

Jonathan Edwards - Amyraldian?

A Paper given at the Sixth Amyraldian Association Conference
on 26 March 2008 at Attleborough, Norfolk

by

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As the title is intended to indicate, this paper has a precise and narrow focus. While the 250th anniversary of Jonathan Edwards' death (he entered glory on 22 March 1758) would be reason enough to include him in our programme, our concern is with his theology, the fruit of his divinely consecrated intelligence. Indeed, next to John Calvin and Richard Baxter, who ever combined intellectual brilliance and fervent piety more than Jonathan Edwards? Shifting our focus from generalities, my object is to rescue Edwards from a specific distortion or suppression of certain aspects of his view of the Gospel. To do justice to the man and his message, I intend to combine biography with belligerence, piety with polemics. I believe that among the many admirers of Edwards, Dr Thomas Chalmers¹ (whose Amyraldianism was demonstrated at last year's conference) and Dr D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones² (who confessed he never preached limited atonement) would approve of my endeavour. Not only were they great admirers of Edwards. The special impact of their ministries - in many respects - owes much to Jonathan Edwards.

Jonathan Edwards hardly needs an introduction to those familiar with

¹ 'I have long esteemed him as the greatest of theologians, combining, in a degree that is quite unexampled, the profoundly intellectual with the devotedly spiritual and sacred, and realising in his own person a most rare yet most beautiful harmony between the simplicity of the Christian pastor on the one hand, and, on the other, all the strength and prowess of a giant in philosophy; ...' (quoted in Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (1987), pp. 464-5. Hereinafter 'Murray, *Edwards*').

² 'No man is more relevant to the present condition of Christianity than Jonathan Edwards. ... He was a mighty theologian and a great evangelist at the same time. ... He was pre-eminently the theologian of revival' (cited in Murray, *Edwards*, p. xvii).

the history of Anglo-American Protestantism in the mid-modern period. To mention only two, Iain H. Murray's *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (1987) and - highly commended by Murray³ - George B. Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (2003) are required reading for those who wish to immerse themselves in their subject. Yet, for all its excellencies, I have a quarrel with Iain Murray's presentation of Edwards. However, before I argue my case, we must first - as briefly as possible - taste the full flavour of the man whose message, like a great painting discoloured by time, needs careful rather than careless restoration. Such an approach means that those who find the theology too much to grasp will not end up without some soul nourishment, and those who relish theological debate will not ignore the piety that must necessarily accompany it. The following brief (generally-unreferenced) outline of Edwards' life reflects several sources including the ones already cited.

I THE THEOLOGIAN

Our subject takes us back to 18th century New England, a century after the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620. The Puritan separatists had fled their native England in the cause of religious freedom and the new settlement at Plymouth was to be the first of many. Later, Dutch, German and French Protestants were to inhabit North America. In 'New England', the ideals of that branch of the Reformed family known as Congregationalists were to find expression, especially in Massachusetts. Although many had emigrated for primarily religious reasons, some saw the commercial possibilities of going to the New World. Thus, the godly were to be constantly made

³ See Murray's review article in *The Banner of Truth*, Issue 481 (October, 2003), pp. 14-16.

aware of secular temptations and pressures. This reality was a constant threat to the original 'Pilgrim ideal' to establish a 'godly commonwealth' in which the pure worship of the Lord Jesus Christ was to be pursued.

Birth and childhood

Jonathan Edwards was 'fourth generation Pilgrim stock'. He was born on 5 October 1703, at East Windsor, Connecticut. His father, the Revd Timothy Edwards was the Congregational minister in the town, a position he held for sixty years until his death in 1758 at the age of eighty-nine. Jonathan's maternal grandfather was the Revd Solomon Stoddard, minister of the Congregational church in Northampton in neighbouring Massachusetts. Jonathan was thus reared in a family where godly piety and learning were sincerely and energetically pursued. These influences produced under the blessing of God a truly remarkable child whose claim to fame has been acknowledged by all. 'Jonathan Edwards is unquestionably the greatest theologian and philosopher America has ever produced'. This statement summarises the kind of remarks made about him by many American historians and others.

Jonathan possessed a unique blend of intellectual brilliance and a fervent, mystical disposition. He had all the equipment to become a brilliant philosopher or scientist. About the age of thirteen, he wrote an essay on the flying spider, still regarded as a classic, and which reveals his remarkable powers of observation and analysis. He was deeply influenced by a spiritual revival in his father's church at this time, judging by an entry in his *Diary*: 'I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious conversation with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together... I with some of school mates, joined together and built a booth in a swamp, in a very

retired spot, for a place of prayer’.

During his teenage years, Jonathan confesses to resolving his childhood doubts about the Calvinistic doctrine of the sovereignty of God, a truth central to New England Congregationalism. Jonathan used to love solitary walks in the woods, where he felt surrounded by the majesty of God. On one such occasion, he had a remarkable experience: ‘And as I was walking there, and looking upon the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, as I know not how to express.....’ Such experiences became common during these years, when Jonathan would sing and pray out loud. God was clearly dealing with him. Indeed, Jonathan longed to know and love God more and more: ‘I felt a burning desire to be, in every thing, a complete Christian; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure, sweet, and blessed rules of the Gospel’. There is no doubt that Jonathan’s conversion was gradual rather than sudden, but no less decisive for all that.

College and call to the ministry

Solid educational (his father taught Jonathan Latin, Greek and Hebrew at home) and spiritual foundations were thus laid before Jonathan left Windsor for New Haven in September 1716 to attend Yale College. He completed his regular studies in September, 1720, when he received his BA - at the age of 17! He was awarded the highest honours of his class. He remained at the college for another two years to prepare for the Christian ministry for which he felt called by God. His talents and godliness brought him to the attention of a Presbyterian church in New York. So, at the age of nineteen, he commenced his ministry there in August 1722, which lasted about eight months.

This brief period at New York proved important for Jonathan Edwards' spiritual development. He wrote, 'On January 12th., 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself, and all that I had to God'. His spiritual fervour is very evident: 'I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of the Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things and secret conversation with God: and had many sweet hours there.... I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the Holy Scriptures of any book whatsoever....' Edwards was clearly a lover of solitude. He did not feel comfortable in company. He was a 'private person' rather than a 'socialiser'.

Edwards returned for a while to Yale to receive his MA and serve as a tutor. After two years, he was approached by the church at Northampton to assist his aged grandfather in the pastorate. So, on 15 February 1727, Edwards was ordained as assistant minister. Years of preparation - both academic and spiritual - were now to bear fruit to the glory of God and the blessing of many.

The Northampton ministry

The venerable Solomon Stoddard had been the minister at Northampton for fifty-five years when his grandson became his colleague. He was a godly and able man, held in high reputation throughout New England. Under his preaching, remarkable revivals had occurred in 1679, 1683, 1690, 1712 and 1718. However, the years after 1718 were noted for their barrenness. Spiritual interest declined to an alarming degree. Young people became worldly and undisciplined, and their parents neglected their responsibilities. Matters were altogether unhappy in a town - population about 1100 - where many of the people attended the church.

Edwards set about his duties with consecrated energy. Many hours were spent in general Bible study and sermon preparation. He usually spent thirteen hours a day in his study! House-to-house visiting was not his particular fort , although he would call when sickness or some special affliction demanded it. It was the usual case for members of the congregation to call on the pastor. His time was thus very full. For his relaxation he would ride into the woods and go for long walks alone. In the winter, he would spend half-an-hour a day with his axe cutting wood.

