

# Topics

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<http://www.rpchurchmanassas.org/drupal/churchhistory16001800>

## A Prayer for Revival

Our Father, in this time of need, we pray for Your power, mercy and faithfulness. The interest of vital piety has long been in decay, and error and wickedness prevail not only in the world but also in Your Church. Would You, in this time of need pour out Your Spirit to breathe fresh life into Your people. As your Spirit brings conviction, we will know our need and flee to You for help. Fix our minds upon Christ and His surpassing excellence that our thoughts may be filled with Him. So, we pray, our heavenly Father, for the true reviving of Your Church among us so that we would not be weak, dull, and lifeless but in good earnest, fervent in spirit, with our hearts vigorously engaged in loving and serving You and our neighbors. And, we pray to You, O God, Lord of the harvest, that You would send out Your workers into the fields of this world and soon the knowledge of Your glory would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. We pray this for Your glory and in Jesus' Name, Amen.

(David Calhoun, based on thoughts expressed in Edward's *A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union Among God's People and Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth* with a couple of additions.)

# PRINCETON

THE GREAT AWAKENING TO THE REVOLUTION

JONATHAN EDWARDS TO JOHN WITHERSPOON



# The Log College

In 1727, just about the time his sons John, Gilbert and William Jr., were experiencing the first stirrings of the Great Awakening, William Tennent opened his "Log College" in Neshaminy, PA. Here many used of God in the Awakening were trained including his own sons and Samuel Blair who, in turn, trained Samuel Davies.





# The College of New Jersey

By the mid 1740's "New Light" Presbyterian churches were growing rapidly and there was an increasing need for ministers. The older colleges in New England (Harvard and Yale) were beginning to stray from orthodox doctrine and William Tennent was old and closing "The Log College".

In 1746 the New Light Synod of New York drew up a charter for a new college to be known as The College of New Jersey. In 1747 classes began in the parsonage of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth, NJ under the leadership of Jonathan Dickenson. Upon Dickenson's death, Aaron Burr took up the work in the parsonage at Newark, NJ. Burr died in September of 1757 leaving Esther Edwards Burr (Jonathan's daughter) to cope with a young family, and the young college to find a new president.

In the meantime the New Light Synod of New York had commissioned Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies to travel to England, Scotland and Ireland to raise money for the college. They arrived in London on Christmas Day 1753 and for all of 1754 they preached and met with correspondents and potential donors including Whitefield. Davies returned home in February of 1755. Their efforts bore fruit to the tune of 3,200 pounds which was delivered to the Synod. The construction of Nassau Hall was completed the following year and remains to this day the central building of Princeton University.









## A Call to the College of New Jersey

It was Richard Stockton who communicated to Jonathan Edwards, the trustee's call to be the college's 3<sup>rd</sup> President.

Initially, Edwards was not disposed to accept the call.

1. The ministry at Stockbridge was beginning to bear some fruit.
2. During the time at Stockbridge Edwards had completed four major works:

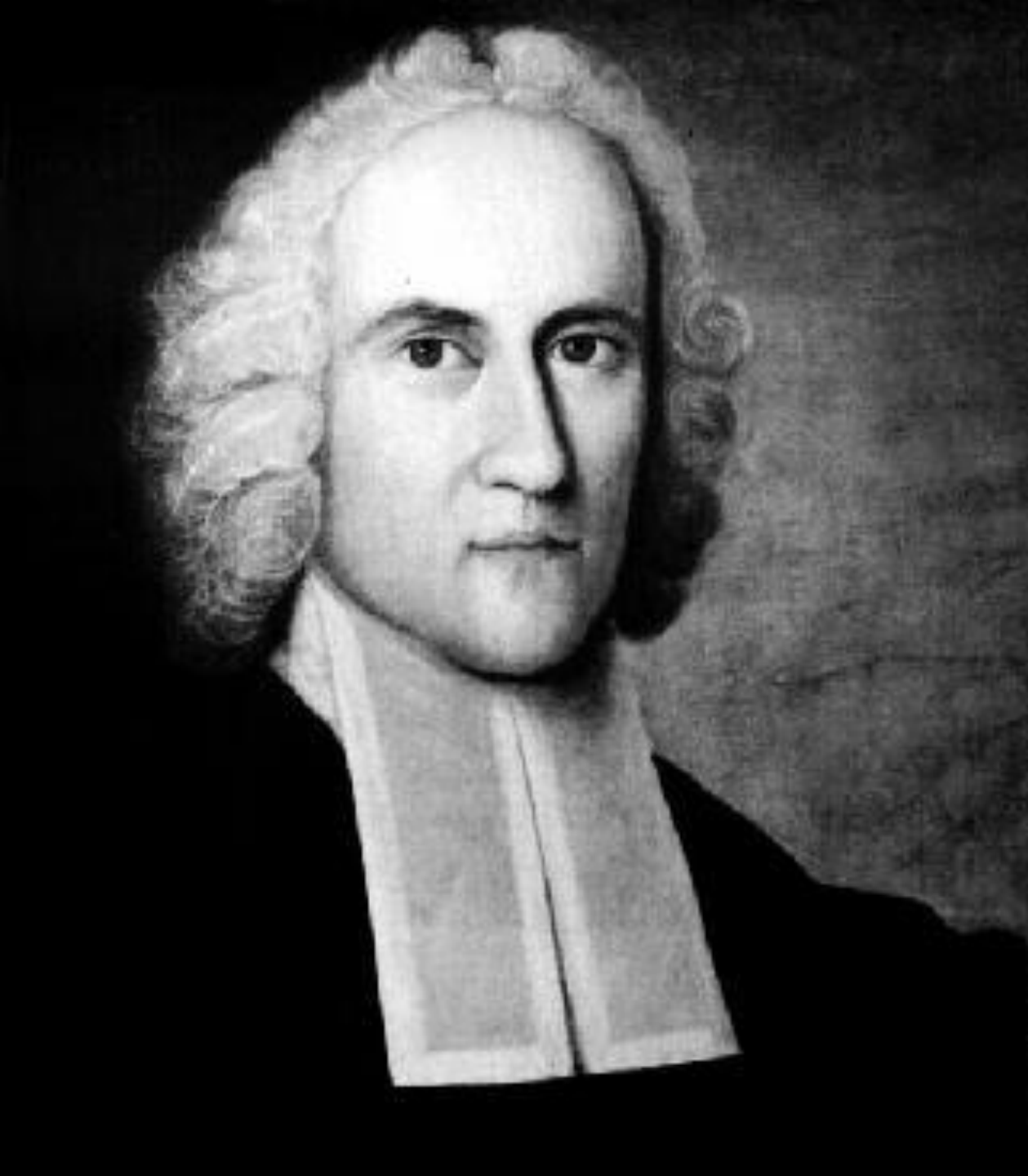
***The Freedom of the Will***

***The Defense of the Doctrine of Original Sin***

***The Discussion of the Nature of True Virtue***

***The Treatise on God's Last End in Creation***

After consulting with a council of neighboring churches, Edwards accepted the call to the college.



