through the moral sense) a love of regularity, balance, justice and benevolence. Hutcheson referred to "uniformity amidst variety" from which general views and standards of beauty and morality are distilled. Edwards rejects Hutcheson on this: the reason things are satisfactory to the moral and aesthetic sense of mankind is because "those intelligent beings...perceive it", because "there is in it some image of the true, original beauty, which has been spoken of. ...[and] by that uniformity diverse things become as it were one." This agreement of man's "gratefulness" towards things, different in form and quality is the way, consistent with their resemblance to that which is "original beauty."20 It is not an objective sense that determines or appreciates the quality we refer to as "appears beautiful" (which is a secondary kind of appreciation of beauty) but in accord with a law or instinct we are born with.21 The beauty of an object, the perfection of

a work of art, and the correctness of a deed is not external and does not come into the senses and recorded as "beautiful, right, correct or just" but is so known and understood by its resemblance to "laws established, or instincts one has."

Edwards realigns his sights for his rejection of "justice" as true virtue. He uses as his target William Wollaston, who, Edwards avers, reduced all "virtue into an agreement of inclinations, volitions and actions with truth." Edwards is referring to "Mr.Wollaston's" The Nature of Religion Delineated. "It is this second kind of beauty [he] seems to have had in his eye... He has respect, " Edwards says, "to the justice in virtues and duties" toward one another and "conformity of affection," as proper between the parts of a true spoken proposition. "But...in true virtue...[as] in all virtuous dispositions and exercises [there is] the union of heart to being in general, which appears in those virtues; when true, are the various expressions or effects. Benevolence to being in general...is entirely a distinct thing from uniformity in the midst of variety, and is a superior kind of beauty."[22] Men do not love beauty, virtue or justice because of any process of reason or because of an antecedent analogy between things material and spiritual. There can only be a shadow of such a connection but it is that taste that "has been mistaken by some moralists, for a true virtuous principle..." 23

Finally, the dispute as to what is or is not virtue, Edwards says, revolves not around the arbitrariness of how the terms "good" and "evil" are used in a moral sense, but in the relative application of the terms in real practical life. In any circumstance and any language,

words like treachery, corrupt, deceit, murder, honesty, loyalty, mean exactly the same we understand them to mean. Hutcheson claimed, Edwards says, that what is described by or what different people and nations consider good and evil is "not inconsistent with a general moral sense, common to all mankind." There is no universal agreement by people in general in the performance of good and evil, Edwards responds,- there is in its understanding. A thief would be considered good by his fellows, if he kept silent when apprehended, bad by the thieves and good by his captors if he gave information leading to his fellow's capture. Our war efforts are good, and that same effort by our enemies is evil. We cannot agree on when one is performing benevolence or demonstrating self-interest,- rendering justice or oppression, love instead of hate; we only assume that such a standard exists, and which moralists pursue, and from that assumption all dispute on virtue revolves and never ends. A disposition from the inner light, an understanding of correctness rising from an inner awareness is the key to knowing what virtue is and to being virtuous. There is a universal understanding of what the term "virtue" means, but there is not a universal application of its meaning in life.

As has been claimed and to some degree hopefully substantiated, Edwards did contend within his time and place, with contemporary philosophers. He did not have the personal contact of a sophisticated community like Harvard at Boston, or Cambridge, Oxford or Princeton. He did not live or labor in the Miletus of a Philadelphia or New York but his engagement of the ideas of distant philosophers like Locke, Hutcheson, Shaftesbury, Newton, Wollaston indicates where his

philosophical mind, not his Calvinist temperament, flourished. In this engagement Edwards took what he felt consonant with his faith "but did not demand that the verity of his belief destroyed the substance and rational possibility of an opposing position."[24] Edwards debated these philosophers' ideas and used some of them as he had recognized the fact that citing Biblical text was no substitute for rational arguments to his own position. These positions go beyond his theological statements which if taken by themselves lead to conclusions like that of Prof. Aldridge who says, "[the argument] can be reconciled quite easily with his favorite doctrine of original sin. Edwards saw very little virtue in the world...primarilly because of [his] narrowness of definition."[25] Reading Edwards' sermons gives one an insight to his faith but his philosophy goes beyond his faith and gives us a rational presentation which enables us to align that rationality within the thoughts of predecessors. Edwards' religion could cause Prof. Faust to say. "[Edwards'] Calvinistic belief in the depravity of man [used] these...[as] support. ...although men are wholly corrupt...unable to become virtuous [some few] are lifted out of their depravity."[26] Edwards' philosophy, however, on virtue for example is not unlike that of Plato's. Both sought and believed there was a "virtue" known only by "contemplation" of the form or by "the sense of the heart." The title of this work reveals at once that Edwards is speaking of "True virtue" not <u>virtue</u>, per se. In his first chapter he made this quite clear--virtue is some kind of beauty, or excellency and he lists several moral qualities deserving praise or blame. He states clearly that there "is a distinction between some things...truly

virtuous...and others which only seem ...so." Love, or benevolence is often considered the basis of True Virtue, by Divines, Deists, "considerable writers", which "occasions some error." Many of these, like gratitude, are secondary grounds of virtuous love. There is not one word, or the slightest element of condemnation of other viewpoints but a gentle and reasoned examination of them to distill the "essence" of virtue. He makes plain that to him True Virtue "consists in BENEVOLENCE TO BEING IN GENERAL...a union of heart to being in general...exercised in a general good will."[27]

Of the many measurements of Edwards' philosophy few have come closer to an accurate theological assessment if such an assessment must be made than Prof. Holbrook. In the preface to his own book Holbrook says, "...it is the theme of this book on ethics [The Nature of True Virtue] that the burden of his thought resides with the theological objectivists."[28] This is close to what Edwards deserves, and although not within the spirit of the meaning of the word "philosophy." helps to place Edwards in a frame that we can focus on.

In Chapter Two of The Nature of True Virtue, although Edwards claims True Virtue is love of Being, he acknowledges that man has love, albeit a "secondary ground" from which benevolence and affection to man rises. In Chapter Three he speaks of "secondary and inferior kind of beauty" in which he does not reject, or evince revulsion (the word is not too strong in the light of accusations of misanthropy) from what he considers a lesser kind of beauty than that which he argues is True Beauty. He had shown that from the lesser beauty notions of aesthetic

symmetry, and regularity stimulates in man elevated notions of merit, reward, punishment and justice. To this point any critic should have noted the similarity of Edwards' pursuit for the "perfect" to Socrates', and by the end of the work concluded also that like Socrates, Edwards was tried on trumped- up charges.

"Self -love," in Chapter Three, Edwards defines as "man's love of his own happiness," a definition Aristotle would have embraced as his own, or at least would have examined its rationality and exposed what he felt inconsistent with his own views. Love, hate, anger, Edwards considered normal emotions of the "natural" man, not debased perversions of corrupt and vicious beings as some would have us believe from their conclusions based on his theology.

Conscience, that great Christian regulatory faculty is examined and considered as "natural to mankind" but not accepted as the font of True Virtue, but neither is it despised or termed vicious or described as depraved. Within Edwards' philosophy it is simply not True Virtue. Chapter Six treats of instincts, often, he says, mistaken for virtue. In tender terms he discusses the relationships between the sexes. He acknowledges the existence, in this relationship, of gentle attitudes, kind devotion, mutual benevolence and complacence, but does not accept these demonstrations or attitudes between the sexes as other than which rises from instinct. There is no disparagement by Edwards of the belief of the natural man that those relationships and emotions are virtuous. They are displays of natural instincts, but in so describing them Edwards does not condemn them as unworthy or depraved. He sides with Hutcheson on this and in passing acknowledges his debt on the issue to

Hume:

> If what is called natural affection, arises from a particular natural instinct, much more does that mutual affection... between the sexes. I agree with Hutcheson and Hume in this, that there is a foundation laid in nature for kind affection between the sexes... . [These] affections are limited to opposite sexes, are from a particular instinct...not...a principle of general benevolence... . Hereby persons become willing to forsake father and mother, and all their natural relations in the families where they were born...for the sake of a stated union with a companion of the other sex...in bearing...labors, anxieties, and pains, requisite to the support and education of a family of children, and partly for the comfort of mankind as united as a marriage relation.29

This has all the marks of "fireside", "home", "family" and the outline of the American ideal of what a husband-wife relationship should be and the way Edwards saw it to be in fact. Although he does not accept this relationship as the foundation of virtue and considers the relationship as one founded on instinct, as he noted that Hutcheson and Hume did too, he does not disparage or condemn the belief by natural men that the practice <u>is</u> virtuous. To Edwards there <u>is</u> virtue in the world of natural men- acts and deeds that men, society and nations, customs and traditions, circumstances and changing times call "virtue." Edwards in this work examines countless "virtuous" deeds and relations, with the dignity they deserve and with respect for the values placed in them by society. He assesses their worth and rejects them not because he thinks them worthless or because his reasoning categorizes them as <u>practical</u> virtues. He certainly does not reject them because of a peculiar depravity on his part to see only evil in mankind. On the contrary, Edwards maintained that "natural" man had to

have rules to follow and these virtues are the accepted practical rules of the society of "natural" man. But for True Virtue, Edwards goes elsewhere- to the Sense of the Heart, that combined with a general good will toward virtue, unites itself with all being and being in general particularly.

Prof. A. J. Taylor gives us an interpretation of this notion as expressed by Plato:

> The main object of the...Meno is to distinguish between a higher and a lower kind of goodness. The higher kind is that...goodness...is based upon certain and assured personal knowledge of the true scale of goods, and is therefore "abiding." The lower kind, which is at best a "shadow" of true goodness is based on "opinions", which are true, but are not knowledge, and therefore not to be counted on as permanent; in fact it rests on acceptance of a sound tradition of living which has not been converted into personal insight into the scale of goods... . Permanent continuance in well doing is only to be had when a sound traditional code of conduct has been converted into "knowledge" by the understanding of the "reasons why", that is, by personal insight into the character of good and personal understanding of the place of

Edwards searched for and tried to explicate, like Socrates, this "higher kind of goodness" but could not find it in the acts and deeds of mankind. He found it in a good will and the sense of oneness with creation and nature which he held the necessary ingredient. Edwards did not reject or condemn the "shadows" of goodness that natural men entertain as virtue, they simply had not learned what <u>is</u> True Virtue. For that let us turn to Plato's own words, instead of paraphrase, and listen as old Socrates advises Meno:

> To sum up our inquiry- the result seems to be, if we are all right in our view, that virtue is neither

> natural nor acquired, but an instinct given by God to the virtuous. Nor is the instinct accompanied by reason... . And if there be such an one [who can educate others], he may be said to be among the living what Homer says that Tiresias was among the dead, 'he alone has understanding: but the rest are flitting shades' and he and his virtue in like manner will be a reality among shadows... . Then Meno, the conclusion is that virtue comes to the virtuous by the gift of God... we shall never know the truth, until, before asking how virtue is given, we enquire into the actual nature of virtue.[31]

That is what Edwards set out to do, and in so doing came to the same conclusions Plato and Socrates did.

