



JONATHAN EDWARDS

THEOLOGIAN OF REVIVAL

Christian Biographies
Richard D. Phillips
Second Presbyterian Church

EDWARDS' EARLY LIFE

Born in Windsor, CN, Oct. 5 1703, the son and grandson of Congregational Ministers

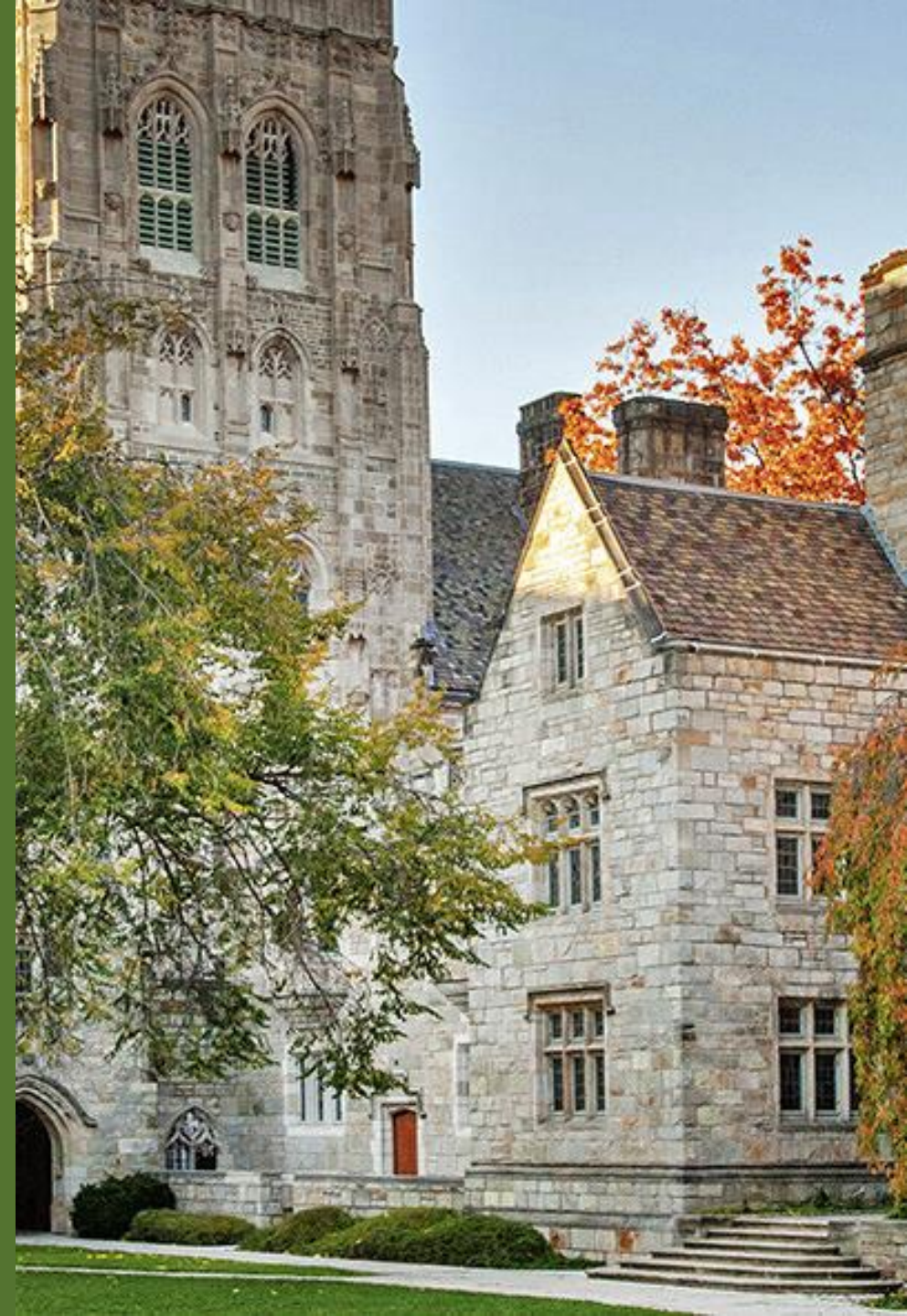
- 73 years after Boston was settled, religious formalism had set into New England

Entered Yale College at age 12, graduated with an MA at 17.

Experienced the new birth in 1721:

- “I was brought to that new sense of things. . . quite different from anything I ever experienced before.” “I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him.”

At 19, became pastor of a congregation in New York; in 1726 he joined his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in the pastorate in Northampton, MA.





MINISTRY AT NORTHAMPTON

During his first 7 years, Edwards grew concerned about spiritual indifference.

“They are gazing about the assembly minding this and the other person that is in it, or they are thinking of their worldly business.”

Began preaching about sin, including “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”

1734-35: Over 300 converted in six months.

Edwards wrote *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, bringing notice around the world.

MINISTRY AT NORTHAMPTON, CONT.

Faced criticism for his role in the Great Awakening

- Some charged him with sermons that manipulated emotions.
- It was pointed out that many converted during the Revival fell away from faith afterwards.

In 1750, Edwards challenged Stoddard's practice of admitting unconverted persons to the Lord's Supper and was dismissed from the congregation.

- 207 of 230 male members voted against him.





MINISTRY AT STOCKBRIDGE

Stockbridge was a missionary outpost, 40 miles west of Northampton, with a mainly Native American congregation. The village contained 12 British families.

After initial opposition, Edwards enjoyed 8 peaceful and fruitful years of ministry.

Edward's daughter Esther married Aaron Burr, who was President of Princeton College. When Burr died in 1757, Edwards was prevailed upon to succeed him as President.

Weeks after arriving, Edwards grew sick from a smallpox vaccination and died at age 54.

EDWARDS AND DAVID BRAINERD

- Born 1717, converted at Yale College, expelled for excessive spiritual zeal
- From 1743-46, served as a missionary to Native Americans, riding thousands of miles on horseback. Led a revival at Crossweeksung, forming a church of 130 members.
- Suffering from tuberculosis, he appeared at Edwards' house. Was engaged to Jerusha Edwards before he and she died in 1747.
- Brainerd entrusted his journals to Edwards, who published them – the first missionary biography. It made a great sensation and would inspire William Carey, Henry Martyn, and Jim Elliott.
- Edwards took Brainerd's exploits as proof of the power of the gospel through the life of a holy minister.



EDWARDS' REVIVAL PREACHING

Emphasis on the Conviction of Sin

- Ian Murray: "Conviction of sin discovers to men their ignorance of God, and the knowledge of God teaches them that their problem is more than the need of forgiveness; the heart and nature is wrong."
- "God holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider. . . Over the fire, abhors you." (Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.)

Emphasis on the wonder of God's love in Christ

- "Immediately go to God through Christ for mercy. . . The arms of mercy are open to embrace you. . . If your souls be burdened, and you are distressed for fear of hell, you need not bear that burden and distress any longer. If you are but willing, you may freely come and unload yourselves, and cast all your burdens on Christ."

His ministry at Stockbridge seems to have involved more simple expository preaching



MARKS THE PLACE WHERE
MEETING HOUSE OF THE
CHRIST IN ENFIELD. BUILT
FOR WORSHIP UNTIL 1775
ON JULY 8, 1741, DURING
THE GREAT AWAKENING
WAS CELEBRATED SERMON
"AN ANGRY GOD"

EDWARDS ON THE AFFECTIONS

Given false conversions during the Awakening, Edwards sought to distinguish between true and false.

He realized that orthodox doctrine, and a sound profession of faith, is not enough to ensure salvation.

His principle was that a true conversion – new birth – results in new, heavenly desires born of the Holy Spirit.

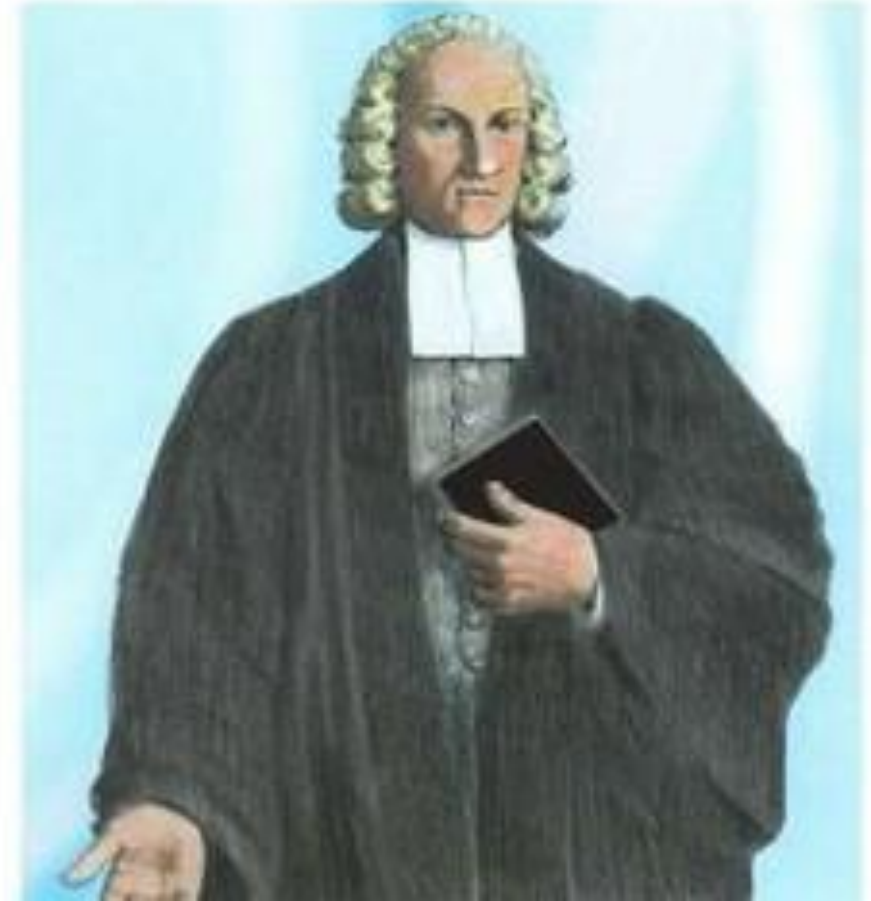
Responses to the gospel that can be accounted for by natural affections do *not* prove regeneration.

Affections that can *only* be accounted for by the Holy Spirit *do* prove regeneration.

Key verse: “Having a form of godliness but denying the power of it” (2 Tim. 3:5).

“Wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects”

THE RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS JONATHAN EDWARDS



OTHER IMPORTANT BOOKS

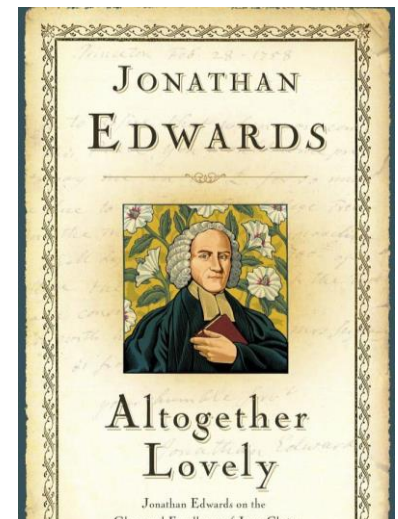
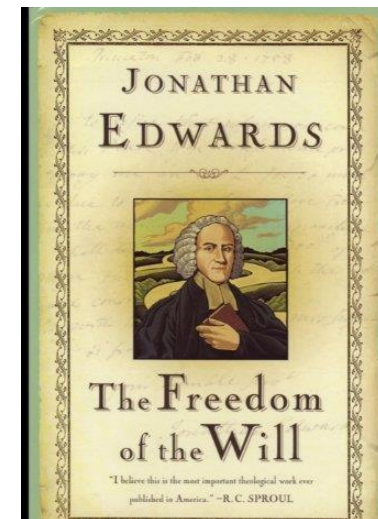
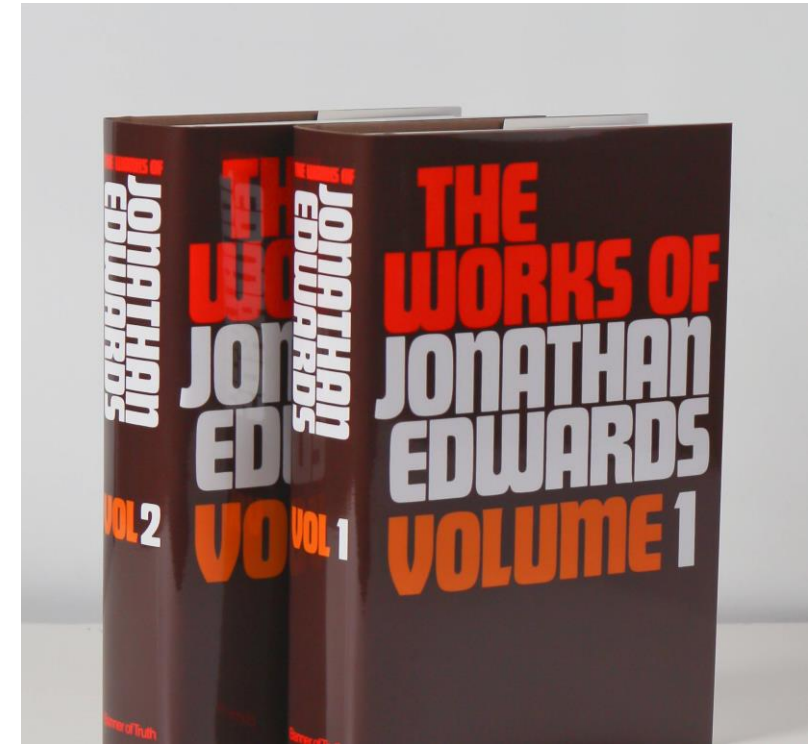
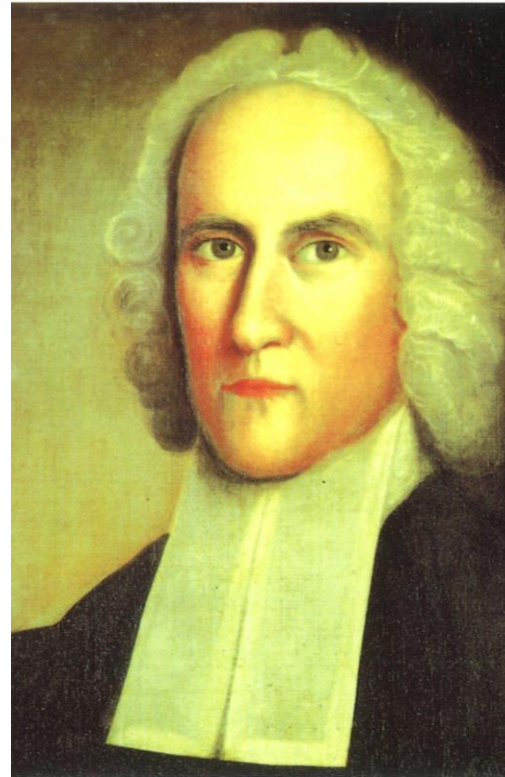
Charity and Its Fruits: Enlightening exposition of the fruits of the Spirit, highlighting Christian love

The Freedom of the Will: Philosophical discussion of predestination and human will.

Altogether Lovely: Edwards' heart on display in adoration of Jesus Christ

The Works of Jonathan Edwards: A massive, small print collection of all his writings.

CHARITY AND ITS FRUITS Jonathan Edwards



GRANDFATHER OF LIBERALISM?

Edwards' disciples Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, and Jonathan Edwards Jr founded the New England Theology.

Edwards had tried to articulate his theology in philosophical terms, which his immediate followers sought to advance.

The New England Theology emphasized man's free will and responsibility, restricted total depravity and original sin, and highlighted the cross as Christ's moral government rather than substitutionary atonement.

Resulted in the ultimate abandonment of biblical faith among New England congregationalists and the New School/Old School split among Presbyterians.

THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

FROM Jonathan Edwards TO Edwards Amasa Park

DOUGLAS A. SWEENEY
ALLEN C. GUELZO

JONATHAN EDWARDS' LEGACY

Embedded a commitment to biblical conversion in American evangelicalism

- Edwards “brought out and presented in bold relief, the idea that conversion is a change, ordinarily discoverable by its effects, so that he who exhibits no evidence of it, may with propriety be regarded as an unconverted man” (Joseph. Tracy).

Had a direct and significant influence on the believers who would launch the great 19th century missionary movement

- Demonstrated that a high commitment to Calvinism was not opposed to evangelism or missions.





EDWARDS' LEGACY, CONT.

Communicated the reality of faith as an eternal perspective

This world was made for a place of preparation for another. . . . Civil, ecclesiastical, and family affairs, and all our personal concerns, are designed and ordered in subordination to a future world.”

Fathered perhaps the most distinguished bloodline in American history

From his 11 children came 1 US Vice President, 3 US senators, 3 governors, 3 mayors, 30 judges, 13 college presidents, 65 college professors, 100 preachers/missionaries, and 75 military officers.

FOR FURTHER READING