# President Edwards

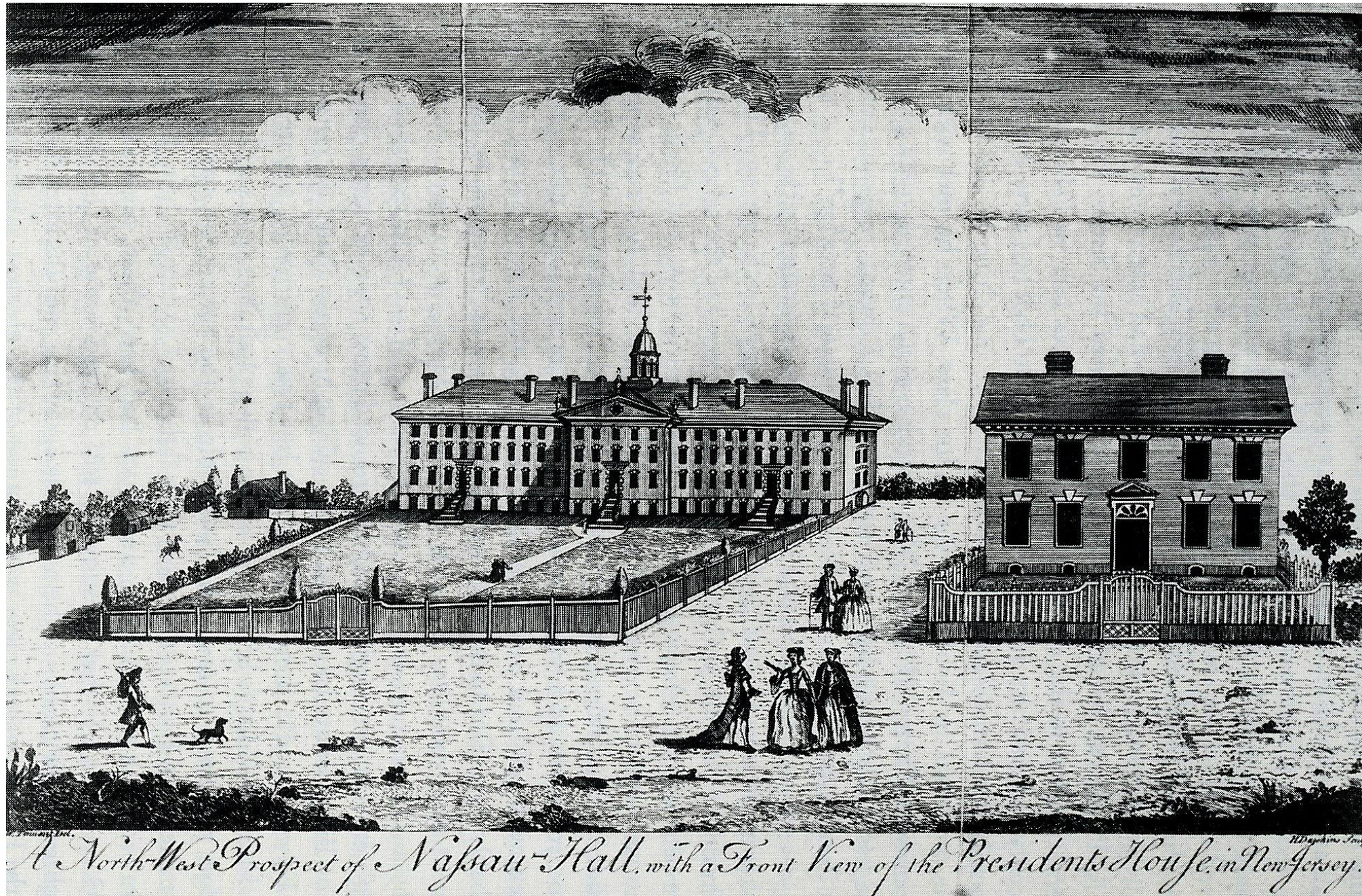
October 5, 1703 – March 22, 1758



Edwards arrived early in January of 1758 to a campus which probably appeared much as it does in this drawing.

He took up duties immediately, preaching several Sundays at the college chapel as well as taking up other duties at the college.

At the end of that first month he received news that his father had died on January 27th.





“Edwards came alone to Princeton but was comfortably situated in the handsome president’s home next to the college hall. Sarah was still in Stockbridge, preparing to move the household in the spring, but two daughters were already in Princeton to meet their father and to care for him. Esther was there with her two children, and Lucy had been there since at least the previous spring.”  
(Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, p. 491)

