

Jonathan Edwards & American Thought

- **Reactionary** Last American Puritan
↳ to deism
- taking 17th century standards and imposing them on 18th century
- **Anticipatory** - 1st great thinker
- analyzed religious mind
- **Transitional** - holding beliefs of Puritans but defending them using science & philosophy
- **Christian** - biblical approach
↳ understood needs of man

to make many ^{different} ^{perspective} ^{opinion} Explain the variety of literary critical views about Jonathan Edwards's contribution to the history of American thought; emphasize the superiority of the Christian view.

There are many differing literary perspectives about Jonathan Edwards's contribution to the history of American thought. One perspective is that Edwards was a reactionary. He was called "the last American Puritan" because he still held to Puritan beliefs. These critics saw him as reactionary because ^{he was} "reacting" against the rise of deism by forcing Puritan values on a deistic society. The next view is that Edwards was anticipatory. He was seen as "the first of America's great thinkers" as he analyzed the religious mind. Throughout his many works, he forced mankind to reflect on their need. Other critics saw Edwards as transitional. In their minds, Edwards delineated the Puritan beliefs through science and philosophy. Edwards used "older" Puritan beliefs and supported ^{them} with the reason that was accepted in "newer" deistic thought. He was seen as the bridge between the Puritan and deistic beliefs. However, the Christian view is superior to all other views. Because the Christian view is based on truth of Scripture, this view can be seen ^{as} superior. Edwards saw the apathy of the church and preached with fervor. He helped to start the Great Awakening. Therefore, Edwards biblically approached the needs of man and brought them to understand their need for Christ. Although there are many perspectives about Edwards's contribution to American thought, the Christian view is the most accurate.

Preparation, Evangelism, Exile

- Preparation
 - Yale - graduated at 17
 - Received a MA at 21
 - Preached at a Presbyterian Church
 - * Converted at 18
- > Q: Despite a meager ~~formal education~~, Edwards was able to converse with and challenge the leading intellectuals of his day.
- > A: False
- Evangelism
 - 1st assisted grandfather at a Congregational Church
 - 24 yo. preached at a church → Northampton
 - Sarah Pierpont - married
 - intense preaching → convicted congregation
 - ↳ whole town spoke of spiritual matters
 - the Great Awakening began in his church
 - He wrote about Holy Spirit in people's lives
 - "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
- > Q: As revival spread in New England, about what did Edwards become concerned?
- > A: He was concerned that it was difficult to distinguish true believers from those who merely professed Christ
- > Q: What was the name of the revival in New England to which Jonathan Edwards's ministry contributed?
- > A: The Great Awakening

- **Exile**

- Spiritual fervor cooled
- Faced opposition → over making them give public testimony (against Halfway Covenant)
- dismissed from church
- became a missionary to Indians
- Wrote 2 of greatest works: Freedom of Will
The Great Doctr. of Orig. Sin Defended
- became president of Princeton → small pox

- > **Q: After Edwards's ministry as pastor, in what ministry did he engage?**
- > **A: He performed missionary activity among the Indians.**

- **Writing**
 - Plain Style
 - Theme: Religious knowledge must be in heart, not just in the head.
- > **Q: What is the main theme of Edwards's writings?**
- > **A: The main theme is that religious knowledge must be in the heart, not just in the head.**
- > **Q: In reference to Edwards's writing, what is ironic about his seeming failure in being dismissed from his church?**
- > **A: His most productive period of writing followed.**
- > **Q: Edwards's view of man's corrupt nature influenced later American authors such as Hawthorne and Melville.**
- > **A: True**
- > **Q: Why were many of the church members who heard Edwards preach "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" unconverted?**
- > **A: The Halfway Covenant's relaxed membership requirements made it possible for many who had not had a true religious experience to join the church.**
- > **Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is the most famous sermon in American history.**
- > **A: True**

"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

- most famous sermon
- Northampton, MA → in church
- During Great Awakening
- sparked revival → eventually fizzled out

Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is the most famous sermon in American history.

