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JONATHAN EDWARDS AND THE VEGAN ELECT: AN  
UNCONVENTIONAL CALVINIST READING

In 1895, when Myrtle Fillmore, co-founder of the Unity School of Christianity, first became a vegetarian, she said “the appetite left me without my even thinking about it and I am sure I outgrew the demand for murdered things” (qt in Rapport 37). One realizes upon hearing this that the move to murder-free eating involved a conversion of some sort, one that she saw as religious. Conversion has a noteworthy place in American religious history. The Great Awakening of 1730s colonial America saw a promulgation of conversion experiences both encouraged and regulated by Puritan clergy. Most famously, the philosopher Jonathan Edwards was most prominent among those who set out to regulate the experience, coming up with criteria for distinguishing true workings of God from the superficial symptoms.

What follows is an attempt to use Edwards, along with ideas of conversion, in a surprising place, namely the morality of eating animals. It is not strange to speak of becoming vegetarian or vegan as involving something like a religious conversion. But what if this conversion were pre-ordained, as it would be in Calvinism? My contention is that adopting an Edwardsean perspective on vegetarianism -- talking about the existence of a vegan elect -- helps to explain why it is that among those who accept the persuasive arguments for veganism, some people find it easy to become vegetarian or vegan, and others find it difficult. From the point of view of certain religious minds, it seems like some are preordained to follow the gospel of nonviolence that leads to rejecting flesh as food, while others are not. Whether God exists, and further is Christian, and further has preordained that some will be saved, is one matter. But even without taking a position on those matters, we can use Edwards’ ideas to explain veganism as a conversion experience involving certain important psychological factors. To explain, we need to present an overview of Edwards’ ideas of conversion and salvation, with particular attention to the possibility of making a distinction between the *discovery* or sign of grace, and the *development* of signs of grace. Exploiting any ambiguity we find in Edwards, we can show that grace is something that it said to be discovered, but which is really developed. This pragmatic approach to theology, heretical if expressed outwardly in Edwards’ America, is nonetheless an interesting implication of Edwards’ philosophical theology.

*SIGNS OF ELECTION*

The doctrine of predestination is logically and psychologically complex, but it is founded on a basic idea that God is all powerful, and thus that

humanity is completely depraved, that is, completely lacking in power to do good. This lack of power, however, cannot be more than theoretical, since any human being questioning whether they have been chosen among the saved is sure to try to prove it. God has it determined, indeed, but God has, so to speak, certain tells, that is, indirect evidence of God's will. These signs of election are, in principle, merely *discovered*, but in practice, they can be *developed*. To mollify the anxiety of not knowing if one is saved, one can look really hard for signs, which, practically speaking, amounts to the development of a certain practices. When you develop something, you contribute something of yourself to the process of bringing it out.

This is particularly evident if one considers the idea of enduring a trial. If a sign of grace is having the fortitude to survive a strong temptation, it seems to be relatively unimportant where the source of the will is, just so long as someone makes it endure. Edwards' *Treatise* begins with an exegesis of a section from *1 Peter* that Edwards says "speaks of the trial of their faith," which are done "through manifold temptations" (13) for the Christian. One type of trial is gustatory. Elmer Towns from Liberty University, for example, promulgates *The Daniel Fast for Spiritual Breakthrough*. Based on consideration from passages in the Book of Daniel, the fast is "an expression of abstinence for purposes of self-discipline" that requires "you give up the things you enjoy eating and eat only what is necessary" (20). Although acknowledging that his belief stops short of full Biblical authority, he nonetheless maintains a personal belief that this fast is required of Christians.

The Daniel Fast is not primarily a dietary choice; it is a spiritual vow to God. You may lose weight during your fast, or you may lower your blood pressure or cholesterol, and while these results are good, they are not the primary focus of the fast. Instead, you are fasting for a spiritual focus. Improved health is always a secondary result ... (21).