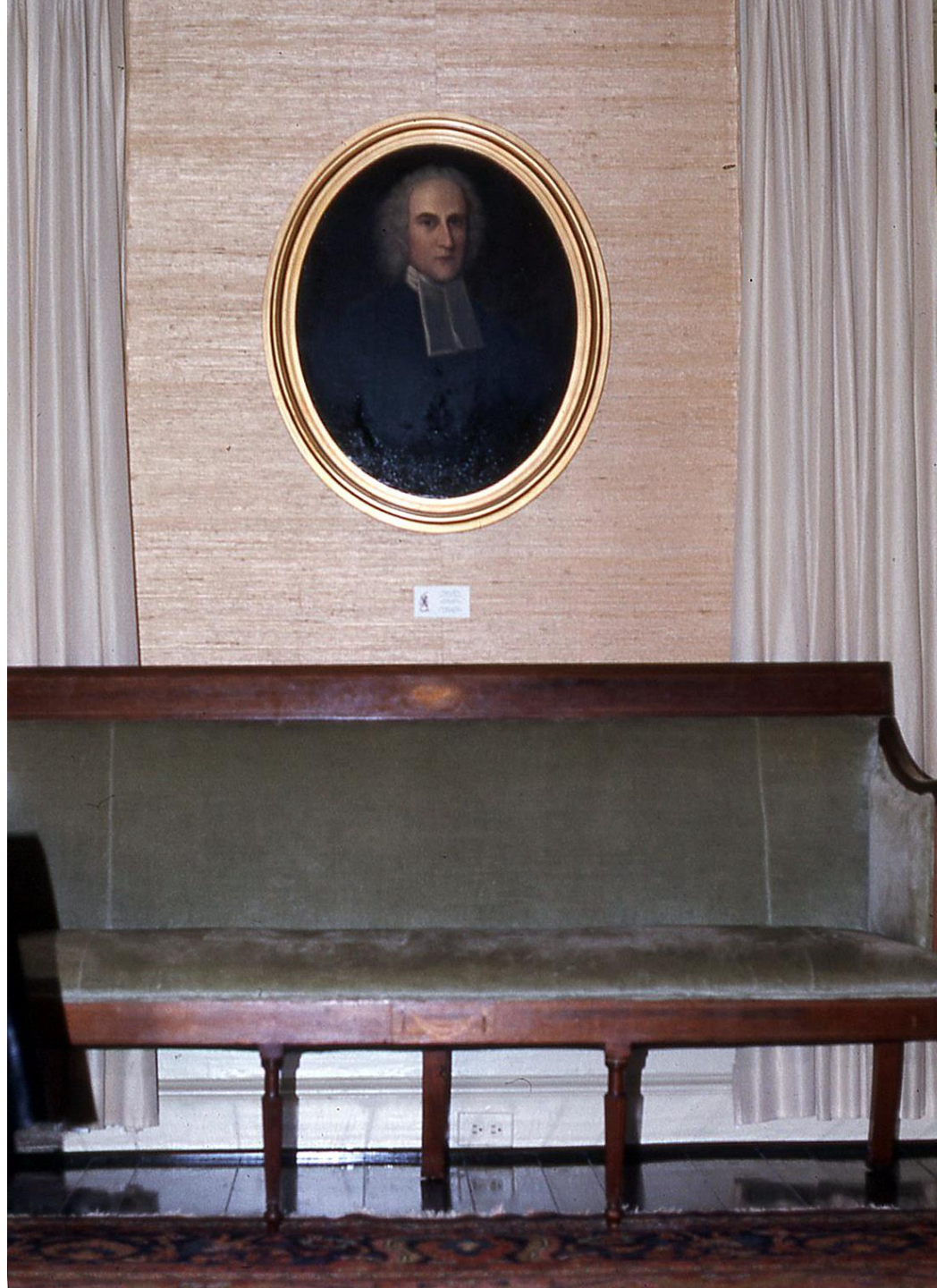




## The President's House (McLean House)

Appropriately a portrait of Edwards hangs in the home where Edwards was cared for in the last month of his life.

His daughter Esther (Esther Edwards Burr) died only a short time later.



The house is now called McLean House. The lower floor was open to visitors and the upper floor housed alumni offices when this picture was taken.



M. S.  
Reverendi admodum Viri  
JONATHAN EDWARDS, A. M.,  
Collegii Novae Caesariae Praefidis,  
Natus apud Windsor Connecticutensium V Octobris  
A. D. MDCCIII. S. V.  
Patre Reverendo Timotheo Edwards oriundus,  
Collegio Yalensi educatus;  
Apud Northampton Sacris initiatus, XV Februarii  
MDCCXXVI-VII.  
Illinc dimissus XXII Junii MDCCCL,  
Et Munus Barbaros instituendi accepit.  
Praeses Aulae Nallovicae creatus XVI Februarii  
MDCCLVIII.  
Nectus in hoc Vico XXII Martii sequentis, S  
Aetatis LV, heu nimis brevis!  
Hic jacet mortalis Pars.

Edwards would serve The College of New Jersey less than 3 months. In late February he received a vaccination for smallpox. He soon contracted the disease. He died on March 22, 1758, less than 3 months after arriving at Princeton. His grave is in "President's Row" at the Princeton cemetery.



# The Theology of Jonathan Edwards

It is almost universally acknowledged that Jonathan Edwards is the greatest theologian that America has ever produced. The real debate is over which of his two masterworks entitles him to that honor: *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (1746) or *A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Prevailing Notions of the Freedom of the Will* (1754).

