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I. THE PRESBYTERIAN BULWARKS OF LIBERTY AND LAW.

It is a striking and memorable coincidence that while in the City of Philadelphia the Presbyterian Synod of New York and Philadelphia, in 1787, was discussing and amending the report of Witherspoon and his associates, and seeking the best possible embodiment of Presbyterianism as an organized, representative and constitutional government, the Constitutional Convention was also at the same time, in that same city, debating and determining the best form of government for the new Nation. Led by Witherspoon, whose blood still tingled with the thrill of the hour when he signed the Declaration of Independence, the Synod took the Confession of Faith in hand, and without any scrupulosities of reverence for it as a venerable symbol, and in absolute indifference to possibilities of patch-work, stripped it of every vestige of Erastianism, and ordered a thousand copies of the Plan as thus amended, printed for distribution among the Presbyteries, "for their consideration, and the consideration of the churches under their care." In the next Synod, 1788, after further amendment and full discussion, the whole Plan was finally adopted as "The Constitu-

V. PRESIDENT JONATHAN EDWARDS.

Jonathan Edwards, the elder, was born at Windsor, Connecticut, October 5, 1703. His father, Timothy Edwards, was pastor at Windsor almost 60 years and was a most godly and greatly beloved man. Jonathan was the only son among eleven children, and four of his sisters were older than himself. At a very early age he gave proof of the wonderful gifts with which he was endowed. He was reading Latin at six ; at twelve, he wrote a paper refuting materialism ; also, an elaborate account of the habits of the field-spider, based upon his own observations. Before he was thirteen he entered Yale College, then a struggling and homeless school at New Haven. While he was still a freshman he read John Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," and he has left on record the great enjoyment thus afforded him. At the end of four years he was graduated with high honors, and after studying divinity two years, he was approbated to preach. He then came out West to preach in a small Presbyterian church in New York City, and though he was urged to remain as pastor, the new and crude conditions of the springing town did not attract him, and accordingly, he returned to Yale and his native New England. Here he held a tutorship till 1727, when he was invited to become associated with his distinguished grandfather, the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, the venerable pastor of the church of Northampton. He accepted this call and in this historic town, then one of the foremost communities in New England, he spent the most of his active life. That summer he married Sarah Pierrpont, the lovely daughter of an eminent minister in New Haven, whom he had loved since she was thirteen, and who was to him a most worthy and sympathetic companion throughout all his after life. For only two years after his coming to North-

ampton Dr. Stoddard continued in the pastorate and, upon his death, Mr. Edwards became the sole pastor. Here he remained for twenty-three years, and here was the scene of his most remarkable labors in connection with the "Great Awakening," a movement of inestimable importance in the history of American Christianity. Here for a score of years he was a tower of strength to his church, the town and that general region of New England. His marvelous preaching, for the discriminating historian has not hesitated to call him the greatest preacher of the age, made him not only the pride of his parish, but also a sort of oracle of wisdom and faith, consulted by great and small, from far and near.

His principles were puritanical and his ideas of policy and conduct were equally so. As a kind of reaction from the great seasons of spiritual activity and ingathering through which they had passed, there came a time of religious indifference among the Christian people of Northampton. The pure-minded pastor found occasion to denounce "frolics" in severest terms; he encountered a spirit of frivolity unseemly in the saints; and he was particularly annoyed to learn that an impure, obscene literature was being handed around among the young. Mr. Edwards consulted his deacons and they resolved forthwith to proceed against such evils in a way befitting their gravity. But human nature was the same among Puritan deacons as among their degenerate sons of later times; for when, after some preliminary inquisitions, it transpired that among the youthful offenders were some of the sons and daughters of these good deacons, their resolution suddenly halted and the earnest pastor, little daunted, found himself with a very broken support.

But this irritation was rather the occasion than the cause of the saddest incident in the life of this faithful man of God. Dr. Stoddard had held peculiar views of what should be required of a participant in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. His theory is commonly referred to now as that of

the "two-fold covenant." In a word, it required moral sincerity, decent deportment and an intellectual assent, in a general way, to the truth of the Christian religion. It did not contemplate a confession of personal Christian faith or experience. It seemed to regard this sacrament as a converting as well as an edifying ordinance and hence might with propriety be administered to certain of the unregenerate as well as to the saints in Christ. Mr. Edwards had had his doubts on this matter even before the death of his grandfather, but he modestly kept them in abeyance; in course of time, however, his views became more pronounced, the wonderful seasons of grace through which he had passed had sharpened in his mind the radical distinction between the converted and the unconverted, while his maturing years and his undivided responsibilities made it with him a matter of gravest conscientious concern whether he should longer keep silence. In 1744, he preached his sermons on *The Religious Affections* in which he strongly declared his dissent from the custom which they had been following. Unhappily, the congregation was not in any frame just then to follow his lead, particularly in a direction which might be construed as a reflection upon the memory of their late beloved pastor. For four years after these sermons no one was presented for admission to this sacrament. In 1748, to one who sought admission, Mr. Edwards declared what he should require. These terms were declined and the issue was then fairly on.