Chapter Six: Notes

1 A. O. Aldridge, "Edwards and Hutcheson," Harvard Theological Review, XLIV, (Jan. 1951) pp. 35-53. Faust and Johnson, op. cit. Introduction.

2 Jonathan Edwards, "The Nature of True Virtue," ed. W. K. Frankena, (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan, 1966) Int. p. v.
Jonathan Edwards, The Nature of True Virtue, Works, Vol. III, Worcester Reprint.

3 Jonathan Bennett, "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn," Philosophy, 49, (April 1974), pp. 123-134.

4 J. E. Faust. The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards. (Burt Franklin, New York; 1940) pp. 96-98; 112.

5 Bennett, op cit.

6 A. Bernstein, "Thinking About Hell," The Wilson Quarterly, Vol. X No. 3, Summer, 1986 pp.78-89.

7 Works, Vol. III. p. 555. Worcester.

8 Edwards, Works, Worcester Vol. III, p. 35.

9 Francis Hutcheson, "An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Harmony, and Design," ed. Peter Kivy, (The Hague; Martinus Nuhoff, 1973) p. 34.

10 Hutcheson, Inquiry, op. cit. p. 25-26.

11 Ibid.p. 150-179.

12 Works, Burtt, Vol. II, p. 38-39.

13 Shaftesbury, op. cit. II, p. 28, 29, 57, 58. 174-176, 274.

14 Hutcheson, "Inq. Into Orig. of Our Ideas," op. cit. p. 150-179.

15 Ibid. p. 59.

15 Works, Edwards, Burtt, Vol.II, p. 9.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid. p. 72-73.

18 Hutcheson, "Inquiry...Passions and Affections"...op. cit. p. 337-38.

19 Edwards, Works, (Burtt) Vol. II, p. 12-14.

20 Ibid. p. 12-14.

21 Ibid. p. 29.

22 Ibid. p. 32.

23 Ibid. p. 34.

24 Frankena, op. cit., p. XI-XII.

25 Aldridge, op. cit., p. 40.

26 Faust, op. cit.. p. xci--xciii. Bennett, op. cit. p. 128-129.

27 Edwards, Works, (Burtt), Vol.II, chap. 1, pp. 7-14. Ibid. chap. VI. p. 56-57

28 Clyde Holbrook, The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards, (Ann Arbor Press; University of Michigan, 1974)

29 Edwards, op cit, Chap. VI, p.56-57

30 Taylor, op. cit. p. 144-45.

31 Plato, "Meno" The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett, ed. R. Demos. (N.Y.; Random House, 1937) Meno, p. 380. 99-100.

Chapter Seven: Explication of Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God.

It was submitted in the introduction to this paper that a "chronological" analysis of Edwards' works would be part of the methodology employed with the exception of one work, Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God. It is a "sermon" which, it would seem is contrary to a major criticism made here: that only his philosophical works should be considered in any interpretations of his philosophy. Justification for this departure can be made. Although this sermon was written and delivered in 1741, and Edwards wrote many treatises and sermons after that date, this work can be considered the most recent of all his works. The sermon as we consider it, an interpretation of comparatively recent years, did not have that interpretation when it was originally written and delivered in 1741. From that point of view it can be considered the most recent of his works, for the current interpretation of it is to all purposes,- theological, literary, or philosophical what Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God means to us today. That understanding, most generally accepted, is that it is a frightening and intemperate piece of work. It is also that current interpretation of the sermon that causes so many to equate Edwards with epithets of "blood and thunder" or "sulphur and brimstone" preaching. It was none of that, but it has become that only in this century. In that metamorphosis from what Edwards intended it to be, to what we presently accept it to be, philosophers have generally overlooked Edwards' intent, an idealism couched in the language of the plain man-

the language and metaphors Edwards' parishioners could understand. Edwards never wrote a treatise expounding his philosophical notions on idealism; he did make notes and promises to do so but never returned to it. Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God is a "sermon" but it is also a sustained expression of Edwards' idealism.

The sermon was not always looked upon as a verbal rendition of Dante's Inferno. Edwards' first biographer, Samuel Hopkins did not even list it, and not until 1830, did Sereno Dwight mention it in his biography of Edwards- 72 years after Edwards died and 79 years after the sermon was composed and delivered. This notation was in a passing comment on Edwards' successes in the pulpit.[1] The sermon went through at least sixteen reprints as a separate tract not including the several editions of collected works from 1741-1922. These reprints included at least one transcribed into the Cherokee Indian language in 1845 and two in Gaelic in 1848 and 1876. One reprint of Sinners appeared in a collection edited by Henry C. Fish, titled History and Repository of Pulpit Eloquence, in 1856.[2]

"Almost a century after its delivery [the sermon] suffered none of the notoriety it would be accorded within a few more decades," says Prof.Stuart. He adds, however, that, "by the late 1800s the tradition of interpreting the sermon...as...predominantly...even exclusively...an occasion for frightening the congregation..." was established. Parrington claimed New Englanders never forgave Edwards for it and Henry Parkes read into it a psychological disturbance in Edwards' mind over the identity of God and Satan.[3] Prof.Stuart makes a sympathetic

defense of Edwards and points out that Edwards was not as blood stained as some interpretations picture him. Edwards' message was, Stuart says, and as he intended it to be understood, that God, angry as he was at the recalcitrant and stubbornly sinning congregants, stood with his back to the threatening destructive forces behind the dikes- dikes that by the mere whim and arbitrary fancy of God would crumble and let pour out and destroy all before it. God is still patient despite all the corruption he beholds, Edwards warned, but the time is late for a decision. Stuart's interpretation is not only a sympathetic one but also accurate for Edwards' own words support that interpretation.

> [Man was] always exposed to destruction...unexpected destruction...the reason why they have not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come...God will not hold them up...any longer, but will let them go: and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction...on the edge of a pit... . There is nothing that keeps men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God...sovereign pleasure...[his] arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty... . There is no want of power in God...at whose rebuke the earth trembles...the rocks fall down...these principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in nature and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would break out they would flame out... . For the present, God restrains...by his mighty power...the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. You probably are not sensible of this;...do not see the hand of God in it. But indeed...if God should withdraw his hand [nothing] would avail...than the thin air to hold up a person...suspended in it.[4]

Sinners is also a plain language harangue of Edwards' idealism

adjusted to a layman's implication and conclusion of what the material world would be like if it were not for God's determination, plans and patience. A review of Kimnach's analysis of Edwards' sermon production in 1741 helps set the perspective.

> ...during these years ...the inclination to pursue issues...and develop his own philosophical theology caused Edwards to present...ideas in sermonic treatises that violate the fundamental requirements of relative simplicity... . he devoted less attention to the composition of sermons in the middle and late forties... At the same time, he began the ambitious series of treatises that continued to the end of his life... . Somewhere along the line Edwards...ultimately sacrificed the traditional Puritan sermon form... .[for] his need to exercise his creative activity... . His streamlined horatory version of Sinners..is virtually monotonic...in such a way that the full blast of emotional appeal begins immediately. This is the ultimate weapon in colonial homiletics, and it established the literary technology of American revivalism. [His] more philosophical writings simply drifted away from the sermon form as if Edwards felt that his profoundest thoughts were unsuitable to it. ...the period of Edwards' greatest achievement in the sermon was relatively early...as 1725 and ending in the early 1740s.[5]

From what Prof. Kimnach says several pertinent implications can be be made.:

1.By the early 1740s Edwards was tiring of the sermon form as a literary vehicle for his philosophical efforts. (Sinners was written and delivered in 1741.)

2.The style of Sinners was that of average colonial ministers and survives in present revivalism.

3.For purely philosophical purposes Edwards turned to standard treatise forms. The intellectual appeal that Edwards hoped to express could have started with the following:

> ... .That there should be absolutely nothing...is...impossible, the Mind Can never Let it stretch its Conceptions ever so much to bring itself to Conceive a state of Perfect nothing; it puts the mind into mere Convulsion and Confusion to endeavor to think of such a state...we cant so Distinctly show the Contradiction by words because we Cannot talk about it without Speaking horrid Nonsense and Contradicting ourselves at every word. A state of Absolute nothing is a state of Absolute Contradiction; absolute nothing is the Aggregate of all the Absurd contradictions in the World, a state wherein there is neither body nor spirit, nor space neither empty space nor full space...When we go about to form an idea of Perfect nothing we must shut out all these things...space that has something in it and space that has nothing in it... 6

However, his concern for the limit of comprehension of his parishioners, as he often expressed it would have caused him to use simpler, more direct terms, "for the sake of the common people."7

All these quotes, of course, were written by the same man, Edwards, but with different goals and under different conditions.8 They were written by a man who easily moved from preacher to philosopher. "When Edwards speaks from the pulpit clad in clerical robes, human error appear as pervasive, ubiquitous forces, but when he enters his study and dons his philosopher's gown, he is able to speak lightly of human error and mistake, regarding them as inadequate to change standards implanted by nature. In one character he rejects the [philosophical] scheme; in the other he finds it congenial and draws

upon it as an aid to his own."[9]

Edwards moved about in his literary efforts as did other ministers of the time. Prof. Erdt noted that Puritans "... in poetry, sermons, tombstone carvings resorted to images of heaven and hell." Puritan divines "exercised creative powers" to embellish their sermons so that their efforts were understood in "fresh light." Generations of Puritan ministers, Erdt notes, harangued their congregants, using every nuance and metaphor to measure and describe the elegant tortures, degrees of exquisite agony, lengths of duress, descriptions of eternal torture awaiting unregenerate sinners. Passages from Thomas Shepard's work, whom Edwards admired and mentioned often, can be compared to Edwards' "Sinners" as the source and inspiration for startling similarity.[11] A preacher, in that age and place as noted in a previous chapter, Edwards thought, acted as properly frightening men out of hell as frightening them out of a burning house. The technique used by Edwards was no different than that used by fellow divines.

> By 1741, the year Edwards preached..."Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God," New England congregations had been hearing about fire and brimstone for over a hundred years; to say they were inured to attempts at frightening them into heaven would seem to be decidedly an exaggeration, as the frequency of revivals touched off, at least in part, by hell-fire preaching, evinces. [At an earlier sermon] preached three months before [Sinners] he acknowledged the congregation's imperturbability: 'I suppose some of you have heard all that I have said with ease and quietness: it appears to you as great big sounding words, but doth not reach your hearts. You have heard such things many times: you are old soldiers, and have been too much used to the roaring of heaven's cannon, to be frighted at it.'[10]

At the reading of "Sinners" Edwards expressed somewhat similar introductory remarks to the sermon.

