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CHAPTER 1

JONATHAN EDWARDS’ FUNERAL SERMONS

TIMOTHY EDWARDS’ INFLUENCE

When Jonathan was born in East Windsor in October, 1703, his parents Timothy (1669–1758) and Esther Edwards (1672–1771) had no way of knowing that he would be the only son born to them. They already had four daughters, and after Jonathan six more would come.¹ Nor could Timothy have known that he and his son would both finish their earthly race within two months of each other, almost fifty-five years later.² What is clear is that Timothy Edwards’ influence over his children, especially Jonathan, began early. As Ola Winslow notes, “meticulous precision and thoroughness” characterized his daily life and ministry, and this attention to detail definitely extended to the education of his children as well.³ The Edwardses showed an interest in their daughters’ education, first at home, and later by nine of the ten girls attending finishing school in Boston, which must have caused some strain on the family’s modest income.⁴ But Jonathan’s education was no less important. Iain Murray’s comment that “Timothy Edwards had the largest influence upon [Jonathan’s] education” seems warranted by the attention that father gave to son, even when Queen Anne’s War (1702–1713) caused the elder Edwards’ absence. In a letter penned in August 1711, Timothy gave detailed instructions to Jonathan’s mother on several aspects of running the household during his absence with a noteworthy instruction dealing specifically with his son’s learning: “I desire thee to take care that Jonathan don’t lose what he hath learned but that as he hath got the *Accidence*, and above two sides of *propria quae moribus* by heart so that he keep what he hath got, I would

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therefore have him say pretty often to the girls.”⁵

Timothy's instruction did not end with memorizing Latin, though. It was from his father that Jonathan also learned the value of accurate and frequent writing, thinking on paper as it were, and a high view of the ministry.⁶ Timothy Edwards' guidance also extended to the study and to the pulpit. Murray notes that Timothy's surviving sermon manuscripts show his thoroughness in preparing for his weekly preaching ministry, a trait that passed from father to son, as evidenced by the thousands of pages of Jonathan Edwards' sermon manuscripts.⁷ And it was from his father's pulpit that young Jonathan first learned, if not formally then surely by observation, how a sermon should be constructed and delivered. When the church met on Thursdays and Sundays and on other special occasions, Jonathan would have been expected to attend, and the impact of at least three services per week for the first twelve years of his life could not have been insignificant. By the time Jonathan left East Windsor for the Collegiate School of New Jersey (later Yale) in 1716 he would have been exposed to hundreds of sermons.⁸

Nor did Timothy Edwards' influence end when his son left home for college, or when he served in Northampton a decade later. Ola Winslow has observed that Timothy and Jonathan remained close throughout their lives, visiting nearly monthly until Jonathan's later ministry at Stockbridge.⁹ One may speculate as to the discussions that they enjoyed, which probably included times of shared prayer and encouragement in ministry. Many of the traits observed in Timothy were learned, internalized, and often extended by his son. But the younger Edwards was born into a ministerial family, and Timothy's father-in-law, Solomon Stoddard, also played a significant role in shaping Jonathan's ministry.

SOLOMON STODDARD'S INFLUENCE

Little is known about Jonathan Edwards' early relationship to Solomon Stoddard. In letters written to his sister Mary (1701–1776) in 1719 and 1721, Edwards requests that his sibling pass along his “duty” to his grandfather.¹⁰ Thirty years later, in a letter to Thomas Gillespie (1708–1774) following Edwards' dismissal from Northampton, he displayed a great esteem for Stoddard, whom he describes as “a very great man, of strong powers of mind, of great grace, and great authority, of a masterly countenance, speech, and behavior. He had great success in his ministry, there being many seasons in his day of general awakening among his people.”¹¹ According to George Marsden, “Jonathan had been reading at

least some of his grandfather's works since his youth and had heard his powerful preaching on occasion." Stoddard's influence is seen most prominently in Edwards' views on evangelism, especially with regard to the value of preaching to awaken the fear of hell in his hearers.¹² It is likely that most of Edwards' thoughts on preaching were already established when he accepted his grandfather's invitation to become his pastoral assistant in Northampton in late 1726. He had spent years listening to his father's sermons and had himself pastored two congregations for over a year, first in 1722–1723 in New York and later in 1723–1724 in Bolton, Connecticut, before returning to Yale as a tutor. But the two and a half years Edwards spent laboring beside his grandfather surely left some mark on his ministry.

In his preaching, Stoddard utilized the conventional three-part division of Scripture, doctrine, and application, but he weighted his sermons heavily toward application, especially applications related to humility and repentance. Stoddard had distinct ideas about preaching, and even preached and published a sermon on the topic, *The Defects of Preachers Reproved*.¹³ "There may be a good deal of great preaching in a country," Stoddard said, clearly thinking about his native New England, "and yet a great want of good preaching."¹⁴ The "good preaching" that Stoddard desired were sermons on salvation: "Ministers don't sufficiently do their duty, if they preach many sound truths, and do it convincingly and with good affection, if they do it with great clearness and evidence, provided they neglect other things that are needful to salvation."¹⁵ The Pharisees taught true doctrines, but, as Nicodemus' conversation with Jesus in John 3 revealed, they ignored regeneration and, in many other New Testament examples, other matters pertaining to salvation by grace through faith.¹⁶