He asked of his church the privilege of discussing the subject in a series of sermons but his request was refused; rather, a storm of passion broke out and the angry cry was for his immediate dismissal. He did procure their consent to write a book on the Qualifications of Full Communion, but the people soon became impatient and would not wait. A Council was called and there was a preliminary wrangle as to the constituting of that body. Dr. Stoddard's views did not prevail generally throughout New England, but

they had a strong hold upon the churches and ministers in the immediate vicinage of Northampton. Accordingly, the people were afraid that if they went outside of the county—an entirely proper and regular thing to do—the Council would sustain Mr. Edwards. At last, the Council voted by a majority of one, that the pastor should go, and, afterward, the congregation ratified this decision by a vote of 200 against 20. He was dismissed June 22, 1750. He remained in Northampton some months, but a town meeting voted formally that he should not again be permitted to enter the pulpit. It is sad to see that great and good man, after twenty-three years of faithful service, with a large family dependent upon him, with no resources or means of support, coldly turned adrift upon the world; but it is far sadder to see the church that could do it. The best people in the congregation repented bitterly of their wrong afterward but it was too late. Nothing but the grace of God can account for the beautiful tenderness and forbearance which characterized Mr. Edwards' course through all this most trying experience. His Farewell Sermon is magnificent in its Christian dignity, eloquent in its judicious omissions and really sublime in its expression of unfeigned affection for all the people.

From Northampton, he went to Stockbridge to be a missionary among the Indians. It is not claimed that he was especially suited for this work but it is very significant that he chose it in preference to flattering invitations to Scotland or a Presbyterian pastorate in Virginia. Here among the red-skins of the wilderness, with the trees for his companions and his well-trained mind for his library, he did the best of his literary work. While his wife and daughters were doing needlework to be sold in Boston for their support, he was writing his Treatise on the Freedom of the Will, and some of his other works. His fame was soon assured and the missionary among the Indians was the only American whose name commanded high respect in the cir-

cles of European scholarship. In 1757, his son-in-law, President Aaron Burr, of Princeton College, died, and the wise directors turned to the metaphysician-missionary for his successor. At first he hesitated, saying that he prized the opportunities he enjoyed at Stockbridge for study and for some extensive literary work which he had in contemplation; and, moreover, he argued that he had an irritable temper which he feared might disqualify him for successful work among young men in the college. However, he finally accepted and came to Princeton, leaving his family at Stockbridge to come on later. He reached New Jersey in January, 1758, and as smallpox was epidemic, it was deemed a proper precaution that he should be vaccinated. It was done, and, the fever taking a bad turn, he died March 22, having been President of Princeton College just five weeks.

This brief sketch does scant justice to what was indeed a most remarkable and vastly influential career. Edwards' biography is intensely interesting and his writings are to be understood only in the light of his personal history. It is said that a great man is the flowering of his age and country; if this be so, is it not strange that the pioneer life of New England, in the first half of the eighteenth century, should produce the man whom Robert Hall has called "the greatest among the sons of men?" He was great, he had both the powers and the limitations of greatness. His intellectual capacities were prodigious. Thirteen hours a day was his regular allowance for work. As a pastor, he never made calls except upon the sick and when he was sent for. He barely took time from his books for his meals and his devotions. His exercise was horseback riding, of which he was very fond. Fortunately, Mrs. Edwards had a practical turn and she looked after the domestic needs, so that her distinguished husband scarcely knew how many cows he owned or whether the winter wood had yet been "laid in." He early formed the habit of writing out his thoughts, and many a time, when taking his ride, he would stop his horse

and jot down some momentary illumination which had flashed upon his active mind. This largely accounts for the thoroughness of his thinking and the clearness of his writings. We read that at his death he had 1,400 manuscripts on a vast variety of subjects.

The secret of his productive energy was his genius for concentration. He wrote his "Freedom of the Will" in four months and yet old Plato himself could not have denied it a place of honor among the noblest of his offspring. His treatise on the "Religious Affections" was first a series of sermons at Northampton, and yet Dr. Dwight said that if he had to choose one book beside the Bible to be saved from a universal deluge, it would be that book. Edwards was nothing if not a philosopher, and yet, like Coleridge, he was a theologian first and a philosopher afterward. A son of the manse, early taught in the Scriptures, he was both by temperament and training, a religious youth. And yet, it was not till his twentieth year—January 12, 1723—that he recorded his formal self-renunciation and the solemn dedication of himself to God. In his earliest years he was much troubled with doubts as to the divine sovereignty and it is indicative of a mystic vein that strongly marked his whole religious life, that those doubts should disappear, not, so much as the result of rational reflection as by a strange spiritual enlightenment. He always emphasized the testimony of experience as to the truth of his profoundest theological tenets. He regarded the wonderful life of the devoted David Brainerd as a distinct proof of the truth of Calvinism¹; and in his journal for 1723 we find this entry: "Wednesday, March 6, near sunset. Felt the doctrines of election, free grace, and of our not being able to do anything without the grace of God; and that holiness is entirely, throughout, the work of God's Spirit, with more pleasure than before."²

¹Volume I., p. 665. All references to Edwards' works in this paper are to the four-volume edition, based on the Worcester Edition, published by Robert Carter and Brothers, New York. ²Opera, I:9.

Edwards was a polemic rather than an apologete. However, he would doubtless have challenged this distinction, at least as it is usually drawn now; for with his penetrating insight he saw the consequences and implications of a doctrine as a part of the doctrine itself and his keen judgment spoke its verdict accordingly. Thus he scented Deism in Arminianism¹ and affirmed prevalent false doctrines of the human will to be "utterly inconsistent with conversion's being at all the effect of either the word or Spirit."²

The mainspring of his philosophical activity was his intense theological conviction. He was too evangelical to spend time in mere speculative theory-spinning and in all his writings we can trace the influence of that famous number eleven of the 70 resolutions which he recorded in early life for his guidance. It runs thus:

"Resolved, When I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances do not hinder."³

Edwards was too clear a thinker not to discover very soon that solving the theorems of divinity must throw him back upon the profoundest problems of philosophy.