If you are a polemicist with a penchant for carefully crafted arguments and logic you will prefer *The Freedom of the Will*.

If your concerns are more pastoral and spiritual you will gravitate to *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*.

But can we ignore *The Defense of the Doctrine of Original Sin, The Nature of True Virtue, or The Treatise on God's Last End in the Creation*?



# *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections (1746)*

The text with which Edward's prefaces his treatise is 1 Peter 1:8, "*Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,*"

The question which Edwards seeks to answer is, What characterizes true religion as God speaks in Scripture?

1. "True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections."

(By affections Edwards does not mean simply emotions, Rather he means to describe the attachments of our minds, hearts and desires)

2. "...*Affections* was directed first of all toward the misguided emphases of the extreme New Lights who had led many people into arrogant self-delusion." (Marsden, p. 285)

3. "Yet Edward's first concern remained with those who already shared his own premises of the centrality of religious affections. For them the crucial question was how to tell true religion from its Satanic counterfeits. Merely raised affections, as he had said in his earlier treatises, were not decisive evidence one way or the other." (Marsden, p. 285)

(References here are from the Banner of Truth edition reprinted in 1994. Text is also in Vol. 1 of Edward's Works, *The Religious Affections* begins on p. 224)



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 1. “Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and Their Importance in Religion”**

1. “What are the affections of the mind? The vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclinations and the will.”
2. “But yet it is evident that religion consists so much in the affections that without holy affection there is no true religion. No light in the understanding is good which does not produce holy affection in the heart.”
3. From a 1733 sermon entitled “A Divine and Supernatural Light” Edwards says, “God communicates to humans, in an immediate way that goes beyond anything that natural reason by itself can attain. What distinguishes saints from the unconverted is that the Holy Spirit dwells *within* converted persons and so gives them the power to apprehend the things of God.” (from Marsden, p. 157)  
(Consider Romans 8:5 and 1 Corinthians 2 as starters and then also the promise of the Spirit in John’s gospel)

A Note on our outline. The “skeleton” of this brief survey of *The Religious Affections*, is borrowed from a presentation by Dr. Sam Logan, past President of Westminster Theological Seminar and a respected Edwards scholar. His outline is incomplete and I have expanded from the text with page references to the edition which I use. JSp



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 2. “What are not certain signs of true spirituality”**

1. “It is no sign one way or the other that religious affection are very great, or raised very high.”
2. “It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.”
3. “It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion or that they have not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent, and abundant in talking of religious things.”
4. “It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not excite them by their own endeavors.”
5. “It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come to the mind in a remarkable manner with texts of Scripture.”



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 3. What are signs of true spirituality.**

1. “Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious arise from those influences and operations of the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural and divine.”

2. “The first objective ground of gracious affections, is **the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are in themselves**, and not any conceived relation they bear to self or self-interest.”

“But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: they first rejoice and are elevated with it, that they are made much of by God; and then on that ground He seems, in a sort, lovely to them.” (p. 176)

“The true saint, when under great spiritual affections, from the fulness of his heart, is ready to be **speaking much of God and His glorious perfections and works, and of the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel:...**” (p. 178)



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 3. What are signs of true spirituality. (continued)**

3. “Those affections that are truly holy and primarily founded on the moral excellency of divine things.”

4. “Gracious affections arise from the mind being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend diving things.” (p. 192)

“Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from the information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, so light or actual knowledge.” (p. 192)

5. “Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the reality and certainty of diving things.” (p. 217)

“There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God.” (p. 235)



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 3. What are signs of true spirituality. (continued)**

6. “Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation.”

“Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart.” (p. 237)

“This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, and every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God’s dispensations towards fallen man are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men.” (p. 239)

“There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself to the dislike of the world, and even to provoke their displeasure, out of pride. For it is the nature of spiritual pride to cause men to seek distinction and singularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at war with those that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party.” (p. 279 – I 1 Corinthians 11:19 should be taken somewhat cynically to just this point.)



# *The Religious Affections*

## **Part 3. What are signs of true spirituality. (continued)**

7. “Another great and very distinguishing difference is that the higher gracious affections are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased. On the contrary, false affections rest satisfied in themselves.”