> The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. ...That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended under you. ...the wrath of God is like great waters that are damned for the present. ...if God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods...would rush forth with inconceivable fury...upon you with omnipotent power...if your strength were ten thousand times greater...it would be nothing to stand or endure it.11

If the stage and sound effects are put aside as the conceits employed by most preachers including Edwards at that time, the elements of Edwards' idealism are revealed. What Erdt attributes to Locke's influence on Edwards' thinking misses the point. Erdt says, "From his own experience and... study of Locke's psychology Edwards knew that it would be highly unlikely for someone to be saved possessing only an abstract knowledge of the horrors of hell. To grasp the truth that the fires of hell are infinitely terrible, one must have an actual feeling of terror...a movement of the will...an idea of reflection based upon an affection." 12

This may be a fine paraphrase of Edwards' eloquence but it is not an accurate interpretation of what steps and action Edwards took to remedy the problem that Erdt otherwise describes so well- how could Edwards make his sermons effective, believable and moving? The theatricals of the pulpits employed stories of sunny days in Sodom and pirates at sea stealing souls from hapless ocean travelling pilgrims.

These were becoming a form of entertainment- fiction, entwined with embellished stories from Bible,- were becoming less effective.[13] Response to calls to conversion was apathetic and Edwards made a distinct change in his sermon style.[14] That change is most apparent in Sinners. It is not Locke that Edwards called upon, as Erdt claims; Locke demanded empirical evidence, based on sense experience. Locke scoffed at the thunderings of Divines who preached a vengeful God and found whatever he knew of God through interpretation of man himself.

An example of Locke's position on this can be surmised from the following. There is no intimation of any kind to confirm what Erdt suggested would be found by Edwards to support the notion that the "fires of hell" are lit, burning infinitelt or as a source from which one could sensuously perceive the terror.

> We are capable of knowing certainly...there is a God...he has given us no innate ideas of himself [or] stamped no...characters on our minds, wherein we may read his being...yet having furnished us with those faculties our minds are endowed with...since we have sense perception and reason and cannot want a clear proof of him as long as we carry ourselves about us... . From what has been said it is plain to me we have a more certain knowledge of the existence of God, than of anything our senses have not immediately discovered to us.[15]

Locke, a theist in fact if not by public attestation believed in a gentle forgiving God to whom appeal and remission of sin was possible by living a socially cooperative life. No, it was not Locke to whom Edwards turned as Prof. Erdt claims, but to the extensions that flowed

beyond Locke's empiricism- idealism. This idealism, rooted in Platonism, made the material world secondary to the spiritual. It is not the present purpose to explore the source of Edwards' idealism, but to show that within the Sinners in The Hands of An Angry God Edwards, "to grasp the truth that the fires of hell are infinitely terrible" turned to his philosophy and uttered words that have been used to damn him ever since by readers and interpreters- and philosophers- who have not recognized the idealism expressed there, of God's absolute soveriegnty and the source of all our ideas.

If Edwards was right, or believed that:

> God in the beginning, created...a number of Atoms...which maintain and always will...such...motion, direction, velocity from whence arise all the Natural changes in the Universe forever...his design, that Ideas shall be united forever just so...as is agreeable in such a series...all the ideas that ever were or shall be...are answerable to the existence of such Atom in the beginning of the creation...God causes all changes...orders all things...not only in the Divine idea, but in created idea which necessarily supposes it.16

then could he also not believe, and preach that:

" ...if God should withdraw his hand" would not "the fiery floods of the fierceness of God rush forth with inconceivable fury" ? Edwards believed it would: any alteration in the order of nature would make Edwards' description pallid by comparison. To Edwards, God was the guarantor of all regularity on earth.

Edwards' idealism was congenial to his Calvinism; it placed God at the center of all things material and spiritual. God being the author

of all idea, is a constant creating being from whom all our concepts and notions of the universe emanate, all our moral principles, all our physics and the "laws" that govern the same are God's and from God. If such a God were to change the constant order of events, if such a God were to establish a different order of conjunction of events- "arbitrarily" within his "pleasure", "if God should withdraw that restraining power" would not the consequences logical to believing parishioners follow and "soon carry all before it." ? Edwards had only one answer.

> ... they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will...uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment...the sun does not willingly shine upon you...the earth does not willingly yield her increase...the air does not willingly serve you to maintain the flame of life in you...the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who has subjected it...were it not for the restraining hand of God it would immediately burst forth... . The sovereign hand of God...stays the...destruction...17

Edwards early in his career, (Notes on The Mind) had stated that the fundamental principle behind the least and the greatest of all phenomena is God. He reduced all body and substance to Divine power, and "body" itself does not exist. "The world is an ideal one...creating and succession of these ideas is constant and regular."

Such language would fall dead on the ears of his parishioners, most of whom had little sophistication; some felt intimate enough with God to ask and hope for the simplest of earthly goods and guidance

toward his favor.[18] As noted earlier, however, Puritans at that time used as cemetery carvings anthropomorphic extremes in depicting heaven and hell. Puritan ministers, to add interest to their sermons, embellished them, as did poets and craftsmen with metaphors, carvings and forgings in these explicit modes and forms. Divines harangued their congregants, reporting carefully the pains meted to sinners and the awful fate, tortures, constancy of utter agony, shrieks of pain, degrees of temperature in an endless, permanent hell. An analysis of Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God as a work of art as Prof. Erdt has done and that of Edwin Cady, whose work he quotes points up the objectivity with which Edwards composed this "brimstone" sermon. Erdt's observation that much of Edwards' efforts here are not concerned only with gaping pits, fire, brimstone and dangling helpless spiders is relevant. Edwards, Erdt observes, speaks not only of the horrors of hell but notes emphatically the difference between "the vast disproportion between the power of God and that of men." 19 Whatever the verdict may be, a theological jury must decide. It is an example of the language obscuring the message. The metaphors, similies and descriptives belong to a different age. Just as punctuation and grammar strike us as strange on examining a text of two centuries ago, we find strange these pre-twentieth century allusions to the might, muscle and sinews of a personal God, battling to redeem us despite our ignorance and corrupt ways. The utilization of these metaphors and language was common to the conceptualization of God by preacher and parishioners in Edwards' time and the century that followed. For that reason the

criticism generally applied to this sermon is based on current attitudes toward a deity and modes of expressing it. Within the context of Edwards' time, however, it was appropriate to discuss and describe God in ways we reject. To attribute omnipotence, omniscience. anger, thoughts and decisions ad hoc were part of the religious and intellectual world view of people in the preceding centuries. God was much more an anthropomorphic divinity in Edwards' time than in our own. It was because it was so general that the almost allegorical descriptives and metaphors with which Edwards painted his verbal pictures that the idealism within his theology had been overlooked. This kind of rhetoric grew unfashionable as a pulpit style, and Edwards became known as a bible stumping, sulphur fuming preacher to more recent readers and researchers. If, however, the product of some of his contemporaries were still read a different picture would emerge. Consider the following, not written by Edwards:

> The sinners are ready every moment to drop into hell. God is a consuming fire against thee: and there is but one paper wall between thy soul and eternal flames..Thou art condemned...thou hangest but by one rotted twined thread of thy life over the flames of hell every hour. Flocks of devils come into thy chamber, waiting for thy soul, to fly upon it as a mastiff dog...wicked men die quietly...Satan hath them as [his] prey.[20]

The following is a piece of poetry, engrossed on a piece of cardboard and often given to apostates as warning:

> Out rebell, (saith Justice), to the Wrack,
> Which every joynt unjoynts, doth stretch and strain,
> Where Sinews tortur'de are untill they Crack,
> And Flesh is torn asunder grain by grain.
> What ! Spit thy Venom in my Face ? Come out
> To handy gripes, seeing thou art so stoute.[21]

By comparison to his contemporary preachers, Edwards used no more sulphur or brimstone than what was generally budgeted for the purpose. The parishioners expected it and in the case of Sinners the congregation prayed for his coming to Enfield to preach it. Many believed God would pass them by because of the indifference toward religion so many neighbors displayed and God's favors would go to more observant Christians elsewhere.[22]

That Edwards responded with the desired force is a fact of history but the content has been sorely misinterpreted by historians and even more regrettably, by philosophers who have not observed and interpreted this sermon as a major effort by Edwards to express his philosophical idealism.

Edwards' idealism has been the subject of much controversy; questions like who was the major philosopher that led him in this direction and did he go beyond or equal that source?[23] The answers revolve around questions that have in fact no basis for being raised. Some say Edwards' idealism may have stemmed from Berkeley's works, others say that he may have been influenced by Samuel Johnson, Edwards' tutor at Yale who was deeply influenced by Berkeley; Cudworth is submitted and Newton's physics find support by some. Still others maintain that Edwards' idealism was an original development of his own prodigious intellect.[24] These questions reflect another misinterpretation of Edwards, one of so many concerning him. The resolution to these questions is quite simple:

1.Edwards' idealism, unlike some of the nuances of his philosophy is not "buried" in unpublished, or abridged over-edited parts of any of his treatises.

2.Too much should not be made of Edwards' idealism. Anything we know of it is derived from incomplete notes, jottings and often disconnected, unpunctuated youthful observations. Whatever else we know of his idealism is that expressed within the treatises he wrote on philosophical issues in general but not on the subject itself.

3.Even that referred to in 1. and 2. exists not in the original, which was lost or destroyed (possibly purloined) but in reconstituted form by several editors and scholars who have studied his work.25

4.The asserted purpose Edwards made that these notes were the basis of a projected work on the topics indicated (there are several hundred topics listed) [26] was never fulfilled. Edwards never returned to the notes in his maturity, at least with the intent to produce the promised treatise. Therefore the question of source, and comparison with Berkeley- or anyone else- is moot. Berkeley did write his book, Edwards only promised to do so. We cannot compare the quality of Edwards' efforts here, or with assurance determine inspiration or source from loose and often random notes.

For the present purpose we must observe some other more pertinent questions from available evidence. Edwards expressed in his youthful Notes many notions on idealism. There are however two statements he

made that may explain why he never fulfilled his goal of writing, in straight-forward philosophical terms, a treatise on those many topics he listed. In Notes he says:

> When we say that the...material Universe, exists...but in the mind, we have got to such...strictness and abstraction, that we must be exceedingly careful, that we do not confound...ourselves by misapprehension... Though...the existence of the whole material Universe is absolutely dependent on Idea, yet we may speak in the old way, and as properly, and as truly as ever....we need not perplex our minds with a thousand questions and doubts ...as, to what purpose is this way of exciting ideas... . I answer, It is all just one, as to any benefit or advantage, any end that we can suppose was proposed by the Creator, as if the Material Universe were existent as is vulgarly thought. For the corporeal world is to no advantage but to the spiritual, and it is exactly the same advantage this way as the other, for it is all one, as to anything excited in the mind. (My italics.) [27]

Edwards thought that it made no difference if we speak or express ourselves "in the old way," and did not think it important to decipher why, or any advantage to us, to understand why "the creator" chose this means of communicating Idea to us. One way or another, the material world serves but as a prelude and preparation to the spiritual world. So, if we apprehend the material world, in the old way and think of the world as it is "vulgarly" thought about we still return to thinking of the spiritual world. If we think about this material world as divine idea we are thinking in the mode of God and about the end purpose- the spiritual end of creation.