Metaphysically, Edwards was a thorough idealist. Indeed, his extreme idealism was the fertile seed-thought which afterward sprouted into grave errors among those who claimed to be his followers. Authorities dispute whether he ever read the books of Bishop Berkeley, but they agree that his ideas were largely of the Berkeleyan type. Although he absorbed Locke while in college, his writings seem to have stimulated his thinking rather to have moulded it. Dr. Martineau says "to make room for the co-existence of finite and infinite causality has ever been the *crux philosophorum*; for no sooner is the infinite invoked than the finite flies."⁴ Early in his thinking Edwards seems to have arrived at what was to him a satisfactory

¹II:540.

²II:584.

³Op. I:4.

⁴Types of Ethical Theory, Vol. I., p. 159.

view of the relation between God and the outside² world; but long after we find him longing for a *rationale* of the relation between God and Mind. He regarded Providence as continuous creation. Objective permanent identity is in no way in the object itself; God has arbitrarily ordered that it should be regarded and treated as there. Such an idealism is often an alias for Pantheism, and it is too true that his teachings are not easily acquitted of pantheistic implications. He minimized second causes and carried the doctrine of immanence to the farthest extent of modern thought. He has very little to say about miracles and it is reasonable to infer that he did not care much for their evidential value; to him all nature was supernatural.

And, moreover, it is certainly as easy as it is common to say that this principle controlled his philosophy of mind also. His treatise on the Will is, as a piece of logic, absolutely unanswerable. First of all, man is an effect, and his resources, physical or psychical, cannot exceed the dowry with which he has been invested. Man, the agent, cannot have larger powers or possessions than, first somehow, were imparted to and so became the property of man the recipient. He asserts that "nothing can come to pass without a cause;" "and this dictate of common sense equally respects substances and modes or things and the manner and circumstances of things;" "but if things not in themselves necessary, may begin to be without a cause, all this arguing is vain."¹ He distinguishes between moral and natural necessity, making the former to refer to the necessary relation between strength of inclination and certain volitions and actions; making the latter to refer to the necessary relation between the force of natural causes—such as a wound causing pain or perceiving that parallel lines cannot cross—and their consequences upon our volitions and actions. Yet, after carefully drawing this distinction, he admits that the difference is not so much in the nature of the connection as in the things connected.²

¹Op. II:26, 27.

²Ibid, II:14.

This essay was no sooner given to the world than the hue and cry was raised that it was fatalism, pure and simple, and that cry has never since ceased to make itself heard. It may be said that the treatise bears evidence of the haste with which it was written, in its lack of a consistent terminology. He announces his purpose to use "will" as a synonym for the whole affectional nature, including, as Locke does, everything outside of the understanding, but he frequently departs from this usage and makes the will the specific faculty of self-determination. His use of "necessity" is confusing; he distinguishes between necessity and certainty, and yet some of his passages are acceptable only by inserting the latter word where he employs the former; indeed, he himself says in his appended remarks in a letter to a minister of the Church of Scotland: "Such a necessity as attends the acts of men's wills, is more properly called certainty, than necessity; it being no other than the certain connection between the subject and predicate of the proposition which affirms their existence."¹

It should not be forgotten that this essay was written as a refutation of Arminianism. Its author regarded that in producing it he was not in the least departing from legitimate ministerial work; the devout Missionary was doing missionary work when he gave it to the world. He distinctly disclaimed all fatalistic imputations. His Calvinism may have been, as Dr. A. H. Strong thinks,² narrower than that of Augustine, or of Calvin himself, but, in any case, it was wide enough to furnish room for a persuasive and availing preaching of the Gospel to impenitent men. We find it in history that the idea of revivals is the gift of Puritan Calvinism in America, though it might be added that the abuses and excrescences of that idea are traceable to another source; it is simple fact that the great apostle of evangelism in early New England, the foremost figure in the deepest spiritual awakening the American church has

¹Ibid, II:185. ²Philosophy and Religion, pp. 114, 120.

ever known, was the writer of this same sternly philosophical essay; it is on record that the great Chalmers, the eminent preacher and teacher in Scotland and the fearless champion of civil and religious liberty everywhere, recommended this book to his pupils more strenuously than any other book of human composition, adding that it had helped him more than any other uninspired book he had ever read; and it is immensely significant that one of Edwards' biographers who is by no means in sympathy with his views, but rather charges that "his thought points directly to God as the author of evil"¹ is yet bound in simple truth to testify that this same so-called necessitarian in philosophy, when he entered his pulpit could show "a marvelous tenderness" in presenting his message, and that "he had the power of inspired exhortation and appeal."²

If there is a lurking *non sequitur* somewhere in the reasoning of the philosopher, certainly it did not affect the zeal of the preacher. It is always easy to detect a flaw in the design of the architect or to see a blemish in the work of the builder. It is easy to criticise "Edwards on the Will." But we are to remember that the theme is one of supreme difficulty and that the problem which it presents surpasses human grasp; and that, with all its alleged faults and flaws, this immortal production has somehow been able to hold a first place in the abundant and ever growing literature upon its theme, commanding the highest respect of all competent thinkers, whether or not they could accept the conclusions at which it arrives. No man is fit to speak on the question of the will who has not read Edwards with great care; as some one has said, there has been a good deal of "nibbling" at Edwards' argument, but "we suspect that the few who have taken hold in earnest, have in the end found pretty good reason to repent of their temerity."

