

# Jonathan Edwards,

We have already seen how there was developing in New England a certain liberal tendency in regard to theological problems. We have traced in a general way the life of Chas. Chauncy, who was the leader of that free movement, and noticed that in the three great controversies, the Great Awakening, the Episcopal controversy, and the Theological controversy, Chauncy was the champion of the ideas that were in accord with the developing movement of the times. In the great awakening, he stood for the extreme clericalist congregational ideas. In the Episcopal controversy, he was again clericalist. In the Theological controversy his own position was franked by the epiphany that he laid in measures of grace, and Arminianism.

Opposed to him was Jonathan Edwards, a man of great power, who represented the Calvinistic thought, and had the courage to carry his thought to its logical conclusions, and paved the way for the overthrow of Calvinism. Edwards was born Oct 5, 1703 in the town of Br.

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mind, he came of a family of great intellect  
power, coupled with great activity. His father  
Timothy Edwards was a minister of great power,  
Edwards's mother was the daughter of Solomon Stoddard  
of Northampton, one of the ablest ministers of the  
period.

As a child he was very precocious, and ~~in~~  
September ~~of~~ before he was fifteen years old  
he entered Yale College, from which he graduated  
in 1720.

At about the age of 19 or 20 he passed through  
a great religious experience of conversion. This was  
of great importance in his life, and was the founda-  
tion of his theological system.  
After a trial of preaching in New York, and a  
period of two years when he was tutor at Yale  
and he was called to and ordained at the  
Church of Northampton of which his father  
was colleague to his grandfather Stoddard.  
During the same year he was married  
to Sarah Pierpont, daughter of James Pierpont, minister  
of New Haven.

His preaching in Northampton soon soon began to give evidence of the fact that he was no ordinary person. Walker says, "The town was not unfamiliar with religious quickenings. At least five had occurred under the able ministry of Solomon Stoddard. But Edwards' sermons were on themes calculated to stir a community, and especially an isolated rural community. Two sudden deaths in the spring of 1734 excited the concern of the little town - a concern which was deepened by a vague alarm lest the spreading Arminianism which the Northampton folk so devoutly detested, was a token of the withdrawal of God's Redeptive mercy from sinful men" See W. E. Leach, Walker P. 233.

During the winter of 1734 and 5, Edwards conducted a revival in his own church, in which there were about three hundred conversions.

These conversions in general carried the people through three stages according to Edwards himself. The first stage was an awful oppression of the "conscience in which men stood by nature," this was so overwhelming as to produce

oftentimes fearful physical effects. Next followed, 4  
in cases which Eschwege believed to be the  
genuine work of the spirit of God, a conviction  
that they justly deserved the Divine wrath, not  
infrequently leading to expressions of wonder that  
'God has not cast them into hell long ago.' From  
this state of extreme humiliation they emerged  
into 'a holy refuge of the soul in God through  
Christ.'

It is not strange that his sermons should  
have had such an effect on the people, when  
he says that the wicked are used simply as  
objects of the destructive wrath of God; when he  
tells the unconverted members of his congregation  
that they are withheld for a brief period  
by the restraining hand of God from the hell into  
which they are to fall at their appointed times; when  
he pictures the damned glow in hellish burning  
agony like a spider in the flame; when he  
pictures heightens the happiness of the redeemed  
by the contrast between the felicities of heaven

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and the eternal torments of the lost, visible for-  
ever to the saints in glory, one ~~it~~ is not sur-  
prised to hear that the people sat on the edges  
of their seats and clutched ~~around~~ ~~convulsively~~  
on the backs of the ones in front. Not only were  
many converted by one who was led to commit  
suicide, and two others contemplated during  
the same thing.

But the fruits of these sermons are not all seen in  
the 300 conversions, for after the excitement  
was over, there came a great relaxation. Edwards  
became especially estranged from his young  
people. ~~He~~ He even waited at one time for four  
years from 1744-48 for a single person to join  
his church. One is so surprised that he lost  
his hold, when one learns that he said "Men is walking  
because of his inherent wickedness," or "As  
innocent as children seem to us, yet in  
God's sight they are evil and loathsome  
like a viper" or "Men are a generation of vipers."

on the simple subject of his famous "Evangelical Sermon."  
"Sinners in the hands of an angry God!"

Thus you see that Edwards was prepared by his own experiences for the Great Awakening of 1740 and he welcomed Whitefield to his pulpit, and ~~not~~ went himself to other places as a preacher of the revival gospel. It is but natural therefore that Edwards, himself having experienced conversion, and been the chosen means (to say the least) of 300 conversions in his own church, should have taken of the Revival Controversy, and offered chauncy and the general annihilation movement.

His theological system rests upon the idea of the Absolute Sovereignty of God. If God is absolute, and yet there is evil in the world, then God must be responsible for sin. Edwards went the full length of his logic and declared God responsible for sin, urging that God's hatred of Sin could not be shown

there is sin in the world, and he furnishes <sup>7</sup>  
the sinners. In his Sermon, "Sinners Useful  
in their Downfall" he brings out this idea  
showing that they are useful to glorify God.

But one is forced to say that a man who regards  
God as a God of love and justice cannot put together  
these two ideas of Edwards. (1) his idea of  
absolute Sovereignty. (2) the damnation of man.

In 1750 Edwards came into trouble with his  
church over the question of a Pure church,  
and was dismissed from Northampton and  
came to Stockbridge, then but a small village.  
but with his clerical or pastor he combined the  
clerical as missionary, to the Housatonic  
Indians,

In January 1758 Edwards was elected  
President of Princeton College in New Jersey  
and moved there by ~~stage~~ in about one

worth, on Feb 13, 1755 of Swell Provolotim. 18

despite Edwards' Theology, he placed great emphasis upon the ethical side of life, and he was especially strong in emphasizing the moral fruits of the spirit.

I wrote a summary of Edwards, and note the things for which he stands

- (1) The idea of the Absolute Sovereignty of God.
- (2) His spiritual mystical Theology, i. e. man coming face to face with God himself (seen in his idea of Communion)
- (3) His high Standard of Ethics.

It was the high Ethical standard of Edwards, that Channing and Parker used in fighting against Edwards' God.