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A REAPPRAISAL OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE  
IN EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN LIGHT OF  
JONATHAN EDWARDS'S  
SENSE OF THE HEART

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A Dissertation  
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the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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by  
Ji Hyuk Kim  
December 2013

**APPROVAL SHEET**

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To Ji Young,  
My partner in life and in the ministry,  
and to  
Sungjae and Eunjae,  
who are living proof of God's blessings

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Ji Hyuk Kim

Louisville, Kentucky

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

During Jonathan Edwards's ministry in Northampton, Massachusetts (1726-1750), two factions emerged from the First Great Awakening: the Old and the New Lights. The New Lights, radical revivalists such as James Davenport, reveled in intense emotions and derogated the intellect.<sup>1</sup> For them, religion was about feelings and emotions, but had nothing to do with intellect. The New Lights encouraged converts to rely heavily on inner experience and enthusiasm<sup>2</sup> rather than an expression of God's work in their lives firmly planted in Scripture and reason.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, the Old Lights, a significant group of anti-revivalist ministers, considered the revival to be more of a "commotion in the passions, than a change in the temper of the mind."<sup>4</sup> When the Old Lights, the most prominent among whom was Charles Chauncy, looked at the revivals, they saw emotionalism and religious excess. For Chauncy, revival preachers had merely stirred up passions, while true religion brought the self under the control of reason rather than emotion.<sup>5</sup> Chauncy "stood for the 'intellectual' and more Aristotelian (and Thomistic)

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<sup>1</sup>C. C. Goen, "Editor's Introduction," in Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 60. The Yale edition of Edwards's *Works* is cited frequently below. For the sake of efficiency, I refer to it hereafter as *WJE*. See also *WJE*, 4:51-52, 79-83.

<sup>2</sup>"Enthusiasm," as Goen defines it, "is belief in God's immediate inspiration or possession, leading often to claims of divine authority." Goen, "Editor's Introduction," 49.

<sup>3</sup>Frank Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 77.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (Hicksville, NY: Regina Press, 1975), 109, cited in "Charles Chauncy's Dissenting Voice," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*, ed. Michael J. McClymond (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), 2:44.

<sup>5</sup>Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford:

tradition, which argued that the will (or heart, affection, passion) should follow the best dictates of reason.”<sup>6</sup> In Chauncy’s view, the revivalists of the Great Awakening were caught up in a false religious experience characterized by bodily convulsions, “freakish” conduct, imagined favor with God, and a dismissal of rational thought.<sup>7</sup> In response to Davenport’s “fanatical” preaching tour through New England in 1742, and the revivals of the period in general, Chauncy published a sermon decrying what he saw as an excess of enthusiasm and a false sense of divine guidance: “[Davenport] mistakes the workings of his own passions for divine communications, and fancies himself immediately inspired by the Spirit of God, when all the while he is under no other influence than that of an over-heated imagination.”<sup>8</sup> More than merely an excess of emotion emphasized over reason, Chauncy saw in the revival the makings of uncontrolled emotionalism and social disorder.<sup>9</sup> For him, as for other “Old Lights,” “reason and judgment must be pre-eminent in all religious experience, otherwise it is but a sham and ‘enthusiasm.’”<sup>10</sup>

Jonathan Edwards, preaching in the midst of these two opposing forces, forged a middle ground between the “cold, diabolical opposers” of the Old Lights and the “pious zealots”

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Oxford University Press, 2012), 313.

<sup>6</sup>George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 282-83. For the “Old Lights, conversion was principally a transformation in one’s intellectual convictions.” Samuel Storms, *Signs of the Spirit: An Interpretation of Jonathan Edwards’s Religious Affections* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 30.

<sup>7</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 440.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Edward M. Griffin, *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston, 1705-1787* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 69. Chauncy’s 1742 sermon “Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against” argued that many who participated in the revival mistook their own passions for supernatural guidance. Chauncy’s fullest response to the revival was contained in Charles Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New-England*.

<sup>9</sup>In the words of Perry Miller, *Seasonable Thought* was a “classic of hardheaded, dogmatic rationalism.” Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981), 176.

<sup>10</sup>Cited in Michael A. G. Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards: The Holy Spirit in Revival* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2005), 87.

of the New Lights,<sup>11</sup> by insisting on a soul whose affections shape not only emotions but also intellect. Edwards refused all dichotomies that set the head against the heart.<sup>12</sup> Michael A. G.

Haykin frames Edwards's approach:

To 'pious zealots' such as Davenport, he will stress that biblical Christianity must involve the mind and reason. When God converts a person, light is shed upon the mind. . . In response to Chauncy and those of his persuasion, he will maintain that genuine spirituality flows out from a heart aflame with the love of God. There is no genuine Christianity without a warm heart.<sup>13</sup>

Since excesses by the Old and New Lights marred New England's Great Awakening, Edwards wrote with determination to answer the objections of each group.<sup>14</sup> Edwards's treatise entitled *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, published in 1746, is his major statement on the awakening. Providing answers to both Chauncy and Davenport, Edwards reiterated his basic positions: that the heart of true religion is located in one's affections rather than reason or intellect, but that heightened emotions and physical reactions do not prove true works of the Holy Spirit. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards explores how one might distinguish true religious affections from false ones.

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<sup>11</sup>See Presbyterian John Moorehead's prayer: "God direct us what to do, particularly with pious zealots and cold, diabolical opposers." Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 20.

<sup>12</sup>Marsden points out that "as any perusal of Edwards's sermons will confirm, Edwards's exaltation of the affections was never at the expense of reason." Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 282.

<sup>13</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 123.

<sup>14</sup>See Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741); *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival* (1743); and most importantly, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746). *Some Thoughts*, in particular, was a defense of the revivals in response to published condemnations by Charles Chauncy. Regarding Edwards's defense of the revival with particular attention to Chauncy's criticisms, see Robert Davis Smart, *Jonathan Edwards's Apologetic for the Great Awakening: With Particular Attention to Charles Chauncy's Criticisms* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

## Statement of Problem

Since the 1970s, American homiletics has been troubled by a debate very similar to that of the First Great Awakening. Hershael York states, “Liberals attempt to deny the absolute truth content of the text, whereas some conservatives deny its appropriate emotional content and purpose.”<sup>15</sup> Specifically, the difference in ideas between the New Homiletic and expository preaching exposes a similar exclusivism—one which also polarizes emotional religious experience and understanding through cognitive propositional truth. Simply put, there has been an inveterate dichotomy between head and heart. Expository preaching is accused of overemphasizing cognitive-propositional truth at the expense of emotional experience. Conversely, the New Homiletic advocates a non-propositional approach at the pulpit and values the experiential aspects of Christian revelation.<sup>16</sup> Despite their common concerns,<sup>17</sup> a closer examination reveals some fundamental differences in how proponents from each perspective understand the task of preaching. The most significant difference between these homiletical approaches is their belief about the authority of the Scripture in the sermon.

### Religious Experience Excluded in Expository Preaching

Another fundamental difference between the New Homiletic and contemporary

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<sup>15</sup>Hershael W. York, “Communication Theory and Text-Driven Preaching,” in *Text-Driven Preaching: God’s Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Mathews (Nashville: B&H, 2010): 232. John Stott also maintains that on the one hand conservatives are biblical but not contemporary, while on the other liberals and radicals are contemporary but not biblical. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 144.

<sup>16</sup>The term non-propositional does not necessarily imply anti-propositional, which argues there are no biblical propositions. Eugene Lowry uses the term to express the “experiential” or “aesthetic” knowing which simply cannot be grasped in propositional form. Eugene L. Lowry, *Doing Time in the Pulpit: The Relationship between Narrative and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 78-81.

<sup>17</sup>Both movements are concerned with reaching modern congregations and attracting their interest.

expository preaching is the issue of this dissertation: the place and role of religious experience in preaching. Although expository preaching recognizes the importance of the listener's experience, the primary focus of its homiletical approach is not the listener but rather the proclamation of the truth of God. The key to effective expository preaching is, according to Haddon Robinson, found in the preacher's ability to "interpret the Scripture so accurately and plainly and apply it so truthfully that truth crosses the bridge [between the text and the listener]."<sup>18</sup> Sidney Greidanus also articulates this focus when he writes,

If preachers wish to preach with divine authority, they must proclaim the message of the inspired Scriptures, for the Scriptures alone are the word of God written; the Scriptures alone have divine authority. . . . Thus, preaching with authority is synonymous with true expository preaching.<sup>19</sup>

Contrary to this, for the New Homileticians the aim of the sermon is not the communication of biblical truths but rather the creation of an experience of the gospel for the listener.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, rather than drawing truths from the text, they concentrate on the total impact of the biblical text on the listener. The New Homileticians seek to create an experience, or evoke a response in the listener. Thomas Long notes that when the New Homileticians thought deeply about how people actually listen to preaching, they concluded that the experience of creative insight on the part of the listener was more essential to the hearing of the gospel than a rational thought process.<sup>21</sup> As Howell summarizes, the goal of New Homiletic preaching is not to identify the objective

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<sup>18</sup>Haddon Robinson, "Homiletics and Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 821.

<sup>19</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 12-13.

<sup>20</sup>Robert Reid, Jeffrey Bullock, and David Fleer, "Preaching as the Creation of an Experience: The Not-So-Rational Revolution of the New Homiletic," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 18 (March 1995):1. See Charles Rice, "Shaping Sermons by the Interplay of Text and Metaphor," in *Preaching Biblically: Creating Sermons in the Shape of Scripture*, ed. Don M. Wardlaw (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 104.

<sup>21</sup>Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 97.

meaning of the biblical text and then convey that meaning to the listeners. Instead, “the goal of preaching is to lead listeners to experience the text’s claim upon their lives.”<sup>22</sup>

This dissertation begins with an assumption that since 1970s, expository preaching has lost the vocabulary of “experience” in preaching to the New Homiletic. In comparing expository preaching textbooks, one can easily recognize a lack of major coverage to religious experience in preaching. This does not mean that expository preachers are not unconcerned with experience or that their textbooks always avoid experiential or emotional vocabulary. Nevertheless, they do not assign experience a constitutive role in their preaching, making it clear that the preacher’s role is to present clear gospel truths.

This dissertation proposes several reasons why expository preaching has faced an unnecessary trauma over religious experience and taken a negative stance on it. First of all, Friedrich Schleiermacher’s vision of hermeneutics as the reconstruction of the author’s mental experience played a significant role.<sup>23</sup> For Schleiermacher, the ultimate aim in interpreting texts was to get through to an author’s psychological experience.<sup>24</sup> Schleiermacher’s conviction that one can only know God through one’s feeling of absolute dependence kept him from accepting the objectivity of God’s nature apart from human experience. Thus, for him, “the words of scripture were not God-given but took shape as human beings reflected on their religious

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<sup>22</sup>Mark A. Howell, “Hermeneutical Bridges and Homiletical Methods: A Comparative Analysis of the New Homiletic and Expository Preaching Theory 1970-1995” (Ph.D. diss., The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999), 192.

<sup>23</sup>Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 204-36; Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 84-97.

<sup>24</sup>Anthony C. Thiselton, *Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 103-6.

experiences.”<sup>25</sup> As a result, a believer’s immediate experience took precedence over the authority of the Bible. As for expository preachers, Schleiermacher’s psychological hermeneutics, which places more emphasis on the religious experience than the authority of the Scripture would be inadmissible.

Second, by overemphasizing religious experience the New Homiletic brought about serious ill effects. The key for Charles Rice, for example, is not the biblical text, but the human experience “behind” it, which the text expresses.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Fred B. Craddock’s inductive, open-ended approach to preaching begins with his conviction that the preacher should allow the audience to draw their own conclusion from the sermon, and that the experience of the listener should be the starting point in preaching rather than the biblical text.<sup>27</sup> Craddock is not concerned with expounding upon the intended meaning of the biblical text, but creating in his listener’s mind an experience of the Word of God through preaching. Like Craddock and Rice, Eugene Lowry also explicitly emphasizes the experiential aspect in preaching. For Lowry, the sermon should be an experiential event rather than a communication of propositional truths.<sup>28</sup> As Charles Campbell states, although one can find a positive contribution of New Homiletic in that it has affirmed the holistic character of preaching, “the experiential focus of contemporary narrative homiletics can result in a theological relationalism that makes God too dependent on immediate

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<sup>25</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 671.

<sup>26</sup>Charles L. Campbell, *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei’s Postliberal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 124.

<sup>27</sup>Fred B. Craddock, *As One without Authority* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001), 146. He writes, “Because the particulars of life provide the place of beginning, there is the necessity of a ground of shared experience. . . . these common experiences, provided they are meaningful in nature and are reflected upon with insight and judgment, are for the inductive method essential to the preaching experience” (58).

<sup>28</sup>Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980), 33, 64.

human experience.”<sup>29</sup> When preaching focuses too heavily on individual experience, the role of the listener supplants the meaning of the biblical text and faith becomes relegated to the private realm. One prominent aspect of the New Homiletical theorists is that they overemphasize religious experience in preaching at the expense of the authority of the biblical text. As a result, by virtue of the New Homiletic’s misuse of ‘religious experience,’ expository preachers came to the understanding that religious experience and the authority of the Scripture are virtually incompatible in preaching. Thus they have not assigned experience the constitutive role in their preaching that the New Homiletic has.