President Edwards' essay on "The Nature of Virtue" is

¹Professor A. V. G. Allen's *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 288.

²*Ibid.*, p. 104.

one of his most influential and epoch-making works. It is characteristic of nearly all of the great Protestant confessions that they confine themselves, for the most part, to formal as over against real, conceptions of holiness and sin. Dr. Samuel Harris regards this as a defect in such a definition of sin, for example, as is given in the Westminster Catechism¹. A formal definition it certainly is, but it is perfectly competent to demur to the exception that herein is a defect. The law of God requires perfect conformity; non-conformity is sin. A broken sphere may be of wood or stone or iron; whatever it is of, it is not a perfect sphere. Sin may be essentially selfishness or unbelief or ignorance—whatever it is, it is non-conformity to the law. Here are indeed two distinct questions, both important and legitimate, but it is a great error to make the formal definition wait upon the real.

New England thought, however, has always had a penchant for philosophizing upon the real side of ethical theory and spiritual integrity and President Edwards gave a very distinct impetus to that tendency.

Fundamentally, he declared "there is no other true virtue but real holiness."² Grace is necessary to holiness and therefore all morality without grace is sin or vice. This searching theology gave characteristic tone to all his preaching.

Edwards made all sin to consist of self-love, and all holiness, on the other hand, to love of "Being." Since God is infinite and everything else is finite, love of Being becomes practically love to God; and, as we have seen, his metaphysical theory was right in the line of this rationalization of the Great Commandment which our Lord declared was the fulfilling of the whole law. This love is not the love of complacency but of benevolence. Happiness is the greatest good and benevolence—the purpose to promote

¹God, Creator and Lord of All, Vol. II, p. 201.

²Op. III, 101

happiness—is therefore the greatest virtue. Indeed, all virtue is reducible to this. In modern parlance, his system was an altruistic, or rather a universal, hedonism as against egotistic hedonism. Augustine was pressed by contemporary Manichean errors into a false notion of the real nature of sin and Edwards, in his abomination of self-seeking, was led into the same mistake. These two eminent instances should warn smaller men against staking too much upon their material definitions of sin. Although the homiletic instinct may lead the philosopher-preacher of Northampton into a theory of what sin is, the history of the Church will show that it is better and safer to treat it, in practically dealing with men, as a violation of the law of God, trusting the Revealed Word applied by the Gracious Spirit to the moral consciousness of men, to make known the rule to which their lives must conform.

The fallacy of Edwards' ethical theory has again and again been exposed. What he reduced all virtue to is good but it is not goodness. It may be good but it is not the good. Moral goodness is both simple and final. It can neither be analyzed into parts nor regarded only as a means to something higher than itself. Holiness is never a mere handmaid to happiness. The consummated kingdom of God is a paradise of eternal bliss but it is more ; and it is that because it is more. Love of Being is nonsense because "Being" is an abstraction and it is absurd to talk about loving an abstraction. We love beings, not beingness ; a being, not being. This idea of virtue has been very influential in the thinking of New England but it is fundamentally inadequate. We must admire the spirit of Edwards which led him to make the essence of evil to be the absorbing devotion to self and the essence of good to be love for others. It is a great truth the poet gives us in his words,

"Love took up the harp of Life and smote on all the chords with might,
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight."

But it is one thing to find something good and quite an-

other to find a definition comprehensive enough to cover all that is good. Edwards' theory has been modified and amended but the informing principle is lacking in comprehensiveness. The late Dr. Henry B. Smith put it in this form, "True Virtue is, love to all intelligent and sentient beings, according to their respective capacities for good, with chief and ultimate respect to the highest good, or holiness."¹ It is perfectly obvious that this statement subordinates, if it does not eliminate, the distinctive principle of President Edwards' doctrine.

That he did teach this utilitarian theory can not be successfully denied. In his sermon on "The True Christian's Life, a Journey towards Heaven," he says, "We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness; to go to heaven, and there be with God and dwell with Jesus Christ."² In another sermon, he says "Satan aimed at nothing else but to fool man out of his happiness, and make him his own slave and vassal."³ This resolving of love into benevolence, he applies even to a holy love to God. The impenitent man hates God and would annihilate him if it were in his power. On the other hand, the believer is in an attitude of mind to make God happy if he could; he ascribes praise to him—"Blessed be God"—in his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England," he speaks of "a sweet rejoicing of soul at the thought of God's being infinitely and unchangeably happy."⁴ This theoretical conception of virtue had great influence upon Edwards' preaching as well as upon his philosophy. Professor Sidgwick thinks that "ethical interests are but slightly affected by our theory of the will." However that may be, with a thinker as logical as Edwards, and with a preacher whose every sermon was a theological deliverance, such a theory was bound to be in some measure controlling.

It is well known that Edwards' preaching was to a very

¹System of Christian Theology, p. 223.

³Ibid, IV, p. 158.

⁴Op. III:303.