8. “XII. **Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.**”

“Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life.” (p. 312)

“It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the Devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivals of religion, since the first founding of the Christian Church.” (preface, p. 17)



*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*  
OR  
*The Freedom of the Will (1754)*

That sermon (“God Glorified in Man’s Dependence” – 1731) sounded a theme which would be central in Edward’s life and ministry: to defend historic, orthodox Calvinism against the inroads of Arminian teaching as well as newer enlightenment views.

“Particularly, Edwards designed to answer, ‘that grand objection, in which the modern writers have so much glorified, and so long triumphed, with so great a degree of insult towards the most excellent divines and, in effect, against the gospel of Jesus Christ, viz. that the Calvinistic notions of God’s moral government are contrary to the common sense of mankind.’” (Marsden, p. 437, The enclosed quote is from a letter from Edwards to John Erskine, dated July 1752)

Again to Erskine in 1757 Edwards wrote, “I think the notion of liberty, consisting in a contingent self determination of the will, as necessary to the morality of men’s dispositions and actions, almost inconceivably pernicious.”

“The heart of Edward’s treatise, as its full title announced, was that moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, and praise and blame did not depend on the sort of freedom that Arminians and others asserted.” (Marsden, p. 440)

## A couple of samplings

“And therefore I observe, that the *Will* (without any metaphysical refining) is, *That by which the mind chooses any thing*. The faculty of the will, is that 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.” (Part I, section I)

“The advocates for this notion of the freedom of the Will, speak of a certain sovereignty in the will, whereby it has power to determine its own volition. And therefore the determination of volition must itself be an act of the will; for otherwise it can be no exercise of that supposed power and sovereignty. Again, if the Will determines itself, then either the will is active in determining its volitions, or it is not. If active, then the determination is an act of the will; and so there is one act of the will determining another. But if the Will is not active in the determination, then how does it exercise any liberty in it? These gentlemen suppose that the thing wherein the Will exercises liberty, is in its determining it own acts. But how can this be, if it be not active in determining? Certainly the will, or the soul, cannot exercise any liberty in that wherein it doth not act, or wherein it doth not exercise itself. So that if either part of this dilemma be taken, this scheme of liberty, consisting of self determining power, is overthrown.” (Part II, section II)



## What is Edwards getting at?

If God is God, then it is His choices which count, not those of humans.

There is no such thing as free will in the sense that the Arminian teaches.

Each act of the will takes place against the background of and conditioned by all the acts of the will which have preceded it – nobody can really break out of that cycle.

But God, in electing love, can break through all of the conditioning and sinful choices to claim a soul for His own.

“Such a rigorous Calvinistic view of a God-controlled universe might seem fatalistic and demoralizing if God were not supremely good and loving... All created reality is like a quintessential explosion of light from the sun of God’s intertrinitarian love... Unlike humans, God sees the ultimate consequences of everything. So, God wills to permit evil but only because that permission grows out of the ultimately loving and just will of God who can do no other than create what is ultimately the greatest good.” (Marsden, p. 443, references *The Freedom of the Will, Works, Vol. 1*, pp. 397-412)

“Edwards had glimpsed something of the future of American religion as well. Self-controlled individuals, as he had observed in his parishes for the past fifteen years, would acknowledge guilt for particular sins, but not guilt for their fundamentally rebellious hearts. Guided by conscience, they saw particular sins as failures of will power, which might be overcome by exercising greater self-control. The liberal Christianity of the new republic would be built around such moral principles... God’s power was most often seen as cooperating with or working through the native power of the sovereign individual will.”  
(Marsden, p. 439)





## President's Row

After Edwards was laid to rest in the Princeton graveyard, the next two presidents followed him to death in quick succession so only a decade later, the search was on for the sixth president of The College of New Jersey.





President  
Witherspoon  
1768 - 1794

“The deeper significance of Witherspoon’s tenure lay in his reorientation of intellectual activity around the principles of the Scottish Enlightenment, a shift that necessitated the displacement of intellectual patterns associated with Jonathan Edwards and New Side Presbyterians.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mark Noll, *Princeton and the Republic 1768 – 1822*, pub. Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 36. See also Samuel T. Logan Jr. “Puritans, Presbyterians and Jonathan Edwards” in *Colonial Presbyterianism*, pub. Pickwick Publications, 2007