Third, the term “religious experience” is often associated with mystical connotations and heightened emotionalism. People tend to think that religious or spiritual experiences are subjective and dependent upon an individual’s report of transcendent reality, an encounter or union with the divine. In the Christian context, the term is misunderstood as if the Holy Spirit gives sudden impulses and impressions in visions, special revelation in voice to the saints, along with a dismissal of rational thought. In fact, a wide variety of experiences fall under the general rubric of religious experience.<sup>30</sup> In his analysis of the religious experience in contemporary theology, Donald L. Gelpi indicates that the turn to experience has yielded negative results for contemporary theology because the construct of experience does not adequately explain both the ordinary human experience and the graced transformation of that experience by Christian faith.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Campbell, *Preaching Jesus*, 141, 142.

<sup>30</sup>William James, *The Variety of Religious Experience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

<sup>31</sup>Donald L. Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1994). For example, among liberation theologians, one finds the turn to experience implicit an attempt to lay epistemological foundations for liberation theology’s political preoccupations. One also finds the turn to experience implicit in Cornel West’s recent endorsement of prophetic pragmatism. Moreover, the turn to experience shows up even in Protestant process theology. See Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*, trans. Robert Barr (New York: Orbis, 1987); Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of*

A recent attempt to transform “experience” into a metaphysical category produced a negative impression of religious experience on expository preachers as well as conservative theologians.

Despite these negative associations with religious experience, and even the frequent misuses of the term, this dissertation insists that expository preaching needs to restore a discussion on religious experience to its theory and practice, since lasting and effectual change in the lives of congregants has its seat chiefly in the heart rather than in the head.<sup>32</sup> Expository preachers must be careful not to throw out the experiential baby with the New Homiletic bathwater. This dissertation will discuss Jonathan Edwards’s concept of the “sense of the heart” and demonstrate how it might provide modern expositors with a new direction for encouraging religious experience in expository preaching.

### **Whose Context? Which Application?**

One of the crucial issues in expository preaching is the necessity of application, which, according to York, is “the secret of powerful preaching.”<sup>33</sup> Every expository preacher underscores “how to make the journey from the biblical text to the modern world.”<sup>34</sup> Without a

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*Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); and Joseph A. Bracken, *The Triune Symbol: Persons, Process, and Community* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985).

<sup>32</sup>In what follows I will define “religious experience” and clarify the relationship between life change and experience in preaching.

<sup>33</sup>Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 145.

<sup>34</sup>Haddon W. Robinson, “The Heresy of Application,” in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig B. Larson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 306. Chapell also argues that “without application, the preacher has no reason to preach because truth without application is useless. This means that at its heart preaching is not merely the proclamation of truth, but is truth applied.” Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 199-200. Wayne McDill and Daniel Doriani maintains that application is essential to effective expository preaching. See Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills*; Daniel Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical*

doubt, application is an essential component to expository preaching, not just an appendix. Application serves as the bridge between the ancient world and the modern world, between meaning and relevance.<sup>35</sup> Having established a clear need for application, though, the question remains: what we mean by “applying the meaning of the text to the listeners’ lives?” Can life change through preaching be possible, and if so, how? Brian Chapell speaks of “exegetically sound application,” and attempts to identify the principles and methods of application.<sup>36</sup> But application is not a matter of principles and methods, but a matter of the heart and decision. This dissertation supposes that the way in which expository preaching approaches the issue of application is too *cognitive and analytic*. We *know* what application is, and *understand* its function, components, and importance in our preaching. Application is not merely a matter of systematic guidance or theoretical paradigm, however. Rather, it takes place as a *decision of the heart*. In other words, application is a matter of the will, involving volition and affections. York sums this up, saying, “Like the prophets and the apostles, we preach for a *decision*, not merely for information.”<sup>37</sup> The primary concern of this study is to clarify what makes application possible. This study will demonstrate that the experience of divine beauty and glory through listeners’ “sense of the heart” makes application possible. Without this experience, Edwards argues, no moral goodness or true virtue would be possible:

A sight of the awful greatness of God, may overpower men’s strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength, no love will be enkindled. . . whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects, as it were with

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*Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001).

<sup>35</sup>Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 135-78.

<sup>36</sup>Bryan Chapell, “The Future of Expository Preaching,” *Presbyterion* 30 (2004): 72.

<sup>37</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

omnipotent power, which nothing can withstand.<sup>38</sup>

This dissertation will demonstrate that application is natural consequence of a glimpsing divine excellency and glory revealed in the word of God. In the same vein, life-change does not happen to those who merely believe rationally that God is glorious and holy, but to those who have a sense of the gloriousness and holiness of God in their hearts. A decision to take action can only be possible when listeners' fundamental affections are reoriented: transform the root and the fruit will follow. This study insists that expository preaching should pursue this *affectional application*.

### **Why Jonathan Edwards?**

With regard to the need for emphasis on religious experience in expository preaching, this study names several reasons why Jonathan Edwards comes to the fore. First of all, Edwards differs markedly from Schleiermacher, who held a subjectively oriented theory of religious experience. Edwards, on the other hand, sought to formulate a conception of religious experience that was not subjective. As McClymond points out, "Edwards's notion of spiritual perception served as a safeguard against subjectivism, since the very notion of perception requires a perceived object as well as a perceiving subject."<sup>39</sup> For Edwards, religious experience involved a genuine knowledge and understanding of an experienced object, namely, God. Edwards carefully attuned both the subjective and objective aspects of religious experience. For Edwards,

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<sup>38</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:264-65.

<sup>39</sup>Michael J. McClymond, *Encounter with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 24-25.

experience for the sake of experience is meaningless. As he repeatedly emphasizes in his treatise, those who talk much of their religious experiences may not be true believers because their eye, mind, and joy is taken up more with their own religious experience than with God.<sup>40</sup>

Second, the importance of Jonathan Edwards in this study can be discovered in Richard Lints's evaluation on Edwards in his book *The Fabric of Theology*:

He is arguably the most creative and the most orthodox theologian that America has yet produced. He was fascinated by the new learning of his day, and, although it may seem incompatible to most moderns, he was also bound by an unparalleled commitment of fidelity to the Scriptures. Even those who do not agree with his conclusions would be hard pressed to find an individual more driven spiritually and intellectually by a commitment and devotion to God. He stands with Augustine and Luther in the depth of the analysis of *religious experience*. He stands with Aquinas and Calvin in the breadth of his *intellectual grasp* of the gospel. He may stand unmatched in his ability to have woven these two strands together effectively.<sup>41</sup>

This match of both the intellectual and the experiential is what makes Edwards an attractive case study. While the New Homiletic only emphasizes the experiential aspect of the Word at the expense of the author-intended meaning and the authority of the Scripture, Edwards was notable for his effort to balance intellect and experience, mind and heart, knowing and feeling, truth and emotion. He also broke down the customary dichotomy of cognition and affection, of head and heart. There was a wonderful combination in Edwards's thought. Above all, Edwards represents a distinct contrast to the New Homiletic in that for him the Bible is self-authenticating and self-evident. He affirms that the Word of God has divine authority.<sup>42</sup> He thus stated that "God may reveal things in Scripture which way he pleases. . . . it is our duty to receive it as his

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<sup>40</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:251. Edwards writes, "What they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the glory of God, or beauty of Christ, but the beauty of their experiences."

<sup>41</sup>Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 172. Italics added.

<sup>42</sup>Chap. 3 investigates Edwards's doctrine of the Word in detail.

revelation.”<sup>43</sup>

Third, this dissertation concentrates on the sense of the heart in Edwards’s thought, which clarifies the problem of how we can know we are experiencing God.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the concept of the sense of the heart is the helm to distinguish true experience from false when we assign religious experience the constitutive role in expository preaching. For Edwards, the sense of the heart is an actual, sensible experience of God’s beauty. The Holy Spirit gives a new spiritual sense or “a principle of new kind of perception or spiritual sensation.”<sup>45</sup> Through the sense of the heart divine beauty is experienced and perceived. This study argues that it is this new sensibility of divine beauty that makes application possible, by producing in the saints a new disposition towards holiness and holy affections.<sup>46</sup> The sense of the heart is an actual infusion of God’s beauty. In other words, the presence of God’s Holy Spirit produces genuine religious experience.<sup>47</sup> Again, for Edwards, the sense of the heart, as it relates to religious experience, involves both the mind and the heart. So he writes, “Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 426, *WJE*, 13:479.

<sup>44</sup>Edwards did not use “sense of the heart” terminology until he was a pastor in Northampton. He first used this term in his 1733 Northampton sermon “A Divine and Supernatural Light.” He also employed the “sense of the heart” in “Miscellanies,” nos. 732 and 782, cited in Karin Spiecker Stetina, *Jonathan Edwards’s Early Understanding of Religious Experience: His New York Sermons, 1720-1723* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2011), 28, n 78.

<sup>45</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:205.

<sup>46</sup>Chap. 2 explores the concept of “sense of the heart” in detail.

<sup>47</sup>Edwards writes, “The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, that he there, as a seed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature, making the soul a partaker of God’s beauty and Christ’s joy, so that the saint has truly fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation of the Holy Ghost.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:201.

<sup>48</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:266.

This study assumes a high view of Scripture: that “the Bible *is* what God says, and what God says is what we must say when we preach.”<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the concepts of religious experience at the expense of the authority of the Word of God, as Schleiermacher and the New Homiletic think of “experience,” are excluded from this study at the outset. Instead, the study will focus on the subject matter from an Edwardsean point of view. Before we tease out the implications of Edwards’s sense of the heart, however, we first turn our attention to the definition of religious experience in the Edwardsean sense.

### **Religious Experience in Edwardsean Sense**

In *Religious Affections*, Edwards presents a sustained theological analysis of religious experience.<sup>50</sup> In the treatise, Edwards provides us with several notions to illustrate what genuine religious experience is.<sup>51</sup> First of all, religious experience, for Edwards, is not speculative knowledge (head knowledge) but sensible knowledge (heart knowledge). The former pertains to understanding and the latter is experiential. For example, a person may know that honey is sweet after reading of its taste and savor in a book or by hearing of its sweetness from another person. This kind of knowledge can be a real knowledge. The person indeed has knowledge that honey is

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<sup>49</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 19. York rightly states that a high view of Scripture is the *sine qua non* of exposition.

<sup>50</sup>According to Smith, Edwards did not use the term “religious experience.” Instead, he used the expressions “experimental religion,” “experiential religion,” and “heart religion” as synonyms. Smith states that the term “religious experience” was made popular by William James in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. John E. Smith, *Jonathan Edwards, Puritan, Preacher and Philosopher* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 56 n17. Edwards used the phrase “Christian experience” in *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:452. Throughout this study, the term “religious experience” will be used as a synonym for genuine, gracious, experimental, true, Christian, heart religion.

<sup>51</sup>In the words of Simonson, “*Religious Affections* brings to culmination of some twenty-five years of thought about the nature of religious experience.” Harold P. Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 56.

sweet. This knowledge, however, is limited and thoroughly different from the knowledge obtained by tasting honey for oneself. Edwards writes, “there is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former that knows not how honey tastes; but a man cannot have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind.”<sup>52</sup> The latter knowledge represents genuine religious experience, derived through the sense of taste. The sweetness is known through experience, not through information, since something of the sweetness must be imparted to the knower. Hence, when we discuss “religious experience” in preaching, we should assume that the preacher includes information and sound reasoning, but that his ultimate goal is not merely informational. As York writes, “Our approach to the Bible and to preaching has application as its ultimate goal. Application is what makes the Bible come alive and makes sermons practical.”<sup>53</sup> This dissertation attempts to clarify what makes application possible. The answer is found in the sense of the heart given to the saints by the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, Edwards understood genuine religious experience as a sight of the divine excellency. By excellency Edwards means God’s beauty.<sup>54</sup> He maintains that true religious experience primarily consists of a sense of the supreme beauty of God. For Edwards, the experience of God’s beauty is at the heart of and the very structure of religious experience. True saints experience God’s beauty as well as know the sweetness of God’s light shining into the soul. Referring to beauty in this way “provided Edwards with a framework to express his

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<sup>52</sup>Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” *WJE*, 17:414. See also Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:20.

<sup>53</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 11.

<sup>54</sup>In this study, the terms *excellency* and *beauty* are used interchangeably.

understanding of genuine religious experience.”<sup>55</sup>

After all, for Edwards and in this study, religious experience means spiritually seeing, tasting, feeling, and relishing divine beauty and excellency through the sense of the heart. Hence in *Religious Affections*, Edwards repeatedly makes a connection between head and heart in any genuine religious experience. This study defines religious experience, according to Edwards’s use, as an experience of the “divine excellency.” This study also assumes that to be genuine, the experience should be of the things revealed in the word of God. True experience should always be Word-driven.

### **Thesis of This Study**

This dissertation originated from a dissatisfaction with the dichotomy that polarizes the goal of preaching between expository sermons and the New Homiletic. The emphasis that expository preachers place on the objective meaning of the biblical text seems incompatible with the New Homiletic focus on the religious experience created by the text. It also seems that the New Homiletic has taken possession of the vocabulary concerning religious experience, while expository preachers exclude experience from their preaching.

One of the central arguments in this study is that our preaching should promote religious experiences of the hearers, as Edwards understands the term. Expository preaching should no longer be understood solely as a cognitive enterprise. It must also address the emotional and volitional life of the hearers. It should speak to both the heart and the head. The

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<sup>55</sup>Louis J. Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty*, Studies in Reformed Theology and History (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 2003), ix.

ultimate goal of expository preaching is to lead the listeners to grasp the meaning of the text and apply its implications to their life situations. Through the proclamation of the Word, congregants should experience its power to transform their lives. For this to happen, expository preachers need to rejoin the discussion on “religious experience.” The thesis of this study is that Jonathan Edwards’s “sense of the heart,” which is an actual infusion of God’s beauty in the person of the Holy Spirit, can provide expository preaching with a meaningful direction for the restoration of religious experience.