²Op. IV, p. 573.

uncommon degree eschatological. He preached much upon the future life, and, as an incentive to turn to God, he impressed upon the impenitent the horrors of an endless torment. No preacher ever surpassed him in the pictorial vividness, the realistic power, and the merciless emphasis with which he set forth the terrors of the law and the sufferings of the lost. Though we are assured that neither Edwards nor Dante believed in a literal hell or heaven¹ yet it is hard to conceive how they could have made their descriptions more real if they had so believed.

One is so impressed with the fervid, evangelical earnestness of this great man, that one hesitates to pronounce this disproportionate feature of his preaching a blemish on his record; all the more, because the fashion of our time has gone to the other extreme. We fain would sing ourselves to sleep with the love-songs of the Gospel while the Justice of the Eternal Throne is too often smothered with qualifications or refined into harmless apologies. Nevertheless, that Edwards' strength became a weakness here, we can not doubt. The judgment of this age is that he did not with sufficient clearness set forth the rational aspects of these truths; that his pictures sometimes make God almost as a cruel Moloch and the impenitent soul the helpless victim of his avenging anger; that his penalties were too exclusively those of objective circumstance rather than of subjective state, also. The very names of his sermons indicate this, e. g., Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God; The Eternity of Hell Torments; and many others. He does not dwell upon the continuity of character, and the reasons inherent in a moral nature for believing in a fixedness of destiny. The calamities of the wicked are judicial, arbitrary and extraneous. This ought he to have done, but not to have left the other undone. He does not choose for his texts, "Whatsoever a man soweth," "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still," "The wages of

¹Dr. A. H. Strong's Religion and Philosophy, p. 514.

sin is death." We are speaking now not of the preacher's intention but of the reader's impression. We could wish that in these sermons he had said more in the line of the remark which occurs in his sermon on Joseph's Great Temptation and Gracious Deliverance, so exceptional as to be all the more noticeable—"Every sin naturally carries hell in it."¹ He does not see the side of truth which Milton saw when he wrote those burning words, "Which way I fly is hell ; myself am hell ;" or, again,

"The hell within him, for within him hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from hell
One step no more than from himself can fly
By change of place."

In his sermon on The Fearfulness Which Will Hereafter Surprise Sinners in Zion, Represented and Improved, one sentence may be selected as showing the crude way in which difference in character is shown to make itself manifest in the future state :

"On these accounts, whenever we see the day of judgment, as every one of us shall see it, we shall easily distinguish between the sinners in Zion and other sinners, by their shriller cries, their louder, more bitter and dolorous shrieks, the greater amazement of their countenances, and the more dismal shaking of their limbs and contortions of their bodies."²

From this infernal realism we turn away with a shudder, to consider what connection it had with his theory of holiness. Though it is a subtle bond, there is a bond, psychological if not logical, which connects this preaching with his doctrine of happiness as the *summum bonum*. It may be true, love of being is essential virtue ; but, then, idealists for all that, we are. Dr. Henry B. Smith has given in a word the solution we are seeking, "The happiness theories must all ultimately run into the self-love theories The general good is only the sum of self-love."³ Heaven is happiness and hell is misery. It may have been the time and place—the Zeit-geist—that led the kind and gentle

¹Op. iv:588. ²Ibid. iv:497.

³System of Christian Tehology, p. 214.

Edwards to try to scare men into heaven and not to coax them in. He who regarded happiness as the greatest good would induce men to be eternally happy by making them realize how infinitely otherwise they should be unless they repented of their sins and turned to God. He would not bribe men, nor goad them nor drive them. He was not forgetful of other truths and of other phases of the truth, but he seems to have underestimated their homiletical, their persuasive value. His mind gravitated to the penalties of wickedness as the most effective weapon in the hand of the preacher with which to fight sin, and indeed to conquer the sinner. And so, whether we account for it by the spirit of his age or by the psychological characteristics of the preacher, we see Edwards, the philosopher, teaching that self-love is sin, and Edwards, the evangelist, urging men, by the quenchless burnings of an eternal hell, to take heed lest they fail not (as he presented it) so much of holiness as of happiness. Whatever may be thought of the consistency in this, there is a related point concerning which we may speak with freer confidence. In his sermon on *The End of the Wicked Contemplated by the Righteous*; or, *The Torments of the Wicked in Hell, No Occasion of Grief to the Saints in Heaven*, he discusses the old objection that the saved in heaven must be grieved to know of the miseries of their loved ones who are lost. His reply is awful and unique. Now, we are to love all men, for "we know not but that God loves them." Then, however, the saints in glory will know that God never loved them that are lost, and as saints are to be wholly conformed to God, "it will be no way becoming in the saints to love them." Indeed, in another sermon we read, "The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven."² And yet, if we turn to the author's *Nature of Virtue*, we are told that love of

²Op. iv., p. 276.

being is the very essence of holiness. Can it be that his final test of virtue fails in the sacred affections and activities of heaven itself? As if seeing the patent contradiction, he says later in the same sermon, that "the different circumstances of our nature now from what will be hereafter make that a virtue now which will be no virtue then."