Marriage and family

On 28 July 1727, Jonathan Edwards married Miss Sarah Pierrepont of New Haven. She was just eighteen. Sarah was renowned for her beauty and her spirituality. Jonathan was aware of Sarah when she was only thirteen, as his *Diary* records: 'They say there is a young lady in (New Haven) who is loved of that great being, who made and rules the world... She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly: and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure... She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have someone invisible always conversing with her'.

Sarah was a cheerful Christian with a bright personality. She was thus a perfect match for her serious and thoughtful husband. During thirty-one years of wedded bliss, Jonathan and Sarah had eleven children. The family was a model for the entire community of Christian piety and domestic happiness.

The beginning of the New England revival

As a result of Edwards' faithful ministry, the spiritual and moral climate of Northampton began to change. His preaching labours began to attract attention further afield. His first published sermon

God glorified in Man's Dependence was preached in Boston in 1731. Then, in 1733, many including the young people began to be less rebellious and more concerned about the state of their souls. Edwards encouraged them to meet in their homes for prayer instead of the usual 'socialising'. In this changing spiritual atmosphere, a great interest in theological questions arose. Arminianism began to threaten New England Calvinism. So Edwards preached a special series of sermons, including his famous one on *Justification by Faith alone*. Many conversions resulted from these sermons. The power of God was most evident during March and April 1735. Nearly thirty people per week, for about six weeks were quite transformed, including the most careless, irreligious and worldly people of the town. Many who knew deep conviction of sin came to know the pardoning mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ in a real and personal way. Edwards wrote: 'The town was never so full of love, nor so full of joy, nor yet so full of distress, as was then'. The people longed to hear the Gospel preached and frequently the entire congregation dissolved into tears. Truly, the Holy Spirit was working.

News of events in Northampton brought many from the neighbouring towns to see for themselves. Curiosity led to conviction and conversion as these enquirers returned home with joy. In time, ten of the towns in Massachusetts and seventeen in Connecticut were favoured with revival blessing. The entire region was ringing with the songs of the redeemed, rejoicing in the pardoning love God in Jesus Christ.

In May 1735, the revival seemed to abate. The intense religious excitement took its toll on the human frame, leaving many feeling utterly languid. In addition to this, trouble arose in nearby Springfield over the ordination of a young minister who had been guilty of

immorality and who held questionable doctrinal views.

The astonishing events just related led Edwards to write an account of them. *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* came to the attention of Dr Isaac Watts and others in England, and an English edition of the book appeared in 1737.

It is clear from Edwards' *Diary* how deeply he himself was affected by these times of heaven-sent revival: 'Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension ... which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud ...'

In 1738, the American edition of the *Narrative of Surprising Conversions* was published in Boston, accompanied by five of Edwards' 'revival year' sermons. The author defends his choice of sermons because of the blessing which attended them when they were preached: 'At that time while I was greatly reproached for defending [Justification by Faith] in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God's work wonderfully broke forth among us, and souls began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified ...'

The second great revival of 1740

Notwithstanding the decline of the earlier revival's intensity, Edwards' ministry was blessed to many far and wide, both through his books

and occasional preaching excursions. There were occasional excesses in religious fervour from time to time which Edwards felt constrained to warn against. All too often, wild antics and extravagant claims brought the revival into disrepute, turning many away from the serious, yet fervent and joyful godliness which characterised the true revival blessing.

Further blessing and its associated problems came in 1740 when the great preacher George Whitefield arrived in Northampton from England on 16 October. Whitefield remained in Northampton for four days, during which he preached five sermons, attended by much blessing. Backsliders were recovered, many were converted and there were many tears. On one occasion, as Whitefield declared the love and grace of Christ, the entire congregation including Edwards himself, was weeping tears of contrition and adoration.

Edwards' powerful sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741) had a lasting effect on many hearers. The tear stains on the pages of the original MS testify to the preacher's compassion.⁴ One may say that Whitefield's and Edwards' sermons both confirmed and complemented their different styles of ministry.

Edwards and Whitefield met for fellowship, comparing what God had been doing through their labours. There were disagreements at some points. Edwards considered Whitefield a little too rash in claiming impulses of direct guidance from God and in his tendency to judge whether or not certain persons were truly converted or not. Not all were converted in the same way or with the same, intense emotion.

⁴ Dr John H. Gerstner, 'Introduction' to A. B. Grosart, *Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (1865, fac. Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992).

Edwards considered that excesses easily brought the revival into disrepute, and true godliness was spurned by many as spurious. A great deal of disorder resulted: untrained converts were jumping up to preach and accusing all regularly-ordained clergymen to be false, unconverted preachers. Edwards responded to the crisis in September 1741 in his famous sermon preached at New Haven entitled *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*. As the years passed, there was an even greater need for Christians to discern true from false experience. Thus, in 1746, Jonathan Edwards published his famous treatise on the subject, *The Religious Affections*. In this work, the author shows that the root of true Christian experience is neither in doctrinal orthodoxy nor a morally regulated life. While these things are necessary, they are not sufficient: sanctified affections producing a love for God and holiness are the infallible marks of the Holy Spirit's work. Much might be claimed by 'mere professors' who are, in fact, destitute of the Spirit's saving work. Edwards was as much against fanaticism as he was against formalism, and his treatise remains of permanent value in assessing the true health of Christianity.

Edwards' later ministry and last years

Edwards had a truly international interest in the work of God. He was involved in an international 'concert of prayer' and he kept in close touch with other brethren in Great Britain. He naturally showed a deep interest in the pioneer missionary work among the Indians being done on his own doorstep by the godly David Brainerd. A crisis arose in Edwards' own church in 1744 occasioned by the obscene abuse of a midwives' handbook by some young people. Edwards' attempt at discipline prejudiced many of the members against him. The Communion controversy of 1750 led to Edwards' dismissal. Insisting that communicants should be real believers, he had disagreed with

his grandfather's policy that unconverted people may attend the Lord's Supper as 'a converting ordinance'. For seven years he ministered to the Indians at Stockbridge, a frontier town. But God, who governs all seeming setbacks for His glory, enabled Edwards to write his greatest theological treatises during this time. He was called to the presidency of Princeton College, New Jersey in 1758. However, his work was done. Never strong in health, a smallpox inoculation went tragically wrong, hastening the home-call of God's much blest servant on 22 March 1758. In his last moments, Jonathan Edwards looked about and said, "Now where is Jesus of Nazareth, my true and never-failing friend?" His last words were, "Trust in God, and you need not fear."

II THE THEOLOGY

Having done with brief biography, it is time for a bit of belligerence! This concerns the precise characterisation of Edwards' theology. In the broadest terms, it was obviously Calvinistic. So much so that, in 1949, critics like Perry Miller could hardly condemn Edwards enough.⁵ Nearly sixty years on, increasingly-aggressive liberal secularism is unlikely to reverse such a verdict. Given the declining purity of once-conservative evangelicalism, Edwards' affirmation of the reality and perpetuity of hell is unlikely to make him popular in annihilationist circles. His cessationist stance on the charismatic gifts has not made Edwards a favourite in Pentecostal/charismatic circles despite his enthusiasm for, and experience of, authentic as opposed to spurious revival. Those concerned with Congregational church order will not admire Edwards in view of his very positive commendation of Presbyterianism. That said, our present concern is with Edwards'

⁵ 'The life of Edwards is a tragedy. ... Because of his faith Edwards wrought incalculable harm' (Murray, *Edwards*, p. xxi).

precise Calvinistic perspective. Before I demonstrate that this perspective may legitimately be called 'Amyraldian', we will remind ourselves precisely what Amyraldianism is, especially in relation to the teaching of John Calvin.