Remarkable here is Towns' belief that the fast is *not* just a choice. For him, it is not part of a lifestyle option, but has what he takes to be real results: Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality is itself not *just* a choice according to evangelicals, and so Towns says that the Daniel Fast is a "lifestyle vow" (24).

Daniel and other especially fit Israelites were selected by Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar for special training in his palace, which included "a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table" (1:5), and Daniel did not want to "defile" himself (8). Jewish dietary laws were cultural, but the story's focus quickly turns to health. When a sympathetic guard agrees to give Daniel and four other Jews only vegetables and water (12) rather than the considerably more luxurious wine and flesh, the men after 10 days looked "healthier and better nourished" (15) than the non-Jews. The point seems to be that the war-culture Babylonians, who did not care about Jewish cultural quirks, did care about vim and vigor. But more importantly to the Jew or Christian, the effects were that to the men "God

gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning” with Daniel specifically given the ability to “understand visions and dreams of all kinds” (1:17). The fast provided a means to display Daniel’s God-given abilities.

It would be mistaken to think that Daniel’s request for abstinence was simply a matter of cultural distinction. It was not just like a contemporary teenager who wants to have piercings as a mark of some kind of continually burgeoning piercing subculture. It is permissible to see Daniel’s abstinence, although apparently presented respectfully, as making a statement against the specifics of Babylonian culture. Daniel is showing that strength comes from humility and intelligence, not from the ingestion of meat, sacrificed to gods in the promotion of death for the greater good, and not from acceptance of the drunken fruits of noble war-culture. It is not difficult to see an antiwar, antiviolence statement in this story, one that extends even into food choices. Towns does not see this, and in fact makes the following statement, which is unintentionally disclosive: “When you begin a Daniel Fast,” you purify the body and “repent of sin (probably not the sin of eating meat, but other sins associated with the flesh) and are drawn closer to God through the experience” (22). Towns likely meant that eating meat is not a sin, but syntax betrays him.

Theologian Stephen Webb calls this story “the first clinical study of nutrition” (20), but it is also more than a clinical trial. Edwards refers to trials “as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or not” (*Treatise* 13). The results of this are a joy that is “unspeakable,” “very different from worldly joys and carnal delights,” and given to people “in their state of persecution” (15). Edwards is not of course using “carnal” in the same sense that one would in a gustatory context. Nevertheless, the connection between general spiritual carnality and specific gustatory carnality can be made. The rejection of gustatory carnality is importantly similar to what Edwards talks about when referring to the ineffable sweetness of grace. This grace, he says, is given to the elect. Although many can enjoy the general graces of God, only a few can appreciate the special sweetness. The vegan elect are a contemporary example of the Christian elect of which Edwards was speaking.

#### *GREAT AWAKENINGS: A TASTE FOR GOODNESS*

Writing in relation to the Great Awakening, in which emotions were running high, Edwards begins by explaining that a number of common phenomena are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for being saved. For example, Edwards says that “it is no sign one way or the other that religious affections are very great, or raised very high” (*Treatise* 50). Edwards on the one hand is arguing against religious rationalists who believe that religious affections disqualify truthful apprehension of the divine. On the other hand, he is ensuring that such affections are not seen

as a mark in themselves of grace. Edwards refers to passages about unspeakable joy, and loving God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength. The Psalms speak of crying rivers because of the world's disobedience, and having flesh that "longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land" (Ps. 63:1). Finding God and righteousness, "my soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness" (5). Edwards adds that "because high degrees of joy are the proper and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel 'good tidings of great joy that should be to all people'" (*Treatise* 53).