Such a logical *faux pas* is almost incredible of Jonathan Edwards. The reader may locate the flaw for himself. Judged by his ethical theory, his sermon—or rather that point of it—is false; judged by his sermon, his theory will not hold; there is no metaphysical necessity to conclude that either is correct. One thing is sure, and it is this: No theory of the Nature of Virtue can stand as rational and sound and true which is not applicable to all moral beings, in all worlds, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Moreover, his doctrine of Virtue led him into a very doubtful theodicy as well. He inclines to the belief that, all things considered, it is best that there should be moral evil in the world. He shows, as against the Arminians, that it is as bad to permit sin as it is to purpose to permit it; he also argues that it is possible that the thing itself may be evil and yet that it is good that that thing should come to pass. But he goes farther and says, "God, in permitting sin, has respect to the great good that he will make it an occasion of;" "Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good;" God's grace could not be shown "if there were no sin to be pardoned." These repeated expressions, while having much truth in them, show that his conception of moral evil was that of a present condition, contributing to an ultimate higher good, which, without sin, could never have been realized. This has the single merit of consistency with an expediency doctrine of holiness, but it magically transforms moral evil into moral good, inasmuch as, benevolently or malevolently, it contributes to a good end, which is impossible without it.

With this view sin becomes at least a *felix culpa*, and

evil is "good in the making." Here again, his philosophy and his preaching do not clearly harmonize, for if sin contemplates a final consummated good as its reason to be, then it is hard to see the place for the eternal sin and the eternal hell which President Edwards so forcibly preached. It is the same old problem; the idealism of Edwards no more than that of Royce has solved it. If God immediately creates all that is, then certainly the only way to acquit God of being the author of sin is to deny that, in the long run, sin is sin—it is only a "seeming;" and that is what, in effect, Jonathan Edwards did.

Professor Allen, in his life of Edwards, points out the distinction between Divine Sovereignty and the moral government of God, and he leaves the impression that he emphasized the former rather than the latter. It would be very unfair to let such an impression go unchallenged; he held devoutly to both, for there is not necessarily any such contradiction between them as Allen makes out¹; and yet it must be said that there are not a few passages in Edwards' writings which give a show of reason for such a charge. His thought exalted the divine will rather than the divine reason. But he does not leave the careful student of his works in ignorance of his unfailing belief that that will is always regulated and directed by infinite goodness and wisdom. His language was not guarded, however. He says the whole course of nature is "an arbitrary constitution;" that is good philosophy and science has no testimony to the contrary, but when that is said it is not all said. He says, "God could have converted the world instead of drowning it;" we submit that the implications of this statement justify a more qualified dogmatism in shaping it. In his sermon on God's Sovereignty, he affirms that God could have saved those who commit the sin against the Holy Ghost without going contrary to any of his attributes; only it has

¹P. 79.

pleased him for wise reasons to declare that that sin shall never be forgiven. We are accustomed to think of that sin as unpardonable because it involves, in the sinner, such a state of confirmed, wilful hostility to God, as must be removed before he can be forgiven. An outright pardon is an act of a governor only, and may disregard the vindication of some of the "attributes" of a judge who "will do right." After the best is said, it must be confessed that Edwards' sermons, particularly, often present the divine sovereignty in a raw and unattractive manner. The rationality of the divine purpose and policy is overlooked. There is no permanence or identity in things except as God arbitrarily orders that there shall be. There is this much basis for the charge that "he asserted God at the expense of humanity." Spinoza said that he was not an atheist so much as an "acosmist;" Edwards, in early life, wrote "The universe exists nowhere but in the divine mind." A pupil of Spinoza need not have said more.

This idea of the arbitrary sovereignty of God took its harshest and most rasping form in his sermons to the impenitent. The sermon on The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners is almost revolting because it seems to bring God down to a low anthropomorphic plain of human motive and method; in reading it, one is almost ready to exclaim, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" When the Augustinian theology speaks of "the mere good pleasure" of God, it safeguards the divine purpose and act against whims and caprice by its primary conception of God, who, by his very nature, is infinitely rational and good and wise. Edwards took care to say this sometimes, but often he did not; he failed in this mostly in his sermons, and, accordingly, in his horrible descriptions of the pains which God will inflict upon the lost, it may with reason be said that his words dishonor God in that they give a defective and inadequate glimpse of the divine thought and mind.

Dr. Charles Hodge argued¹ that with two exceptions, Presi-

¹Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, Vol. 30, p. 585. (Oct. 1858).

dent Edwards was a loyal champion of the old Calvinism. This claim, however, is not universally conceded. Dr. George P. Fisher¹ says "He was the originator of that modified Calvinism which is termed "New England Theology." The writer in the *American Encyclopedia*² says "Edwards sums up the old theology of New England and is the fountain-head of the new." The exceptions which Dr. Hodge referred to are, theologically, "Stapfer's scheme of the mediate imputation of Adam's sin;" and, philosophically, an eccentric theory of the nature of virtue. The second we have considered at some length. As to the first, while he does explicitly accept the doctrine mentioned, it must be said that he is not consistent in doing so. On the one hand, a text-book in Calvinistic theology could find no better setting forth of the traditional doctrine of Justification than Edwards has given them; but certainly that doctrine fits in ill with Stapfer's view. On the other hand, Edwards held a theory of realism which identified Adam and his posterity so that his first act of sin was theirs, not representatively but actually, and this realism is not affected by the circumstance that he postulated it upon the "arbitrary establishment" of God; but it must be apparent that such a theory of identity eliminates all imputation, mediate or immediate. It is not unfair to infer that his metaphysics muddled his theology on this whole question, but it cannot be denied that his writings on Justification and Original Sin bear out the impression made by his works throughout that there is a federal relation between Adam and the race and that that relation and not simply the natural, is the ground of the racial calamities that have marked the course of mankind.