Elsewhere Edwards expresses this ambivalence in his position or commitment to idealism. Our senses support our belief that our mind and body are united, he says, and no sense experience can support or

falsify that idea. But then he asks (what starts as a mind-body question) "how reason in any way can imagine that a solid mass of matter...should have perception...understanding...exert thought, volition, love, hatred, etc." The frustration, the inability to provide an adequate answer to his own questions seems apparent when he observes that "...to say that spirit acts upon matter, or that God established some means by which this phenomenon works is still inconceivable, for we have no concept of any way or manner, in which God, who is pure Spirit, can act upon matter or impel it."[28]

Edwards' discussion in this context notes the inconsistencies in any rigid interpretation of metaphysical idealism and empiricism. If there is a sensible world, it must be in the mind only, or out of the mind independent of its imagination or perception. Such an external world is that of which we have no sense experience. But if all qualities- color, extension, quantity,- are excluded, any kind of substance or quality is inconceivable. If all the qualities our sense report to us are excluded, then what is left ? A removal of all existence, and a perfectly empty universe. Edwards discusses this dilemma that exists in this confrontation between idealism and reason:

> But if the sensible world has existence only in the mind...then the organs of sense...have no existence...but in the mind; and those organs of sense have no existence but what is conveyed into the mind by themselves, for they are part of the sensible world...and it will follow that the organs of sense owe their existence to the organs of sense and so they are prior to themselves...a seeming inconsistence...with reason...that reason cannot explain... .[29]

This ambivalence and his awareness of inconsistencies in both

philosophical approaches may have been the reason Edwards never wrote the treatise on idealism he promised he would. He confined the expression of those ideas and idealistic principles which he philosophically held true and consistent with his religion to his sermons and theology, not to the general content of his philosophy. Sinners conveys in abundant phrases this notion. "It is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire...that you were suffered to wake again in this world...God's hand held you...there is no other reason why you do not now drop down... " He ends with a message of hope, "Haste and escape...look not behind you, escape to the mountain..."

In another treatise, written the year he died, The Doctrine of Original Sin Defended he continued to express his idealism within the substance of the treatise's purpose itself and used it in support of his argument.

> ...God does by his immediate power...uphold every created substance in being...the existence of the moon at this present moment cannot be the effect of its existence at the last foregoing moment...which was no active cause...but passive. ...therefore the existence of created substances, in each successive moment, must be the effect of the immediate agency, will, and power of God... It will follow... that God's preserving created things in being is perfectly equivalent as a continued creation...at each moment of their existence..[30]

He then concludes by observing that everything "is in a state of flux...renewed every moment...all is constantly proceeding from God, as light from the sun."...which is but one of so many instances, as in Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God, where he expressed his idealism. Edwards has been condemned for excesses of language branded with

epithet because of misinterpretation but most severely misunderstood by too many philosophers that should have recognized his efforts in metaphysical idealism corresponded closely to the language of theology in his time and place. Instead, all too many have judged his philosophical efforts through a filter determined by assumptions, based on his religion, of a current value system. This was and is wrong, and the continuation and support of such biased opinion is intellectually repugnant. Edwards should be forgiven and removed from the stocks to which he has been chained for almost two hundred years; whether he will offer the same forgiveness to the many that ill-judged him is another matter.

Chapter Seven: Notes

1 Terrence Erdt, Jonathan Edwards: Art and the Sense of the Heart, (Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 1980.) pp. 70-71.

2 T.H.Johnson, The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1940) pp. 22-28.

3 Robert L. Stuart, "Jonathan Edwards at Enfield: 'And Oh The Cheerfulness and Pleasantness...", American Literature, XLVIII, No.1, (March 1976) pp. 46-59.

4 Works, (Dwight) VII, pp. 163-177.

5 Kimnach, op. cit , p. 43.

6 Works, Religious Affections op. cit. pp. 210, 254, 269.

7 Works, (Dwight) I p. 668-700.

8 Ibid.

9 Aldridge, "Edwards and Hutcheson."

10 Erdt, op.cit.

11 Ibid. p.70-72.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Tracy, op.cit. pp. 131-135.

15 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. J. W. Yolton, (London: Dent, 1968). Vol. Two, Bk. IV, Ch. X, pp. 217-218.

16 Works, (Dwight), VII, 163-700.

17 Works, (Dwight), I, 668-700.

18 Stein, op. cit. "For Their Spiritual Good."

19 Ibid.

20 Erdt, op.cit.

21 Clarence H.Faust, "The Decline of Puritanism". Transitions in American Literary History. (New York: Octagon Books, Duke Univ.Press, 1967) pp. 3-47.

22 Op.cit. Shaffer; Tracy; Faust and Johnson; Fiering. Aldridge,

"Edwards and Hutcheson". Harvard Theological Review, XLIV (Jan.1951) pp. 35-53. Clarence Ghodes, "Aspects of Idealism in Early New England," The Philosophical Review. Vol. XXXIX, No. 6, (Nov. 1930) pp. 537-553. H. N. Gardiner "The Early Idealism of Jonathan Edwards, The Philosophical Review, Vol.IX, No. 6. (Nov. 1900) pp. 574-596. Andrew Hudgins, "How Will the Heart Endure?" South Atlantic Quarterly, 80 No. 4. Autumn 1981 pp. 429-440. Hux, Dissent, Winter 1984, pp. 127-141. Daniel B. Shea. "Jonathan Edwards: The First Two Hundred Years", Journal of American Studies, Vol. 14, No. 2 (August 1980) pp. 181-197.

23 J. S. Caskey, op. cit. Appendix "A", p. 1. Gardiner, op. cit.

24 Ibid.

25 C. H. Faust, "Jonathan Edwards as a Scientist," American Literature, Jan. 1930. pp. 393-404.

26 Gardiner, op. cit.

27 Notes, (Dwight), I, 668-700.

28 Caskey, op. cit.

29 Works, Vol. VIII, The Insufficiency of Reason, p. 190-191.

30 Ibid.

31 Works, Vol.II, pp. 309-491.

Chapter Eight: Summation

It seems appropriate to include in these final chapters some of the observations made by Edwards that served him on one occasion as a summation to his own efforts. In his Letter to a Minister of the Church of Scotland [1] Edwards makes clear his position on the subject he held and stated in his treatise on "freedom of the will." The letter, addressed to Henry Home, Lord Kames, is in defense of that position which was subjected to criticism, most of it positive but some negative. He repeats his argument against the Arminian position that indifference, that state of the will in perfect equilibrium prior to volition, is an essential pre-requisite to freedom. If an examination is made of the self-determinists (in this case the Arminian's) Edwards argues, such a contingent will expresses a lesser freedom: "... such a will would not be a voluntary determination..." for the person involved is not "...in power of doing something...according to his own choice...or acting from his own election. A will such as this he says is not free, but dependent on whatever it is that moves it into a "preponderation." The will itself, and the individual have no preference or choice. This, scoffs Edwards, is hardly a "free" will.

Then Edwards asks Lord Home a plain common sense question, "I ask here...whether anyone [can be found that] is conscious to a sense or feeling...in his mind...that in order to perform any action...he must exercise a liberty that implied a power of acting without any motive, view, design, desire or principle of action ?" The most superficial introspection reveals that all conscious acts are motivated by the

concurrence of mind's contemplation and judgement. It is a clever question, and it puts his opponents on the defensive,- who would admit that they function without cogitation, weighing alternatives, or acting without sober judgement ? Would any of his learned contemporaries who opposed him admit to being the subject of a ruling will and they the slave and servant of that authoritarian power? Not likely.

Edwards' position was made quite clear in that letter to Lord Kames, but he would be saddened by the obfuscation of his intellectual expression that has followed his comparatively early death. Whether his critics and friends were motivated by a will described by Edwards above is subject to inquiry but Edwards' has not fared well in analyses of his philosophy. He has been subjected to extremes of interpretation and so much of that has been due to gross misunderstanding of his work, the context in which they were written, the goal he intended to reach. Partisans in his own day and immediately in the several decades after his death championed him as a bulwark against encroaching Deism and natural theology. He probably considered himself all that but Deism in fact and practice, if not in name survived and Edwards' Calvinism survives mostly on church cornerstones not in practice. Powerful Calvinists like Moses Mather, in Edwards' lifetime, succeeded in modifying and tempering some of its less attractive dogma and tenets. Although Edwards achieved world wide acclaim and translation of his works into many foreign languages almost all of that acclaim accorded him was for his efforts as a theologian. He did garner a great measure of respect for his work on "Freedom of Will." This subject did not have as a goal a proof of such "freedom" but as a destructive weapon

against the Arminian held position that man's will is a self-determining, indifferent faculty. The subject itself- freedom or a caused will became less a subject of philosophy and more of a curio inherited from religion. Hume, a contemporary of Edwards, treated the topic with less than thoroughness believed necessary by earlier philosophers; and Kant held freedom of will a notion beyond proof, for or against, but that all rational beings take for granted anyway and act as though freedom is in fact the case. Thus Edwards' position in philosophy has gone unappreciated and because of the rarity of complete editions of his works much of his philosophy exists only in old reprints, adumbrated collections, over-edited reprints and abstracts. Highly charged assessments of him became the fashion during the last part of the nineteenth century. Current interest in him has been ignited by two biographies of him in the last half century, one by Ola Winslow and the other by Perry Miller. Winslow's work is a straightforward biography documenting the factual Edwards, his life, his vocation, his works. Perry Miller's work is an intellectual biography that has been the object of absolute unrestrained admiration to outright condemnation as an over speculation of Edwards philosophy and an unfounded transformation of him into a physicist- scientist, a mathematician- empiricist exceeding Newton, Einstein, Locke.2 Miller's enthusiasm for his subject, not his conclusions, is shared by the present writer.

The picture of Edwards- a cramped, warped, misanthrope was replaced by that of Miller's, whose prestige in the intellectual world of history gave massive weight to his conclusions. The view this paper

has attempted must be considered a modification essentially of Miller's. He was neither a bitter, hell fire and damnation preacher, the view inherited from the late 1890s nor a precursor of Einstein, an eloquent interpreter of Newton or an avid disciple of Locke. His qualifications for these encomia, by his own admission did not warrant the praise, and his own efforts in science, physics and mathematics held no threat to the prestige earned in those fields by Newton and Einstein. The almost negative interest in politics, government and civil affairs in no way reflects the abject worship of Locke that Miller maintains. The treatise on idealism promised in youthful notes, and cited as the equal of Berkeley's was never realized and whatever we have of Edwards' idealism has been gleaned from over-emphasized college notes. The real Edwardsean expression of idealism is in some of his sermons whose language and subject matter is congenial to such a style of interpretation and mode of expression.