In examining New England sermons, Stoddard concluded that though there was much good preaching that dealt with the salvation of souls, there was still preaching that was a "cause of lamentation." Preaching that taught that "frequently men are ignorant of the time of their conversion" was such cause for lamentation as was preaching that diminished the role of "humiliation" before faith.¹⁷ Good preaching must warn men and women "about the danger of damnation," must herald the biblical view of "the nature of justifying faith," and must not give "false signs of godliness" to its hearers.¹⁸ Stoddard examined not only the content of a preacher's sermon, but also the style of delivery. Using one of his favorite rhetorical devices, the Northampton pastor asked, "Is the

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late practice of some ministers, in reading their sermons, commendable;¹⁹ Stoddard allowed that older ministers who had lost the “strength of their memories” might be pardoned for using notes, but “it was not the manner of the prophets or apostles.”²⁰ But as he stated more frankly, “The reading of sermons is a dull way of preaching.”²¹ The facts that there was “so little conversion” and that “many men that make an high profession, lead unaffected lives” led Stoddard to conclude that there was much deficient preaching in New England.²²

Edwards departed from his grandfather’s teaching on some issues, most notably on church membership and the Lord’s Supper, but Edwards could still describe him as “the prophet, that eminent minister of the Gospel that God so long continued in this place [Northampton],” a “burning and shining light,” a “pillar,” and “our Joshua, he that was our captain to lead us into heavenly Canaan.”²³ Clearly Edwards had a high view of his grandfather’s ministry and likely accepted some of Stoddard’s ideas on preaching.²⁴

FUNERAL SERMONS IN EDWARDS' HAND

Jonathan Edwards’ preaching stands squarely in the Puritan New England tradition, though differing in style and goals from the longer, more highly structured Boston sermons, especially in calls to conversion, a tradition that Kimnach suggests might be called the “Connecticut Valley School.”²⁵ While his preaching was shaped by his father and sharpened by his grandfather, it became uniquely his own. This fact is true not only of Edwards’ regular pulpit ministry, but also of his funeral preaching.

According to the *Chronological Index* of Edwards’ sermons there are twelve sermons that Edwards preached on the occasion of someone’s death.²⁶ In addition, Marsden has identified other funeral sermons.²⁷ For the purposes of this monograph, however, some of these sermons have been excluded from discussion because they cannot be linked to a specific funeral or are unpublished.²⁸ There are eight remaining sermons that will be discussed and will be followed by a synthesis of key themes.

THE DAY OF A GODLY MAN'S DEATH

In the spring of 1734 a noticeable trend toward a spiritual awakening was taking shape in Northampton and the surrounding villages. One such village was Pascommuck, where in April, “there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth.”²⁹

Following his death, Edwards preached a funeral sermon from Psalm 90:5–6 employing the imagery of morning grass that appears strong and which the same day might be mowed down and lose its beauty and life.³⁰ Edwards urged the youth in the congregation: “Consider. If you should die in youth how shocking would the thought of you having spent your youth in such a manner be to them that see it.”³¹ Edwards thus encouraged the youth of the congregation to seek an interest in Christ.³² The impact was profound. In Edwards’ own words the death of the young man coupled with his sermon “much affected many young people.”³³

Only a couple of months passed before another death affected the youth in Northampton. This time a young married woman was taken from them. According to Edwards, she “had been considerably exercised in mind, about the salvation of her soul, before she was ill, and was in great distress in the beginning of her illness; but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God’s mercy to her, before her death.”³⁴ Edwards preached from Ecclesiastes 7:1 and stated as his doctrine, “The day of a godly man’s death is better than the day of his birth.”³⁵ As Edwards developed this theme, he argued first that a “pious person on the day of his death receives a better and more blessed life than on the day of his birth.”³⁶ Then, the day a godly person dies, he “enters into a better world than on the day of his birth.”³⁷ Third, the godly, when they die, are “brought to behold a more pleasant and glorious light” than the day when they first beheld the light of earth’s sun.³⁸ The godly are “received by a better parent” than on the day they were born, and also receive “a better inheritance” than they received the day they were born.³⁹

Edwards suggested several applications of this doctrine to his congregation: those who mourn the death of a godly man or woman should consider the joy that the departed saint now has and let this joy temper their grief. He encouraged parents who had lost children to reflect on the child’s birthday, on the joy they had as parents, and to consider how much better was their present state. He also encouraged friends who mourn the loss of their companions to consider that the departed were in much better company and did not lack care.⁴⁰

Edwards also used the opportunity to exhort his hearers to “strive that you may be godly persons.”⁴¹ Because everyone who lives will surely die, they should “get into such a state that the day of their death” would indeed be a better day than that of their birth.⁴² Edwards reminded his hearers that being prepared for death would bring them comfort in life, and conversely, to be unprepared for death was sure to make this

life miserable.⁴³

Between the preaching of this sermon and the end of 1734, another citizen passed away, this time “an elderly person.” However, there is no record of Edwards’ sermon on this occasion. Edwards remarked that this person’s death was “attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.”⁴⁴ These 1734 funeral sermons worked on different levels to accomplish different purposes. On the surface they comforted the survivors of the deceased, but on another level they fanned the small flame of revival that would soon spread throughout Northampton.