Edwards was a philosophical theologian, and his thought was so vast and many-sided that it is not strange that many different schools claim him as their patron. Historically and in point of ability, he was the father of New England

¹History of Christian Doctrine, p. 395.

²If we are not mistaken, the writer of the article was George Bancroft.

theology but not otherwise. As we have seen, his eccentric theory of Virtue was far-reaching in its consequences, but it is hard to conceive of a greater libel on history than is that of calling the pastor at Northampton the originator of what goes to-day by the name of "New England Theology." If this be true, then the doctrine of Transmutation of Species needs no other proof. But what is New England Theology? Is it Unitarianism or is it present-day Congregationalism? The evolutionist can trace both back to the theological progenitor of New England, but he can find little that was distinctly his, in either. The Grotian theory of the Atonement is a mark of it, but that was neither Calvinistic nor Edwardian. A large and representative element, speaking for itself, would decline to characterize the nondescript, heterogeneous, theological conglomeration known as the new theology as even *neo*-Calvinism, and most discerners of the times would thoroughly respect the judgment. Jonathan Edwards, the younger,¹ led departures that might with reason entitle him to the distinction awarded to his father; Emmons' Exercise Scheme bears the marks of the elder Edwards' immediate creationism, but it is an interesting fact that it is more like Herbert Spencer's conception of mind, or the soul, as being only a series of states.

The fact is, President Edwards' direct influence upon the so-called new theology was rather philosophical than theological. His idea of the nature of Virtue was influential upon his own thinking and upon that of his successors, but it did not impair his allegiance to that system of truth known as Calvinism, of which he was such a distinguished defender, and to which he always declared his most ardent and unqualified support.

Edwards was the father of Congregationalism in this country, but he lived a century and a half ago. History must judge whether the offspring has been loyal to its

¹The son is commonly spoken of as "Doctor;" the father, as "President."

father. It were well if it were as ready to stand for his faith as it is to claim the honor of his saintly name. We may well believe he would be more at home to-day in Princeton than among the Berkshire hills. After he had been expelled from his church at Northampton, he was invited to go over to Presbyterian Scotland, and these were among the words he wrote in reply: "You are pleased very kindly to ask me whether I could sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, and submit to the Presbyterian form of church government . . . as to my subscribing to the substance of the Westminster Confession, there would be no difficulty; and as to the Presbyterian government, I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God and the reason and nature of things."¹

Edwards' thoughts were seed-thoughts and he cast them forth on virgin soil. He had a clear wide field before him. His mind was of that self-resourceful type that was perhaps at its best, remote from libraries and schools. Conventionalities might have hampered and harassed him. He was not the man for active administration. His gaze was turned within rather than without. He might have suited the Princeton of his day better than that of ours. He would have begrudged from his books and pen the time required for eyeing naughty students and nursing sick rich men for their last will and testament. Standing as he did at the very "fountain-head" of American intellectual life, his profound and genuine piety went far to atone for the merely philosophical idiosyncracies of his system and left a deep and permanent influence for good upon the succeeding generations. He is even yet the most convenient and most telling illustration of a man who combined, in a remarkable

¹Dwight's Life of President Edwards, p. 412.

manner, profound intellectuality and profound spirituality. If his philosophy was too much like Spinoza's, it may be said of him, in the best sense, as was said of the Hebrew of Amsterdam, that he was a "God-intoxicated man." He had God in all his thoughts. For him, all things culminated in redemption; all cosmical processes found their interpretation in the work of the Son of Man. All his sufferings were propitiatory; the blood of his circumcision as well as of his crucifixion was shed to fulfil the law and to save his people. Lost men, saved by grace and ingrafted into the ever-living Redeemer, are in a far higher state than if they had never been lost; that is to say, redemption is far more than restoration.¹

No other man ever made a more careful study of the work of grace in the heart, for the pastor at Northampton was also the scientific investigator, noting and registering pathological symptoms and psychological data in the midst of the spiritual clinic for which he labored. And his conclusions are sound for all time. He lacked the first impulse of the fanatic. No pastor ever discriminated more sharply between "the warmth of sound health and the heat of a fever." His "Thoughts on the Revival in New England" are worthy the careful study of every pastor. He discouraged excessive emphasis on mere experience as a basis of assurance; he insisted that ordinary grace is more to be desired than supernatural gifts; he denounced morbid "exercises" and mystic "discoveries;" he made much of the difference between a willingness not to be damned and a being willing to accept Christ as a Saviour; he taught that a true Christian may not be able to state the time or place of his conversion; he put all possible emphasis upon the necessity of the fact "for a swine washed and a dove defiled have their nature still;" he rejected all testimonies that did not put honor upon the Word of God

¹It will be observed how this harmonizes with the idea that sin is a means to a good unattainable without sin.

and particularly upon the personal Christ; and in the end he came back to the Biblical test. By their fruits they shall be known. No preacher ever had less to say of himself and yet, again and again, we can see the gentleness and sympathy of the man. We can understand how he shed tears over his red-faced friends at Stockbridge when he left them to go to Princeton. That "Farewell Sermon" at Northampton is a marvel of self-control and many an aggrieved pastor, about to leave his church, would do well to read it from his pulpit instead of giving his "parting shot" as he retreats. The English language may be challenged to produce a sermon more exalted in tone, more beautiful in reverent thought and more delightfully edifying than is his most noble discourse on "The Excellency of Christ."