In this regard, Eugene Lowry’s “aesthetic knowing” deserves much attention. He distinguishes reading a book from experiencing a painting. While the former is actively seeking meaning and the propositional thought, the latter is “grasped” by an “experience” of the work of art; a kind of conversion or abrupt change takes place, as the work of art is experienced as an “event” at an intuitive level.<sup>56</sup> According to Lowry, the gospel should be ultimately not understood, but experienced and the goal of our preaching is to create a transforming, revelatory, experiential event for the hearers.<sup>57</sup>

### **History of Research**

Due to the provocative scholarship of Perry Miller, an academic renaissance of Jonathan Edwards’s studies has flourished. As a result, scholarship not only includes a series of excellent studies on Edwards’s life and thought,<sup>58</sup> but also a new all-important edition of his

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<sup>56</sup>Lowry, *Doing Time*, 82.

<sup>57</sup>Lowry, *Doing Time*, 36.

<sup>58</sup>For studies which introduces the prominent works done in the last decade, see Kenneth P. Minkema, “Jonathan Edwards in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 4 (2004): 659-87, and Sean Michael Lucas, “Jonathan Edwards between Church and Academy: A Bibliographical Essay,” in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael

works.<sup>59</sup> The importance of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, published by Yale University press, can hardly be measured. In 2008, M. X. Lesser's book *Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729-2005* accelerated rising interest in Edwards as a theologian. The book lists thousands of academic studies concerning Edwards and his thoughts, annotating and indexing each title. Moreover, studies on single doctrines, such as the doctrine of God, the Trinity, the nature of salvation, the atonement, and doctrine of hell were also evident as never before. It is difficult, indeed, to find a hitherto unstudied subject concerning Edwards's theologies.

In contrast to this, a careful research on the theology of his preaching was not enough. A scant research on Edwards's sermons is especially incredible, considering the fact, as Wilson Kimnach writes, that "although the reputation of Jonathan Edwards is appropriately multifaceted and he is deservedly recognized as theologian, philosopher, and pioneering psychologist, the popular conception of him as a preacher is essentially correct."<sup>60</sup> Ralph G. Turnbull noted this discrepancy, writing, "Edwards has been appraised by those who have been attracted by his philosophy. His worth as a preacher has been neglected."<sup>61</sup> Even in the twenty-first century, much scholarship has been directed toward using his sermons as a source for plumbing his

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Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 228-47.

<sup>59</sup>*The Works of Jonathan Edwards* completed in 2008 with vol. 26 published by Yale University offered many theologians opportunities to access Edwards's theology and thought formation.

<sup>60</sup>Editor's introduction to *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 10, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson Kimnach (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 3. Kimnach also writes, "His career in the pulpit and the attendant body of sermons he produced constitute the hub of his diverse interests and activities." Kimnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:3. In addition, he also writes that "the one literary genre he mastered was the sermon." *WJE*, 10:xiii. John H. Gerstner highly acclaims Edwards as a preacher: "Jonathan Edwards was, in my opinion, the greatest preacher, from the standpoint of content of his message, who has appeared in history since apostolic times." John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhatan, VA: Berea Publications, 1991), 1:480.

<sup>61</sup>Ralph G. Turnbull, *Jonathan Edwards the Preacher* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 20.

thoughts on a particular topic, rather than his preaching itself.<sup>62</sup> There has been, as John Carrick mentioned, “a surprising *lacuna* in the otherwise exponentially exploding field of Edwards scholarship.”<sup>63</sup>

This dissertation begins with the assumption that the deepest *lacuna*—or *gap*—in Edwards scholarship persists in the relationship between Edwards’s preaching and his notion of the sense of the heart. Some scholars have already recognized the significance of Edwards’s understanding of the sense of the heart.<sup>64</sup> Their studies, however, have not examined the sense of the heart in relation to Edwards’s preaching and how this central concept emerged out of his sermons. For example, in his book *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion*, Brad Walton argues that, for Edwards, the sense of the heart involves an inclination, or volition, that determines how a person perceives and inclines toward, or disinclines from, divine reality.<sup>65</sup> He successfully demonstrates that Edwards’s thought must be seen in the context of his own Puritan tradition and the longer history of Christian thought. The work falls short, however, in that it does not directly or indirectly deal with Edwards’s sermons and does not understand the “sense of the heart” in

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<sup>62</sup>While Rachel M. Wheeler briefly explores Edwards’s preaching style and offers helpful insights in her dissertation, Edwards’s preaching is not the focus of the dissertation. Rachel M. Wheeler, “Living upon Hope: Mahicans and Missionaries, 1730-1760” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1999), 133-211.

<sup>63</sup>John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), 18. Carrick writes that his work attempts to supply that *lacuna*. “It seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of Jonathan Edwards’s preaching.” Carrick, *Jonathan Edwards*, 20.

<sup>64</sup>Terrence Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards, Art and the Sense of the Heart* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); David M. Jacobson, “Jonathan Edwards and the ‘American Difference’: Pragmatic Reflections on the ‘Sense of the Heart,’” *Journal of American Studies* 21 (December 1987): 377-85; William J. Wainwright, “Jonathan Edwards and the Sense of the Heart,” *Faith and Philosophy* 7 (January 1990): 43-62; Harold P. Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982); Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*.

<sup>65</sup>Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2002), iii.

relation to Edwards's preaching. There are several scholars, however, that touch on the various relationships that this dissertation will explore. Their discussions do not necessarily combine Jonathan Edwards's "sense of the heart," but they do highlight the major arguments of this dissertation. In Karin Stetina's book *Jonathan Edwards's Early Understanding of Religious Experience*, she recognizes the importance of the religious experience in Edwards's thought by examining his concept of the "sense of the heart." She argues that Edwards's theology of religious experience in the concept of the "sense of the heart" is the fundamental theme in his thought and proves that the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures rather than his philosophical roots are essential to Edwards's thought. She limits her focus, however, to Edwards as a young pastoral theologian and his writings from 1720-1723, including his sermons from New York, and does not examine in detail Edwards's important writings, such as *Religious Affections*, or his monumental later sermons. In addition, Adam Dooley, in his doctoral dissertation, tackles the gap between intellectual and emotional sermons. Dooley demonstrates that preaching with emotion, intending to draw an emotional response, is necessary in order to achieve maximum persuasion. The most intellectual approach to preaching, according to Dooley, requires preaching for the affections.<sup>66</sup> However, his work generally focuses on emotions rather than affections. He also does not explore Jonathan Edwards's "sense of the heart" or his preaching theology.

### **Methodology and Limitations**

This dissertation proposes a new direction for expository preaching through the

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<sup>66</sup>Adam Dooley, "Utilizing Biblical Persuasion Techniques in Preaching without Being Manipulative," (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006), 5.

reappraisal of religious experience. In support of the thesis, this dissertation presents a historical, theological, philosophical and homiletical analysis of Edward's doctrine of the sense of the heart and his understanding of religious experience. Because of its focus on preaching, this dissertation focuses more on Edwards as a preacher rather than a philosopher or theologian. Hence, throughout the dissertation, while Edwards's moral theology, spiritual epistemology, pneumatology and view on beauty will be examined, those issues will only be dealt with to the extent that they are related to reestablishing the goal and task of expository preaching. The primary purpose of this dissertation is not to explicate Edwards's theology or philosophy *per se*. Rather, it focuses more on how Edwards's preaching theory and practice can contribute to contemporary expository preaching by analyzing his concept of "sense of the heart" and examining his sermons and other works. Throughout its treatment of religious experience, this dissertation will define Edwardsean religious experience as Spiritual-linguistic approach and demonstrate that expository preaching should restore the discussion on religious experience in Edwardsean sense.

These aspects, at the same time, result in some limitations of this dissertation. First, the discussion on religious experience cannot fully evaluate Edwards's views as they compare to all other theologians, including writers influenced by the Enlightenment, the Romantic movement, existentialism, the "God who acts" movement, neo-orthodoxy and liberalism, but instead focuses on three possible interpretive model. These three views were chosen because they offer the most comprehensive and influential explanations on religious experience. Second, the section on the sense of the heart is unable to handle all of Edwards's relevant texts because its purpose is to demonstrate that religious experience through the sense of the heart makes our preaching powerful and effective. It provides an exposition of the sense of the heart specifically

in *Religious Affections*. Third, this dissertation analyzes two of Edwards's most well-known sermons to demonstrate how his understanding of religious experience is expressed in his sermons. The results of the analysis in chapter four cannot be applied to all of Edwards's sermons, but rather understood as the homiletical principle which Edwards employed in order to enable the listeners to have religious experience.

### Outline

Whatever the causes, one cannot deny that expository preaching has overlooked the poly-dimensional aspect of Scripture and overemphasized its propositional aspect.<sup>67</sup> This dissertation assumes that the word of God should be considered poly-dimensional, if those dimensions include propositional aspect. This is very applicable to expository preaching in the sense that there is a direct link between a theology of Scripture and a theology of preaching. If preachers understand Scripture as propositional, they will also preach propositionally; if the Scripture is regarded as poetic, they will understand their preaching as poetry. One of the goals of this dissertation is to demonstrate, by examining Edwards's understanding of religious experience and the sense of the heart, that the impact of our preaching lies not only in the truths it conveys but also in the affections it uses in order to convey those truths, and in its imaginative language.

Chapter 1 introduces an uncomfortable phenomenon in expository preaching that polarizes affectionate religious experience and cognitive-propositional truth, by illustrating the

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<sup>67</sup>Donald Bloesch's warning against modern evangelical preoccupation with propositional revelation raises the alarm to expository preachers: "Revelation is better spoken of as polydimensional rather than propositional in the strict sense, in that it connotes the event of God's speaking as well as the truth of what is spoken: the truth, moreover, takes various linguistic forms including the propositional." Donald Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 1:76.

debate between the Old and the New Lights in the First Great Awakening. It details why the vocabulary of expository preaching has ceded the term “experience” to the New Homiletic, and why Jonathan Edwards’s view is foremost in this matter. Chapter 1 offers the thesis of the dissertation, which contends that Jonathan Edwards’s “sense of the heart,” which is an actual infusion of God’s beauty in the person of the Holy Spirit, can provide expository preaching with a meaningful direction for restoring the notion of religious experience. It discusses history of research and methodology used in this dissertation.

Chapter 2 discusses Jonathan Edwards’s spiritual epistemology characterized by the “sense of the heart.” It documents Puritan influence on Edwards’s spiritual sense. It then examines whether a “spiritual sense” is continuous or discontinuous with ordinary perception. This chapter summarizes Edwards’s “third way,” which is a creative synthesis of Puritan and Enlightenment views. It surveys the concept of the sense of the heart, centering around its content, mode, and sensibility. Then the chapter presents the relationship between Edwards’s pneumatology and his concept of sense of the heart, and investigates what the Holy Spirit does through the sense of the heart. It defines God’s beauty as the immediate object of sense of the heart. Edwards understands an experience of God’s beauty as genuine religious experience. The chapter culminates with homiletical reflections on Edwards’s sense of the heart.

Chapter 3 explores the nature of Edwardsean religious experience. It examines three possible interpretive models for religious experience. Specifically, it defines Edwardsean model as “Spiritual-linguistic” approach, which is opposed to Schleiermacher’s experiential-expressive approach and George Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach. After surveying the legacy of Calvin, the chapter traces the development of Edwards’s thought on religious experience in the context of the Revival. It analyzes Edwards’s conversion experience and the case histories of

Sarah Edwards and David Brainerd, which he analyzes in his own writings as evidence of real religious experience. The chapter defines genuine religious experience as Spirit-led experience through the word of God. The Spirit-illuminated word of God is the primary mediator for genuine religious experience.

Chapter 4 presents a homiletical analysis of Edwards's affective preaching. It begins by recognizing the legacy of Puritan preaching and its effect on Edwards's preaching theology and style, especially his debt to his grandfather Solomon Stoddard. It also discusses Edwards's beliefs about typology, which directly influenced his use of figurative language in his sermons. Finally, the chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of two of Edwards's sermons, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and "Heaven is a World of Love," to exemplify the affective aspect of his preaching. Following Edwards's belief that a preacher could, and must, use language to help his congregants see and taste the divine things, the analysis focuses particularly on his use of imagery and metaphor in his sermons.

Chapter 5 provides helpful implications for contemporary expository preaching. First, the chapter proposes preaching as a persuasion by illustrating Paul's use of rhetoric. Second, it indicates Edwards's power of imagination and suggests that expository preachers should pursue affective preaching by the use of their imagination and imaginative language. Third, it examines the implication of Edwardsean piety for expository preaching. Fourth, it offers preaching as a means of experiencing God's beauty.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to the dissertation that summarizes the overall arguments established in the previous chapters and suggests areas of research that warrant further exploration in this subject matter.