It is apparent that many who try a vegetarian diet feel much better afterward, and it would not be surprising to find someone feeling very happy about it, going from a state of unsatisfied eating to one in which they are joyful. They may gain or lose weight in way that makes them feel better about their body, both in terms of health and appearance. They may see the wrongness of eating flesh, and cry for the animals affected by the meat culture around them. All of this, however, does not always last. As Edwards notes about the great awakenings around him, the great affections might be signs of grace, but they might not as well, and thus are not reliable guides. The Jewish people around Mount Sinai earnestly proclaimed fidelity to God's covenant, but when Moses left, Edwards notes "how quickly were they turned aside after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf" (54--55). And exalted by Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, says Edwards, the people raised up Jesus with cries of "Hosanna!" turning into "Crucify!" (55). With vegetarian converts, the righteous deliverance can be followed by relapses in which they find themselves around the Golden Calf, or, more precisely, under the Golden Arches, satisfying a fast-food craving.

Edwards also argues that "It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body." He speaks in reference to notions of psychosomatic unity according to which "the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise without some effect upon the body" (55). Among others, he quotes Habakkuk, who he says was "overbourne by a sense of the majesty of God," (58) causing the prophet to note that "my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself" (Habakkuk 3:16). There is a mixture of literal and figurative language here, but the sense is that true affections can be associated with feelings in and about the body. Yet the presence of a trembling belly does not necessarily indicate the presence of God any more than a rumbling stomach indicates real hunger. Nor do quivering lips indicate true fear of God.

What's more, the peculiar lip movements associated with speech are not reliable signs of conversion: We cannot tell anything from people who are "fluent, fervent, and abundant, in talking of the things of religion" (59). Speaking of things that happen even today, in religion and elsewhere, Edwards says that,

A person may be over-full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, every where, and in all companies, and when it is so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. As a tree, that is over full of leaves, seldom bears much fruit; and as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it over-much wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth: which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great show of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life. (61)

Some vegetarians do indeed become like evangelists, preaching and trying to convert rather than accept others' settled beliefs. The example of the over-burdened tree is significant in a number of ways. Not all words are nutritious in the way that not all food is nutritious. In fact, an over-abundance, even of even healthy food is not a guarantee of health. The idea here is none other than the old philosophical advocacy, made most notably by Aristotle, of fitness and proportionality. In addition, although it was likely not intended, the example of a tree and the thirsty earth suggests the significance of fruit and water, as opposed, perhaps, to flesh-food, which is indeed filled with water, but not with health. As is characteristic of the *Treatise*, Edwards takes an approach where he rejects certainty on both sides. Among the other supposed signs Edwards notes, there is that of a feeling that things are coming not from "their own contrivance" or "by their own strength" (62). He uses this as an opportunity to critique overly rationalist theologians.

How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience, or sensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late? They say the manner of the spirit of God is to co-operate in a silent, secret, and undiscernible way with the use of means and our own endeavors; so that there is no distinguishing, by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds. (63-63)

For Edwards, it is not that God cannot be subtle; it's just that God does not have to be subtle. Edwards is allowing both that God can manifest in a way that seems overpowering to the will, and also in ways that seems indistinguishable from one's normal will. The source of the change is inaccessible to others, and even to ourselves; we can only judge conversions by the appropriateness of the effects. Religious pragmatist William James would later read the *Treatise* and conclude that "The roots of a man's virtue are inaccessible to us. No appearances whatever are infallible proofs of grace. Our practice is the only sure evidence, even to ourselves, that we are genuinely Christians" (24). The "even to ourselves" part, present in the writings of both Edwards and James, might be somewhat startling to hear. It is a critique of the idea that humans have complete clarity about intentions. Yet matters of intentions usually appear complicated upon the narrowing of introspection, and are invisible at the point of origin.

Edwards' work is an assertion of fallibilism. Having confidence that one is saved, for example, does not indicate one is saved. A hypocrite, however, "has not that cautious spirit," (*Treatise* 101), and "the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence." The confidence "is not shaken by sin," and some of them remain boldly confident "in the most corrupt and wicked ways; which are sure evidence of their delusion" (104). The true Christian is open to evidence in her own life that would disconfirm the hypothesis that she is saved. What's more, they cannot be sure about the salvation of others. "There is nothing in others, that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances," Edwards notes, drawing on his background in philosophical empiricism, and then adding a religious point: "The scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit" (112). There is an element here of the idea of total depravity that is attributed to Calvinists. Humans have been so corrupted by the Fall that every perception and judgement is saturated by sin, and thus they cannot without the help of God even know what the Good is. Edwards is not going to maintain that human can know nothing about salvation, but he will maintain that humans cannot be certain about salvation—even in their own case. Speaking generally about our judgment of others, Edwards says that people

commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining person's states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things: either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and self-confidence, and so ignorant of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair. (113)

In this passage, Edwards clearly is tempering judgment, and if he is to be faulted, it is in seemingly relegating spiritual discernment to specialists. He himself never claims to be one of these specialists, however. In the case of judging the spiritual states of others, Edwards' point is obvious: we cannot know what is in another person's heart, but can only go with signs that are commonly unreliable and subject to our own biases. It is impossible to tell a vegan from a non-vegan by looking at them. What's more, even a comprehensive health assessment would be far from conclusive, since some meat eaters can be as healthy as some vegans. But even if we were to maintain vigilance about monitoring one's specific eating behaviors, we would be missing the point, at least from an Edwardsean perspective. For Edwards, one's inner disposition toward the good in their life is a true sign of being saved. Analogously, the true vegan is discernible only in the heart, that is, in an inward condition that accompanies the outward signs. Vegans not only have the outward signs

of a practice, but have an inward *taste of goodness* associated with that practice. This taste involves something more fundamental than a desire for health, or an agreement with ethical arguments, but is expressed in, for example, *Psalm 34:8*, which contains the imperative “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” The Psalm continues, in ways often relevant to vegan Christianity,

blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.  
 Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints  
 For those who fear him have no lack.  
 The young lions suffer want and hunger;  
 But those who seek the Lord lack no thing.  
 Come, oh children, listen to me;  
 I will teach you the fear of the Lord.  
 What man is there who desires life,  
 and loves many days, that he may see good?  
 Keep your tongue from evil  
 and your lips from speaking deceit.  
 Turn away from evil and no good;  
 Seek peace and pursue it. (8-14)

The psalmist speaks of the saints as having a sustenance in the Lord different than that of the predatory animals, whose predation leaves them vulnerable. The children of God are somehow exempt from predation, and the psalmist implies that being such a child contributes to longevity. After noting that truth comes out of the mouth, the poem refers to seeking peace. Although the themes of avoiding lies and violence are common through the Bible, here they are specifically subsumed under the idea of a special spiritual *taste*. The Lord is encountered through an inward taste, not just through outward signs.

The outward signs themselves are often unreliable, and Edwards offers that “it was never God’s design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know who of our fellow professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats” (*Treatise* 123). One of the problems is humanity’s total depravity. Sin, Edwards says, is like “distempers that put the mouth out of taste so as to disenable it from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but everything tastes bitter” (125). In the unfallen state, humans liked the good. Similarly, in the unfallen state of consumption, humans ate what tasted good, and what tasted good *was* good. Food writer Michael Pollan notes that there was a corruption of taste that occurred due to the proliferation of processed foods. But after making a unwarranted claim that “our Puritan roots” bear responsibility for impeding “our sensual or aesthetic enjoyment of food,” Pollan appropriately notes (quoting Harvey Levenstein) that our problem is that “taste is not a true guide to what should be eaten ... that the important components of foods cannot be seen or tasted, but are discernible only in scientific laboratories.” Pollan

concur, and adds that this describes what he refers to as the mistaken philosophy of “nutritionism” (55).

Edwards was not a theological nutritionist. Although his work is filled with technical nuances, Edwards did not base religiosity on an appreciation of nuance, but rather an immediate experience of taste. The Holy Spirit, he says, manifests in an individual through “a new inward perception or sensation of their minds,” one that is “different from any former kinds of sensations of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses,” and “as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men have of honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it” (*Treatise* 137-138). Edwards is stressing the elemental nature of taste. Sweetness is as irreducible. You simply cannot describe it without repeating yourself. Referring to ‘pleasure’ is certainly way too vague. In the case of honey, for example, referring to health misses the point, as does referring to the work of the bees who produced it. Sweetness, after all, is just good because it is sweet.

Vegans who have a taste for fleshless food are, accordingly, different from those who merely tolerate a vegan diet for health or ethical reasons. More importantly, though, as we will see next, the taste vegan is different from others in that they are less susceptible, if not completely insusceptible, to the temptation of falling away from the practice.

#### WINKING CALVIN

Taste appears to be elemental, but on a pragmatic level, it can be changed in light of health or ethical concerns. God, according to Edwards’ official view, is the one in charge of changing our natures. We cannot will our way into salvation, because that would be a limiting of God’s power. But on a pragmatist Calvinist view, one that I will call *Winking Calvin*, changing taste can be done, but subversively, by practically disobeying theological postulates. It is, as it were, a benevolent hypocrisy that maintains both that tastes are beyond our control and yet that, if we adopt certain persistent behaviors, tastes can be changed. Will is ineffectual on the immediate experience of taste, but through a willful practice, one can over time change the immediate experience of taste. Edwards does not make it easy though. He notes that one of the signs of gracious affections is a raising of the “spiritual appetite” towards God (*Treatise* 337), but notes that there are many “hypocrites” here.

Their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it; but only for by ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls; or because in great discoveries self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others; they long to taste the love of God (as they call it) more than to have more love to God. (341-342)

This is analogous to people becoming vegetarians or vegans because of ethical or health concerns. They wish to be physically or mentally clean, and perhaps stronger in the process. Although such desires are not contrary to virtue, they lack what Edwards calls the true virtue of outward action reflecting inner disposition. Yet Edwards seems to wink at the reader when he speaks of the *practice* of godliness. The culmination of Edwards' signs of gracious affection is a "Christian practice" that persists all of the time, and to the end of life (343).

Yet the principal evidence of this power of godliness, is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the will, and conquering the lusts and corruptions of men, and carrying men on the way of holiness, through all temptation, difficulty, and opposition (354).

This seems a little more like inspirational talk than Calvinism. The holiness comes from one's *own* conquering of the will, and this passage has a noticeable absence of determinism. Sure, God is the one who conquers, but the main thing here is the conquering.

The outward action is the stronger authority. Edwards insists that "without a change of nature, men's practice will not be thoroughly changed." Emerson, we recall once again, said that we are a stream whose source is hidden. Edwards tries to give power to that source. Nature is a more powerful principle of action than any thing that opposes it: though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: it is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped awhile with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a course, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing more constant and permanent than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal men's reformation and righteousness. (356)

But Edwards' analogy almost betrays his Calvinism. Dams are now used to generate energy, in effect denying the strict determinism he implies. More important, in saying "nothing to be done," he is implying there is something to be done. Nature is *more* constant and permanent than action. Theologically, the implication is that nature is infinitely more constant; practically, the implication is that is simply *formidable*, not unconquerable for humans. Those who have conquered the carnality -- including violent eating habits -- are living in God's common graces. But there are also, as Edwards notes in his *Nature of True Virtue*, those who have a sense of beauty evident in "immediate sensation of the gratefulness of the idea called beautiful; and not by finding out by argumentation any consequences" (98). Those who have not only conquered the habits, but who have also manage to change, or are fortunate enough to have changed for them, their inward disposition, so that such habits are enjoyable -- that is, who have in some way gained a taste for the practices -- are the blessed ones.

## PEACEFUL PRACTICE

When Edwards talks about Christian practice, he mentions, among many other passages, that of Matthew 25, in which Christ says “I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat.” Edwards’ archaic translation takes “meat” as referring to food in general, a fact which is interesting in itself, reflecting the unreflectiveness of meat-eating behaviors to this day. His point, though, is that one cannot be “universally obedient” simply by avoiding bad behaviors. One should also “be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful charitable and beneficent walk and conversation” (*Treatise* 346). Of particular interest here is the “peaceful” part. It is short sighted to see Edwards’ words as referring merely to interactions among individual persons. It can also refer to interactions among species, as well as communal and even national dispositions.

In *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards criticizes “affection to a private society or system, independent of general benevolence” (21). Although such affections are necessary to the welfare of the world, and thus a deficiency in them is a vice, it remains that they are incomplete. To have them is a step toward graciousness, but merely evident of a common grace of God, rather than that extra grace reserved for the elect. These are self-interested affections towards those “near to us by the ties of nature,” for whom we have a “very peculiar propriety, and whose circumstances, even from the beginning of their existence, many ways lead them to a high esteem of us, and to treat us with great dependence, submission and compliance.” In such cases, there is a “communion in each other’s affections, desires, cares, friendships, enmities and pursuits” (55).

Edwards then refers to the relationship between children and adults, but this passage nonetheless comes frustratingly close to consideration of animals. After all, domestic and agricultural animals are likewise in a relationship of dependence. So considered, the implication is that common graces give us the ability to treat animals well, but this is only an act of self-interest, since we derive benefit from the animals. With merely domestic animals, it is companionship, not vicious in itself; but with agricultural animals it is the consumption of bodies that we are after. Despite what we might believe, we do not create and keep agricultural animals for the benefit of the animals themselves. Our affections are limited by speciesism, that is, by a privileging of human interests because they are human interests.

In another passage, Edwards comes close to disclosing speciesism as a consideration within his own philosophy: “Some would be moved with pity by seeing a brute-creature under extreme and long torments, who yet suffer no uneasiness in knowing that many thousands of them every day cease to live, and so have an end put to all of their pleasure” (81). There reference here is likely to animals’ natural deaths, which Edwards

contrasts with the particular pains that might happen during these animals' lives. Yet he does not bother considering explicitly the human agency in this death and suffering. He says that "it is the nature of true benevolence to desire and rejoice in the prosperity and pleasure of its object," even though "persons may greatly pity those that are in extreme pain, whose positive pleasure they may be still be very indifferent about" (81). This kind of true benevolence is easier to do with animals, since generally the positive pleasure of most animals is increased if we just leave them alone.

Promoting benevolence to being in general is possible not only in individual food choices, but also in political actions. Connections between the two have been noticed in the history of philosophy and theology, but seems to have escaped Edwards' notice or failed to register his concern. As early as 8th Century BCE the poet Hesiod wrote of races "who ate no bread," and "were terrible and strong, and the ghastly action of Ares was theirs, and violence." Hesiod sends them to their fate in Hell: Yet even these, destroyed beneath the hands of each other, went down into the mouldering domain of cold Hades; nameless: for all they were formidable black death seized them, and they had to forsake the shining sunlight. (qt. in Walters and Portmess *Vegetarianism* 19)

In the 3rd Century, the philosopher Porphyry speaks about an earlier time before humans had the taste for blood and the penchant for violence, and chastises those "who say that abstinence from animals is the mother of injustice, since both history and experience testify, that together with the slaughter of animals, war and injustice were introduced" (25). For his part, Edwards apparently saw no connection, although he certainly was aware of Genesis 1:29-30, in which the original state has all beings eating only "seed-bearing plants and trees," and then the Fall bringing sin, and soon violence, into creation.

It is this return to Edenic thinking that marks the vegan elect from the rest. They enjoy the eating of non-meat and non-dairy food, tasting that it is good in itself. If arguments had an effect on them, it was merely a releasing of what was already latent. It was, in the terms of Calvinist theology, a sign of limited atonement, a sign that God's work only works on those chosen by God.

Yet whether taste is in our control or not, nothing prevents us from believing that it is in our control. Whether it is discovered, as it was for Fillmore, or developed, as it could be for those not as blessed, makes no practical difference so long as it is ultimately made present. And if it is made present, then according to the Calvinist doctrine of perseverance of the saints it should endure.

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