THE WORKS OF DEPARTED SAINTS FOLLOW THEM

Jonathan Edwards’ maternal grandmother, Esther Warham Mather Stoddard (b.1640), died on February 10, 1736, just one day shy of the seventh anniversary of her husband’s death.⁴⁵ She was known for her piety, strength, and “intellectual vigor.”⁴⁶ In a fitting tribute, Edwards preached from Revelation 14:13 the following doctrine: “When the saints depart out of this into another world their works do follow them.”⁴⁷ “The life of a saint,” according to Edwards, “is a life of good works.”⁴⁸ When a saint dies, “they shall reap the sweet fruit” of their works in eternity.⁴⁹ On what basis are the works of a saint rewarded? They are rewarded not because of merit, “but of free grace,” through Christ.⁵⁰ What exactly are these rewards? They shall receive “an exceeding glorious reward,” often called a crown.⁵¹

As Edwards applied this text, he first noted that there would be “different degrees of glory in heaven,” corresponding to the rewards earned on earth. He comforted his hearers by assuring them that departed saints were not only in a state of “rest and blessedness,” but that they were also “exalted high in glory.”⁵² Second, Edwards suggested that this text might “lead us to reflect on the miserable and doleful state of those that die out of Christ.”⁵³ Thus, he exhorted his hearers to be diligent, “to make sure of being in Christ.”⁵⁴ Christians should seek to gather much treasure in heaven and to emulate the life that Esther Stoddard lived.

Edwards refrained from speaking of his grandmother until the end of his sermon, partly because he was “unacquainted with her in the day of her action,” and partly because many in the congregation could tell *him* more about his grandmother than he could tell *them*.⁵⁵ Although she had not been active in the congregation in the way she had been for many years prior, her “example should stir us up to labour” for Christ,

and her pious interest in religion should serve as a model for emulation.⁵⁶ Edwards focused a particular application with regard to the women of the congregation,

I would hence take occasion to exhort those women in the congregation that stand in the like family relations that she did. To a wise and the like care in bringing up their children pious and diligent care in instructing and governing of chil[dren].⁵⁷

Edwards' eulogy for his grandmother is only a secondary concern of this sermon. His primary purpose seems to be that of reminding his hearers that eternity awaits every person, and that the works of one's life continue into eternity. For the godly person, their works yield a reward, not because of any value in their works, but because of God's free grace. For the ungodly, their wicked works will haunt them for all eternity.

SORROWS OF THE BEREAVED SPREAD BEFORE JESUS

Occasionally Jonathan Edwards used the same sermon for multiple funerals, changing sections as the circumstances warranted. Such is the case with the funeral sermons preached for Nehemiah Bull (1701–1740) and for Edwards' uncle, William Williams. Nehemiah Bull was only two years older than Edwards, and both men were ordained in 1727.⁵⁸ William Williams was Solomon Stoddard's son-in-law, and as Marsden has noted, the relationship between Williams and Edwards was of great family and political importance.⁵⁹ The text for both sermons is Matthew 14:12, "And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it and went and told Jesus." The textual occasion for the sermon came from the death of John the Baptist, and it is the response of John's disciples that Edwards has in view. The doctrine of these sermons is worded nearly identically: "When any is taken away by death that has been eminent in the work of the Gospel ministry 'tis suitable that such as are bereaved thereby should Go and spread their sorrows before Jesus."⁶⁰

On both occasions, Edwards purposefully limited his development of the sermon's doctrine to more fully expand the applications:

Though in handling this subject I might particularly speak to several propositions that are contained in this observation, and many things might profitably be insisted upon under it, if there were room for it within the compass of a sermon; yet I shall only give

the reasons of the doctrine, and then hasten to the application.⁶¹

The first reason that the bereaved should spread their sorrows before Jesus is that “Christ is one that is ready to pity the afflicted.” Then, Jesus has made provision for the bereaved, and third, this provision is extensive.⁶² Finally, reflecting on the work that Christ has undertaken for his people “should engage them to go and spread such a calamity...before him.”⁶³

The applications of both sermons show Edwards as a minister of comfort for the grieving. Though the application sections of both sermons follow the same general outline, the circumstances of each death led Edwards to make specific uses in one sermon that he does not make in the other. First, Edwards addressed the congregations of these two pastors. Just as the disciples of John were those who sat regularly under his instruction, so these congregants had sat under the instruction of their departed pastors; just as the former sought solace in Jesus, so should the latter.⁶⁴ Edwards reminded Bull’s congregation how faithfully their pastor had ministered among them, telling them that “God has taken him from you your head and Guide who faithfully and painfully watched for the good of your souls God has taken the shepherd from the flock and you are left destitute.”⁶⁵ Edwards exhorted the congregation to show kindness to Bull’s family, not simply at the funeral, but in the days that would follow.⁶⁶

To the mourners in Hatfield, Edwards remarked of Williams,

You have enjoyed great advantages for your soul’s good, under his ministry. That you had such a minister was your privilege and your honor; he has been an ornament to the town of Hatfield; and his presence and conversation amongst you has been both profitable and pleasant... But now it hath pleases an holy God to take him away from you. You’ll see his face and hear his voice no more, in the land of the living... Therefore now go to Jesus, the supreme head of the church, and Bishop of Souls. Your pastor is dead, and will not live again till the last day. But Christ is the Chief Shepherd.⁶⁷

In this sermon for Williams, Edwards asked the congregation at Hatfield to “go to Jesus” in prayer for their “surviving pastor,” Timothy Woodbridge (1713–1770), who had served as Williams’ assistant since the previous year. Edwards’ application is specific:

[Ask Jesus] that he would be with him [Woodbridge], and furnish him more and more for, and assist him in that great work, that is now wholly devolved upon him, and make him also a burning and shining light amongst you; and that you may have the presence and blessing of Jesus with you, and him.⁶⁸

He would later address Woodbridge directly, noting the pastor's "large share" in the bereavement of Williams and exhorting him to "go and tell Jesus" of his sorrows and to look to Jesus for guidance:

Therefore you have nowhere else to go, but to your great Lord and Master, that has sent you to labor in that part of his vineyard, where his aged, and now departed servant was employed, to seek strength and wisdom, and divine influence and assistance from him, and a double portion of that Spirit, that dwelt in your predecessor.⁶⁹

Edwards also spoke directly to the families of both departed pastors. These "near relatives" were "above all others to be looked upon as the bereaved" because "God has dealt bitterly with you. He has taken from you a very dear pleasant and profitable friend and it is a time of sorrow and mourning with you."⁷⁰ In speaking to Bull's widow he encouraged her to realize that:

Tho Gods dealings with you are very awfull...yet your sorrow is not Remediless not that you Can have any Remedy from Earthly friends. we can Pity you but we cant make up your Loss and must Confess our selves miserable Comforts but you may go to Jesus and there you may have both support and reparations.⁷¹

Comfort was also extended to Williams' widow, Christian Stoddard Williams (1676–1764):

Suffer me, honored madam, in your great affliction to exhibit to you a compassionate Redeemer. God has now taken away from you that servant of his, that was the nearest and best friend you had in this world, that was your wise and prudent guide, your affectionate and pleasant companion...But you may go and tell Jesus, and there you may have both support and reparation: his love and

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his presence is far beyond that of the nearest and most affectionate earthly friend.⁷²

In the funeral sermon for Bull, Edwards made special mention of Nehemiah Bull's mother, reminding her of Jesus' compassion toward the widow at Nain (Luke 7:11–17) and inviting her to lay her sorrows on the same Jesus: "You may be assured that Christ will put all your tears into his bottle and will be ready to administer divine consolations proportionable to your many and great sorrows."⁷³ Edwards was also careful to speak to the children of the deceased pastors. To Bull's children he said,

Let the fatherless children, those of them that are capable of reflection and consideration, go to Christ now [that] God has taken away their Father from [them], and beg of him that now [that] their father has forsaken them, he would take them up and take the care of them and be a father to them.⁷⁴

The situation with William Williams' children was quite different, although the application was identical. Williams' sons were influential men, and the relationship between Edwards and his cousins was tenuous.⁷⁵ Marsden notes the "gentle evangelical tone" of Edwards' sermon, and his evaluation seems appropriate:

You will no longer have your father's wisdom to guide you, his tender love to comfort and delight you, and his affectionate care to guard you and assist you... But in the blessed Jesus, your father's Lord and Redeemer, you may have much more, than all those things.⁷⁶

In concluding both sermons, Edwards also included himself among the ranks of those who needed to spread their sorrows before Jesus. And in both sermons, he ended by addressing the clergy of the neighboring regions. Because ministers are to be fellow helpers of one another, and "considering how much he that is now taken away was so with respect to us that were neighbouring ministers," Edwards exhorted those attending Nehemiah Bull's funeral to "go and spread it before Jesus the Great Lord of the harvest who appointed both him and us to the work of the ministry."⁷⁷ Concerning Williams' death, Edwards said, "God has now taken

our father and master from our head: he has removed him that has heretofore, under Christ, been very much our strength.”⁷⁸ It was to Williams that Edwards and other ministers had turned “in difficult cases for instruction and direction.”⁷⁹ Now the eminent leader was gone, and Edwards’ encouraged his fellow ministers: “Let this awful providence bring us to look to Christ, to seek more of his presence with us.”⁸⁰

These two sermons reveal Edwards’ deep pastoral concern, even when the congregations were not his own. Both sermons are heavily focused on application, and the use to which Edwards returned again and again was the admonition to “go tell Jesus,” which is clearly a call to prayer. It is interesting to notice Edwards’ repetition of this phrase throughout both sermons. The rhetorical device of repetition had been a characteristic of Edwards’ grandfather’s preaching style.

TRUE SAINTS, WHEN ABSENT FROM THE BODY, ARE PRESENT WITH THE LORD

On October 9, 1747, David Brainerd (b.1718) died in Jonathan Edwards’ home. Three days later, Edwards preached at the young missionary’s funeral a sermon that was markedly different from his other funeral sermons in its emphasis, style, and length. *True Saints, When Absent From the Body, Are Present With the Lord* is a beautiful literary composition that appears to have been designed by Edwards to overcome certain negative perceptions of Brainerd that some people had and to present as near a beatific vision of heaven as could be presented on earth.⁸¹ Edwards’ text was 2 Corinthians 5:8, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”⁸² Four observations about the text were made by the preacher. First, the apostle Paul hoped for a “great future privilege,” namely being present with the Lord. Second, this privilege would be realized not in the final judgment and resurrection, but immediately upon a saint’s death. Then, this privilege was highly valued by Paul. Finally, this future privilege had present benefits, particularly “courage, assurance, and constancy of mind.”⁸³ Here Edwards focused his doctrine: “the souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ.”⁸⁴

This doctrinal perspective is developed in five ways. First, departed saints live with Christ in heaven.⁸⁵ Edwards cited over a dozen passages from the New Testament that name or describe this “highest heaven” where Christ’s human nature lives and where the souls of departed saints meet him at death.⁸⁶ “The souls of true saints,” Edwards emphasized as

his second point, “when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, as they go to dwell in the immediate, full and constant sight or view of him.”⁸⁷ Edwards’ description of the saints’ new sight of Christ well reveals the Christ-centered beauty of their new state:

Their beatifical vision of God is in Christ, who is that brightness or effulgence of God’s glory, by which his glory shines forth in heaven, to the view of saints and angels there, as well as here on earth. This is the Sun of Righteousness, that is not only the light of this world, but is also the sun that enlightens the heavenly Jerusalem; by whose bright beams it is that the glory of God shines forth there, to the enlightening and making happy all the glorious inhabitants.⁸⁸

Third, departed saints are united with Jesus in a way impossible on earth.⁸⁹ This union completes a spiritual conformity that began at conversion. Their joining together with Christ is perfect in every way. Furthermore, departed believers enjoy sweet communion with Christ.⁹⁰ Believers “are not merely Christ’s servants, but his friends...his brethren and companions...yea, they are the spouse of Christ.”⁹¹ As Edwards continued,

Thus they shall eat and drink abundantly, and swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up in the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving that light, eternally full of it, and eternally compassed around with it, everlastingly reflecting it back again to the fountain of it.⁹²

Departed saints are also “received to a glorious fellowship with Christ in his blessedness.”⁹³ In the same way that an earthly spouse shares in her husband’s estate, so believers, Christ’s spiritual bride, “shall partake with him in his glory.”⁹⁴ This fellowship is expressed in three ways: believers share an indescribable fellowship with the Father; they reign with Christ in his heavenly sovereignty; and they continually bring glory to God.⁹⁵

Edwards offered only one application to his congregation: “Let us all be exhorted hence earnestly to seek after that great privilege that has been spoken of; that when we are absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord.”⁹⁶ David Brainerd’s life and death were an example of one who earnestly sought this privilege. Edwards takes the time to

examine four aspects of Brainerd's life: his conversion, spiritual practices, lifestyle, and preparation for death.⁹⁷ Edwards' source on these matters was Brainerd's own spiritual diary, from which Edwards quoted generously. After considering in great detail these four aspects of Brainerd's life, Edwards concluded thus:

O that the things that were seen and heard in this extraordinary person, his holiness, heavenliness, labor, and self-denial in life, his so remarkable devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God, and the wonderful frame of mind manifested, in so steadfast a manner, under the expectation of death...may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work we have to do in this world, the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the blessedness of the end of such, whose death finished such a life, and the infinite value of their eternal reward, when absent from the body and present with the Lord; and effectually stir us up to endeavors that in the way of such an holy life, we may at last come to so blessed an end. Amen.⁹⁸

In this sermon, Edwards' meditations on heaven bombard the senses, as he uses the metaphors of "light" and "sweetness" with great rhetorical effect.⁹⁹ Another distinguishing mark of this sermon is its length, especially its extended eulogy of Brainerd. This sermon is thus a prelude to the longer Brainerd diary that Edwards would later edit and publish.

A STRONG ROD BROKEN AND WITHERED

On June 19, 1748, Northampton lost perhaps its most eminent citizen, and Jonathan Edwards lost one of his most faithful supporters, when his uncle Colonel John Stoddard (1682–1748) died of a stroke that he had suffered a few days earlier.¹⁰⁰ Edwards preached his uncle's funeral sermon on the following Lord's Day, June 26, 1748. In *A Strong Rod Broken and Withered*, Edwards turned to Ezekiel 19:12, "Her strong rods were broken and withered."¹⁰¹ As Edwards explained this text, the "Jewish church" is "here compared to a vine planted in very fruitful soil." The reference to "her strong rods" are to "her wise, able and well-qualified magistrates or rulers." The breaking of these rulers means that they are "being removed by death," and understandably this is "a great and awful calamity."¹⁰² From this text, Edwards drew the following doctrine:

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“When God by death removes from a people those in place of public authority and rule that have been as strong rods, 'tis an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation.”¹⁰³

Edwards developed this doctrine in two sections. He set out to demonstrate “what kind of rulers may fitly be called ‘strong rods.’” Then, he wanted to show why the “removal of such rulers by death is to be looked upon as an awful judgment of God on that people, and is greatly to be lamented.”¹⁰⁴ Edwards gave five tests by which a ruler might be considered a “strong rod.” First, he would be adept in managing public affairs. Such a ruler must also be wise, kind, and possess “a greatness and nobleness of disposition.” Then, rulers, as described by Ezekiel, must possess “a peculiar talent in using their knowledge, and exerting themselves in this great and important business.” Fourth, their character must be exemplary. Finally, a ruler’s circumstances also qualify him as a strong rod: “his being a person of honorable descent, of a distinguished education, his being a man of estate, one that is advanced in years, one that has long been in authority, etc.”¹⁰⁵

Edwards proceeded to show why the death of such a ruler was a sign of God’s judgment and an occasion for lamentation among a people. Such a ruler brings many “positive benefits and blessings to a people.” It is surely a sign of God’s displeasure when they are removed by death.¹⁰⁶ Then, on account of the way those rulers ward off great calamities, their death must signal God’s judgment.¹⁰⁷

In applying this text, Edwards began by connecting “the late awful frown of divine providence upon [Northampton]” in the death of John Stoddard to the standards he developed earlier. Here Edwards heaped praises upon his departed uncle:

He was eminently a *strong rod* in the forementioned respects. As to his natural abilities, strength of reason, greatness and clearness of discerning, and depth of penetration, he was one of the first rank: it may be doubted whether he has left his superior in these respects, in these parts of the world. He was a man of a truly great genius, and his genius was peculiarly fitted for the understanding and management of public affairs.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, Edwards continued:

He was probably one of the ablest politicians that ever New Eng-

land bred... The greatness and honorableness of his disposition, was answerable to the largeness of his understanding; he was naturally of a great mind... He was a man remarkably of a public spirit, a true lover of his country...he had a remarkable government of his spirit; and excelled in the government of his tongue.¹⁰⁹

The death of such a man was a “testimony of the divine displeasure” and God’s “awful frowns among us.”¹¹⁰ The correct response to such a display of God’s sovereignty was “our humiliation and fear before God.” God was clearly calling the people of Northampton “to adore the divine sovereignty, and tremble at the presence of this great God.”¹¹¹ When such an eminent man as Stoddard is taken away, it was cause enough for the people of the town to “see how that none are out of the reach of death, that no greatness, no authority, no wisdom and sagacity, no honorableness of person or station...exempts from the stroke of death.”¹¹²

In this eulogy for John Stoddard, Edwards displays another facet of his pastoral role, namely, that of prophet, interpreting events for his congregation.¹¹³ His lofty praise for Stoddard is also another unique aspect of this sermon.