## CHAPTER 2

### JONATHAN EDWARDS'S SPIRITUAL EPISTEMOLOGY: "SENSE OF THE HEART"

One of the most controversial issues for those studying Edwards's theology has been the significance of his teaching on the "sense of the heart" or "new sense."<sup>1</sup> This has been controversial because scholars disagreed with matters such as its nature, its relationship to Locke's empiricism, and its object. This term the "sense of the heart" does not refer to new information about God, but rather a way of appreciating and relating to God. Namely, this is the disposition or habit that the Holy Spirit gives saints to enable them to see God's infinite beauty and glory. In Erdt's words, the sense of the heart is "the state or frame of mind that constituted the saint's experience of grace, his exposure to and participation in spirit."<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, I will first examine the puritan influence on Edwards's spiritual sense. I particularly investigate Edwards's indebtedness to such Puritan authors as Richard Sibbes and Thomas Shepard, among others. Before discussing the issue of the sense of the heart, the relationship between the sense of the heart and ordinary mental perception needs clarification. Some have argued that Edwards's

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<sup>1</sup>Because the idea of the "sense of the heart" holds a pivotal position in Edwards's thought, a large number of authors have written on it recently. Among the most important discussions of the "sense of the heart" are the following: John E. Smith, "Editor's Introduction," in Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:1-83; Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 12-43; James Hoopes, "Jonathan Edwards's Religious Psychology," *Journal of American History* 69 (1983): 849-65; and James Hoopes, *Consciousness in New England: From Puritanism and Ideas to Psychoanalysis and Semiotic*, New Series in American Intellectual and Cultural History (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 64-87; David Laurence, "Jonathan Edwards, John Locke, and the Canon of Experience," *Early American Literature* 15 (1980): 107-23; Edward H. Davidson, "From Locke to Edwards," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963): 355-72; Terence Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards, Art, and the Sense of the Heart* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1980); Paul Helm, "John Locke and Jonathan Edwards: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 7 (1969): 51-61; David Lyttle, "The Supernatural Light," in *Studies in Religion in Early American Literature* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 1-20; William J. Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards and the Sense of the Heart," *Faith and Philosophy* 7 (1990): 43-92.

belief is in keeping with Lockean empiricism, and this study will examine to what extent that is or is not true. This is important because everyday experience is both the object of our spiritual perception and the subject matter of our preaching. This study seeks to articulate Edwardsean creative synthesis of Puritanism and Enlightenment, and his balanced evaluation of the two. The kernel of this chapter is Edwards's understanding of the sense of the heart. I explicate this concept, especially as it appeared in the *Religious Affections*. An aesthetic vision of the excellency and beauty of God is closely related to the sense of the heart, in that God's beauty is the immediate object of the sense of the heart. Hence I will examine God's beauty as the object of the sense of the heart. Lastly, I will suggest the homiletical implications that the sense of the heart and the beauty of God each carry.

### **Puritan Influence on Edwards's Spiritual Senses**

Many scholarly works on Edwards argue a clear discontinuity between Jonathan Edwards's theology on the nature of spiritual sense and a more traditionally-held Puritan view.<sup>3</sup> Yet both Edwards's theology and his preaching must be understood in the context of the Puritan tradition to which he belonged. Brad Walton argues that *Religious Affections*, in particular, is "a reassertion of traditional puritan 'experimental' spirituality, cast largely in the same form, and using essentially the same language and conceptualization, as seventeenth-century puritan

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<sup>2</sup>Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 20.

<sup>3</sup>Since Miller's groundbreaking work, a number of commentators have held that *Religious Affections* shows a decisive departure from seventeenth-century Puritanism and that Edwards remarkably adapted Locke's epistemology. See Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981); Everett Emerson, *Puritanism in America: 1620-1750* (Boston: Twayne, 1977); Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966); Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). As Walton points out, Hambrick-Stowe's study does not mention Edwards. Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2002), 36.

analyses of true piety, spiritual sensation and heart religion.”<sup>4</sup> Walton argues that Edwards did not depart from earlier Puritanism as he explored the “sense of the heart.” In fact, Edwards shared much with that tradition, as evidenced by examining both the Puritan works he cites in *Religious Affections* and similar works he does not directly cite but seems to be influenced by. Douglas J. Elwood points out that Richard Sibbes and John Owen have a profound effect on Edwards’s development of religious psychology and heart religion.<sup>5</sup> Janice Knight also observes Sibbes’ the apparent influence on Edwards, commenting that “though Edwardsean scholars neither trace the instances nor consider the implications, they often remark on his indebtedness to Sibbes.”<sup>6</sup> In addition, as Brad Walton observes, the works of Thomas Shepard are cited more than seventy times in the Edwards’s writings.<sup>7</sup> Hence among other Puritan authors, Richard Sibbes, Thomas Shepard, and John Owen’s thoughts on spiritual senses are very helpful in examining Edwards’s own understanding of spiritual sense.

Richard Sibbes is one of the Spiritual Brethren who emphasized experimental piety and affectionate knowledge of divine things.<sup>8</sup> In this regard, Sibbes exercised broad influence on Edwards’s understanding of the spiritual sense, particularly in terms of taste. Edwards describes

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<sup>4</sup>Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 1.

<sup>5</sup>Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 122. Elwood writes, “The emphasis on the Holy Spirit and divine immediacy in creation and conversion, characteristic of Sibbes, Owen, and Smith, finds its recrudescence in Edwards.” Elwood, *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 107.

<sup>6</sup>Janice Knight, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 200. John E. Smith mentions Edwards’s debt to Sibbes in “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 2:69-70. Janice Knight distinguishes between the intellectual and spiritual traditions within Puritanism. Knight, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts*, 2.

<sup>7</sup>Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 36. John Smith also writes, “Edwards quoted more from Shepard than from any other writer.” John E. Smith, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 2:55.

<sup>8</sup>On a detailed discussion about Richard Sibbes’ affectionate theology, see Mark E. Dever, *Richard Sibbes: Puritanism and Calvinism in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 135-60.

this as the sense whereby the saints “perceive the excellency and relish the divine sweetness of holiness.”<sup>9</sup> Edwards affirms that a merely intellectual knowledge of the divine consists of “notions” with no saving efficacy, but that they become a “spiritual” light only when accompanied by a “sense” or “taste,” an affective response to the object of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Sibbes notes that true divine knowledge is “knowledge with a taste,” for God “giveth knowledge *per modum gustus*.”<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the most pervasive influence Sibbes had on Edwards’s thought, the one which shaped the ideas expressed in *Religious Affections* most fully, is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Especially important is Sibbes’ idea of the conjunction of the Word and the Spirit.<sup>13</sup> Sibbes writes, “The word is nothing without the Spirit; it is animated and quickened by the Spirit. Oh! The Spirit is the life and soul of the word.”<sup>14</sup> Both Sibbes and Edwards stress the role of the Holy Spirit on the Word of God.<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Shepard argues in his *Parable of the Ten Virgins* that general Christianity should be identified with and evaluated according to the love which believers experience for

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<sup>9</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:378.

<sup>10</sup>Harry S. Stout, “Editor’s Introduction,” WJE, 13:51.

<sup>11</sup>Sibbes, *Works*, 4:334. Sibbes elsewhere remarks, “In the godly, holy truths are conveyed by way of a taste; gracious men have a spiritual palate as well as a spiritual eye.” “There is a sweet relish in all divine truths, and suitable to the sweetness in them, there is a spiritual taste, which the spirit of God puts into the soul of his children.” Cited in Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 202-03.

<sup>12</sup>Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 14. He writes, “A large influence in directing the Puritan’s attention to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was the preaching of Richard Sibbes.”

<sup>13</sup>Sibbes writes that “as the spirits in the arteries quicken the blood in the veins, so the Spirit of God goes along with the word, and makes it work.” Cited in Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, 23. This view of the relation between the Spirit and the Bible should be compared with both “A Divine and Supernatural Light” and Edwards’s sign in the *Religious Affections*, 291 ff.

<sup>14</sup>Cited in Nuttall, *Holy Spirit*, 24.

<sup>15</sup>Concerning the relationship between the Word and the Spirit in Edwards’s thought, see chap. 3.

Christ. Shepard also offers some signs indicating whether or not one truly loves Christ,<sup>16</sup> as well as the reasons why one ought to love Christ.<sup>17</sup> For Shepard, to love Christ is only possible through *seeing him*,<sup>18</sup> since knowledge of Christ involves “an intuitive or real sight of him as he is in his glory.”<sup>19</sup> Shepard also describes the nature of hypocrisy or “counterfeit grace.” Above all, he argues, it is the Holy Spirit who bestows a new nature on the saints, so they can live in holiness.<sup>20</sup> Edwards regularly uses Shepard’s *Parable* throughout Part Two in *Religious Affections*.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Edwards relies on Shepard’s authority for several assertions in his twelve signs of gracious affections, except the fifth.<sup>22</sup> Walton introduces Shepard’s use of the language of “experimentalism” and the understanding of spiritual senses. Shepard writes, “Saints have an experimental knowledge of the work of Grace, by virtue of which they come to know it for a certainty . . . as by a feeling heat, we know fire is hot; by tasting honey, we know it is

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<sup>16</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:33-41. See also Smith, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 2:53-57.

<sup>17</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:41-68.

<sup>18</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:120.

<sup>19</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:123.

<sup>20</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:260.

<sup>21</sup>Edwards cites six times from Shepard in *Religious Affections*: that hypocrites tend to draw attention to themselves; that joy following terror of God’s wrath is not a conclusive sign of genuine conversion; that not knowing the precise moment of one’s “closing with Christ” is not a sign of unregeneracy; that a distinction exists between “legal” and “evangelical” hypocrites; that there is a difference between Christian peace and carnal presumption; and that the appearance of piety is not the same as genuine piety. Cited in Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 96.

<sup>22</sup>That “natural” and “spiritual” love for Jesus Christ are distinct; that not all affections arise from “light in the understanding”; that “evangelical hypocrisy” can be characterized by covert forms of self-righteousness; that false affections tend to excite complacency; that genuine piety is never satisfied with its present degree of blessedness; that the “change” effected in hypocrites is merely temporary; that hypocrites “affect applause”; that free grace can be abused as an excuse for sin; that some of those who honor God publicly neglect him privately; that true Christian practice is the “chief of all evidences of sincerity”; and that trials and tribulations test the mettle of and reveal the true Christian. Cited in Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 97.

sweet.”<sup>23</sup> The most distinctive is that Shepard, like Edwards, already spoke of “seeing” Christ, which is an “experiential knowledge,” unlike “speculative knowledge” in Edwardsean sense. Thus when a believer “sees” Christ, there is a “shining into the heart,” and a “kindling of an infinite esteem of him.”<sup>24</sup> For Shepard, “seeing” Christ always precedes the act of understanding or “knowing.” In addition, Edwards and Shepard agree that the object of “seeing” is the beauty of God. Edwards’s idea of beauty provides the center for understanding the sense of the heart, especially as that concept is related to the psychology of religious experience.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Shepard’s religious imagination had an immense influence on Edwards’s view of language and preaching.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to Sibbes and Shepard, Edwards seems to be influenced by the thoughts and assumptions of John Owen when he asserts that knowing Christ is experiential. Owen argues that the human “will” or “heart” functions as the integrating principle of the human personality for regeneration.<sup>27</sup> The heart is “the whole rational soul, not absolutely, but as all the faculties of the soul are one common principle of all our moral operations.”<sup>28</sup> For Owen, as for Edwards, one of the effects of regeneration is the change of the heart. A saint, by “circumcising” his “heart,”

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<sup>23</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:222, cited in Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 98-100.

<sup>24</sup>Shepard, *Works*, 2:124.

<sup>25</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 19. For Edwards, the sense of the heart is the “aesthetic sensibility of the whole self.” Sang Hyun Lee, “Mental Activity and the Perception of Beauty in Jonathan Edwards,” *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976): 389.

<sup>26</sup>Especially, see chap. 7, “Shepard’s Legacy and the Religious Imagination in American Literature,” in Thomas Werge, *Thomas Shepard* (Boston: Twayne, 1987).

<sup>27</sup>Owen writes that the real change and internal renewal of the will is the essential and defining characteristic of regeneration. John Owen, *Works*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3, *The Holy Spirit* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850), 328, cited in Walton, *Jonathan Edwards*, 182.

<sup>28</sup>Owen, *The Holy Spirit*, 326.

obtains a spiritual sense to experience the beauty of the divine things.<sup>29</sup> Hence Owen anticipates Edwards by understanding the work of the Holy Spirit as granting a supernatural principle, namely, the sense of the heart into the soul.

For many Puritans, “heart” meant the whole human soul. Thomas Goodwin noted that “the natural faculties of the mind, and will, and affections are in scripture termed the heart, or are connoted at least when the heart is spoken of.”<sup>30</sup> This seems to concur with Richard Sibbes’ statement that “the heart is put for the whole soul.”<sup>31</sup> Likewise, for Edwards, the heart as the principle of human wholeness is not a particular emotion, but the general disposition of the affections.

### **Sense of the Heart: The Product of Calvinism and Enlightenment**

McClymond summarizes the key issue related to the sense of the heart as follows: “At the heart of the debate lies a disagreement over whether the spiritual sense should be seen as basically continuous with, and integral to, the sphere of everyday sense experience, or as discontinuous with ordinary perception, and thus distinct and separate from it.”<sup>32</sup> Those who argue for continuity between spiritual awareness and everyday experience understand Edwards’s spiritual sense not as a vision of a different world, but as a deeper vision of the world already known. There is no sixth sense distinct from the five faculties of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. Perry Miller, Wayne Proudfoot, Edward Davidson and Bruce Kuklick,

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<sup>29</sup>Owen, *Works*, 324.

<sup>30</sup>Goodwin, *Works*, 6:212.

<sup>31</sup>Sibbes, *Complete Works*, 6:525.

<sup>32</sup>Michael J. McClymond, *Encounter with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*

among others, follow this interpretation of the spiritual sense. Those who make a case for discontinuity, on the other hand, assume the existence of a sixth sense distinct from the common sense experiences. Thus the unregenerate, those who have no spiritual sense are spiritually blind. Iain Murray, Paul Helm and David Lyttle are proponents of this position.