Rooted in a dualistic conception of the divine will (see *Deuteronomy* 29: 29), Calvin taught that Christ was offered as the Redeemer of the whole world according to God's 'revealed' conditional will, albeit only received by elected believers according to God's 'hidden' absolute will. Notwithstanding the rationally-challenging paradox involved, Calvin maintained the doctrines of universal atonement and divine election side by side. Faced by clear biblical evidence for both, he refused to tamper with the scriptural texts. Logic was not allowed to dictate one emphasis at the expense of the other. Typical of his numerous statements on the extent of the atonement, Calvin commented thus on Romans 5: 18: 'Paul makes grace common to all, not because it in fact extends to all, but because it is offered to all. Although Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all men, yet not all receive him'.⁶

Unhappy with this kind of dualism, Calvin's rationalistic successor Theodore Beza deleted the 'universal' aspect of Calvin's scheme in favour of limited atonement - as John Owen was to do in the next century. This in turn provoked the equally-rationalistic Jakob Arminius to delete the 'particular' aspect of Calvin's scheme in favour of conditional election. Unimpressed by either of the two deviants, Amyraut was persuaded that Calvin's original position alone possessed biblical integrity. For him, the only option was Calvin's 'authentic Calvinism'. Amyraut also insisted that Calvin's view, with its unique 'mind and heart-set', had enormous pastoral and

⁶ *Comment* on Romans 5: 18.

evangelistic advantages. Roger Nicole admits that Calvin's comment on Romans 5: 18 'comes perhaps closest to providing support for Amyraut's thesis'.⁷ Dr Richard Muller admits that 'Calvin's teaching was ... capable of being cited with significant effect by Moïse Amyraut against his Reformed opponents'.⁸ According to Dr van Stam, at a time when Bezan ultra-orthodoxy had replaced Calvin's balanced biblicism, 'Amyraut ... revealed the attraction which the theology of Calvin held for him. He demonstrated this preference in an array of books, in the process proving his familiarity with the writings of this reformer. ... Amyraut rediscovered Calvin, as it were, and was perhaps the Calvin-expert of the day. In any case, Amyraut fell under the spell of Calvin's theology'.⁹ Thus historian Philip Benedict - who incorrectly imagines the Canons of the Synod of Dort (1618-19) to represent a *higher* orthodoxy than is the case - recognises Amyraut's position in France accurately when he says that 'the theologians of the Academy of Saumur ... consciously opposed Beza and appealed to Calvin instead. ... In effect they reversed the steps that had been taken in the passage from Calvin to Calvinism'.¹⁰

In his discussions of Edwards' Calvinism, Iain Murray seems to assume that it was identical with John Owen's.¹¹ However, there is much evidence, either simply missed or deliberately suppressed by Murray, to challenge such an assumption. Clearly out of sympathy

⁷ Dr Nicole flies in the face of the obvious when he adds: 'it may well refer simply to the relevance of the sacrifice of Christ to a universal offer, without actually asserting a substitutionary suffering for all mankind' (*Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) and the Controversy on Universal Grace*, Harvard University thesis, 1966, p. 83, n. 38).

⁸ *The Unaccommodated Calvin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 62.

⁹ *The Controversy over the Theology of Saumur* (Amsterdam & Maarssen: APA, 1988), p. 431.

¹⁰ *The Faith and Fortunes of France's Huguenots, 1600-85* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 227.

¹¹ See Murray, *Edwards*, p. 105.

(unlike Murray¹²) with the scholasticism of the late-seventeenth century high-orthodox Calvinist theologian, Francis Turretin (1623-87),¹³ Edwards appropriated ideas (opposed by Turretin) originally emanating from the French Reformed Academy of Saumur. In short, albeit mediated by other authors, Amyraldian teachings were accepted and endorsed by Jonathan Edwards. Among other things,¹⁴ Murray refers to the distinction between natural and moral ability, famously associated with Amyraut.¹⁵ But Murray simply sidelines such ideas as ‘individualisms’ in Edwards’ thought when he asserts, ‘They are by no means characteristic of his teaching as a whole’.¹⁶ Clearly, Murray is anxious to rescue Edwards from himself in the interests of an

¹² Ibid. p. 283.

¹³ Ibid. p. 282. Turretin was professor of theology at Geneva. His *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (1679-85) is a classical exposition of Reformed scholastic orthodoxy (‘elenctic’ = ‘the socratic method of refuting error by means of question and answer’). As a defender of Reformed orthodoxy against Socinianism, Arminianism and Amyraldianism, he was one of the chief architects of a reactionary anti-Amyraldian document known as the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1675), to which all Reformed pastors in Switzerland had to subscribe. The *Consensus* had no authority elsewhere. It was largely through the instrumentality of Turretin’s son, Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1671-1737) that the rule obliging ministers to subscribe to the *Consensus* was abolished in 1706 and the *Consensus* itself renounced in 1725.

¹⁴ Lamenting Edwards’ attempt to ‘buttress’ the biblical truth of divine sovereignty with the ‘theory of necessity or determinism’ (Murray, *Edwards*, p. 451), Murray should find Edwards’ English Baxterian friend Philip Doddridge’s discussion attractive. Contrary to R. L. Greenall’s at best highly ambiguous statement that he ‘rejected the grim doctrine of predestination’ (*Philip Doddridge, Nonconformity and Northampton* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1981), p. iii), Doddridge believed in predestination no less than Edwards. However, his careful discussion of it avoids the pitfall of determinism. While predestination is ‘certain’ according to God’s sovereign purpose, Doddridge states that ‘the *certainty* of an event does not imply *necessity*; ... and consequently, that there may be a foundation for certain foresight, where the event itself is contingent; or in other words, the thing will not be because God foresees it, but God foresees it because it will certainly be’ (*Lecture xli, ‘Of Contingency and Scientia Media’, The Works of the Revd P. Doddridge*, ed. E. Williams and E. Parsons (Leeds, 1802-5), Vol. 4, p. 386; ‘... an event may be allowed *contingent*, though it will *certainly* happen; divine *predestination* ... does not imply the *necessary* salvation or condemnation of any’ (*Lecture clxxxiv, ‘Of Predestination and Personal Election’,* *ibid.* Vol. 5, p. 257). Hereinafter ‘Doddridge, *Works*’. In short, human beings are not automatons even though God remains sovereign in divine-human interaction. See my *The Good Doctor: Philip Doddridge of Northampton* (Norwich: Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2002), p. 293. Hereinafter ‘*The Good Doctor*’.

¹⁵ See my ‘The Case for Amyraldianism’ in ed. Alan C. Clifford, *Christ for the World: Affirming Amyraldianism* (Norwich: Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2007), p. 15.

¹⁶ Murray, *Edwards*, p. 452.

Owenite agenda, a manoeuvre of questionable integrity as we shall see.

Two big issues not mentioned by Murray have close Salmurian connections. One concerns Edwards doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. In this respect, albeit mediated by the writings of the Swiss 'Placean' Johann Friedrich Stapfer (1708-75), Edwards held to the doctrine of *mediate* imputation expounded by Amyraut's colleague Josué de la Place (1596-1665). Turretin, Charles Hodge (1797-1878), and other 'ultra-orthodox' divines, advocating the idea of the *immediate* imputation of Adam's sin, rejected the Placean view. (The *first* view argues that human guilt is consequent upon our own sin arising from an inherited depravity, whereas the *second* view insists we are judged guilty by the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, making us guilty for the sin of another.) In his recently-published magisterial contribution, *Saumur Redux*, David Llewellyn Jenkins, besides vindicating both Josué de la Place and Edwards on biblical grounds,¹⁷ has validated the Saumur divine's appeal to Calvin on this issue,¹⁸ an appeal paralleling Amyraut's on the matter of the atonement.

The other big issue, completely ignored by Murray, concerns Edwards' view of the atonement. Here, Edwards' pupil and friend, the 'Amyraldian' Joseph Bellamy (1717-90) of Bethlem, Connecticut (whom he'd advised against reading Turretin¹⁹), is a central figure, and a key to understanding Edwards' own theology. Instead, Murray focuses on the deviations of another pupil, Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) and Edwards' son, Jonathan Edwards Jr (1745-1801). While

¹⁷ See David Llewellyn Jenkins, *Saumur Redux: Josué de la Place & the Question of Adam's Sin* (Harlestone, Norfolk: LP Christian Monographs, 2008), pp. 25ff.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 34ff.

¹⁹ Murray, *Edwards*, p. 282.

Murray - like B. B. Warfield²⁰ - attempts to sever the link between Edwards Sr and these 'New Light' theologians,²¹ we must ask why he fails to address the Edwards-Bellamy connection. Is it because he fears his Owenite evaluation of Edwards will be discredited?

Indeed, Jonathan Edwards Jr reinforced Hopkins' claim that in Edwards' writings 'a great deal of new light' had been shed on many subjects included the doctrines of the will, the atonement (nature and extent), imputation (of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness) and justification,²² experimental religion and regeneration.²³ A liberalising theological emphasis produced a line of 'new light' theologians including Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1801) - a pupil of Hopkins - and Nathaniel Taylor (1786-1858). However - and one sympathises with Murray's concerns at this point - these men embraced and emphasised further-developed views arguably inconsistent with the supposed Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards while claiming an 'Edwardsean' theological ancestry. Taylor's views were considered not as a vindication but a surrender of Calvinism to Arminian ideas, a line of development which culminated in the views of Charles G. Finney (1792-1858) and Edwards A. Park (d.1900). However, while it seems absurd to argue for any Arminian tendencies in Edwards' writings, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that he departed from WCF/Owenite *high* Calvinism in the above-identified areas. Attempting to deny this by merely severing the link between Edwards and *all* his 'New Light' successors is a failure to face facts.

²⁰ See B. B. Warfield, 'Edwards and the New England Theology' in *Studies in Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, fac. 1988), pp. 513-538.

²¹ Murray, *Edwards*, p. 452.

²² Similar to Richard Baxter's, Edwards' views on justification are significantly different from Owen's (see my *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790 - An Evaluation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990/rep. 2002), pp. 218-9. Hereinafter '*Atonement and Justification*').

²³ See Edwards, *Works*, ed. Edward Hickman (1834, fac. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), Vol. 1, pp. cxciiff. Hereinafter '*Edwards, Works* (1834)'

So, what about Bellamy? Why is he important? While Murray attempts to distance Edwards from Samuel Hopkins, he says nothing about Joseph Bellamy's theology of the atonement.²⁴ Indeed he makes no reference at all to Edwards' important preface to Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated* (1750), in which the author expounds, in 'Discourse I', 'the Nature of the Divine Law' and, in 'Discourse II' (a large-scale exposition of John 3: 16), the 'Nature of the Gospel'. Obviously at one with the contents of the book, Edwards' opinion of it could not be higher:

I verily believe, from my own perusal, it will be found a discourse wherein the proper essence and distinguishing nature of saving religion is deduced from the first principles of the oracles of God, in a manner tending to a great increase of light in this infinitely important subject; discovering truth, and at the same time showing the grounds of it; or showing what things are true, and also why they are true; manifesting the mutual dependence of the various parts of the true scheme of religion, and also the foundation of the whole; things being reduced to their first principles in such a manner, that the connection and reason of things, as well as their agreement with the Word of God, may be easily seen;...²⁵

It is difficult to believe that Edwards' was not consciously departing from Owenite orthodoxy when he writes of Bellamy's work in such terms, especially when one examines the author's exposition of the atonement. Indeed, having repudiated the *commercial* theory of the atonement (on which Owen's entire case rests) - the idea that sin is equated to debt in *quantitative* terms - Bellamy (arguing in *governmental* terms)²⁶ sets out to demonstrate that 'a door of mercy is

²⁴ For the only discussion of Edwards' and Bellamy's theological differences (over grounds of assurance), see Murray, *Edwards*, pp. 263-4.

²⁵ Joseph Bellamy, *True Religion Delineated* (Edinburgh: M. Gray, 1788), p. iv. Hereinafter 'Bellamy'.

²⁶ For a discussion of the relative merits of the commercial, governmental and ethical

opened by Jesus Christ for a guilty world':

Upon the cross, our Saviour's spirit of obedience was tried and discovered, and his obedience was perfected, and his sufferings completed: and so here, in a more eminent manner, the law was honoured, and justice satisfied; and so the door of mercy opened for a sinful, guilty world. ... What Christ has done is in fact sufficient, to open a door for God through him to become reconcilable to the whole world. ... Because the door of mercy is thus opened to the whole world by the blood of Christ, therefore, in scripture, he is called, the Saviour of the WORLD (*1 John 4: 14*); the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the WORLD (*John 1: 29*); a propitiation for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD (*1 John 2: 2*); that gave himself a ransom for ALL (*1 Timothy 2: 6*); and tasted death for EVERYMAN (*Hebrews 2: 9*). The plain sense of all which expressions may, I think, without any danger of mistake, be learnt from John 3: 16, God so loved the WORLD, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And, indeed, was not the door of mercy opened to all indefinitely, how could God sincerely offer mercy to all? Or heartily invite all? Or justly blame those who do not accept? Or righteously punish them for neglecting so great salvation?²⁷

Considering the warrant to come to Christ from a limited atonement perspective, Bellamy argues against it with powerful logic from Christ's 'free offer' parable of the wedding feast - 'Come for all things are ready' (*Matt. 22: 4*):

'No man at all, can rationally take any encouragement, until he knows he is elected'. Because, until then, he cannot know, that there is any ground of encouragement. It is not rational to take encouragement, before we see sufficient grounds for it: Yea, it is presumption to do so. But no man can see sufficient grounds of encouragement to trust in Christ, and return to God through him, in hopes of acceptance; unless he sees that God may, through Christ, consistent with his honour, accept and save him, and is willing so to do. If God can, and is actually willing to save

theories of the atonement, see my *Atonement and Justification*, pp. 125ff.