CONCLUSION

This survey of Edwards’ funeral sermons shows several common themes that made his funeral preaching unique and effective. First, Edwards was primarily an expositor of Scripture and limited his funeral sermons to explaining a single text. Edwards begins each of these funeral sermons by contextualizing the passage upon which he will preach. These explanations are uniformly brief, though some are more detailed as the text warrants, and they also show a concern by Edwards to ground his sermon in a literal reading of the Bible.¹¹⁴

Two examples of this practice will demonstrate this pattern. First, in *The Sorrows of the Bereaved Spread Before Jesus*, Edwards set the context by explaining the occasion of the text: the death of John the Baptist; the persons mentioned in the text: John’s disciples; and the behavior of these persons: first they showed their concern for the remains of their leader and second, they showed their trust in Jesus by bringing their sorrows to him.¹¹⁵ In a few paragraphs, Edwards accurately sets the historical context of his passage, before stating and developing his doctrine. Second, in *A Strong Rod Broken and Withered*, Edwards explained the historical

setting of Ezekiel's prophecy, indicating that he applied a consistent hermeneutic across genres of Scripture. It is also clear that Edwards did not see contextualization as the goal of his sermon, as he gives considerably more attention to the doctrine of his sermons.

Edwards' "doctrines" were also drawn from a literal reading of the text of Scripture. On occasion Edwards indicated that additional doctrines might be drawn from the passage in question, but in his funeral preaching, he restricted himself to the most basic truth of a text.¹¹⁶ At times these doctrines were merely a slight rewording of the text, such as in *A Godly Man's Death* or *True Saints*.¹¹⁷ Occasionally the rhetorical effect of the sermon's doctrine would be apparent immediately at the statement of the doctrine and reinforced throughout by repetition.¹¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that Edwards' doctrines can at times be so obvious that they might be overlooked. For example, in *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, Edwards uses a text that was historically limited to the first century, namely the death of John the Baptist and John's disciples' mourning before Jesus, and develops a theme that transcends historical boundaries by calling on his contemporaries to take *their* sorrows to Jesus.

Second, Edwards showed himself to be a pastor in the most biblical sense of the word, shepherding his flock (or occasionally the flock of others) through the dark valley of death's shadow. One way in which Edwards demonstrated his pastoral concern and ability through his funeral sermons was his obvious concern for the bereaved families. In both instances that Edwards preached *The Sorrows of the Bereaved*, he showed great concern to address specifically those touched most closely by death. His tender words of consolation to the widows of Nehemiah Bull and William Williams, as well as their children, and in the case of Bull, his mother, demonstrated an awareness of the pain of loss. His call for the communities of these two deceased pastors to support the families is also strong and shows that Edwards was far from being the aloof intellectual that he has at times been characterized.

Another way Edwards demonstrated his pastoral gifts was in his role as the prophetic interpreter of events, especially the death of a prominent member of the community. This role is seen most clearly in Edwards' sermon for his uncle, John Stoddard, and the theme of God's "awful frown": "I come now to apply these things to our own case, under the late awful frown of divine providence upon us, in removing by death that honorable person in public rule and authority."¹¹⁹ Again, Edwards said: "We now have this testimony of the divine displeasure, added to all

the other dark clouds God has lately brought over us, and his awful frowns upon us.”¹²⁰

In the third place, Edwards also demonstrated a pastoral concern for the spiritual state of his hearers, often by using the life and witness of the deceased as a call for faith or repentance. For example, in David Brainerd's death, “God puts us in mind of our mortality, and forewarns us that the time is approaching, when we must be absent from the body.”¹²¹ He concluded this sermon with a call to his hearers,

O that the things that were seen and heard in this extraordinary person...may excite in us all...the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the blessedness of the end of such...and effectually stir us up to endeavors that in the way of such an holy life, we may at last come to so blessed an end.¹²²

In his sermon for an unnamed young woman, Edwards used the occasion of her unexpected death to call the congregation, particularly the youth, to faith:

The second use I would make [of this doctrine] is to persuade and urge persons to get into such a state that the day of their death may be [better than the day of their birth]. Strive that you may be godly persons. That you may have your heart changed and nature sav-
ingly renewed. Then it will be thus with you—that the day of your death will be better than the day of your birth.¹²³

Finally, Edwards displayed a keen pastoral sense in his selection of texts and in his relative restraint in developing those texts as the occasion warranted. Although Edwards did preach the same funeral sermon on more than one occasion, he edited each sermon for the specific needs at hand. It does not appear that Edwards had a “stock” funeral sermon ready for any occasion, but that he wrote his sermons in preparation for each funeral. The relative brevity of his funeral sermons' doctrine and emphasis on application is also noteworthy. With the exception of his funeral sermon for David Brainerd, Edwards tended to shorten the development of his doctrine sections and focus more attention to the applications. This fact is seen especially in *Sorrows of the Bereaved*.