This study, however, argues that Edwards's idea about spiritual sense is a creative synthesis of Puritan and Enlightenment ideas. There is a "tacit tug-of-war between the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Christian experience as he conceived it, and the Enlightenment's appeal to general human experience as the basis for all legitimate claims to knowledge."<sup>33</sup> In the following sections, I will discuss Edwards's thought in continuity with Locke's. Following that, I will clarify the discontinuity between Lockean empiricism and Edwards's thinking before demonstrating his creative synthesis of Puritanism and Enlightenment. I will conclude this section with some reflections and implications on Edwards's use of spiritual sense.

### **Continuity with Locke in Edwards's Thought**

Since 1948, when Perry Miller wrote his influential article, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart,"<sup>34</sup> the phrase has come to represent one of Edwards's most distinctive thoughts. The question has been "how substantial was Edwards's philosophical indebtedness to

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>33</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 10.

<sup>34</sup>Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart," *Harvard Theological Review* 41 (1948): 123-45.

Locke in ‘sense of the heart’”? Miller basically understood Edwards’s thought on spiritual perception by means of natural experience. In Miller’s view, while Edwards used the vocabulary of traditional Calvinism, he understood theology according to the empiricism of Locke.<sup>35</sup> Miller writes that “In Edwards’s ‘sense of the heart’ there is nothing supernatural or transcendental; it is rather a sensuous apprehension of the total situation.”<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, he interprets the term ‘sense of the heart’ in connection with his thesis that Edwards was the first American empiricist.<sup>37</sup> Edwards’s ‘sense of the heart,’ as Miller writes, “is a perception, a form of apprehension derived exactly as Locke said mankind gets all simple ideas, out of sensory experience.”<sup>38</sup> In sum, for Miller, the “new sense of the heart” is not a sixth sense but a deeper vision of the present world. Miller claims that the supernatural can be “scientifically explicable,” and “empirically verifiable,” and he presents evidence that Edwards also holds to this belief.

Miller’s analysis is limited, however, in that while he frees Edwards from the grotesque picture of a fire and brimstone preacher, he imprisons Edwards in modern, rationalistic philosophical context.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as McClymond points out, Miller’s naturalization of Edwards’s theology underestimates his belief in the role of the Holy Spirit and supernatural grace.<sup>40</sup> Suffice it to say that Miller went too far when he understood Edwards’s thought as

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<sup>35</sup>Miller, “Sense of the Heart,” 123-45

<sup>36</sup>Miller, “Sense of the Heart,” 127. Miller even writes that “conversion is a perception, a form of apprehension, derived exactly as Locke said mankind gets all simple ideas, out of sensory experience.” Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 139.

<sup>37</sup>Miller, “Sense of the Heart,” 124.

<sup>38</sup>Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 139.

<sup>39</sup>Miller refers to Edwards as “the greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American Scene.” Miller, “General Editor’s Note,” *WJE*, 1:viii.

<sup>40</sup>Michael J. McClymond, “Spiritual Perception in Jonathan Edwards,” *The Journal of Religion* 77 (1997): 200; Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 1. James Hoopes has also charged that Miller persistently attempts to make Edwards not only ‘modern’ but also a materialist like Miller himself. Hoopes, “Religious Psychology,” 856.

“Puritanism recast in the idiom of empirical psychology.”<sup>41</sup>

Since Miller, many have come after the line of interpreting Edwards as Lockean. Wayne Proudfoot, while acknowledging Edwards’s Calvinistic identity, argues that for him Locke and Newton are not only resources for theology, they are also central to the knowledge of God.<sup>42</sup> Proudfoot emphasizes Locke’s influence on Edwards’s psychology, noting the prominence with which he uses language describing taste and sensation in the *Religious Affections*. Edward Davidson also follows Miller’s naturalized interpretation of the spiritual sense by arguing that, “both natural and supernatural knowledge are part of an everyday process of living. [ . . . ] ‘Experience’ is not, therefore, divided between ‘natural’ and ‘supernatural’ knowledge, for everything is part of daily cognition.”<sup>43</sup> For Davidson, divine or spiritual knowledge can be explained in naturalistic terms.

In addition, according to Miller’s circle, both Edwards and Locke use a form of empirical reasoning. Locke defines the meaning of a simple idea as “the power to produce any idea in our mind I call a quality of the subject wherein that power is.”<sup>44</sup> Put another way, the perceiving agent receives the quality from the object it perceives, and then the idea shows up to the human mind.<sup>45</sup> Of importance is that Locke distinguishes between primary quality and secondary qualities. While primary qualities are utterly inseparable from the body and are

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<sup>41</sup>Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 62.

<sup>42</sup>Wayne Proudfoot, “From the Theology to a Science of Religions: Jonathan Edwards and William James on Religious Affections,” *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989): 153-54.

<sup>43</sup>Edward H. Davidson, “From Locke to Edwards,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963): 362 and 364.

<sup>44</sup>John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Robert Cummins and David Owen, *History of Modern Philosophy* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992), 129.

<sup>45</sup>Locke states that human understanding is caused by a collection of micro-physical particles and the object’s quality, which can produce ideas in the minds. Locke, *Essay*, 2. 8. 8.

intrinsic to it, secondary qualities are extrinsic properties and relational to the body.<sup>46</sup> Locke defines secondary qualities as “powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities,”<sup>47</sup> and holds up colors, sounds, and tastes up as an example. Interestingly, these vocabularies are conspicuous in *Religious Affections*. In this regard, Edwards can be generally viewed as a Lockean.

### **Discontinuity between Edwards’s Thought and Lockean Empiricism**

Unlike those who believe that spiritual sense entails a deeper perception of the physical world rather than the vision of a different world, those who support discontinuity between Edwards and the Enlightenment understand his spiritual sense as the apprehension of a mental content qualitatively different from the other five faculties. In the language of Puritan conviction, the unregenerate are spiritually blind and conversion is the opening of one’s eyes to God.<sup>48</sup> Paul Helm and David Lytle, among others, support this discontinuous interpretation of the spiritual sense.

Helm acknowledges that Locke’s *Essay* “was a major factor in the philosophical development of Jonathan Edwards,” and that Edwards himself freely uses Lockean terminology in *Religious Affections* while never explicitly quoting or referring to Locke. Helm sees, however, the discontinuity between Lockean empiricism and Edwardsean sense of the heart, saying definitively, “Edwards was not an empiricist, and it is too much to say that his philosophy was

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<sup>46</sup>For a contrast between the two, see Locke, *Essay*, 2. 8. 9, 10.

<sup>47</sup>Locke, *Essay*, 2. 8. 10.

<sup>48</sup>Regarding the Puritan thoughts on regeneration and conversion, see Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 463-80.

Locke-inspired.”<sup>49</sup> He highlights Edwards’s non-natural character of a truly spiritual experience: “It is evident, that those gracious influences which the saints are subjects of, and the effects of God’s Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, altogether of a different kind from anything that men find within themselves by nature, or only in the exercise of natural principles.”<sup>50</sup> Edwards, still within *Religious Affections*, clearly states a belief that spiritual experience is supernatural. Thus a genuine spiritual experience cannot be tested scientifically and empirically. It depends upon whether or not a person possesses another sense. According to Helm, this sixth sense is not possessed by everyone but only by those to whom God chooses to impart it.<sup>51</sup> In a nutshell, the use of Lockean vocabulary alone cannot commit Edwards to the position Miller claims for him.

David Lyttle also demonstrates how Edwards used Locke’s empirical terminology for his own purposes, arguing that Edwards simply used empirical terms to try to express the inexpressible.<sup>52</sup> Edwards translated many Lockean elements into “his own Calvinistic philosophy.”<sup>53</sup> Consequently, Miller is wrong when he asserts that for Edwards the supernatural light is “composed of nothing but what nature supplies,” because Edwards never says that the saint knows the supernatural light through sensory or natural experience. Lyttle concludes that

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<sup>49</sup>Paul Helm, “John Locke and Jonathan Edwards: A Reconsideration,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 7 (1969): 51.

<sup>50</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:205.

<sup>51</sup>Helm, “Locke and Edwards,” 58.

<sup>52</sup>David Lyttle, “The Sixth Sense of Jonathan Edwards,” *The Church Quarterly Review* 167 (1966): 54. Edwards writes, “Because spiritual things being invisible, and not things that can be pointed forth with the finger, we are forced to borrow names from external and sensible objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of light. . . . The Scripture itself abounds with such like figurative expressions.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:212.

<sup>53</sup>Lyttle, “Sixth Sense,” 56.

“the Supernatural Light is known to the saint by a spiritual or sixth sense.”<sup>54</sup> Iain Murray refers to an article of Woodbridge on Edwards, which concludes that “We remember him, not as the greatest of American philosophers, but as the greatest of American Calvinists.” Murray adds,

The plain fact is that Edwards’s excursions into philosophy were only occasional and peripheral to his main thought; it was theology, or ‘divinity,’ which belonged to the warp and woof of his life. Edwards’s place in history is not alongside Locke, Berkeley or Kant. His life and impact were essentially religious.<sup>55</sup>

Murray concurs with Helm that for Edwards, spiritual sense is God-given and its subject matter is non-empirical. Yarbrough and Adams encapsulate this point of view: “Saints did not simply disagree with sinners: they saw differently, they felt differently, they thought differently. In short, they lived in a different world altogether.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Edwards’s Creative Synthesis of Puritan and Enlightenment**

Both continuous and discontinuous positions are open to criticism. The former naturalized Edwards too much by belittling the role of God and supernatural grace in Edwards’s theology. In *Religious Affections*, in particular, Edwards repeatedly teaches that the spiritual sense becomes possible only through the inner enablement of the Holy Spirit.<sup>57</sup> For Edwards,

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<sup>54</sup>Lyttle, “Sixth Sense,” 58.

<sup>55</sup>Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), xx. McClymond is on the same page with the discontinuous position when he says, “Edwards stands Locke on his head, for he uses Locke’s empiricist principle – that everyone must see with his own eyes – to establish, against Locke, that the intellectual certitude of the believer’s spiritual perception is greater than the certitude gained by mere human reasoning about God.” McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 17.

<sup>56</sup>Steven R. Yarbrough and John C. Adams, *Delightful Conviction: Jonathan Edwards and the Rhetoric of Conversion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993), xiii.

<sup>57</sup>Edwards writes, “The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and

perception of holy beauty in God is dependent upon a prior operation of divine grace. In this regard, Cherry correctly attacks Miller for his overemphasizing Edwards's modernity and minimizing his traditional Calvinism.<sup>58</sup>

In contrast, the discontinuous position ignores Edwards's elaboration of the mind's active role in the knowledge process and his consistent appeal to Locke in his writing. Edwards embraces Locke's treatment of the human faculties and his theory of the "simple idea."<sup>59</sup> A fair estimation, therefore, must be that Edwards expanded the meaning of Lockean empiricism while not rejecting it. Sang Hyun Lee correctly writes that "Edwards viewed the perception of reality that is now made possible through the indwelling divine disposition as an imaginative sensation – an intuition that constitutes an act of receiving the objective structure of reality into the mind's consciousness, though involving the full activity of the imagination. Edwards did affirm, in his own way, the Lockean principle that knowledge must be a knowledge gained through the experience of the objective world."<sup>60</sup> Stephen Nichols concurs with Lee, that Edwards "went beyond Locke by including the emotions in his understanding of perception."<sup>61</sup> Marsden also argues that "Locke opened up exciting new ways of looking at things, especially regarding the

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action. . . . [The Holy Spirit] is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life." Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:200.

<sup>58</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 3, 15. Cherry argues that "for good or for ill, Edwards was a Calvinist theologian; and, as a Calvinist theologian, he claimed the heritage of his New England Forefathers." Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 3.

<sup>59</sup>Regarding the powers of the human mind and the internal dynamics of the act, see Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 12-24. Chris Chun also briefly summarizes Lockean epistemology in his *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 88-90.

<sup>60</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 146.

<sup>61</sup>Stephen J. Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 48. Erdt also points out that Locke's description of the mind neglects to include the will, the feelings of pleasure and pain experienced in reaction to one's ideas. Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 21-22.

relation between ideas and reality. Locke was crucial in setting Edwards's philosophical agenda and shaping some of his categories. Yet Edwards was no Lockean in any strict sense."<sup>62</sup>

Consequently, it can be concluded that, in McClymond's words, the "divine and supernatural light" does not "destroy or bypass nature but perfects it . . . melding the discontinuity of grace with the continuities of human nature."<sup>63</sup>

Terrence Erdt offers the most balanced evaluation. Erdt identifies Edwards as Calvinist rather than Lockean, but at the same time he warns that "it would be equally erroneous to regard his reading of Locke as unimportant to his conception of the sense of the heart." This dissertation thus proposes a creative Edwardsean synthesis of Calvinism and enlightenment for several reasons. First, such Lockean terminology as *sense* appears in early Puritan writings, so there is no necessary connection between Edwards's use of those expressions and Locke's influence. Rather, as Erdt has remarked, "the term was central to what perhaps appropriately could be labeled a Calvinist psychology of the heart."<sup>64</sup> In order to do justice to the sense of the heart in Edwards's thought one must confirm his adherence to Puritanism and Calvinism. Second, while remaining within the Calvinistic tradition, Edwards embraced Locke's epistemological mechanics for identifying empiricism in *Religious Affections*.<sup>65</sup> Chai demonstrates that Edwards's definition of true religious experiences in *Religious Affections* is based upon Locke's model of sensory evidences for external objects.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, in the sermon *Divine Light*,

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<sup>62</sup>Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 63.

<sup>63</sup>Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 318.

<sup>64</sup>Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 2

<sup>65</sup>Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 88.