A: True

- Audience - apathetic, lukewarm, unconverted, crying Christians, praying

Q: Why were many of the church members who heard Edwards preach "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" unconverted?

A: The Halfway Covenant's relaxed membership requirements made it possible for many who had not had a true religious experience to join the church. (pp. 79, 84)

Q: Unfortunately, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" had relatively little impact on the audience despite Edwards's burden for his people and the quality of the text of the sermon itself.

A: False

- Structure - 3-part Puritan structure
 - ① discussion of text ② development of doctrine ③ application (uses)
- Q: In "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards successfully alters the usual three-part pattern of the Puritan sermon organization in order to more effectively bring his hearers to a point of decision.

A: False

D discussion of text
 Passage: *Deut. 32:35*

Q: Give the Bible verse and reference Edwards used for "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"?

A: "Their foot shall slide in due time" (Deut. 32:35). (p. 84)

Deuteronomy 32:35- "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; **their foot shall slide in due time**: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste."

Hint Statement

Implications vs. Inferences

- related words
- but opposites
- Implication-
 - > "To imply is to suggest something is true without actually saying it."
- Inference-
 - > "To infer is to see the implication in the sentence."
- "Here are the rules:
 - > The person who makes the suggestion implies it.
 - > The person who recognizes the suggestion infers it (or draws an inference).
 - > Inference always comes after an implication: I imply, then you infer."
- http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Implication_and_inference

12/2 Bellringer:

Make some observations about what is happening in this picture:



Passage:

Deuteronomy 32:35- "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; **their foot shall slide in due time**: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste."

Discussion of the text:

- Inferences Edwards makes:

- ① in perpetual danger
- ② in the presence of danger → sudden/unexpected black ice
- ③ they bring destruction on themselves
- ④ God has kept them/ decides when destruction falls

Developments of the Doctrine:

Q: What is the thesis or controlling idea of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"?

A: "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God." (p. 85)

THESIS: "There is nothing that keeps wicked man at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God."

"Mere pleasure of God" - *sovereign (king)*
pleasure
 ↳ arbitrary will
 ↳ does what He wants when He wants
 - restrained by no obligation →
 owes no one anything

Developments of the Doctrine (cont.):

- See Google Drive Document for a review of Edwards's doctrinal development: <https://docs.google.com/a/twintiersca.org/spreadsheets/d/13mqZMWtwM0nnUumZ4nnKgqki72SOyUSVWEMfkuMa0vc/edit?usp=sharing>
- Quiz Review:

Q: Each of the following is a central ingredient in Edwards's method of developing his ideas in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" except (pp. 84-91)

- A careful definition.
- B graphic illustration, often from ordinary life.
- C Biblical allusion.
- D historical allusion.

A: D historical allusion

Q: In "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards says that "God is a great deal more angry . . . with many that are now in this congregation" than He is with whom?

A: sinners already in hell (p. 85)

Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" gives particular emphasis to each of the following ideas except that (pp. 85-86)

- A wicked men have no means of resisting God's power to cast them into hell.
- B only those God has elected will be saved.
- C the wicked deserve to be cast into hell and are already condemned to that fate.
- D Satan is eager to claim the wicked as his own as soon as God will allow him to.

A: B only those God has elected will be saved.

Q: Which of the following points is least essential to proving the thesis of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"? (pp. 86-87)

- A "There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints."
- B "It is no security to wicked men for one moment that there are no visible means of death at hand."
- C "Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment."
- D "God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment."

A: A "There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints."

Q: Why does Edwards use a paragraph of summary just before the "Application" section of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"? (p. 87)

- A to review the key ideas of the long development of the doctrine section
- B to cite Biblical allusions and illustrations that could not be included earlier
- C both A and B
- D neither A nor B

A: A to review the key ideas of the long development of the doctrine section

Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" refers to "greedy lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back." In this illustration, who is represented by the lions?