The present research has demonstrated that Edwards was a theologian who used the language preachers of his time and place used when addressing rustic, unlettered and unsophisticated parishioners; he was also capable of sustained, clear and cogent philosophical disputation which is rich in source material gleaned from writers of his day. He was a preacher whose preaching metamorphasized into treatises and essays some of which were analyzed and discussed in previous chapters. When prior notions of him- his religion, his pulpit style and rhetoric were put aside, a wholly new Edwards emerged. Much of this problem is due to the currently general acceptance of Edwards as a man of modern letters, science and physics or the older extreme-

that of an advocate of a religion of hell and heaven ruled by an unforgiving vengeful god. Both are extreme; this research has shown that Edwards mellowed and did imply in practice the possibility of forgiveness, intercession and continued patience of God. More important here is that he did not rely on sermon and theology alone for the expression of his ideas but that as time passed his sermons became more involved with philosophical issues. These were the issues of his time that philosophers were debating- morals, ethics, virtue- topics that are still major issues to philosophers in the western world.[3] Into these treatises Edwards introduced humanistic values of concern like psychology, habit, motivation. His appreciation of the virtues recognized in general society has been obscured, and almost totally obliterated by interpreters that cite Edwards' Calvinist theology. Categorizing and classifying can become a Procrustean enterprise and this unfortunately has been the fate of Edwards' works and reputation.

A proper understanding of Edwards, this research has shown, must start with his earliest works stripped of all notions about him, but viewing him as a theologian- philosopher in the context of early 18th century moral thought. This must be done, as was done in this paper, by following a strictly chronological approach from his earliest production to the last. By limiting the inquiry to material that is philosophy, excluding religious-theological treatises, and refraining from excessive speculation, the Edwards within the work emerges. When he speaks philosophically we have allowed him to do so and we have refrained from judging those philosophical works through a "category" of religion.

It has been the rule followed here that a strict chronological survey be followed so that the context of his philosophy can be related to the context of his time, age and vocational pursuits. It will be noted that when he was but a youth he reflected on notions of science, physics, and philosophy that were current and "in the air." In later manhood his work reflected his religious interests and pursuits, and in the last years of his life the tenor mellowed and content changed. There has never been an edition of his work (even the current in-progress Yale edition does not) that has followed a purely chronological- philosophical assessment. This approach- chronology, philosophy only, and an absence of contextual speculation- has been the present rule. Speculation will be reserved for the final chapter, but that will be distilled from the evidence submitted.

A sermon delivered when he was minister to a small congregation in New York, another, A Divine and Supernatural Light, and another, God Glorified in Man's Dependence have not been generally recognized for what they are. As explained in Chapter Two, these three sermons, although expressed in a theological context, express Edwards' theory of knowledge and underline his philosophical stand. They also demonstrate the consistency with which he expressed the general thrust of his philosophy as not an ad hoc excursion into philosophy.

1. These three sermons are related in theme and context and cannot be properly understood unless examined in sequence.

2. These three sermons must be approached with the knowledge

before-hand of the context, time and audience to whom they were addressed: the one in New York was to a small but sophisticated congregation; God Glorified was to an audience of sophisticated Bostonians- well established, and opposing, Harvard trained ministers. Divine Light was delivered to his own Northampton congregation. In these three sermons Edwards made clear his theory of knowledge and philosophical orientation. Knowledge of the physical, material world is possible through sense experience and rational judgement and speculation of that sense experience. True knowledge, that kind of knowledge Plato describes Socrates as having searched for but knew existed only in the non-material Ideal world, is apprehended only by a "sense of heart." This "sense of heart" has been the subject of dispute ever since Edwards expressed it and evidence has been submitted here that supports the argument that Edwards did not mean a sixth sense, a supra-sense but an act of will to love, become committed in heart and mind to the greatness he saw in the act of creation and being.

3. These sermons are the key, the present research claims, to a philosophical understanding of any of Edwards' work in philosophy. He cannot be interpreted by filtering his philosophy through his theology. Edwards was first and foremost, and so considered himself, a theologian. Rare is his work that does not rely on testament, gospel, or religious authority. That reliance was so firm that the claim made in this paper that theology was Edwards' epistemology is established. As observed in that section, Edwards' flawed his arguments in several

instances when he used theology to prove his theological premises. It was also shown that Edwards realized that his arguments could no longer rest on theology alone and that a rational response was necessary to a rational question or opposing opinion.

It was shown in early chapters that the early success Edwards attained as a published theologian brought him fame in the colonies and in many countries in Europe also led to an estrangement from his Northampton parishioners. His erudition and attention to affairs other than pastoral caused a wound that never healed.[4] This division of interest highlights the fact that by his fifth year as minister he had begun to write longer, more extensive and philosophically packed "sermons" that became within a few years "sermon series", "lecture series" and topic studies that were extended over weeks, then months and some almost a year. These "sermons" were then edited, rewritten, and published as the treatises, inquiries, dissertations, and observations we now know as Edwards' philosophy. It would have been the normal state of affairs for a writer's works to settle into some level as time passed but the publication of Edwards' works as the product of a Calvinist preacher, the apathy toward that stern religion in an age of acceptance, at least de facto of Deism by many Americans made of Edwards' a person of contention. The ubiquitous demand for religious conformity for acceptance was the rule then even as it always has been.

Edwards' works, it has been shown, were edited and published soon after he died in a well-intentioned effort that included works that

have no relevance to his mature efforts- at least as a philosopher- Insects, Resolutions, Diary, Sarah Pierrepont. One, On The Soul is a work not even written by Edwards and so has not been considered here.[5] (Extensive use has been made of Edwards' Catalogue of Books, a handwritten listing of books he read, intended to read, or to buy.) This first edition of Edwards' works followed no apparent program or policy. In many instances material was included, or abridged or otherwise edited because it apparently fit the size of the projected volume. As was indicated in Chapter Six this was also a severe problem in the edition of Edwards' works published in London in 1814. Time, context and purpose is lost, and the edition and several others like it served at most as a repository for the preservation of much of Edwards' work, and not much else- philosophically. Eschatology, sermons, personal notes, handbooks, fill the pages which are larded with intrusive notes by the editors that obfuscate Edwards even further.

Works that some called a prime example of Edwards' empiricism, others an expression of Neo-platonism and still others a statement of profound religiosity, like A Divine and Supernatural Light have been over-edited through the centuries to the point that their content, context and structure have been lost. Overlooked and almost un-noted by most research is the fact that Edwards' religious-theological efforts became less his occupation and that his philosophical writings became his vocation. His sermons became perfunctory; they were often repeated and condensed from several others into a topically current and appropriate "sermon." Notes, not text, often as not were the source of typical sermons; Edwards' efforts were in his treatises.

It was not Edwards' "return" to a sterner interpretation of Calvinism that alienated his parishioners, but his clearer conception and enunciation and distinction of material "truth" and the Platonic "truth." It was Edwards who sought, as did Plato, an example of being not an instance of doing. Generally it is argued by most researchers that Edwards "returned" to the requirement of "full communion" but in fact the submitted evidence here indicates that Edwards' statement in Supernatural Light required not verbal assertions, physical demonstrations- or position in the parish- as certification of piety. He sought, this thesis argues, some kind of verifiable "being" of piety and rejected instances of deeds, works, tongues, revelations, convulsions or "signs". His work, Religious Affections makes this clear- if one wears the correct lenses- that Edwards, sobered by the recidivism of "saved" souls, "repentant" sinners and declared "saints" - rejected the psalm singers' expectations that their modulations affected their anticipated position in the heavenly choir. Edwards' preaching technique was not unlike that of his fellow ministers, except that when he addressed a Harvard audience, or a Boston congregation, his language was moderate, sophisticated and within the idiom of the learned and educated. However, when he addressed his own parishioners his language was tailored to their expectations and comprehension; he was no more a blood and thunder bible thumper than any of his neighboring preachers, most of whom have been forgotten but that Edwards contributed something they did not,a lasting philosophy, he is remembered but often misinterpreted.

His theology was consistent with his epistemology, but his sermons and the production of them had become what was described by an observer as a "cottage industry." [6] Edwards' first major treatise An Inquiry Concerning Religious Affections was written as his own entry into the debate that engaged many philosophers of his time. This was not, as some consider it, a local dispute over church procedure or ritual but a statement that summoned up notions from Hobbes, Plato, Augustine and many others. To assume that this was a paper in the style of Locke alone, as some say, is to slight the contributions of thought of many other philosophers that Edwards alluded to in his argument. Locke's was the language and psychology of Harvard and Edwards had to tailor his Inquiry within that pattern. Instead of it being a dull and ponderous work as it is when read in the usual over-edited forms generally available it emerges as a psychological analysis of the basic motivations toward religion and human activity in general.

Read within the context of his own activity it is clearly a statement of a chastened minister who knows he was carried away by his own religious enthusiasm and exuberance. These were, however, problems that Shaftesbury, Hobbes, Hutcheson, Locke and others also had found important and to which Edwards also responded. It was a problem that so consumed the western world in those years- religion- church membership, and the definition of its orientation. This paper shows that it was an analytical inquiry into the nature of religion. If any one philosopher's work is the target of Edwards' arguments, it is Shaftesbury that he is arguing against, not some local long forgotten

minister in New England as Prof. Miller claims. In it is an acute analysis of psychological motivation, making of the work much more than that purely religious exposition that Prof. Smith, editor-in-chief of the Yale edition of Edwards' works, claims it to be. Smith does not unwrap the work to analyze its philosophical content. For the apprehension of what is true religion, Edwards, with consistency, reaffirms that it is the "sense of heart," which is the key. In so doing, however, Edwards makes an excellent case for psychological analysis of motivations. The "springs" of actions, he argued there, are the factors that urge us on to do the things we determine and choose. We are not indifferent "or without will or choice...without motive, view, design, desire or principle of action" as he told Lord Kames. (See n.1, ch.8.) Smith and so many editors before him have overlooked Edwards' introduction of psychology into American philosophy and its acknowledgemnt as a factor in theology.

Earlier in this chapter the basic outline of Edwards' Freedom of the Will was stated. Edwards was not attempting to prove that man had free will but rather was attempting to refute the Arminian position that man's will is free. Using as armament cause and effect Edwards felt he had demolished the Arminian argument. Whether he did so or not is less important than the way he did it. Besides the usual cause and effect, he introduced into his work the notion of constant conjunction of events in series. He argued that such series is part of the plan of God who established a necessary order which God himself must follow so that He could have the foreknowledge which He must have to be God as we know Him. This treatise is generally hailed as Edwards' "magnum opus"

and finest example of his logical argumentation and himself at his empirical best. The accolades are proper but given for the wrong reasons: for his technique, the perfection of his causal arguments, the effectiveness of his powerful language. What is the value of the argument on a subject held by so many as unimportant, and taken for granted or beyond proof ?

The value in this work is not in his style, technique or causal arguments, for the burden of his argument rests on the arsenal of definitions and analysis of terms that run deep into psychology and human behavior. He was not the first to do so, but he was probably among the earliest in the colonies to place his argument in other areas besides God, besides causal principles, into the clinic of psychological analysis. The opinions, for or against Edwards' success in proving his argument, add nothing to Edwards' reputation, any more than had he proved in 1755 that the earth was round and not flat. As Edwards stated, no one would admit being controlled by an external power but by sober, serious pre-consideration. As Kant observed it is a topic that cannot be decided either way, but everyone assumes we have a will that we determine. The topic here, this paper shows, was not important; the tools he employed are most relevant to us in this most sensitive-to-psychology age.

In 1755 Edwards wrote The Nature of True Virtue and the The End For Which God Created the World. Both were published posthumously in 1765 as Two Dissertations. We are concerned with the dissertation generally called "True Virtue." This work and some of Francis Hutcheson's could serve easily as a most illuminating dialogue. It is

evident that Edwards had several of Hutcheson's treatises at his desk when the former wrote what is to an extent a "rebuttal" to Hutcheson's "aesthetic" philosophy and his views on the "moral sense." Edwards accepts much of Hutcheson but treads carefully into his own and original direction and makes some singular contributions to that very intense ethical debate of the early 18th century. This work, like so many of Edwards' has been relegated to the storage rooms of libraries and has gathered little more than dust and has been seen in print only in abridged form. What has been available, as usual has been interpreted in the light of Edwards' religious views and left us with a picture of a bitter, man-hating misanthrope. Edwards travels an intellectual path with Hutcheson,- carefully examining the latter's submission of virtue in many forms and conditions.

Contrary to the views of so many interpreters, Edwards did not reject these examples of virtue nor did he find them un-worthy in any manner. A cursory reading, with foreknowledge of the context in which this work was produced reveals Edwards' approbation of all of Hutcheson's examples of virtue, but the emphasis is on True Virtue and Edwards makes very clear what he means by True Virtue. To Edwards True Virtue is a state of being, not an act or a deed, a point of view he held consistently with its sources in Plato. Edwards conceded many of Hutcheson's premises, and embraced much of his aesthetic theory but drew the line on the latter's contention that the moral sense is a faculty that could assess, perceive, and guide the moral and ethical conduct of man and society in general. Whereas Edwards conceded the principle of a moral sense, he confined its capacity to material

objects and activities perceived by sense. True Virtue, he insisted, is a state of one's will, a condition of compliance with the beauty of being and existence- in short, beyond the perception of any sense. But- and this caveat is vital- in no way, no manner did Edwards demean, decry or debase that which is by general consensus considered "virtue." In fact several of his own examples run from the sentimental, and obvious, approval of marriage, family, the practical determination of good and evil by society, and the dilemma faced by moralists in their moral discourse. He points out that no one has difficulty in knowing what is right or wrong no matter what the language used to describe it may be- murder is murder, and lying is dishonest in any language but the circumstances and context in which it is used makes for the conflict philosophers and moralists mistakenly perceive in social and ethical relations. The sin one commits against an enemy in the enemy's estimation, is the virtue one displays in the estimation of ones own society or community.

It is evident that one exception was made in the strict chronological order that . was indicated that Edwards and his philosophy would be examined in this paper. The "sermon" Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God was written and delivered, and published in 1741 at the height of the Great Awakening, five years before he wrote and published Religious Affections. Insufficient attention has been paid to the relationship between these works: the former was written at the height of the excitement generated by a God fever during the Revival and the latter was written in the aftermath of the waning and apathy that set in when enthusiasm ebbed. Religious Affections has been

discussed in a previous chapter, and reviewed in this summation but it is with "Sinners" we are at present concerned.

The question can properly be asked then, why is a "sermon" a religious statement being considered in what has been to this point an inquiry into Edwards' philosophical efforts? It is because this "sermon" has, since it was first delivered, never been recognized-neither by historians, or philosophers as a major repository of Edwards' idealism.

Early youthful notes show an interest and capacity to express his comprehension of idealism. Despite a notebook listing a projected treatise on the subject, jottings on at least 75 topics, outlines and a determined and clear indication of the title of this projected work, the promise was never fulfilled and the treatise never written. Edwards never returned objectively to this project. A cursory examination, however of Sinners with the point of view here suggested, reveals within this sermon the idealism he did not express in a special or deliberate work on the subject. In several instances Edwards tells us that "the old way" of talking, or "the vulgar way of thinking of the material world" is the same and as effective as ever. It is in this sermon and in several others that Edwards' idealism is expressed and instead of recognizing it as such it has been used since the latter part of the nineteenth century as the tar and brush to destroy his reputation and examined as a paradigm of his hell-fire pulpit technique. It has been shown in this paper that Edwards was not alone in this form of impassioned preaching, and it has been shown also, that the parishioners expected it, welcomed it and enjoyed it.[7] Edwards

gave the congregation what it wanted, and met the needs of the time in the language and pulpit style of the day. The language he used in so doing was that of the basic content of idealism, a style no longer followed in theological discourse. He did not "compact" his idealism, which has been compared, but not proved, to be akin to Berkeley's which this paper points out is moot for Edwards never wrote a specific treatise on idealism, whereas Berkeley, and others did. Notes cannot be compared to published treatises without excessive speculation and resultant distortions.

The language and metaphor in Sinners has been used as indicative of a depravity and warped nature. It is not much different than that of his contemporaries as for example:

> You poor unconverted creatures, in the Seats, in the Pews, in the Galleries, I wonder you do not drop into Hell! It would not surprise me, I should not wonder at it, if I should see you drop down now, this Minute into Hell. You Pharisees, Hypocrites,now, now, now, you are going right into the Bottom of Hell. I wonder you do not drop into Hell by Scores, and Hundreds...[9]

The recorder of these words adds that the minister, Rev. James Davenport, "then came out of the Pulpit...stripped off his upper Garments, and got into the Seats, and lept up and down, and clapped his Hands and cried out...the War goes on, the Fight goes on, the Devil goes Down, the Devil goes down...and then [began] stamping and screaming most dreadfully." The present writer submits that it is time that we have reviewed our perspectives and rethought our opinions on the philosophy of Jonathan Edwards. He was a theologian but not one that added any unique or distinct interpretations to the body of his

faith. He was an early American philosopher in the context of early 18th century moral thought. He engaged that philosophy in dichotomies on virtue, religion, psychology, semantics, perception, will, choice, moral sense, aesthetic sense, metaphysical idealism, mental processes, morality, benevolence, - in short he was not the crabbed, bitter preacher nor was he the scientist, the towering physicist, the intellectual receptacle of Newton, Locke or the rival of Freud, and Einstein others claimed him to be. He also was not an imitator of Locke, a disciple of Berkeley, Hutcheson or Shaftesbury. He was not like a humming-bird, a flittering partaker of the essence of what attracted him.

Jonathan Edwards, this paper shows, was an earnest early American whose early years were spent in religious milieu. His training led him into the pulpit of his grandfather Stoddard at Northampton where he served for 23 years. His success and acceptance as writer of importance led to estrangements within the parish and the disappointments of post-Revival realities led to early philosophical second-thoughts. His sermonizing diminished, his philosophizing increased and came to a full fruition in his mature years and were expressed in several treatises. That which was the promise of idealism remained wrapped in the language of his sermons and theology. When he died of an infection from a needle used to protect him from small-pox, the then President of Princeton, at that time The College of New Jersey, left a legacy of thought to America. Much survived in the seminaries, churches, and descendants that carried on his religious views. But his death closed for almost two centuries a chapter on a great early American 18th

Century moral philosopher, who had he lived beyond his short span of 55 years might have spent some of his eloquence refuting the adverse criticism leveled against him.

Chapter Eight: Notes

1 Faust and Johnson, op.cit. p. 311. Edwards, Vol. II, Works, p. 311.

2 Bennett; Faust, American Literature; Holbrook, Theology Today; Hux; Johnson; Kimnach; Noll; Shea; Stuart; Tomas; op cit.

3 Faust; Tomas; Caskey; op.cit.

4 Tracy, op.cit.

5 Anderson, op.cit.p. 401.

6 Kimnach, Jonathan Edwards' Sermon Mill op.cit. p. 167- 73.

7 Faust and Johnson, p. xvii.

8 Ibid.op cit. p. xviii.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

Through almost three centuries Jonathan Edwards has been a factor in the world of philosophy, theology, and history. Many attributions and critiques for or against his position in other disciplines have been made; many submissions have been offered analyzing his contributions in so many other fields. All these, even the negative critiques are testaments to the impact that Edwards' thought has had on intellectual America. As recently as November of 1985, the noted historian, Prof. Paul Johnson, in an article in a prestigious American journal implied that Jonathan Edwards was a factor firing the revolutionary spirit in the War for Independence.[1] Another critic, a professor of philosophy, in a prestigious philosophy journal recently compared Edwards' morality to the Nazi, Heinrich Himmler and found in the latter a finer morality, greater grace and understanding for humanity among his fellows than that of Jonathan Edwards.[2] There is something wrong in all this but a calm assessment suggests that it is not the province of the present researcher, or the paper that follows that research, to assess or engage <u>all</u> these issues. The poets, the dramatists, the sociologists, the pursuers of misogynists and misanthropists have <u>their</u> work to do, and Edwards is a subject, an example and all too often the target. This final analysis will review,-an admittedly general survey- some of Edwards contributions as a Preacher, a Minister, and a Theologian. Other sections will examine him as Mathematician, Scientist, Empiricist. A final survey will consider him as a philosopher.

Preacher, Minister, Theologian:

If Calvinism had meshed into the mainstream of American Protestantism instead of the diverse and more liberal deistic directions it did follow, Jonathan Edwards, not his grandfather Solomon Stoddard would have been referred to and remembered as the "Pope" of the Connecticut Valley. His reputation for sermonizing and for involvement in theological disputation was internationally recognized and preceded his efforts in philosophy.