<sup>66</sup>Leon Chai, *Jonathan Edwards and the Limits of Enlightenment Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23

Edwards also emphasizes the *modus operandi* of the natural human faculties, saying,

It is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. The natural faculties are the subject of this light: and they are the subject in such a manner, that they are not merely passive, but active in it; the acts and exercises of man's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to this nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; though the faculties are made use of, it is as the subject and not as the cause. . . . As the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.<sup>67</sup>

Third, God is not the direct or immediate object of our spiritual sense. We do not directly see God's face, hear His voice, or touch His hand. Rather, God's reality is inferred from the excellency and beauty of the things depicted in the Scripture. Put differently, without everyday experience, we cannot apprehend spiritual things. The *content* of spiritual perception is continuous with everyday experience. Both the unregenerate and the regenerate encounter the spiritual things, but only the regenerate perceive God's beauty and excellency. However, the *mode* and the *sensibility* of perception are discontinuous with ordinary experience. In sum, Edwards was not content with the either/or alternative between the two views, rather he was always searching for an adequate third way, which is "a distant vision of the confluence of the two mainstreams of Christian thought."<sup>68</sup>

### **Sense of the Heart in Edwards's Thought**

Since Perry Miller published his article "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart" in 1948, the spiritual sense in Edwardsean thought has been at the forefront of many scholarly discussions. For Edwards, the foundation of all gracious affections is the experience of God's

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<sup>67</sup>Edwards, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," *WJE*, 17:416.

<sup>68</sup>Elwood, *Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 7.

beauty through the sense of the heart. When Edwards writes, “Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty,”<sup>69</sup> he allows his readership to observe the close connection he sees between the “sense of the heart” and “beauty.” Thus, Edwards’s concept of the sense of the heart is a crucial hermeneutical key in understanding his spiritual epistemology. In addition, as Roland Delattre argues, beauty “is fundamental to Edwards’s understanding of being, the inner, structural principle of being-itself, according to which the universe system of being is articulated.”<sup>70</sup> In order to analyze Edwards’s spiritual epistemology, this section will utilize Michael McClymond’s helpful categories of Edwardsean perception: content, mode and sensibility.<sup>71</sup> The *content* of perception is the spiritual “excellency” or “beauty” of God, the *mode* is the “divine supernatural light” and the *sensibility* is the “spiritual sense” or the sense of the heart.<sup>72</sup>

### **Content, Mode, and Sensibility**

First, an appropriate starting point for analyzing Edwards’s spiritual sense is the divine *content* of experience.<sup>73</sup> What saints see through their sense of the heart is not a physical object. Edwards states in *Religious Affections*, “The first objective ground of gracious affections is the

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<sup>69</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:272.

<sup>70</sup>Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility*, 1 n.1.

<sup>71</sup>McClymond, *Encounters with God*, 17. McClymond provides the most important texts on the spiritual sense: *Religious Affections*; the sermon “A Divine and Supernatural Light”; the *Personal Narrative*; the sermons “The Pure in Heart Blessed,” “Man’s Natural Blindness in Religion,” and “True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils”; *Treatise on Grace*; “Miscellanies,” nos. aa, 123, 141, 201, 212, 239, 248, 390, 397, 408, 410, 419, 460, 471, 476, 481, 489; “Miscellanies,” nos. 541, 628, 1090; “Miscellanies,” nos. 537-9, 540, 567, 580, 626, 628, 629, 686, 732, 853, 1029; and “Miscellanies,” no. 782. McClymond, *Encounters with God*, 120 n. 41. Chris Chun also makes use of McClymond’s categories in his book. Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, 92-107.

<sup>72</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 17-18.

<sup>73</sup>I will discuss the object or content of the sense of the heart more in detail in the following section.

*transcendently* excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves.”<sup>74</sup>

Edwards notes that what chiefly makes a person or creature lovely is his excellency or beauty.

God, to an even greater degree, is lovely, laudable, and worthy of love because of his infinite

excellency. God’s divine nature is “infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself,” Edwards

writes.<sup>75</sup> God’s beauty or excellency thus must be the object of spiritual perception. The saints

receive a new spiritual sense at regeneration, and the immediate object of this new sense is “the

supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves.”<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, all spiritual knowledge consists “in a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and

sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning

and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon and flows from such a sense.”<sup>77</sup>

“Spiritual understanding,” continues Edwards, “consists primarily in a sense of the heart of that

spiritual beauty.”<sup>78</sup> From these claims in *Religious Affections*, one can understand that the

content of spiritual perception is much different from the content that the physical senses

perceive. What the saints see is the “excellency,” “glory,” “amiability,” or “beauty” of God and

divine things. “To see God,” Edwards insists, “is to have an immediate,

sensible, and certain understanding of God’s glorious excellency and love.”<sup>79</sup> For Edwards, from

the outset, “speculative understanding,” of God and spiritual things belongs to both the

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<sup>74</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:240. Italics mine.

<sup>75</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:242.

<sup>76</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:271.

<sup>77</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:272.

<sup>78</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:272.

<sup>79</sup>Edwards, “The Pure in Heart Blessed,” WJE 17:64. In another place, Edwards says, “For it is not only the mere presence of ideas in the mind, but it is the mind’s sense of their excellency.” Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 397, WJE, 13:463.

regenerate and the unregenerate. What makes them different is that experiencing beauty of God occurs to the mind of the regenerate and not to the mind of the unregenerate.<sup>80</sup> This is because, in Edwards's words, "That *notion* that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the word of God; but the *sense* of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>81</sup> In other words, even Satan and the demons possess extensive knowledge of Christ and a great degree of speculative knowledge about God's truth, but they cannot have the *sense* of the quality of excellency and holiness since "the more holiness they see in him, the more hateful he appears: the greater their sight is of his holiness, the higher is their hatred of him raised."<sup>82</sup>

Second, the *mode* of spiritual perception is the divine and supernatural light. In his sermon, "A Divine Supernatural Light," Edwards portrays divine light as God's supernatural means by which the human soul comes to appreciate the spiritual beauty of God. This light that God has shined in the hearts of the saints is "a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the Word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them."<sup>83</sup> Many have heard about divine things and have understood them cognitively, but only the saints are able to sense their beauty and appreciate them personally. A special empowerment, given by the Holy

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<sup>80</sup>McClymond states that "the saint and the reprobate live in the same universe and have access to the same speculative understanding of God, but only the saints perceive God's quality of excellency. Satan and the demons, according to Edwards, have speculative knowledge of God's truth, but they have no sense whatsoever of God's holiness." *Encounter with God*, 19.

<sup>81</sup>Edwards, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," *WJE*, 17:417. Emphasis mine.

<sup>82</sup>Edwards, "True Grace, Distinguished from the Experience of Devils," *WJE*, 25:634. For the insightful analysis of this sermon, see Miklos Vetö, "Spiritual Knowledge According to Jonathan Edwards," trans. Michael J. McClymond, *Calvin Theological Journal* 31 (1996): 161-81.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, "A Divine Light," *WJE*, 17:413. For Edwards, true experience has a Word-driven aspect.

Spirit, is required before any human can perceive God's beauty and excellency. This empowerment does not exist separate from natural human faculties, however. When he refers to the human faculty, Edwards means the "understanding" that belongs to man as a rational creature.<sup>84</sup> For Edwards, spiritual perception is still based on rational understanding.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, it is not "notional" or "speculative understanding." Instead, this rational understanding is coupled with "the spiritual and divine light" which plays a decisive role in spiritual perception. While, as McClymond points out, there is an obscurity about what the light shines on,<sup>86</sup> what matters for Edwards is that the unique aspect of the divine light is closely associated with the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>87</sup> The Holy Spirit creates a new disposition in the believer's heart and gives the human capacities we already have new bearings and purpose.<sup>88</sup>

Third, the final category of Edwardsean perception, *sensibility*, can be defined as "the affective human response to God," that is, "sense of the heart."<sup>89</sup> Edwards states the nature of the sense of the heart in the first positive sign of truly gracious affections, outlined in the *Religious Affections*. The remaining eleven positive signs are the results of the sense of the heart and cannot be fabricated. For Edwards, the crucial question about spiritual experience has to do with

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<sup>84</sup>Edwards, "A Divine Light," *WJE*, 17:416.

<sup>85</sup>The rational understanding is a "necessary but not a sufficient condition for spiritual perception."  
McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 120 n.52.

<sup>86</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 19. McClymond argues, "At various points it appears that that light shines on the human mind itself, while on other occasions the light shines on the perceived objects, and at still other times it seems that the light becomes one with the mind that perceives. The texts provide no clear-cut answer."

<sup>87</sup>In the next section, I will examine the role of Edwards's pneumatology in his epistemology in detail.

<sup>88</sup>John K. LaShell, "Jonathan Edwards and the New Sense," *Reformation and Revival* 4 (1995): 90. With this new disposition, the saints have a new set of spiritual desires given by the indwelling Holy Spirit. LaShell relates the "new sense" to three doctrines of regeneration, justification, and sanctification. He argues Edwards's concept of "new sense" binds these three doctrines into an intrinsically balanced whole.

<sup>89</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 20.

discerning true spiritual experiences from false ones. Edwards understands the sense of the heart as genuine spiritual experience, in which a believer tastes or sees God's beauty. For Edwards, experiencing God's beauty through the sense of the heart is central to all genuine religious experiences.<sup>90</sup> The defining issue in spiritual sense is Edwards's spiritual epistemology as to how the subject, namely the saints, perceive the object, God. In his sermon, "A Divine Light," Edwards reveals what causes the saints to perceive God's beauty. Edwards writes,

Reason's work is to perceive truth, and not excellency. It is not ratiocination that gives men the perception of the beauty and amiableness of a countenance; though it may be many ways indirectly an advantage to it; yet it is no more reason that immediately perceives it, than it is reason that perceives the sweetness of honey: it depends on *the sense of the heart*.<sup>91</sup>

A divine and supernatural light stimulates and promotes the sense of the heart. In the discussion of the first positive sign, Edwards also introduces the nature of this sense of the heart as "a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified."<sup>92</sup> In regeneration the Spirit of God gives the saints a new spiritual sense, namely, "a principle of new kind of perception or spiritual sensation,"<sup>93</sup> which is distinct from natural ability. The "new sense" or "sense of the heart"<sup>94</sup> enables the saints to attain a new habit or disposition of the heart that

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<sup>90</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 17-18.

<sup>91</sup>Edwards, "A Divine Light," *WJE*, 17:422-23. Emphasis mine.

<sup>92</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:205. Edwards prefigures his mature thought on the sense of the heart in the entries of "Miscellanies," nos. 123, 141, and 782. See Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty*, 58-59.

<sup>93</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:205. Edwards writes, "There is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified." *WJE*, 2:205.

<sup>94</sup>James Hoopes differentiates between Edwards's vocabularies of "new sense," "new spiritual sense," and the "sense of the heart." As Hoopes observes, the "sense of the heart" is a "broad category that includes various experiences of both saints and sinners." Yet, the "new spiritual sense" is experienced only by the regenerate. James Hoopes, "Jonathan Edwards's Religious Psychology," *Journal of American History* 69 (1983): 857-58. In this

creates new affections as they are inclined towards God's reality.<sup>95</sup>

### **An Exposition of the Sense of the Heart in *Religious Affections***

Edwardsean scholars have considered the positive signs in *Religious Affections* as a positive presentation of the nature of true piety,<sup>96</sup> reliable marks of true spirituality,<sup>97</sup> or as Edwards himself emphasized, the crucial criteria to discern true religion from false. This dissertation, however, proposes that these eleven positive signs can be understood as the results of the sense of the heart, which are important goals for our preaching. Consequently, these positive signs seem to suggest a direction for expository preaching.

The second positive sign is that the saints love God primarily because of who God is, in himself. They hold the beauty and excellence of God and his glory, above any personal gain. Edwards does not devalue benefits God brings, but he rejects the idea that any "interest" the individual may have in loving God can be a fundamental element in determining that love. Edwards stresses that the good is to be loved because it is intrinsically good.<sup>98</sup> The genuine affections of the saints "begin with God," while "false affections begin with self."<sup>99</sup> The sense of

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dissertation, however, "new sense," "spiritual sense," and "sense of the heart" are used interchangeably. In *Religious Affections*, the phrase 'new sense' occurs 10 times, 'spiritual sense' 22 times, and 'sense of the heart' 5 times.

<sup>95</sup>Edwards states that the "new holy disposition of heart that attends the new sense, is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercise of the same faculty of will." Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:206.

<sup>96</sup>Michael A. G. Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards: The Holy Spirit in Revival* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2005), 126.

<sup>97</sup>Gerald R. McDermott, *Seeing God: Twelve Reliable Signs of True Spirituality* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1995).

<sup>98</sup>Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," WJE, 2:28.

<sup>99</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:246.

the heart enables the saints to love God because of who He is and what He does.<sup>100</sup>

The third positive sign is related to the moral beauty of divine things and a love for God's holiness. Thus a genuine love for God "must begin with a delight in his holiness . . . for no other attribute is truly lovely without this."<sup>101</sup> The sense of the heart allows the saints to see the beauty of holiness, which is the immediate object of the spiritual sense. Without the sense of the heart God's holiness cannot be experienced and perceived. The unregenerate never see the beauty of holiness because they do not have the sense of the heart. They may have some knowledge of God's holiness, but they never appreciate the aesthetic dimension of God's beauty.<sup>102</sup> In contrast, the saints experience spiritual beauty through the sense of the heart. A taste of God's moral beauty and glory, through the sense of the heart given by the Holy Spirit, leads a person to God.