A: demons in hell (p. 86)

Q: "Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen." What truth in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is supported by this statement?

A: that wicked men have no security from death, even though the means of their death may not be readily apparent (p. 86)

Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" points out that a man's good intentions about escaping hell or his interest in religion does not obligate God to preserve him for one moment from eternal destruction.

A: True

Application:**• Homework Questions:**

3. The first extended metaphor Edwards uses in this paragraph describes the unconverted soul as heavy lead, tending downwards; the second compares man's care, prudence, and righteousness to a "spider's web," of no more value in preventing the soul from plummeting into hell than a spider's web would be in preventing a rock from falling to the ground. The third metaphor compares sinful man to a "burden" which the earth must bear. It is this metaphor which Edwards develops most fully; he describes the groaning of the earth under such a burden, its unwilling bondage to man's corruption, its unwilling yield of its increase to man, its reluctant provision of the air which "maintain(s) the flame of life" in man, and finally, its desire to cast off or "spew out" such a burden. The last metaphor Edwards uses in paragraph 3 compares God's wrath to "black clouds" which hang ominously over the heads of sinful men.

Can you find examples of other metaphors?

Application:**• Homework Questions:**

4. In the second sentence of the Application, Edwards begins addressing the audience as you. Prior to this point, Edwards follows the strict form of a Puritan sermon. In this third section, however, he decides to become more personal in an effort to make his appeal of salvation pointed.

5. In paragraphs 9 and 10, Edwards concentrates on instructing the unconverted. Following this instruction, he then calls on each of them to take specific action. He calls first on the older men and women, then the younger men and women, and finally on the children. He warns the older people that their case is extremely dangerous because of the guilt and hardness of heart they developed over the years. He then tells the younger men and women of their great opportunity to turn from sin and warns that if they refuse this opportunity, they will become as hardened as their elders. He finally tells the children that God is with them now, but if they refuse, as so many other children have, to be converted, they will eventually bear God's wrath in hell.

Application cont.:

Quiz Questions Review-

Q: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" includes a reference to each of the following creatures except a (pp. 85-87)

- A worm.
- B spider.
- C scorpion.
- D snake.

A: C scorpion.

Q: According to Edwards in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the situation of those who are outside of Christ is like each of the following except which one? (pp. 87-88)

- A being as heavy as lead
- B being the chaff on the threshing floor
- C being suspended in air
- D being caught in a spider's web

A: D being caught in a spider's web

Q: In "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards likens God's wrath to each of the following except (pp. 87-88)

- A great waters.
- B an earthquake.
- C a bow and arrows.
- D black clouds and rough winds.

A: B an earthquake.

Q: In the second sentence of the "Application" section, Edwards begins to address his audience using the second-person pronoun you. Why does he adopt this strategy?

A: In this section he decides to become more personal in an effort to make his appeal of salvation pointed. (TE, p. 83)

Q: According to Edwards in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," a wicked man's strength would be nothing to withstand God's omnipotent power of judgment, even if his strength were of what specific magnitude?

A: "ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell" (p. 88)

Q: In the "Application" section of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards emphasizes the certainty and the severity of punishment in hell for the wicked. What other aspect of punishment in hell is discussed in this section?

A: that it is eternal (p. 89)

Q: According to Edwards in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," what is the "extraordinary opportunity" available to his audience?

A: the "door of mercy" which "Christ has thrown . . . wide open" (p. 90)

Q: According to Edwards in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," the earth and all that is in it does not willingly support the existence of the unsaved. (pp. 87-88)

A: T

Q: Because Edwards is not completely clear about what he means by salvation, it appears that one of his primary purposes in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is to encourage his hearers to doubt their salvation. (p. 88)

A: F

Homework: → reference to something common outside the text

In the last two paragraphs of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards uses three Biblical allusions: "the great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days," "as it was in the days of John the Baptist," and Sodom. Explain the context of how Edwards uses these allusions and his purpose in using them.

Why?

→ based on words around it

→ expound

→ give details to make clear