ENDNOTES

1 *Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p.28.

2 George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp.490–94.

3 *Jonathan Edwards*, p.21.

4 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.17–18.

5 *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p.12.

6 Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.14–15.

7 Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.8.

8 Wilson Kenneth has noted the formative nature of these weekly sermons on Edwards. See his “General Introduction to the Sermons: Jonathan Edwards’ Art of Prophesying,” in *Sermons and Discourses, 1720–1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p.10. Subsequent citations of the Yale editions of Edwards’ works will be cited as *Works*.

9 *Jonathan Edwards*, p.23.

10 Jonathan Edwards, Letters to Mary Edwards, March 26, 1719 and December 12, 1721 in *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 16; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp.31, 39–40.

11 Jonathan Edwards, Letter to Thomas Gillespie, July 1, 1751, ed. Claghorn (*Works* 16:381).

12 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.118–121.

13 *The defects of preachers reproved in a sermon preached at Northampton, May 19th. 1723* (New-London: T. Green, 1724) (online), *Early American Imprints: Series I, Evans*, accessed February 18, 2008; available from <http://iu.newsbank.com>.

14 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.2.

15 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.3.

16 *The defects of preachers reproved*, pp.3–4.

17 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.10–11.

18 *The defects of preachers reproved*, pp.13–17.

19 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.23.

20 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.23.

21 *The defects of preachers reproved*, p.24. Although the idea that Jonathan Edwards’ primary method of preaching was to read from his sermon manuscripts has become standard fare, several modern scholars have questioned the accuracy of this view. Wilson Kimnach offers a tentative rebuttal of this position in “Preface to the New York Period,” in *Sermons and Discourses, 1720–1723*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 10:282, No. 3). Iain Murray goes further than Kimnach, arguing that “there is reason to believe that this subject also has been distorted by a later folklore” (*Jonathan Edwards*, p.188). Murray adduces five arguments against the tradition of Edwards as a manuscript reader in the pulpit. First, Stoddard’s critique of the practice of reading sermons from the pulpit would likely have carried much weight with Edwards. Then, Edwards’ own thoughts on preaching show that he believed in a “lively application” of Scripture to men and women. Third, Edwards’ practice of

using smaller manuscripts might indicate that these booklets were meant to be glanced at occasionally and not read as a book. Fourth, Edwards' began to favor outlines instead of manuscripts in the early 1740s, a practice well documented in his manuscripts, but which received no comment by his peers. Finally, no eyewitness accounts exist of Edwards reading his sermons (*Jonathan Edwards*, pp.188–191).

Perhaps the strongest refutation of this tradition is that of Jim Ehrhard, "A Critical Analysis of the Tradition of Jonathan Edwards as a Manuscript Preacher," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 60 (1988): 71–84. Ehrhard extends Murray's arguments, focusing on additional eyewitness accounts, Edwards' sermon manuscripts, and the influence of the "New Light" preaching of the Great Awakening, and concludes that the long-standing view of Edwards reading his manuscripts from the pulpit cannot stand based on any existing records.

22 *The defects of preachers reprov'd*, pp.25–27.

23 *The Death of Faithful Ministers a Sign of God's Displeasure*, in *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Richard A. Bailey and Gregory A. Wills (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002), p.37.

24 See Wilson H. Kimnach, "Edwards as Preacher" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.105 and "The Sermons: Concept and Execution," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.243–256, for additional discussion of the influence of Timothy Edwards and Solomon Stoddard.

25 Kimnach, "General Introduction" (*Works*, 10:15).

26 *A Chronological List of Jonathan Edwards's Sermons and Discourses* (New Haven: The Jonathan Edwards Center, 2005) (online), accessed March 2, 2008; available from <http://edwards.yale.edu>. These are sermons 119, 126, 361, 380, 542, 567, 593, 634, 725, 879, 901, and 904. These sermon numbers will be utilized throughout this monograph.

27 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 153–55. These are sermons 319, 324, and 327.

28 A closer examination revealed that Sermon 126, *Many wicked men, if they knew how near death was, would not do as they do*, and Sermon 567, *God exercises perfect wisdom in ordering things as he does with respect to the death of mankind*, cannot be linked to any particular funeral and were thus excluded from examination. Sermon 119, published as *The Death of Faithful Ministers a Sign of God's Displeasure*, was preached in the Summer or Fall of 1729, following the deaths of Solomon Stoddard and Ebenezer Strong (February 11, 1729), and John Williams (June 12, 1729) of Deerfield, but was excluded because it was preached several months after their funerals. Sermon 361, published as *Our Weakness, Christ's Strength*, was preached on a fast day following the death of Edwards' uncle, Joseph Hawley (1682–1735) and was thus excluded. Sermon 725, "Subject: Abraham's faith," Sermon 319, "Man is fitly compared to grass that so often in the morning is green and flourishing but in the evening cut down and withered," and Sermon 324, "When some are converted, this should stir up others to be converted also," are all unpub-

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lished manuscripts and were unavailable for examination.

29 Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising work of God in The Great Awakening*, ed. C.C. Goen (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 4; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p.147.

30 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.153. The author is indebted to Marsden's account of the sermon for my analysis.

31 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.154.

32 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.154–55.

33 *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen (*Works*, 4:147).

34 *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen (*Works*, 4:148).

35 *The Day of A Godly Man's Death is Better than the Day of His Birth in The Blessing of God*, ed. Michael D. McMullen (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), p.152.

36 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.153.

37 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.154.

38 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.156.

39 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.157.