The fourth sign involves an affectionate knowledge in contrast to both "an anti-intellectual enthusiasm" and "unfeeling rationalism."<sup>103</sup> A person possessing the sense of the heart has a genuine religious experience between head and heart, or intellect and emotions. "Holy affections," reasons Edwards, are not "heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or

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<sup>100</sup>Edwards describes the foundation of true saints' love for God as follows: "True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures; 'tis the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment, they have in the view of the beautiful and delightful nature of divine things, is the foundation of the joy that they have afterwards, in the consideration of their being theirs." Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:250.

<sup>101</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:257. For Edwards, "holiness comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other virtue, but real holiness." WJE, 2:255.

<sup>102</sup>McDermott, *Seeing God*, 118.

<sup>103</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 129.

actual knowledge.”<sup>104</sup> One of the results of the sense of the heart is an apprehension of God’s beauty, which involves both the taste and relish of God’s holiness. This experience is related to both the will and the understanding, the heart and the head altogether.

Edwards proceeds to explicate the results of the sense of the heart. The fifth positive sign is “a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things.”<sup>105</sup> In addition, when the saints experience God’s beauty, it also produces a seemingly antithetical religious sensation. Perceiving divine beauty necessarily reveals one’s sinfulness. As soon as a person comes to see holy beauty that is in divine things, he or she can also see the exceeding evil of sin; such knowledge is dark to natural men.<sup>106</sup>

The sixth positive sign produced by the sense of the heart is “evangelical humiliation.”<sup>107</sup> By evangelical humiliation, Edwards means a Christian’s sense of his or her “own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart.”<sup>108</sup> The seventh positive sign is “a change of nature.”<sup>109</sup> As with the first sign, Edwards again finds that the sense of the heart is foundational to authentic Christian spirituality. The sense of the heart, infused by the Holy Spirit in conversion, transforms the nature of man. Conversion

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<sup>104</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:266.

<sup>105</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:291.

<sup>106</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:301.

<sup>107</sup>Edwards distinguishes “evangelical” humiliation from “legal” humiliation. Legal humiliation lacks “an answerable frame of heart, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone: this disposition is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God’s holy beauty.” While legal humiliation produces despair, evangelical humiliation are “brought sweetly to yield, and fully and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.” WJE, 2:312. Legal humiliation is a Spirit-assisted conviction of sin, whereas evangelical humiliation is the product of the efficacious works of the Holy Spirit. Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 68-69.

<sup>108</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:311.

<sup>109</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:340.

does not entirely root out sin, rather it has “great power and efficacy . . . to correct” them.<sup>110</sup> The eighth sign is “the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ.”<sup>111</sup> Edwards writes that a person with the sense of the heart can have “such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.”<sup>112</sup> In the same vein, Edwards asserts at the ninth sign that “gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of Spirit.”<sup>113</sup> In these two signs, Edwards seems to have critics of revivals in mind, because of their violent, passionate, combative attitudes toward the revivals as a whole.<sup>114</sup>

The tenth sign is “beautiful symmetry and proportion.”<sup>115</sup> This sign speaks to a coupling of seemingly opposite attributes in the hearts and minds of the saints, such as holy hope and holy fear. Edwards writes that “one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin.”<sup>116</sup> The beauty of God can be expressed by balance in the life of the saints. Regarding the affections of the saints and hypocrites, Edwards says,

Whereas a true saint is like a stream from a living spring; which though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought; yet constantly runs, or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought. . . . Many hypocrites are like comets, that appear for a while with a mighty blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:341.

<sup>111</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:344.

<sup>112</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:345.

<sup>113</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:357.

<sup>114</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 69.

<sup>115</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:365.

<sup>116</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:366. Contrary to the saints, hypocrites show “monstrous disproportion in gracious affections.” WJE, 2:365.

<sup>117</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:373.

While the affections of the hypocrite without the sense of the heart are disproportioned and unbalanced in intensity and duration, the affections of the saints with the sense of the heart are always beautiful in their balance. The eleventh result of the sense of the heart is that the saints are never satisfied with their present spiritual condition.<sup>118</sup> The more the saints love God, the more they long to love Him. The final result has “the exercise and fruit in Christian practice.”<sup>119</sup>

### **Edwards’s Pneumatology and the Sense of the Heart: Illumination and Infusion**

Edwards makes a clear distinction between the assisting work of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s salvific work. The difference between the two kinds of work of the Spirit is that of the Spirit working *on* someone versus *in* someone.<sup>120</sup> When “assisting,” the Spirit works outside of a person, using natural principles to extend common grace. On the other hand, the Spirit works *within* a person, transforming him into a new creation and revealing knowledge beyond what the natural mind can understand. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards expounds on the aspects of the Holy Spirit given as a common grace to natural men’s minds:

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon natural principles; but gives no new spiritual principle. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle, viz. the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gives no new sense; neither is there anything supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. . . . [the Spirit of God] only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 71.

<sup>119</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:383. I will examine the twelfth sign in more detail in chap. 5.

<sup>120</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 63; McDermott, *Seeing God*, 94.

<sup>121</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:206-07.

In his *Treatise on Grace*, Edwards also writes, “There are many things in the minds of some natural men that are from the influence of the Spirit, but yet are by no means spiritual things in the scriptural sense of the word. . . . Natural men may have common grace, common illuminations and common affections, that are from the Spirit of God in his common operations and gifts.”<sup>122</sup> There may even be some religious knowledge extended from the “common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God assists men’s faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have in some degree, by only the ordinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties.”<sup>123</sup> *Spirit-assisted* knowledge is an enhancement of natural principles and abilities.

In contrast, the Spirit of God enters the hearts of the saints “to dwell in them, as his proper abode.” From within the believer, the Spirit can “influence their heart, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action.”<sup>124</sup> Salvific knowledge is above nature and cannot be perceived apart from the Spirit of God, since it “must be wholly and entirely a work of the Spirit of God, not merely as assisting and co-working with natural principles, but infusing something above nature.”<sup>125</sup> Edwards contrasts the common work of the Spirit with the “vital indwelling,” which imparts holiness to the believer. He writes, “The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his *vital indwelling* in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his

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<sup>122</sup>Edwards, *Treatise on Grace*, WJE, 21:179.

<sup>123</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:270.

<sup>124</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:200.

<sup>125</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 782, WJE, 18:463.

own proper, holy or divine nature.”<sup>126</sup> For Edwards, the Spirit “becomes an *indwelling vital principle* in the soul,” when the Spirit bestows saving grace to the soul.<sup>127</sup> In the common work of the Spirit, natural man cannot partake in the Spirit’s work, just as a garments cannot become part of one’s body, but only exist externally.<sup>128</sup> In contrast, the Spirit as the indwelling principle infuses divine grace into the soul and the saint becomes a partaker of God’s glory, beauty, and holiness.<sup>129</sup> In the *Religious Affections*, Edwards writes exactly the same thing:

The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlasting dwelling place (I Corinthians 3:16, II Corinthians 6:16, John 14:16–17). And he is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life.<sup>130</sup>

Edwards’s idea of the “sense of the heart” is the infusion or the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not an extra-measure of grace or gifting, but is available to all believers at regeneration.

Sang Hyun Lee, in his introduction to *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, argues that for the Spirit to work as Edwards says, the human mind must receive external “sense data” that

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<sup>126</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:236. Italics added. In Christ’s work of atonement, the Spirit is the “thing purchased.” Edwards states in other place, “the price, and the thing bought with that price, are equal. And ‘tis as much as to afford the thing purchased: for the glory that belongs to him that affords the thing purchased, arises from the worth of that thing that he affords; . . . and therefore ‘tis the same glory, and an equal glory.” *WJE*, 21:137-38.

<sup>127</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8:158. For Edwards, grace is nothing but the holy nature of the Spirit of God imparted to the soul. Elsewhere, Edwards writes, “The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul.” Edwards, “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence,” *WJE*, 17:208.

<sup>128</sup>Kyle C. Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 197.

<sup>129</sup>Edwards is careful to emphasize that although the saints are “partakers of divine nature” and “made partakers of God’s holiness,” it is not that the saints are “made partakers of the essence of God, and so are “Godded” with God, and “Christed” with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:203.

<sup>130</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:200.

rouses the “internal disposition” to action.<sup>131</sup> The Spirit of God triggers the external sensory data that leads to the spiritual knowledge of God through the sense of the heart. However, the work of the Holy Spirit is inexplicable, because the way of giving or withholding divine illumination from human minds depends upon the will of God.<sup>132</sup> The Spirit’s action in illumination is “arbitrary.” For Edwards, the arbitrary conferral of illumination is a suitable expression of the preciousness of grace.<sup>133</sup>

### **The Object of the Sense of the Heart: The Beauty of God**

The detailed discussion of beauty is necessary in this dissertation since, for Edwards, the immediate object of the sense of the heart is God’s beauty and excellency.<sup>134</sup> Edwards developed his idea of the sense of the heart using the language of beauty. In addition, beauty is fundamental to Edwards’s “understanding of being,”<sup>135</sup> which is one among many reasons to regard Edwards as an original thinker. According to Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott in *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, “his placement of beauty at the heart of his

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<sup>131</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 21:57.

<sup>132</sup>Edwards defines illumination as “that spiritual light that is let into the soul by the Spirit of God discovering the excellency and glory of divine things.” Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 628, *WJE*, 18:156. Illumination should not be understood as imparting any secret or new revelation. Edwards writes, “This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths, or propositions not contained in the Word of God.” This is the function of inspiration. Illumination “gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the Word of God.” Edwards, “A Divine Light,” *WJE*, 17:412.

<sup>133</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 20. McClymond correctly writes, “There is no human explanation as to why God illumines one mind and not another, and so the teaching on the divine light leads one back to Edwards’s Calvinistic belief in election.” On the “arbitrariness” of grace, see *WJE*, 13:189-91; *WJE*, 13:327; and *WJE*, 13:523-24

<sup>134</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, ix.

<sup>135</sup>Roland Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 1.

theology may have been the boldest stroke of all.”<sup>136</sup> This emphasis sets Edwards apart within the Calvinist-Puritan tradition. Douglas Elwood comments,

His stress on the primacy of the aesthetic element over the moral and legal in our experience of God places the old Calvinism on a very different footing. His neo-Calvinism appears most prominently in his fundamental conception of God in terms of absolute *beauty* and not merely absolute *power*, and in his appeal to immediate experience in our knowledge of God.<sup>137</sup>

No Calvinistic author has assigned beauty such a pivotal role. Haykin also notes that, “beauty is a central and defining category in Edwards’s thinking about God.”<sup>138</sup> Meanwhile, beauty informs Edwards’s moral theory in his ethical writings, therefore Edwards’s morality warrants some discussion before one begins a comprehensive study on beauty as the object of the sense of the heart. In this section, I will first investigate the nature of Edwards’s moral theory and then his understanding of beauty.<sup>139</sup>

While many have ranked Edwards as the founding father of American theology and philosophy, the originality and creativity of his ethical position made him a distinguished scholar.<sup>140</sup> Yet his moral theory is so complex that there are many conflicting interpretations about it. Contemporary evaluations of Edwards’s ethical writings vary from puzzlement to

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<sup>136</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 94.

<sup>137</sup>Douglas Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 9.

<sup>138</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 165.

<sup>139</sup>In his series of entries in a private notebook, entitled “The Mind,” Edwards offers the exposition of the idea of excellency. One encounters the basics of Edwards’s understanding of beauty in the discussion of excellency. Excellency is a complex of related ideas such concepts as beauty, holiness, and greatness. In this dissertation, excellency is a synonym for beauty. They may be used interchangeably.

<sup>140</sup>Moral philosopher, William Frankena has said of Edwards: “He was perhaps the outstanding American theologian and certainly the ablest American philosopher to write before the great period of Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, and Santayana. In no field is his power more manifest than in moral philosophy.” Frankena, foreword to *The Nature of True Virtue*, v.

accolade as the culmination of his career.<sup>141</sup> Perry Miller, for example, considering *The Nature of True Virtue* as “only purely nonpolemical work” and divorcing the philosophical stance from the theological doctrines, encourages a reading of this work separately from the Edwards corpus.<sup>142</sup> This naturalistic reading made Miller reinterpret Edwards’s ethics as more cosmic rather than theistic. Frankena, following the view of Miller, also encourages a reading of *True Virtue* that intentionally distinguishes it from Edwards’s other works.

He meant to propound an ethical theory which was consistent with Calvinism, but he meant to establish it on empirical grounds, even if he does refer to Scripture once or twice. In doing so he produced a work which is interesting and important apart from any connection it may have with his theology, simply as a piece of moral philosophy.<sup>143</sup>

Frankena approaches *True Virtue* by way of isolating the work from all of Edwards’s other writings since he considered *True Virtue* as a philosophical text rather than a theological one. This interpretation is persuasive in the face of the fact that Edwards refrained from reference to Scripture in the treatise. Clyde Holbrook, on the other hand, attempts to interpret Edwards’s moral theory from the point of view that Edwards’s theology has a unity of thought in general.<sup>144</sup> Roland Delattre and William Spohn, following a methodology similar to that of Holbrook, argue that in order to understand Edwards’s moral theory, one should closely examine his ethics in relationship to his other writings.<sup>145</sup> Norman Fiering also notes that there is a very close

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<sup>141</sup>William C. Spohn, “Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue,” *Theological Studies* 42, no. 3 (1981): 394-421.

<sup>142</sup>Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 285.

<sup>143</sup>Frankena, foreword to *The Nature of True Virtue*, vi.

<sup>144</sup>Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: Morality and Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1973).