²⁷ Bellamy, pp. 294, 308-10.

any that comes, then there is no objection. ... But if God is reconcilable only to the elect; then I may not come, I dare not come, it would be presumption to come, till I know that I am elected.²⁸

Throughout his lengthy and detailed exposition, in which he answers all kinds of objection, Bellamy is clearly opposing both Arminianism *and* Owenism. Accordingly, G. P. Fisher rightly remarks: 'In relation to the atonement, Bellamy represents it to be a satisfaction of divine justice in the sense that God, consistently with His honour and holiness, can offer pardon to men. Christ died for the salvation of all who will repent and believe. The conception resembles Amyraut'.²⁹

Nearly a century later, and a year before Murray's biography was published, Allen C. Guelzo also considered that the Edwards preface to Bellamy's book has important and highly significant implications for Edwards' own views. He added that 'It is true that nothing in Edwards' published works openly embraces a governmental or unlimited atonement. But in his private notebooks - the bulk of which remain unpublished - he inclined sharply toward such ideas.³⁰

Guelzo's remark is interesting for two reasons. *First*, it is *not* true that Edwards' earlier published works contain 'nothing' by way of a precedent for Bellamy, and *second*, the new Yale edition of Edwards' *Works* certainly confirm where Edwards' theological sympathies lay. Indeed, the Edwards *Miscellanies* largely explain where Bellamy got his ideas from. Regarding the first point, Edwards declared:

Christ ... is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; ... [sinners] that come in a right manner have all their hope through

²⁸ Ibid. p. 311

²⁹ G. P. Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), p. 411.

³⁰ Allen C. Guelzo, 'Jonathan Edwards and the New Divinity' in *Pressing Toward the Mark*, (Philadelphia: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), p. 162.

Christ, or from the consideration of his redemption, and the sufficiency of it. ... So that Christ having fully satisfied for all sin, or having wrought out a satisfaction that is sufficient for all, it is now no way inconsistent with the glory of the divine attributes to pardon the greatest sins of those who in a right manner come unto him for it. - God may now pardon the greatest sinners without any prejudice to the honour of his holiness.³¹

Consequently, Edwards declared to his hearers:

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling, and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God.³²

Commenting on Christ's prayer in Gethsemane (in a sermon on Luke 22: 44), Edwards employs the dualistic language associated with Amyraut's view of the atonement:

Fifth, what was the success of this prayer of Christ? To this I answer, He obtained all his requests. The apostle says, "He was heard in that he feared;" in all that he feared. He obtained strength and help from God, all that he needed, and was carried through. He was enabled to do and to suffer the whole will of God; and he obtained the whole of the end of his sufferings — a full atonement for the sins of the whole world, and the full salvation of every one of those who were given him in the covenant of redemption, and all that glory to the name of God, which his mediation was designed to accomplish, not one jot or tittle has failed.³³

Yet another sermon reveals the same Amyraldian understanding:

Christ appeared gloriously above the guilt of men. For he offered a sacrifice that was sufficient to do away all the guilt of the whole

³¹ Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 2, p. 111. Edwards employs 'governmental' rhetoric in his 'Miscellaneous Remarks' on 'Of Satisfaction for Sin' as published *ibid.* Vol. 2, p.567.

³² *Ibid.* p. 11.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 874.

world. Though the guilt of man was like the great mountains, whose heads are lifted up to the heavens; yet his dying love, and his merits, appeared as a mighty deluge that overflowed the highest mountains, or like a boundless ocean that swallows them up, or like an immense fountain of light that with the fullness and redundancy of its brightness, swallows up men's greatest sins, as little motes are swallowed up and hidden in the disk of the sun. In this Christ appeared above all the corruption of man, in that hereby he purchased holiness for the chief of sinners. And Christ in undergoing such extreme affliction, got the victory over all misery; and laid a foundation for its being utterly abolished, with respect to his elect.³⁴

With obvious reference to John 3: 16, this universal/particular distinction appears also in Edwards' *Treatise on Grace*:

[In the affair of Redemption], ... glory belongs to the Father and the Son, that they so greatly loved the world. To the Father, that He so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, who was all His delight, who is His infinite objective happiness. To the Son, that He so loved the world, that he gave Himself. But there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost on this account, because He is the love of the Father and the Son, that flows out primarily towards God, and secondarily towards the elect that Christ came to save.³⁵

As for a universal dimension in the atonement, Edwards could not be clearer in his treatise *On the Freedom of the Will* (1754), published four years after Bellamy's book. While affirming that 'there must be something particular in the design of [Christ's] death' with respect to the elect - a truth also affirmed by Bellamy, Edwards firmly states that 'Christ in some sense may be said to die for all, and redeem all visible Christians, yea, the whole world, by his death; ...'³⁶

³⁴ Ibid. p. 215.

³⁵ *Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. A. B. Grosart (1865, fac. Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992), p. 49.

³⁶ Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 1, p. 88. The following e-mail (6 March 2008) was received from Gervase N. E. Charmley of Little Hautbois, Norfolk: 'In the light of your forthcoming lecture you will be interested to know that Dr John Brown of Edinburgh quoted the following passage from Edwards in a defence of the place of

In a sermon from the same year (recently published for the first time³⁷), a similar ‘Amyraldian’ dualism is evident. While there are references to ‘the sins of the whole world’ and to Christ’s ‘chosen people’, Edwards repeatedly specifies in indefinite, general terms, those for whom Christ died: the frequency with which the preacher uses ‘the souls of men’³⁸ indicates his broad and generous concerns in an evangelistic context.

Turning to Edwards’ *Miscellanies*, Guelzo’s claims are confirmed:

424. UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION. Atonement Is Sufficient. Christ did die for all in this sense: that all by his death have an opportunity of being saved. He had that design in dying that they

Amyraldianism in the United Secession Church of Scotland in the Synod of 1841: ‘From these things it will inevitably follow, that however Christ in some sense may be said to die for all, and to redeem all visible Christians, yea, the whole world, by His death, yet there must be something particular in the design of his death, with respect to such as He intended should actually be saved thereby’ (from the conclusion of the *Freedom of the Will*). The source for this fact is John Cairns *Memoir of John Brown, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860) p. 229. As this was in defence of Amyraldianism during the controversy over James Morison, it certainly deserves consideration. If John Brown did not actually think that Edwards favoured Amyraut, he certainly thought that his theological statements had an Amyraldian direction.’ (GNEC) *Note*: A strong defender of the WCF/Owenite position, Ian Hamilton is clearly unimpressed by John Brown and his supporter John Cairns (see *The Erosion of Calvinist Orthodoxy: Seceders and Subscription in Scottish Presbyterianism* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990), pp. 70-1).

³⁷ ‘The Work of the Ministry is Saving Sinners’ in Jonathan Edwards, *The Salvation of Souls*, eds. Richard A. Bailey & Gregory A. Wills (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002).

³⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 167-70.

should have that opportunity by it, for it is a thing that God designed that all men should have such an opportunity, or they would not have it, and they have it by the death of Christ.³⁹

Despite a slightly-puzzling continuation,⁴⁰ this statement contains a

³⁹ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), Vol. 13, *Miscellanies*, Entry Nos: a-z, aa-zz, 1-500, #424. Edwards clearly thinks that 'all men' are offered the opportunity of salvation in gospel preaching. Thus unbelievers are guilty for rejecting Christ's provision: 'For your refusals of the gospel, and your rejections of this way of salvation, are so much the oftener repeated. Every time you hear the gospel preached, you are guilty of a renewed rejection of it, the guilt of which therefore you will have lying upon you' (*The Wisdom of God, Displayed in the Way of Salvation* in Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 2, p. 155). In what sense then did Edwards say 'Christ did not die for the damned' ('Sermon VII' in *Selections*, ed. A. B. Grosart, p.204)? Here, he resembles Beza's identical statement to the Lutheran Andrae at the Colloquy of Montbéliard in 1582 (see Michael Jinkins, 'Theodore Beza: Continuity and Regression in the Reformed Tradition', *The Evangelical Quarterly* 64.2 (1992), 131-154). It is impossible to square Edwards statement with plain Scripture (see *Rom. 14: 15; 1 Cor. 8: 11*), unless it is explained in Baxter's manner: 'Christ did not die for [the damned in hell] as such, but as in their antecedent, recoverable, pardonable sin and misery' (*Catholick Theologie* (London: 1675), II. p. 72). See my *Atonement and Justification*, p. 117. Calvin's view is significantly different from Beza's (and Edwards'): 'True it is that the effect of [Christ's] death comes not to the whole world. Nevertheless, forasmuch as it is not in us to discern between the righteous and the sinners that go to destruction, but that Jesus Christ has suffered his death and passion as well for them as for us, therefore it behoves us to labour to bring every man to salvation, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be available to them' (*Sermons on Job* (London: 1574, fac. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), p. 548). [later interpolation deleted] as per C. R. xxxiv. 696.

⁴⁰The statement continues with a strangely contradictory qualification:

This however is no designing of the atonement but only for the preservation of their being. Paul uses the term in a similar way in 1 Tim. 4:10, "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe."

Based on a questionable and unnecessary view of 1 Tim. 4: 10, even the brilliant Edwards could not see that what he gave with one hand he took away with the other! See my *Atonement and Justification*, pp. 151-2. With regard to 1 Timothy 4: 10, '...we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially those that believe', there is nothing in the context which demands an exegesis confined to providential well-being. Although Edwards has Calvin on his side in this *textual* instance, Richard Baxter does not deny that the providential element is present, but he rightly gives it a wider interpretation (consistent also with Calvin's usual understanding). Baxter insists that Paul means that 'God ... giveth the mercies of this life and that to come ... eternal good' as well as 'temporal good' (*Paraphrase on the New Testament*, London, 1685). It is interesting to note that although the eminent Reformed commentator William Hendriksen (*Commentary on I & II Timothy and Titus* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), pp. 153ff) rejects the exclusively redemptive exegesis of the Lutheran scholar R. C. H. Lenski, his own interpretation of 1 Timothy 4:10 is little different from Baxter's. In other words, the text may legitimately be expounded in the light of Calvin's sufficiency/efficiency dualism, with reference to both providence and redemption.

clear Amyraldian emphasis - that besides the salvation of the elect there is a divinely-designed sense in which Christ also died for all.

In view of the tendency of 'limited atonement' teaching to cramp and confine our love to *some* rather than to *all* (as the Law and Gospel of God surely demand), another statement by Edwards reveals the impact of a belief in universal atonement on our loving disposition towards others:

781. CHRIST'S MEDIATION. The Wisdom of God in the Work of Redemption. ... But now Christ has suffered for the sins of the world, we ought to hate no man, because there is room to hope that Christ has suffered and satisfied for his sins; and therefore, we should endeavour to bring him to Christ. A right consideration of Christ's sufferings for the sins of others is enough to satisfy all just indignation against them for their sins. When once the saints and angels come to know certainly that Christ has not satisfied for any man's sin, they will hate them, and will rejoice in their infernal and eternal sufferings, which they will see to be no more than in proportion to the hatefulness of their sins. So that Christ by his sufferings [for all] has in a sense made propitiations for men's sins not only with God, but with their fellow creatures; and so by his obedience, he recommends them not only to the favour of God, but of one another.⁴¹

In our final specimen of Edwards' Amyraldian outlook, he shows that the divinely-designed universal atonement justly and necessarily provides for the universal proclamation of pardon to a guilty world:

1226. REVELATION TO REVEAL PARDON. The Justice of God. "If pardon and salvation are designed for the world, it is altogether meet that they should be proclaimed and promised. If they are not proclaimed and promised, there will be no sufficient assurance of them. Patience is not pardon, forbearance is not

⁴¹ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Ava Chamberlain (Yale University Press, 2000), Vol. 18, *Miscellanies*, Entry Nos: 501-832, #781.

forgiveness, and if the divine patience administer some hope, yet the judgments of God upon the world will suggest as much anxiety and dread. And so, through fear of death and destruction, the self-conscious mind must be all its time subject to terror and bondage. If it be so hard for a sensible mind, now upon a public proclamation and promise to believe the forgiveness of sins, it would be much more difficult to believe it without any such security. ... If pardon and salvation must be publicly proclaimed and promised to the guilty world, there will be an impediment or bar laid against it by the divine purity and justice. ... The righteousness of God being this evident in itself and acknowledged by the world that if man was to be pardoned by public edict and covenant, it was altogether congruous thereto that there should be some great valuable sacrifice slain and offered to God for the sin of the world. It was meet that there should be a public demonstration of the holiness and purity of God and of his hatred of sin, that the world may not be tempted to abuse his goodness and presume upon his mercy.⁴²

It is impossible to think that Edwards was not in sympathy with Bellamy's rejection of the Owenite doctrine of limited atonement. His sentiments concur with Bellamy's exposition, a view very different from the classical commercial-based formulation of limited atonement found in Dr John Owen's *Death of Death* (1647). Furthermore, Edwards promoted Bellamy's book in his correspondence with his friend John Erskine in Scotland⁴³ - unsurprisingly, a detail not mentioned by Murray. Of no less interest in this letter dated 15 November 1750 is the double reference to Philip Doddridge (1702-51), the famous pastor and author in Northampton, 'Old England'. Commending Doddridge's books, especially his *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), Edwards obviously felt a strong spiritual affinity with his contemporary English brother. Where the atonement and free offer of the gospel are concerned, neither Edwards nor Doddridge tampered with the text of Scripture by reducing 'all' to

⁴² *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), Vol. 23, *Miscellanies*, Entry Nos: 1153-1360, #1226.

⁴³ Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 1, p. cxxiii.