There is evidence in his work that in early years he struggled with the emotional conflicts that rigid Calvinism evoked, the awesome authority of God, the predetermination by God of the individual's present activity and future fate. This conflict was resolved in his acceptance of this creed. His education at Yale, then in its first semester, immersed him in religion but the education he received there was suspect by the more conservative and sophisticated clergy that came from the even then, prestigious classrooms of Harvard College, or Trinity, Oxford and Cambridge in England. This audience, sophisticated but external to Northampton's more rustic parishioners served Edwards well; it forced him to adopt a technique of adjusting his language-written or oral to his audience. In Boston, in New York and other more sophisticated cities the Edwards there was not the Edwards in Northampton, in style or content.

Edwards' preaching style was that of his colleagues in neighboring villages; it was topical, seasonal, and standard within the time. Most

important, however, it was adapted to the emotional capacity of his audience which was comprised of unlettered and semi-literate townsmen, farmers, trappers, traders- plain and simple people. Of singular importance is the fact that this style required passionate delivery, extremes of metaphor and evocations of Dante's poetry. Edwards' colleagues are for the most part forgotten but one sermon among the hundreds he wrote or sketched has gone far to besmirch him as a frightening preacher. He was no more such a preacher than any of his fellow New England preachers, and evidence shows he was in many ways even less of a brimstone bible-thumper, for as he matured even that element in his preaching became less pronounced. Intellectual issues, philosophy, psychology, science and physics entered much of his sermonizing. Because of his reputation with Boston and English publishers Edwards found little difficulty in converting many of his sermons into the treatises we now recognize as his philosophical efforts. In his sermons he let himself express his idealism although he had several times expressed reservations about its practical value in public expression.

The international acceptance Edwards achieved grated on his parishioners, who viewed his publishing efforts as pastoral neglect and the estrangement between them increased. Edwards was not a bedside parson and found difficulty in making "rounds" or expected house calls to the sick, the old, the needy. The Great Awakening swept New England, and Edwards was a leading light in that internationally observed Revival. His efforts were intense, perhaps naive in its total dedication and belief that the "converts" he counted entering his

church would actually enter heaven too. It is evident that the ebbing of religious fervor brought with it the decline in Sabbath attendance and attention to the promises made when Satan stood before them. Edwards became aware that more than song and psalms made a soul into a Christian and put those notions into the first philosophical work he published, A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections- an adaptation of a sermon series he delivered over a period of several months in 1742-1743. It was not, as most say it is, a declaration of an intensification of religious severity; it was a statement, derived from philosophical introspection on the meaning of being contrasted with doing. It averred that religiosity must spring from will, inclination, and desire to approach and love virtue. It averred that acts alone, deeds, statements, hysteria, hallucinations, visions, dreams, babblings and talking in tongues did not make of one a regenerate nor a convert.

Edwards demanded that his parishioners be virtuous and regenerate, not only do virtuous things or act in virtuous ways. This was unacceptable to less than learned frontiersmen and the battle lines were drawn. Dissension increased and a few years later Edwards was dismissed from the pulpit he led for 23 years. Socrates found few friends among the Athenians when he questioned them on these issues, nor could they enlighten him as to the true meaning of piety.

It is not the province of the present writer to show any relevancy of Edwards' theology to present society; his interpretation of religious practice and theology was rejected in his own parish and in his own time. Calvinism itself underwent revision under the

re-interpretation of more liberal Calvinists like Moses Mather who saw God as permitting instead of pre-ordaining. Edwards was a conformist and hewed closely to Calvinist principles although he denied being influenced or unduly affected by Calvin's thought. He implied a modification in his strictness of interpretation in his appeals to prayer and pious behavior, and even in his own lifetime Calvinism was undergoing changes toward moderate interpretation. An unattractive element in his intellectual character was his strong interest in eschatology and belief in the coming of the millenium. His acceptance of the Bible was absolute; it was to him in fact, the foundation and base of truth. The Bible was truth and philosophy was but another means of rationally proving and supporting that truth, and also his recognition that a rational argument for or against this theological position must be met with a similarly rational response.

Mathematician, Physicist, Empiricist:

Many interpretations of Edwards include expansive speculations on what Edwards might have accomplished had he chosen to pursue the sciences and mathematics. They point to his youthful college notes and describe the wonders he would have accomplished had he chosen the laboratory instead of the pulpit. These notions are pure science fiction; Edwards was in fact neither mathematician nor physicist, His own words on the subject cite his deficiency in mathematics and his catalog of books indicate ownership of several volumes which today would be called "guides" and basic primers in algebra. Newtonian

physics and mathematics were not taught at Yale when he studied there and no instructors capable of teaching the subject on the faculty. Whatever Edwards knew of Newtonian physics and mathematics he gleaned from some of the latter's works which were available in the Yale library, but most of what he knew of Newton's works were the subject of papers and essays that were discussed in the many pamphlets that crossed the Atlantic. Newton's work was the subject of learned discussion at the time: it was new, current, revolutionary and intellectually exciting. Halley, a friend of Newton, was also in the press as even then his calculations on the comet named for him was shown accurate. It was Halley's primers and guidebooks that Edwards relied upon for his self-help in mathematics and comprehension of Newton.

Edwards' notes on science, mathematics and physics, although impressive and the evidence of a keen understanding, has within it no new insights or theories. It is almost a small repetition of much of Newton's physics on colors, rainbows, light refraction, gravity, substance and the like. These are all in notes, some even lack grammatical arrangement or punctuation. Although he refers to the composition and physical arrangement of the world and universe in much of his later intellectual efforts, he never objectively returned to these notes with the purpose of producing a work on physics, science or mathematics. We cannot consider Shakespeare a philosopher for the metaphysical soliloquies some of his characters like Hamlet attempt at times; we cannot award a posthumous Nobel prize to Edwards for his efforts in physics and mathematics.

It has been popular to describe Edwards as an empiricist; one that does so with effusive praise is Prof. Miller who described him as the first and earliest of American empiricists, and a scientist exceeding Newton, Boyle and rivaling Einstein. Edwards was not an empiricist. The appellation is derived from his alleged allegiance to John Locke. This is a total fiction:

1.Edwards' went beyond Locke's sensationalism and embraced idealism, which if a comparison must be made reflected Berkeley's philosophy more closely than Locke's. Whereas empiricism derives its comprehension and knowledge through sense experience, Edwards understood true knowledge as derived wholly from idea.

2.The notion that Edwards was an empiricist because of his dependence on causal arguments generally used by empiricists is false. Edwards' used cause and effect, constant conjunction, natural order of events in series as his argument required. He assumed that behind all these principles was the ruling order of God that made these series, constant conjunctions, regularities of successive events to operate the way they do as his (God's) means of communicating to us. God himself requires this regularity- past, present and future so that he can function with foreknowledge as a God, to be a God, must do.

3.That Edwards was an empiricist derives from an associational notion generated by Prof.Miller who described Edwards as an empiricist basing that opinion on the so-called Lockean influence he found in Edwards.:

(a) It has been shown that Edwards went beyond Locke in his theory of knowledge into Idealism, and although their philosophy on will in many ways are parallel, Edwards' philosophy in other areas- man in nature,

virtue, ethics had roots in Plato not in Locke.

(b) Edwards' goal in Freedom of Will was not to prove or disprove man as the agent in control of a motivated will, but to demolish an opposing religious principle; Locke's purpose was to prove man was in control of the faculty called will. Edwards submitted a closely reasoned thesis that proved that man is free to choose, only if one accepts Edwards' definition of choice. Edwards' absolute acceptance of Calvinism's predetermination foreclosed any possibility that his conclusions could bear any likeness to Locke's. A free will as Locke argued for would bring a confrontation between man and his maker or at least leave the latter uninformed about future events or acts. This is unthinkable to Edwards.

(c) Locke's tacit acknowledgement of theism and natural religion would have made personal enemies and intellectual antagonists of these two philosophers.

(d) Edwards owned Locke's works called "Complete Works of Mr. John Locke." Whether Edwards may, or may not have read the political works of Locke is not evident but Edwards never discussed politics, or the structure of government except a passing observation on a theocratic relationship that he obviously approved. Edwards' avoidance of political philosophy leaves us with no expressed views by him with which to compare him to Locke's theory of government. Edwards' views of "man in nature", "nature", "state of nature" and "man out of nature" bear no resemblance to Locke's treatment of these "social contract" premises. Their purposes and conclusions diverged. No empiricism can be determined in Edwards' perception of man, as a "natural man" existing

in a "state of nature" in preparation for a future state for those few who come out of the "state of nature" as chosen and elect. Locke, with no shift in perspective can be classified as an epiricist in his theory of the social compact. He can without difficulty point to hunger, thirst, need for habitation and garments, and the urge for procreation and mating. He can point to the means to satisfy those wants- the forests, the land for cultivation, the opposite sex for companionship and mating and by a small leap of rationalization claim that it was God that gave the wants and needs but provided the means to fulfill them. The evil that lurks in so many of us drives what is a generally good individual into free association for self-protection. There are in this social contract many empirical elements, but there are also some rationalizations too.

Edwards however in his venture into a discussion of man in nature and the state of nature in his work A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections leaves us milling there in a two class system with those who were chosen out of the state of nature. Those masses left behind in the state of nature are doomed to pursue as best they can an un-enlightened existence. It is a discussion not valuable for its worth in comparison to Locke's; it resembles more of Hobbes' creatures in a crude, hard and selfish state of nature, and was echoed somewhat in Rousseau. From that state of nature in which we all find ourselves, if we are elected to become super-natural men, in that state of higher existence we will get all our benefits of eternal bliss and happiness. If such is empiricism then the definition of the word has been changed.

There was a cartoon character some years ago who observed, "Dear

Lord, I aint much but I'm all I got." This it must be observed is applicable to Edwards' opinion of man in nature. If the masses are those who make up the core of human population throughout the ages and passages of time; if the destiny of the masses is that very state of nature, several steps below the blessed, then whatever is, is because of the sweat, toil, and application of those "people in a state of nature." The beauties of the Vatican, the Louvre, the Acropolis, the arts of Rembrandt, Shakespeare, the wit of Twain and Sholem Aleichem all came out of the mire of that state of nature. True, it follows so did the pestilences, diseases, hunger, war and atom bombs. The same state of nature that made Hitler produced Mother Teresa, Madame Curie, and Dr.Salk. The same impetus that brought the Puritans to a New Zion brought the Dutch to South Africa and with them the destruction and oppression of the native "man in nature." Edwards embarked on a problem, one of the very few instances in which he involved himself in any debate resembling a social issue, but he leaves us with an open question. When man becomes truly enlightened with absolute truth then and only then will man emerge from the present lower state and enter a state of nature worthy of his creation as a creature of reason. This is all very good, but how do we go about implementing that and if it is right, is it good to leave, what actually still exists, as is ? We're not much, but we are "all we got" to work with. Edwards tells us what ails us but gives us no means to cure ourselves in this instance.