Edwards' limitations were largely those of his time; yet his insight was foresight and he anticipated many of the developments of subsequent thought. He was no mere mimetic tradition-worshiper, but said almost in the words of the late Professor Clifford that it is a sin to believe the truth on false or insufficient evidence. He combined immanence and transcendence and, strangely enough, seemed to put excessive emphasis upon each. His doctrine of continuous creation is precisely that of the Christian evolutionist to-day, however different may be the routes by which they approach it¹. It was Professor Huxley who had the temerity to say that he never learned to distinguish between causality and sequence and that his doctrine of the Will to-day is held only by agnostics². In his "Religious Affections" he distinctly forecasts the New Psychology—Professor Royce's psychology of the dissecting-room as against that of the arm-chair. He foresaw the mission of the religious newspaper and suggested to the magistrates the propriety of appointing an American fast-day. He did

¹Le Conte's *Evolution and Its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 359.

²Encyc. Brit., Article Jonathan Edwards,

not trouble himself much with sociological problems and civic reforms. Professor Allen strains the truth to make him out a high-church-man, but in truth, the church and the town were in his time in many ways one. He was Christian statesman enough to foresee what has come to pass and it is interesting to read his words just now¹, with the West Indies on one side of us and Hawaii and the East Indies on the other, awaiting developments that may speedily and literally realize his vision :

“When those times come, then doubtless the Gospel, which is already brought over to America, shall have glorious success, and all the inhabitants of this new-discovered world shall become subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, as well as all the other ends of the earth; and in all probability, Providence has so ordered it, that the Mariner’s compass, which is an invention of later times, whereby men are enabled to sail over the widest ocean, when before they durst not venture far from land, should prove a preparation for what God intends to bring to pass in the glorious times of the church, viz.: the sending forth of the Gospel wherever any of the children of men dwell, how far soever off, and however separated by wide oceans from those parts of the world which are already Christianized”².

And yet, along with this prescience of genius, was a *naivete* which frequently provokes the reader’s smile. He never economized with the supernatural for as we have seen, everything was supernatural. It never occurred to him to doubt that the Pope was anti-Christ or that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Human life was shortened in Moses’ time lest men should scorn immortality. As God is supposed to have created the world about the time of year of the Feast of Tabernacles, so in that glorious time God will create a new heaven and a new earth. It was a strange idea which he entertained that Satan led the first settlers over to America in order to frustrate the rapid spread of Christianity; “that they might be quite out of the reach of the Gospel, that here he might quietly possess them and reign over them as their god.”³

¹October, 1898.

²Op. Vol. I., p. 469.

³Op. Vol. I., pp. 322, 468.

For intellectual cogency and grasp Jonathan Edwards has had few equals. Sir James Macintosh speaks of him as "perhaps unmatched, certainly unsurpassed, among men." His arguments are ablaze with earnestness and as stern as steel. To read his essay on the Will is itself a course in logic. His controversial writings are dignified and courteous; he first points out the mark, and then he unerringly hits it. He uses scant rhetoric. His illustrations are few. He saves the force which other men would waste in words, to give greater intensity to his thought. If Martin Luther could say that the devil is a D. D., the mighty Edwards could say that he is orthodox in his faith; "he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian or Antinomian"¹. If he was as great in intellect as Augustine or Anselm, he was not less a mystic in the depth of his religious fervor and in the holy visions of his chastened faith.

The world will never see his like again—not that the race of giants died with him, but that the social and intellectual conditions which entered so largely into his making can never reappear. The lonely missionary to the Indians seems all the larger in his solitude. Human life was less complex, and so his individuality survives the better; he rises out of the past like some lofty mountain from the low level of a lonely plain. He had the spirit of a reformer, a hero, a martyr. He was an ordained knight-errant of eternal truth. He served God, not men. He held forth high standards because they were God's. He did

"Not give religious faith
To every voice which makes the heart a listener
To its own wish."

His quaint words describe his loyalty to his conscience and his Lord: "Practice is the proper evidence of Christian fortitude; the trial of a good soldier is not in his chimney corner but in the field of battle." Accordingly we are not surprised when the great Chalmers says, "I have long

¹Ibid. IV., 457.

esteemed him as the greatest of theologians, combining in a degree that is quite unexampled, the profoundly intellectual with the devoutly spiritual and sacred, and realizing in his own person a most rare yet most beautiful harmony between the simplicity of the Christian pastor on the one hand and on the other, all the strength and prowess of a giant in philosophy."

Times have changed and we thank God for that. We would not recall those days if we could. This mighty man of God had his weakness and his limitations and no one can see them larger than did he. But this Elijah the Tishbite, this John the Baptist, of the wilderness of New England, clothed in the camel's hair of his rustic age and eating the locusts and wild honey of his honorable poverty—no fanatic, no time-server, no flatterer, no self-seeker—standing like some prophetic fore-runner at the threshold of the breaking era of a New World and preaching in no soft words "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," might well return to these velvety, luxury-loving times and call us back to the changeless claims and eternal truths of God; for we may be well assured of this, that with all our boasting greatness, in all that makes a great thinker, a great preacher, a great, good, godly man, either in brain or in heart, there hath not arisen among us a greater than Jonathan Edwards, the Elder.

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