‘some’ and ‘world’ to ‘the elect’ in the manner of John Owen. Happy to let the Bible speak for itself, Doddridge declared the same kind of universalism we find in Edwards:

Look upon our dear Redeemer! Look up to this mournful, dreadful, yet, in one view, delightful spectacle, and then ask thine own heart, Do I believe that Jesus suffered and died thus? And why did he suffer and die? Let me answer it in God’s own words, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; and to put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin; for “the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all” (*Isa. 53: 5-6, 10*). ... “To you is the word of this salvation sent’ (*Acts 13: 26*); and to you, O reader, are the blessings of it even now offered by God, sincerely offered: ... Would you therefore, O sinner, desire to be saved? Go to the Saviour. Would you desire to be delivered? Look to the great Deliverer: and though you should be so overwhelmed with guilt, shame, and fear, and horror, that you should be incapable of speaking to him, fall down in this speechless confusion at his feet; and behold him as ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world’ (*John 1: 29*).⁴⁴

It is striking to see similarities and parallels between Edwards and Doddridge, born just over a year apart, both Congregational pastors in towns of the same name, and both exhibiting the same combination of intellectual rigour, interest in philosophy and science, fervent piety and evangelistic compassion. Both were involved in the Great

⁴⁴ *The Rise and progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), Chs. 8. 7; 9. 6 in Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. 1. pp 275, 280. Calvin’s comments on the passages cited by Doddridge fully justify his free unglossed use of them: ‘We see that here none are excepted, for the Prophet includes ‘all’. The whole human race would have perished, if Christ had not brought relief. ... I approve of the ordinary reading, that he alone bore the punishment of many, because on him was laid the guilt of the whole world. It is evident from other passages, and especially from the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that ‘many’ sometimes denotes ‘all’ (*Comment on Isaiah 53: 6, 12*; tr. W. Pringle (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1854), pp. 117, 131); ‘And when he says the sin of the world he extends this kindness indiscriminately to the whole human race, that the Jews might not think the Redeemer has been sent to them alone. ... John, therefore, by speaking of the sin of the world in general, wanted to make us feel our own misery and exhort us to seek the remedy. Now it is for us to embrace the blessing offered to all, that each may make up his mind that there is nothing to hinder him from finding reconciliation in Christ if only, led by faith, he comes to Him’ (*Comment on John 1: 29*; *The Gospel according to St John*, tr. T. H. L. Parker (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 32).

Awakening, and both were friends of George Whitefield.⁴⁵ They clearly shared the same kind of understanding of the universal/particular character of the gospel.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Two conclusions are in order. *First*, it seems the question mark in our title may be safely deleted. Edwards is in the company of Calvin, Amyraut, Baxter, Doddridge and others who argue for a dualistic understanding of the atonement. One may include the saintly David Brainerd in this company, whose *Diary* - published by Edwards - reveals a closely similar view.⁴⁷ All these men saw sound exegetical and logical reasons to reject the stances of Arminius on one hand and Owen on the other. Recalling Dr Sinclair Ferguson's admission that the doctrine of limited atonement had an adverse effect on personal assurance in Owen's day,⁴⁸ and that Owen himself never knew of

⁴⁵ See my *The Good Doctor*.

⁴⁶ Doddridge's 'Baxterian *alias* Amyraldian Calvinism' is virtually identical to Edwards position. Accordingly, he says in his academy *Lectures*: 'It is plain ... that there is a sense, in which Christ may be said to have died for all, i.e. as he has procured an offer of pardon to all, provided they sincerely embrace the Gospel. Cf. John 3: 16, 6: 50, 51, Romans 5: 18, 8: 32, 1 Corinthians 8: 11, 2 Corinthians 5: 14, 15, 19, 1 Timothy 2: 4, 6, Hebrews 2: 9, 1 John 2: 2. [Thus]... there (is) a sense, in which Christ might be said to die for all; as all men partake of some benefit by his death, and such provision is made for their salvation, as lays the blame of their ruin, if they miscarry, entirely upon themselves: but it was in a very peculiar and much nobler sense, that he died for the elect, intending evidently to secure for them, and only for them, the everlasting blessings of his Gospel ... John 10: 15, 16, 26; 17: 2, 9, 16' (Doddridge, *Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 214, 263); and *The Good Doctor*, pp. 259-61.

⁴⁷ 'Lord's Day, October 5. Was still very weak. In the morning, considerably afraid I should not be able to go through the work of the day and I had much to do, both in private and public. Discoursed before the administration of the sacrament from John 1: 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world'. Where I considered: I. In what respects Christ is called the Lamb of God, and observed that He is so called (1) from the purity and innocency of His nature; (2) from His meekness and patience under sufferings; (3) from His being that atonement which was pointed out in the sacrifice of lambs, and in particular by the paschal lamb. II. How and in what sense He 'takes away the sin of the world': not because all the world shall actually be redeemed from sin by Him, but because (1) He has done and suffered sufficient to answer for the sins of the world, and so to redeem all mankind; (2) He actually does take away the sins of the elect world' ('Brainerd's Life and Diary' in Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 2, p. 374).

⁴⁸ See S. B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p. 99.

anyone personally brought to Christ under his ministry,⁴⁹ are sobering facts. This would suggest that Owen's iconic position within the Reformed world is in need of drastic revision if not demolition, to put it mildly. Widespread attachment to the Owenite agenda might explain, in part, the significant lack of impact on society during the neo-Calvinist revival of the last half-century. If the ministries of men like Chalmers and Lloyd-Jones are anything to go by, their debt to Edwards has something significant to say to us today, not only about prayer and revival but about the nature and preaching of the gospel.

The *second* conclusion relates to the influence of the Banner of Truth Trust. Indebted as we all are to Iain Murray and his staff for many of the titles - old and new - they have published, he and his publishing house 'speak with forked tongue'. Besides the works of Owen and other 'limited atonement' authors, they - thankfully - publish 'Amyraldian' authors like J. C. Ryle, John Davenant (somewhat deceptively⁵⁰), and a (derisory) selection of Baxter's books (but where are the *Saints' Everlasting Rest* and *Call to the Unconverted?*), not to

⁴⁹ See *The Works of John Owen*, ed. W. H. Goold (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850-55; fac. Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), Vol. 8, p. viii.

⁵⁰The 2006 Quinta Press edition of Davenant's *Dissertation on the Death of Christ* compensates for the deletion of it from the recently-issued (2005) single volume Banner of Truth Trust facsimile of the author's original two-volume *Commentary on Colossians* - where it appeared at the end of Volume 2. It is surely regrettable if not disingenuous that the publisher of the facsimile nowhere indicates that the dissertation has been deleted. Since the translator's 'Life of the Author' is retained, readers are informed that a 'translation' of the dissertation is 'annexed to this work' (p. xlvi). Disconcerted readers will thus look in vain for it in the facsimile! As to why the Banner of Truth Trust excised Davenant's dissertation, we are left in no doubt. In an e-mail to Dr Hazlett Lynch, editor Jonathan Watson said that The Banner wanted to make his *Commentary on Colossians* available and to include it in the Geneva Series of Commentaries. The only edition they had to work with was an old two volume edition which had appended to it Davenant's *Dissertation on the Death of Christ* - hence the references to the latter work in the translator's Introduction, which they could not excise due to the nature of the photolitho process. They decided not to publish it, partly because of the sheer size of the book (the *Commentary* alone runs to 952 pp), and partly because, in their view, the work was less valuable than other works they have published on the Death of Christ, namely Owen's *The Death of Death* and Smeaton's two volumes on the *Atonement*, to name but two. So there we have it. A theological agenda rather than commercial considerations really explains the deletion.

forget the highly-significant and relevant work of Owen Thomas on past atonement debates in Wales.⁵¹ Sadly, Iain Murray himself is not a sure guide in the choppy waters we have navigated in this paper. As I have shown elsewhere, committed as he is to Owen's theology, and driven by his WCF/Owenite fixation, Murray has misappropriated evidence from men - including Augustine, Calvin, Bunyan, Howe, Chalmers, Dabney, Charles Hodge and John Murray - who all clearly embraced Amyraldian, or near Amyraldian thinking about the gospel. His cherry-picking method does him no credit.⁵² His less-than-satisfactory approach to Edwards has been replicated in the recent John Newton commemoration. He is mistaken to think that Whitefield's and Newton's theology were one and the same thing. Indeed, in the *Banner of Truth* special issue JOHN NEWTON,⁵³ Iain Murray cites Newton's 'dread of high Calvinism' (without realising that such was Owen's standpoint), also giving a footnote impression that there was nothing amiss in Newton's sermon on John 1: 29! Yet in this sermon on the atonement, Newton rejects the commercial theory of the atonement (on which Owen's entire thesis rests). He also refuses to reduce 'world' to 'the world of the elect' and he accepts the distinction between natural and moral inability.⁵⁴ Thus (as I have demonstrated elsewhere⁵⁵), Iain Murray's assessment of Newton's

⁵¹ See Owen Thomas, tr. John Aaron, *The Atonement Controversy in Welsh Theological Literature and Debate, 1701-1841* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002).

