

defines it as "any antecedent, either natural or moral, positive or negative, on which an event, either a thing or the manner and circumstance of a thing so depends, that it is a ground or reason either in whole or in part, why it is rather than not, or why it is as it is rather than otherwise." It is plain that in this definition, several things of entirely distinct sorts are brought together under a common name. A cause is any antecedent on which the result depends in any way. But there may be various antecedents on which the result depends in various ways; and therefore our volitions may have different causes to which they are in different ways due. For instance, the sustaining power of the Creator, exercised from moment to moment, is a ground or reason why our volitions are, rather than not; for if this sustaining power were withdrawn we should cease to exist. The Divine power is the efficient cause to which our existence, as beings possessed of the power of Will, is to be ascribed. I need not say that it is not in this sense that motives are held by philosophers of the school of Edwards to be the causes of our volitions. Neither are they considered to be of the nature of physical causes. What then? They are regarded as moral causes; and the necessity which is conceived to attach to their operation is a moral necessity.

You will keep in mind that we are trying to discover how much, if anything, is contained in the proposition: Motives determine the Will, beyond what is involved in the statement that voluntary action is performed from motive. The nut of the question lies in the word "determine;" and we have got thus far in our process of clearing up what that word implies: we have ascertained, namely, that the meaning intended to be conveyed is, that motives are the moral causes of our volitions, and that the necessity which attaches to their operation is a moral necessity. But what do the expressions, moral cause, and moral necessity mean? I do not know that any other answer can be given, than that they denote the relation which subsists between the nature of an intelligent agent and the ends, which in given circumstances, he prefers, or the actions, which under given circumstances, he voluntarily performs. One person is tempted to steal a sum of money. He is a good man, and resists the temptation. Another is tempted to steal. He is a bad man and