

striking passages in Hall's discourse on *Modern Infidelity*, to which the reader is referred. Those who are interested in the inquiry would do well to consult also the *Dissertation on the Nature of true Virtue*, and the notes in which the Editor endeavours to vindicate the definition above quoted. The attempt, however, is to no purpose. In bad hands the definition has led to base consequences: and in no hands can it lead to any good, as it is not fitted to the nature of man. It is in vain to tell us that the love of our neighbour and our country, *if detached from a tendency of affection to universal being, is not truly virtuous—That attachment to an object, not founded on the comparative value of that object, belongs not to the nature of true virtue—That a heart enlarged to the love of being in general, includes all particular objects; and is then only capable of virtuous love*, when the attachment to each object is *for the sake of the whole system of being*. There is, I repeat, neither truth nor practical wisdom in all this. The particular affections are virtuous, because they are manifestly in accordance with the will of God. By their exercise our higher capacities are matured; without their exercise, no moral virtue could ever germinate. Suppose a man to reach a high grade of moral virtue; is he then called on to throw down the very scaffolding by which he mounted—to strip himself of all the feelings which have manifested themselves in his heart from the first dawnings of his moral nature? He is called on to make no such sacrifice: and were he called on, the sacrifice would be impossible*. High

* Many other examples of the evil effects of *a priori* reasoning on moral questions might be found in the works of Jonathan Edwards. He was an acute, honest, and pious man, and a most intrepid reasoner: