That Oppenheim gets Royce right seems unquestionable. That Royce himself is right, however, remains very much in question. Oppenheim brings much "appreciative empathy" to his study of Royce, but seems to have little empathy (or even argument) left over for those whose lives have led them to other views or other provincialisms—especially those worried by Oppenheim's discussions of the Infinite and superhuman such that they prefer, for example, Dewey's *A Common Faith* and *Theory of Valuation* to Royce's *The Problem of Christianity* and "Extension Course on Ethics, 1915-1916." In this light, it is perhaps surprising that Oppenheim does not say more about his own personality and personal life—given his recognition that this is the basis upon which he, like other philosophers, ultimately rests his case. But, in any case and for readers of all temperaments, this wonderful book is a model of scholarship and no doubt long will remain the definitive work on the topic.

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One Holy and Happy Society, Gerald McDermott. University Park, PA; The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. 184 pp. $29.95

This book examines Jonathan Edwards's (1703-1758) relationship to civil religion in the United States. Civil religion, in the author's use of the term, refers to the collection of beliefs that the United States is the redeemer nation, the New Israel, and will be the locus for the millennial reign of Christ. This may be an exaggerated form of civil religion, but McDermott is trying to separate Edwards from this strong view—of America as the redeemer nation. Edwards's involvement with the spiritual awakenings of the 1730's and 1740's and his stature as a theologian and philosopher make him prime material for this kind of speculation. Civil religion arose with the spirit of the revolution in the years just after Edwards's death. The author is at great pains to dispel this myth. Edwards was not the source of civil religion. Rather he was a global thinker who did not see the young America in a favored position, but a position of great peril—as either the faithful beginning of a period of revivals and failings or as the unfaithful hindrance to the progress of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was also not the promoter of American economic power as the image of the millennial kingdom, rather he was a caustic social critic who promoted charity to the poor and condemned usurious commercial practices. According to McDermott this latter critique may have cost him his job, since the Northampton people that turned him out of the pulpit were primarily the wealthy.

McDermott argues this thesis in six chapters covering Edwards's view of the national covenant, the millennium, social ethics, the Magistracy (law enforcement), and theology of citizenship, followed by the author's conclusion. The author reverses the traditional image of Jonathan Edwards by thorough
historical work in the political aspects of his ministry, and by examining a liberal dose of his sermon texts. From these sermons McDermott demonstrates that Edwards was more condemnatory of the Northampton congregation than would be expected if the thousand year reign of Christ was to spring out of their midst.

The historical work shows Edwards's personal involvement in practical social problems, as well as his non-conformist political views. The author takes stock of Edwards's systematic power by drawing the connection between his ontology and his social ethic. Edwards was a thinker of connection, of metaphysical continuity, despite his Lockean beginnings. The view he formulates prefigures Peirce's agapism. The author does not trace out Edwards's philosophical roots or his radical breaks with those roots. John Smith's Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher makes clear the connection with the British tradition and the innovations that inspired classical American philosophy, such as his notion of "transitive practical acts." (99)

McDermott's book is even-handed when dealing with controversial points of interpretation or historical questions. His treatment of theological issues and interpretations is clear and free of jargon although he neglects to link these disputes clearly with their contemporary offspring. McDermott does not reinsert Edwards into the current civil religion conversation as much as he could have. The major weakness of this book is the conclusion that Edwards was myopic and overly optimistic in his belief that the Catholic world would crumble and that the increasing number of people experiencing a regenerating conversion would well up into a world historical movement. Edwards's optimism was thoroughly couched in the realization of the limits of sinful humanity. But optimism is more a matter of the content that inspires confidence than the reality that content opposes. To look now on Edwards's predictions as "overly optimistic" is to miss the point of his optimism altogether; God's will incarnate in human activity is possible, because human nature can change. What would American philosophy be without this optimism that looks past history to the possibility of radical transformation?

Penn State Roger Ward


In the one hundred and thirty odd years since his death, Henry David Thoreau has acquired an almost mythic status in American letters. Thousands of his admirers revere him as a man who dared to walk to the beat of a different drum by rejecting the conventional lifestyles and values of his day, retreating to the silent shores of Walden Pond, and preforming a grand experiment in self-exploration to determine once and for all if life is worth living. He is regarded as a seer, a sage, a devotee of the