⁵² See my criticisms in *Calvinus: Authentic Calvinism, A Clarification* (2nd edition, 2007), pp. 55ff.

⁵³ *The Banner of Truth* (August/September, 2007), p. 16.

⁵⁴ See *The Works of John Newton* (1820; fac. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), Vol. 4, pp. 188ff.

⁵⁵ 'In short, between the polarised positions of Wesley and Whitefield, the earlier 'Anglican Calvinist' tradition [e.g. Davenant] re-emerged in the wake of the Methodist revival. While shunning Arminianism, John Newton (1725-1807) still shared Wesley's aversion for high Calvinism: 'That there is an election of grace, we are plainly taught; yet it is not said, 'that Jesus Christ came into the world to save 'the elect', but that he came to save 'sinners', to 'seek and save them that are lost' ... And therefore the command to repent implies a warrant to believe in the name of Jesus, as taking away the sin of the world.' (*Atonement and Justification*, pp. 80-1).

theology is simply deceptive and misleading to say the least. Together with the writings of Dr J. I. Packer, Murray's stance on Amyraldian Richard Baxter has led others to utterly misrepresent the great Puritan pastor-evangelist.⁵⁶

Iain Murray is equally misleading in his advocacy of Lloyd-Jones who declared, except on one occasion which he regretted, that he never preached limited atonement.⁵⁷ His case against Dr R. T. Kendall on this issue is not by any means conclusive.⁵⁸ Murray is quite contradictory, even admitting himself that, in his evangelistic preaching, Lloyd-Jones preached 'man's inability and absolute dependence upon God but then he speaks of the arms of divine mercy thrown open to all, of the love of God in Christ as ready to embrace all, of an atonement freely offered as a gift for all'.⁵⁹ The question is, where did Lloyd-Jones get his emphases from (next to the Bible, of course), if not from the authentic Jonathan Edwards whom he discovered in 1929?⁶⁰ Even if he felt the cold hand of Owenism⁶¹

⁵⁶ Sadly, relying only on second-hand citations from Packer and Murray, Philip Eveson totally misrepresents Baxter's view of the atonement when he states: 'His commendable concerns and love for lost sinners made him renounce the widely prevailing belief that Christ's death, though sufficient for all, is effective for the elect alone' (*Justification by Faith Alone* (Epsom: Day One Publications, 1996), p. 172). This was precisely Baxter's own view!

⁵⁷ 'Whatever Dr Lloyd-Jones might have said in private conversations or at conferences, limited atonement never appeared in his sermons. During his doctoral research, Kendall had a number of discussions with Dr Lloyd-Jones on John Calvin's position. Conducting his own examination of the reformer's commentaries, Dr Lloyd-Jones was obviously surprised to discover how frequently universalist Calvin's statements were. During a fortnight period, Dr Lloyd-Jones repeatedly telephoned Kendall and, in excited tones said, "I've found another one!" During one discussion, he said to Kendall with regard to limited atonement, "I never preached it, you know ... only once on Romans 5: 15 and I was in great difficulty when I did so." Being present, Mrs Lloyd-Jones then added, "I have never believed it and I never will!" (Dr Kendall related these facts to me when we met in London in July 1989 to discuss my thesis *Atonement and Justification* (published by OUP the following year) (*The Good Doctor*, pp. 273-4).

⁵⁸ See Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 2 The Fight of Faith 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), pp. 721ff.

⁵⁹ See D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), p. xxx.

⁶⁰ Murray, *Edwards*, p. 466.

during the 1950s after leaving Port Talbot for Westminster Chapel in 1938, the Edwards emphasis prevailed in his pulpit preaching. Judging by the Aberavon sermons at least, Lloyd-Jones would never have approved of the appalling statement in a Banner of Truth evangelistic booklet - '[Christ] did not die for everybody'.⁶² Baxter's answer to this is perfect:

When God saith so expressly that Christ died for all [2 Cor. 5: 14-15], and tasted death for every man [Heb. 2: 9], and is the ransom for all [1 Tim. 2: 6], and the propitiation for the sins of the whole world [1 Jn. 2: 2], it beseems every Christian rather to explain in what sense Christ died for all, than flatly to deny it.⁶³

So, it is time to return to the authentic New Testament gospel of Calvin, Amyraut, Baxter, Doddridge, Edwards, Newton, Chalmers, Ryle and Lloyd-Jones. Obviously sharing Edwards' breadth of vision and depth of compassion, Lloyd-Jones reminds us of the message that should drive our evangelism:

But look at [Christ's] death for a moment and consider it as an expiation for the sin of the whole world. What are we told about it? Well, those sufferings were enough, according to John, for all. Listen! 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 Jn. 2: 2). The whole world! ... The sins of the whole world he had borne upon Himself.

[If] ever you feel utterly helpless and hopeless, then turn back to Him, the Christ of the cross, with His arms outstretched, who still says: 'Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth'. It is there that the whole of humanity is focused. He is the representative of the whole of mankind. He died for all.⁶⁴

We give Jonathan Edwards the last word:

⁶¹ See Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 2 The Fight of Faith 1939-1981*, p. 231.

⁶² John Benton, *Coming to Faith in Christ* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, eleventh reprint, 2003), p. 8.

⁶³ *The Universal Redemption of Mankind* (London: 1694), p. 286.

⁶⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Evangelistic Sermons at Aberavon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1983), pp. 87-8, 278.

We should admire the love of Christ to men, that he has thus given himself to be the remedy for all their evil, and a fountain of all good. Christ has given himself to us, to be all things to us that we need. We want clothing, and Christ does not only give us clothing, but he gives himself to be our clothing, that we might put him on. 'For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ' (*Gal. 3: 27*). 'But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof' (*Rom. 13: 14*). We want food, and Christ has given himself to be our food; he has given his own flesh to be our meet, and his blood to be our drink, to nourish our soul. Thus Christ tells us that he is the bread which came down from heaven, and the bread of life. "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" [*Jn. 6: 48-51*]. In order to our eating of his flesh, it was necessary that he should be slain, as the sacrifices must be slain before they could be eaten; and such was Christ's love to us, that he consented to be slain, he went as a sheep to the slaughter, that he might give us his flesh to be food for our poor, famishing souls. ... Here is love for us to admire, for us to praise, and for us to rejoice in, with joy that is full of glory for ever.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Works* (1834), Vol. 2, p. 936.