40 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, pp.159–60.

41 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.160.

42 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.160.

43 *Godly Man's Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, pp.161–62.

44 *Faithful Narrative*, ed. Goen (*Works*, 4:148).

45 Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.148.

46 Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.24–25.

47 *The Works of Departed Saints Follow Them in The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Caleb J.D. Maskell, 4 (online) accessed March 9, 2008; available from <http://edwards.yale.edu>. This online resource will henceforth be referred to as *Works Online*.

48 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.5).

49 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.8).

50 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, pp.10–13).

51 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, pp.13–17).

52 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, pp.17–19).

53 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.19).

54 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.25).

55 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, pp.31–32).

- 56 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.32).
- 57 *Works of Departed Saints*, ed. Stout, Minkema, and Maskell (*Works Online*, p.33).
- 58 *The Sorrows of the Bereaved Spread Before Jesus* in *Sermons and Discourses, 1739–1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Nathan O. Hatch, and Kyle P. Farley (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 22; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp.462–63.
- 59 *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.227–231.
- 60 *Sorrows of the Bereaved Spread Before Jesus* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Caleb J. D. Maskell, 4 (online) accessed March 9, 2008; available from <http://edwards.yale.edu>. Compare with the sermon's second preaching for William Williams in *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:465).
- 61 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.4–5 [Bull]) and ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:466 [Williams]).
- 62 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:466–468 [Williams]). The four propositions Edwards developed are nearly identical between the two sermons.
- 63 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:468 [Williams]).
- 64 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.13–14 [Bull]).
- 65 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.17–18 [Bull]).
- 66 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.20–21 [Bull]).
- 67 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:471 [Williams]).
- 68 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:472 [Williams]).
- 69 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:474 [Williams]).
- 70 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.22 [Bull]).
- 71 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.22–23 [Bull]).
- 72 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:472 [Williams]).
- 73 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.24–25 [Bull]).
- 74 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, p.25 [Bull]).
- 75 *Jonathan Edwards*, pp.230–31.
- 76 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.230; Edwards, *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:473 [Williams]).
- 77 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works Online*, pp.26–27 [Bull]).
- 78 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works*, 22:474 [Williams]).
- 79 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works*, 22:474 [Williams]).
- 80 *Sorrows of the Bereaved* (*Works*, 22:475 [Williams]).
- 81 *True Saints, When Absent From the Body, Are Present With the Lord* in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743–1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 25; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.225–56.

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- 82 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works* 25:225).
- 83 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works* 25:225–26).
- 84 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:226).
- 85 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:227).
- 86 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:227–229).
- 87 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:229).
- 88 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:229).
- 89 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:230–231).
- 90 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:232).
- 91 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:232).
- 92 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:233).
- 93 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:233).
- 94 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:234).
- 95 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:234–243).
- 96 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:243).
- 97 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:244).
- 98 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:256).
- 99 See John Piper's excellent discussion on Edwards' use of imagery in general: *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), pp.82–90.
- 100 Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, p.343.
- 101 *A Strong Rod Broken and Withered in Sermons and Discourses, 1743–1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 25; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p.315 (original emphasis).
- 102 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:315–316).
- 103 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:316) (original emphasis).
- 104 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:316).
- 105 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:316–320).
- 106 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:320).
- 107 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:321).
- 108 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:323).
- 109 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:324–328).
- 110 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:329).
- 111 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:329).
- 112 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:329).
- 113 For a discussion on Edwards' role as an interpreter of events, see John D. Hannah, "The Homiletical Skill of Jonathan Edwards," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 159 (2002): 96–107.
- 114 For discussions on Edwards' hermeneutic, see especially Robert E. Brown, "The Bible" in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp.87–99; Conrad Cherry, "Symbols of Spiritual Truth: Jonathan Edwards as Biblical Interpreter," *Interpretation*, 39 (1985): 263–271; Samuel T. Logan, Jr., "The Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards," *The Westminster Theological Journal*, 43 (1980): 79–96; Stephen J. Stein, "Edwards as Biblical Exegete" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.181–93; Stephen J. Stein, "The

Quest for the Spiritual Sense: The Biblical Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 70 (1977): 99–113; Stephen J. Stein, “The Spirit and the Word: Jonathan Edwards and Scriptural Exegesis,” in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp.118–128; and Ralph G. Turnbull, “Jonathan Edwards—Bible Interpreter,” *Interpretation*, 6 (1952): 422–35.

115 *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:464–465 [Williams]).

116 Note Edwards’ comments on limiting his development of a text’s doctrine in *Sorrows of the Bereaved*, ed. Stout, Hatch, and Farley (*Works*, 22:466 [Williams]) and *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:226).

117 *The Day of a Godly Man’s Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, pp.149–52 and *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:225–226).

118 Note Edwards’ comments on the psychological impact of his sermon from Ecclesiastes 7:1: “This [doctrine] is as contrary as is possible to the notions commonly entertained by men who look on the day of a man’s birth as a happy day but the day of death as the most sorrowful and doleful day that ever a man met with” (*The Day of a Godly Man’s Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.152). It is interesting to note the tension that the biblical text arouses, a tension not overlooked by Edwards, and thus by a simple restatement of the text, Edwards creates a rhetorical “hook” that draws the reader into the sermon, who wants to learn how this tension between the text and human expectation can be resolved.

119 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:323).

120 *A Strong Rod Broken*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:329).

121 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:244).

122 *True Saints*, ed. Kimnach (*Works*, 25:256).

123 *The Day of a Godly Man’s Death in The Blessing of God*, ed. McMullen, p.160.