

HUMOR



Phyllis McGinley

(1905-1978)

The Theology of Jonathan Edwards (1957)

Whenever Mr. Edwards spake
In church about Damnation,
The very benches used to quake
For awful agitation.

Good men would pale and roll their eyes
While sinners rent their garments
To hear him so anatomize
Hell's orgiastic torments,

The blood, the flames, the agonies
In store for frail or flighty
New Englanders who did not please
A whimsical Almighty.

Times were considered out of tune
When half a dozen nervous
Female parishioners did not swoon
At every Sunday service;

And, if they had been taught aright,
Small children, carried bedwards,
Would shudder lest they meet that night
The God of Mr. Edwards.

Abraham's God, the Wrathful One,
Intolerant of error--
Not God the Father or the Son
But God the Holy Terror.