III. Jonathan Edwards as Philosopher.

In 1734 Edwards delivered the third in a related series of sermons, A Divine and Supernatural Light to his Northampton congregation. That sermon based as usual on a text from the Testament was delivered as a typical Sunday sermon-lecture and has the usual lengthy title ministers and writers in general appended to their literary efforts. This one has as a final descriptive phrase the words "... Shown to be both a Scriptural and Rational Doctrine." From that phrase alone we cannot conclude that Edwards meant this to be a philosophical work but from the contents, which have been examined in earlier chapters of this paper, Edwards made a statement that knowledge of material affairs and things are through sense experience. Knowledge of "eternal" things, notions and concepts that are beyond substance, notions of qualities like piety, virtue and truth can only be ascertained through this inner light. Speculative knowledge derived from comparisons of material things aid us in understanding and improving our lives and society but such knowledge is not "truth."

It is not to be understood that it is worthless or incorrect to pursue those avenues of knowledge of sense experience, for to all practical purposes, it is the only means by which we can understand our material world and the span of existence we have within it. Real, eternal truth, is that truth that is attained by the "sense of the heart"- a gift, a capacity, that very few have and a faculty that cannot be acquired by any objective means. Edwards revived the notion

that knowledge of non-sensible reality is possible. This, through the "sense of the heart" which is not an additional sense, nor a "supra" sense, (like an addition to) or an expansion of the senses' general accepted capacity. It is present in some few who have a willing motivation toward all goodness, all virtue and a complete surrender to love of creation and existence itself. This sense does not operate through special senses or modification of the senses, nor does the sense of heart tell new ideas, or messages, or truths- it merely brings a perception of the concept closer, clearer, more meaningfully into an understanding of its place in the order of the world.

Edwards likes to compare the difference between knowing honey is sweet by being told about it and knowing its sweetness by actually tasting it. This, of course is, Platonism. The question raised as to Edwards' source for this element in his work and thought has often been examined. [3] This is less important than the fact that it was expressed and that such a notion would bewilder an empiricist philosopher whose theory of knowledge depends so heavily upon a posteriori knowledge it is not difficult, nor does it change the importance of the issue, to assume that Edwards inheirited his Platonism from its most obvious source- Plato. He had in his library many of Plato's dialogues, but if this is a simplistic response, the many works of the Christian fathers, whose works Edwards eagerly absorbed, the contacts he had from the diverse reading he secured through loans, the pamphlets and treatises of the Cambridge Platonists are sufficient to provide a likely source. Good evidence indicates that it was Henry More whose Calvinism as well as his neo-Platonism, appealed to Edwards.[4]

The principle within that sermon, lofty in Edwards time as it was when Plato expressed it, was one from which Edwards never wavered in any of his works. It had a purpose, overlooked or under-stated by most interpretations. Edwards saw a wave of materialism moving across the ocean and being greedily absorbed in the colonies. The values to which his Puritan forefathers had covenanted themselves were being questioned, attacked, rejected and all too often, perfunctorily observed. Quick and automatic profession of faith, virtue and piety in the pursuit of land, status, profitable matrimony, privilege and profit. In the face of this Edwards had the courage to issue a warning that such was not the road toward the attainment of permanent values, but only the acquisition of material "truths." There was slavery in the colonies, and Indians were being cheated, deprived and slaughtered. Edwards did not stand in the way of progress. He did question values and philosophically attested that truth and lasting values did not lie in substance, but elsewhere. He was not original in this; he was unwavering on the issue. The pragmatism that was more meaningful and profitable was the philosophy that soon became the world view of the land.

Edwards was not the first philosopher to warn society about the dangers of material pursuit and the error that social relations can be based on such a narrow world view. He did not enter into formal discussions or treatises on these topics but his constant seeking for a truth beyond the material truths, a virtue beyond the practiced virtues, a dedication to seeking truth stripped of any motivation other than the goal and possibly of its attainment is worth the effort. He

offered no surcease from life's vicissitudes as reward for such dedication, only that the pursuit itself is a life with value; he gave no guarantee that a life spent on such a path had more than a surety that it was a life spent on such a path of value.

His assumption that knowledge of non-sensible reality is possible requires of others an acceptance of that assumption that there is a "non-sensible" reality. Conceding that we can ascertain some knowledge of what we also accept as "non-sensible reality", of what value is such knowledge? If we know the "structure" of that non-sensible reality how can we adjust it or our own lives to accommodate one to another. If we can know now what will be, what difference does the knowing make to our material lives? We must turn to considering what the value of pursuit of such knowledge is to our material world and practical affairs. To assume with Edwards that there is an absolute truth or an absolute ethic and morality is to lay claim to knowledge of "non-sensible" reality and the one way one can accept the means or the results is to have the faith in the assumption that Edwards displayed. We do not have the faith Edwards had, and we do not all accept his assumption that there is such an absolute knowledge.

Edwards' parishioners saw their values in a more practical world view and the colonies did not separate but united and successfully fought a war against the strongest nation at that time. The expansionism that carried a loosely associated society into "world power" status evidently did not stop to reason along the lines that Edwards' philosophy intimated and the enlightenment and its materialism did not hesitate long enough in Europe to embrace Edwards' Platonism

1.Edwards suggested no obligation in his philosophy. I am not obliged to do good, or act virtuously for any end or purpose except that such is the way I must act; it is the order and rule of existence just like stones roll down-hill and fire is hot.

2.Edwards denied benevolence as a factor ruling virtue. Benevolence to Edwards is but a disguised, objectively or otherwise, self-love. If I help my neighbor in distress it is because I expect him or society to reciprocate when and if I need help. If I help others it is only because that makes the community I live in a better place for me to live in. This is an obvious adaptation of Hobbesian thinking but Edwards insists that any act "vulgarly called" virtuous is commendable though it might be not True Virtue.

3.Sympathy, empathy, even justice are not ruling elements in this pursuit.

4.Love of parent, wife or children is natural, and Edwards emphasized his own agreement with Hume and Hutcheson on this. Such love is but instinctive, universal but often displayed with aberations and not an act of will. An act to be called virtuous must have its origin in the will and virtuous nature of the "doer."

5.Edwards gives us no rule or method to pursue this truth or a conduct to follow that will lead us to being virtuous.

6.He does, in fact, tell us that few of us will ever attain that state of virtue and if we do, neither we nor our fellow-man will know that we have attained that state. There will be no outward sign, no definition of our status, and the newer broader more perfect conception of the

material world will be as natural to us as though it had always been ours.

7.Finally, the definition of what truth is and what it means- what virtue is and what that means is the same in any language, place or time. He departs from the ethical relativism of Hobbes: murder is murder, lying, cheating, stealing means the same in any language, place or time. But the designation these acts signify varies and it is that which causes the confusion in the disputations of moralists and ethical teaching. The terrorists' acts are heroic feats of bravery but murder to their victims; the bombing of London was despicable and barbaric acts of violations against civilian populations but the bombing of Berlin, Cologne and Hiroshima were acts of necessity that shortened the war. It is not that we do not universally define and agree on what is true, ethical or virtuous, or that what is true or virtuous in one society may relatively be the opposite in another place or time--no. Human beings generally have the same feelings and capacity to understand, but because some people do things and believe things that are other than that which we do we believe there is variety in truth and virtue. If we examine the philosophies that mankind has pursued and held worthy of acceptance, more have been rejected and relegated to the arcane than those that are retained. Of the many philosophies that flourished in Greece and of the philosophers that produced them two great and over-riding elements have survived: Platonism and Aristotelianism. The time is gone since the epithet "The Philosopher" was meaningful in reference to Aristotle. Much of his philosophy no longer adequately answers the questions we ask now even though at one

time "The Philosopher" it seemed to many, answered all questions, and that in the philosophy of Aristotle all truth could be found.

It is not that Aristotle's philosophy has been found to be not true, but that his descriptions of material and non-material reality do not supply the premises upon which we can make the explications and implications our present society finds it essential to have as a point of departure. Whether or not transparent spheres hold the stars and planets in their position does not mean that something did not do an adequate job of keeping them in place. We have found more precise and more detailed and useful descriptives but not "truer" ones; the ancients knew it was noon without quartz watches and sailed the seas without compasses or sextants. There were tides on a regularly predictable schedule as were the seasons and the stars well chartered.

Still, and although so much of Aristotle's works have content that is less precise or sufficient for all our questions does not mean that his philosophy is not "true anymore." The rational depth and the willingness to analyze and inquire and then provide an answer is never "untrue" and for that reason the particulars of Aristotle's philosophy may be found wanting in our time, but the "truth"--never being attainable, and unmeasurable is in his work as lasting as any philosophical description can be "true."

Edwards' philosophy can be compared to Plato's: there is nowhere a definite description of "truth" or "virtue" or the "good." There is a constant unending search or implied search for these "forms." As stated immediately above, so many philosophies have been examined throughout intellectual history, considered meaningful and then put

onto the storage shelves of the libraries and schools. There has never been an abeyance in the search for truth or the search for the "good." This does not mean that man in society has the time, the span of concentration or the same sense of values to determine what is true and what is good. In some sense pragmatism has always been a characteristic of mankind's rational philosophy. We cannot determine what is absolute good or what is the ultimate truth and if we do is that decision applicable to all involved and is it a permanent determination ?

Utilitarianism, the route that the moral, ethical and social philosophers followed after the moral sense philosophers pioneered it with benevolence, justice, harmony is premised upon the greatest good to the greatest amount of people with the least amount of pain to the fewest people. Existentialism is premised upon the notion that all or most of all our present institutions ill serve society. A cursory examination of many philosophies have sought or described "the good" and declared "the truth" as time and needs have required. But the search, the need to seek, the assurance that they exist in some way, or manner has been the basis of the almost immutable resiliency of Platonic thought. The same search, the same constancy, the same insistence that beyond the mundane, the pragmatic, the rote and sophistic is a <u>state</u> of truth, and a <u>state</u> of virtue. This challenge, this universal knowledge that is a part of all human beings, whether they practice the pursuit or not certifies the validity of Jonathan Edwards' work, and that Jonathan Edwards deserves.

It is pleasant to walk through the fields and meadows of Connecticut and Massachusetts where once Jonathan Edwards communed with his conscience and his God. It is still possible to hear his voice delivering the message of that communion to his flock in the white churches in the country side, with their spires pointing to the sky. But one does not need these fields and meadows or a dark and starry night to evoke Edwards in the land. His voice and thoughts can be discerned in the many facets of American culture impressed there by descendants and followers who entered the universities, schools, seminaries, and high office of the country. It is important that we release him from the stocks where he has been placed by some interpretations and that we respect him for what he always was- a searcher for the good, a seeker for the virtuous, and truth.

Chapter Nine: Notes

1 Paul Johnson, Wilson Quarterly, Nov. 1985. op. cit.

2 Bennett, op. cit.

3 Gardiner, op. cit.

4 Watts, Early American Literature X, 1975. op. cit.

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