<sup>145</sup>Roland Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and theological Ethics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968). Spohn, “Sovereign Beauty,” 394-421.

relationship between *True Virtue* and *Original Sin*.<sup>146</sup> Thus, contrary to the interpretation of Miller and Frankena, one must link *True Virtue*'s philosophical language with the theological articulation of Edwards's other writings. This dissertation proposes that Edwards's writings on moral theory are theological, even theocentric.

## The Vocabulary of Beauty

Unsatisfied with defining beauty merely as proportionality or regularity, Edwards articulates vocabularies for talking about beauty and develops those concepts further in his essay "The Mind."<sup>147</sup> Edwards calls the lowest kind of regularity *simple beauty*, while "proportion is *complex beauty*."<sup>148</sup> Edwards associates complex beauty with *natural beauty*: "That sort of beauty which is called 'natural,' as of vines, plants, trees, etc., consists of a very complicated harmony; and all the natural motions and tendencies and figures of bodies in the universe are done according to proportion, and therein is their beauty."<sup>149</sup> These kinds of beauty belong to a larger category, called *secondary beauty*. One can find secondary beauty in "inanimate things: which consists in a mutual consent and agreement of different things in form, manner, quantity and visible end and design; called by the various names of regularity, order, uniformity, symmetry, proportion, harmony, etc." Secondary beauty is inferior to *primary beauty*, which is

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<sup>146</sup>Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 148. In Fiering's view, although *Original Sin*, in comparison to *True Virtue*, had the relative intellectual poverty regarding its style and reasoning, Edwards was composing both of them simultaneously.

<sup>147</sup>This section is indebted to Delattre, his book *Beauty and Sensibility*, chap. 2 "A Preliminary Definition," 15-26.

<sup>148</sup>Edwards, "The Mind," *WJE*, 6:333. Circles with equal radii, triangles with equal sides, lines with equidistant points portray *simple beauty*. A more sophisticated identity of relation is related to *complex beauty*. For example, "points on a straight line having distances with the ration of one half the distance from the preceding point" are harmonized into a more complex whole. Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 2-3.

<sup>149</sup>Edwards, "The Mind," *WJE*, 6:335.

found in the “consent, agreement, or union of being to being, which has been spoken of, viz. the union or propensity of minds to mental or spiritual existence.”<sup>150</sup> While secondary beauty exists in certain relationships between material objects or natural virtues, primary beauty has its seat in immaterial objects or true virtue. Edwards also argues that secondary beauty shadows or mirrors primary beauty, so that the former is attractive only to the extent that it reminds one of the latter.<sup>151</sup> As a corollary, the agreement or consent in the natural world is a shadow of the agreement or consent of spiritual beings.

“One of the highest excellencies,” Edwards writes, “is love.”<sup>152</sup> He explains this both in terms of the consent of physical beings to one another, and the consent of spirits to one another. “Nothing else,” according to Edwards’s understanding of excellency, “has a proper being but spirits, and bodies are but the shadow of being, therefore the consent of bodies to one another, and the harmony that is among them, is but the shadow of excellency. The highest excellency, therefore, must be the consent of spirits one to another.”<sup>153</sup> Edwards seems to embrace mundane Platonic mysticism, which attempts to see God through ascending “from the secondary beauty of creatures to the primary beauty of God.”<sup>154</sup> Yet, unlike the Platonic emphasis upon a creature’s ascent to the archetype of beauty, Edwards’s philosophy “travels

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<sup>150</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:561, 562. The term *consent* or *agreement* is not limited to primary beauty. Several examples of secondary beauty such as equilateral triangle, a regular polygon, or “colors, figures, dimensions, and distances of the different spots on a chess board” can be called the mutual *agreement* or the mutual *consent*. WJE, 8:562. However, consent and agreement are more properly related to spiritual things rather than natural things.

<sup>151</sup>Edwards says, “As bodies, the objects of our external senses, are but the shadows of beings, that harmony wherein consists sensible excellency and beauty is but the shadow of excellency.” WJE, 6:380.

<sup>152</sup>Edwards, “The Mind,” WJE, 6:337.

<sup>153</sup>Edwards, “The Mind,” WJE, 6:337.

<sup>154</sup>McClymond, *Encounters with God*, 26.

from the primary beauty of God to the secondary beauty of the created realm.”<sup>155</sup> While Edwards seems to use Neoplatonic ideas when discussing the physical realms’ mirroring of the spiritual realm, he seems to move in the opposite direction of Neo-Platonism here, revealing the theocentricity of his theology. Neo-Platonic thought discusses creation’s ability to reach new heights in excellency, while Edwards, focusing on the Creator, sees creation only as a poor reflection of such excellency.

In *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards proposes another way to classify beauty. *Particular beauty* “appears beautiful when considered only with regard to its connection with, and tendency to some particular things within a limited and, as it were, a private sphere.”<sup>156</sup> *General beauty*, on the other hand, “appears beautiful when viewed most perfectly, comprehensively and universally, with regard to all its tendencies, and its connections with everything it stands related to.”<sup>157</sup> According to Edwards, true virtue must be a beauty that is both primary and general, so it must belong to “the *heart* of an intelligent being, that is beautiful by a *general* beauty, or beautiful in a comprehensive view as it is in itself, and as related to everything that it stands in connection with.”<sup>158</sup> True virtue must thus primarily consist in a propensity and union of heart to “Being simply considered,” or “Being in general.”<sup>159</sup> In

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<sup>155</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 166.

<sup>156</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:540. In the same place, Edwards utilizes music to illustrate the difference: “as a few notes in a tune, taken only by themselves, and in their relation one to another, may be harmonious; which when considered with respect to all notes in the tune, or the entire series of sounds they are connected with, may be very discordant and disagreeable.”

<sup>157</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:540.

<sup>158</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:540.

<sup>159</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:544.

Edwards's theological ethics, "Being in general" is understood as God.<sup>160</sup> Edwards state that "when we speak of Being in general, we may be understood [to speak] of the divine Being, for he is an infinite being."<sup>161</sup> God is "the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty," and "the sum and comprehension of all existence and excellence."<sup>162</sup>

### God's Beauty and Its Manifestation

For Edwards, creation results from the overflow of God's glory and beauty.<sup>163</sup> Beauty is the structure of being, and God's beauty is the foundation of all the beauty he has created. Edwards states, "All the beauty to be found throughout the whole creation is but the reflection of the diffused beams of the Being who has an infinite fullness of brightness and glory."<sup>164</sup> God created the world for the sake of communicating his own beauty and glory.<sup>165</sup> Edwards writes, "Here is both an emanation and remanation. . . . The beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back again to the original. So that the whole is of God, and

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<sup>160</sup>Edwards never says outright, "Being in general (or Being, simply considered) is God." But, as Paul Ramsey acknowledges, "Edwards *does* say that consent to Being *is* love to God." See Paul Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," *WJE*, 8:117.

<sup>161</sup>Edwards, "The Mind," *WJE*, 6:363.

<sup>162</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8: 551.

<sup>163</sup>In *End of Creation*, Edwards writes, "As there is an infinite fullness of all possible good in God, a fullness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty, and of infinite happiness. And as this fullness is capable of communication or emanation *ad extra*; so it seems a thing amiable and valuable in itself that it should be communicated or flow forth, that this infinite fountain of good should send forth abundant streams, that this infinite fountain of light should, diffusing its excellent fullness, pour forth light all around." Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8:432-33. For recent scholarship on God's communication and emanation, see Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 75-104; William M. Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012). Also see Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. While Lee develops an account of Edwards's philosophy and then applies that philosophy to his theology, Strobel stresses Edwards's theocentricity and attempts to advance his distinctively theocentric philosophy.

<sup>164</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8:550-51.

<sup>165</sup>Edwards develops this argument in *End in Creation*.

in God, and to God; and God is the beginning, middle and end in the affair.”<sup>166</sup> William Clebsch points out that “Edwards’s discussion of true virtue shifted the effects of religion from duty to *beauty*, from ethics to *aesthetics*. . . . The rhetoric of beauty conveyed the sum of [Edwards’s] spirituality: true religion is not to achieve moral goodness but to receive holy beauty.”<sup>167</sup> In other words, God created the creature to manifest the beauty of the triune God.<sup>168</sup> In what follows, I explore the concrete content of genuine religious experience.

**The beauty of Christ.** The culmination of God’s expression of His beauty is the beauty of Christ. As Sang Hyun Lee observes, “God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, making visible the transcendent beauty of divine being. This manifestation of God’s beauty also involved Christ’s work of the atonement for human sin.”<sup>169</sup> God’s beauty is most obviously manifested in Christ’s person and work. In his 1738 sermon, “The Excellency of Christ,” Edwards relates the beauty of Christ to the Christology—the study of Christ’s person and work—and he offers an understanding of the nature of genuine religious experience. He begins the sermon with two images—the lion and the lamb—in order to portray Christ’s beauty and excellency. Edwards demonstrates in great detail that the conjunction of various contrasting attributes in the person and work of Christ render Him beautiful and excellent. For example, Christ is the Creator and his majesty is “infinitely awful,” that is deserving of eternal reverence and fear, yet “his

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<sup>166</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8:531.

<sup>167</sup>William A. Clebsch, *American Religious Thought, a History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 54, 55.

<sup>168</sup>Edwards states that “the son of God created the world for this very end, to communicate himself in an image of his own excellency. He communicates himself properly only to spirits; and they only are capable of being proper images of his excellency, for they only are properly beings. . . . Yet he communicates a sort of shadow or glimpse of his excellencies to bodies, which as we have seen, are but the shadows of being, and not real beings.” Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 108, *WJE*, 13:279.

condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have no good deservings, and those that have infinite ill deservings.”<sup>170</sup> Edwards lists several such pairings: “infinite *justice* and infinite *grace*,” “infinite *glory* and lowest *humility*,” “infinite *majesty* and transcendent *meekness*,” “deepest *reverence* towards God and *equality* with God,” “infinite *worthiness* of good and the greater *patience* under suffering of evil,” “an exceeding spirit of *obedience*, with supreme *dominion* over heaven and earth,” “*self-sufficiency*, and an entire *trust* and *reliance* on God.”<sup>171</sup> Yet, in Christ’s death on the cross his beauty is most intensely revealed, because on the cross Christ “never so eminently appeared for divine justice, and yet never suffered so much from divine justice.”<sup>172</sup> The cross demonstrates both Christ’s divine glory and the greatest degree of humiliation. As Louis Mitchell points out, “in Edwards’s understanding, beauty becomes more intensified as more and more disparate entities or characteristics of an entity are harmonized into an integrated whole.”<sup>173</sup> The sight of Christ’s divine beauty changes our action, emotion, and thought, that is, our whole person. Edwards writes, “It is this sight of the divine beauty of Christ, that bows the wills, and draws the hearts of men. A sight of the greatness of God in his attributes, may overwhelm men, and be more than they can endure.”<sup>174</sup> And yet, only “he that has his eyes open” by the gift of “a new spiritual

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<sup>169</sup>Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 143.

<sup>170</sup>Edwards, “The Excellency of Christ,” *WJE*, 19:566.

<sup>171</sup>Edwards, “The Excellency of Christ,” *WJE*, 19:567-71. Emphasis added. Edwards writes, “There do meet in the person of Christ, such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject.” *WJE*, 19:567.

<sup>172</sup>Edwards, “The Excellency of Christ,” *WJE*, 19: 577.

<sup>173</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 35.

<sup>174</sup>Edwards, “True Grace, Distinguished from the Experience of Devil,” *WJE*, 25:635.

sense” will “behold the divine superlative beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>175</sup> The sense of the heart, given by the infusion of the Holy Spirit, is an actual experience of God’s beauty. Once the saints have experienced God’s beauty through the sense of the heart, their reaction should be to manifest their own beauty in their lives.

**The beauty of saints.** In the same way that physical beauty reflects spiritual beauty, so Christ’s beauty is reflected in that of the saints. In fact, beauty is also a distinctive characteristic of sainthood. The tenth sign Edwards gives of a genuine religious experience is a manifestation of beauty in the life of the saint. Edwards expresses it as “beautiful symmetry and proportion.”<sup>176</sup> By “proportional” beauty in the affections of the saints, Edwards means that “an holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints. . . . In the saints, joy and holy fear go together . . . particularly, one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin.”<sup>177</sup> The beauty of saints thus can be seen in the proportioned conjunction of affections, of which hypocrites are devoid. This beauty of proportionality in the affections of saints implies its intensity or duration. Edwards illustrates the difference between the beauty of proportion of the saints and disproportion of hypocrites:

[Hypocrites] are like the waters in the time of a shower of rain, which during the shower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry: and when another shower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true saint is like a stream from a living spring; which though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought; yet constantly runs: or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought. . . . Many hypocrites are like comets, that appear for a while with a mighty blaze;

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<sup>175</sup>Edwards, “True Grace,” *WJE*, 25:635.

<sup>176</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:365.

<sup>177</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:366.

but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion, and their blaze soon disappear, and they appear but once in a great while. But the true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are steadfast in their orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant light.<sup>178</sup>

The beauty of saints, in Haykin's words, is expressed by "the harmony and balance in the life of the believer."<sup>179</sup> Saints, who have experienced God's beauty through the sense of the heart, are to manifest beauty in their lives because of the Spirit of God, who Himself is beauty and the foundation of all genuine beauty.

**The beauty of society.** Edwards is not often considered a consequential figure in the realm of social thought, such that he has been described as having no concern for social theory. Some described Edwards as a person who had no concern on social theory. Perry Miller argues "in Edwards, social theory seems conspicuous by its absence."<sup>180</sup> According to Herbert Schneider, Edwards is "surprisingly blind to the political philosophy of the Holy Commonwealth."<sup>181</sup> Sidney E. Mead even claims that Edwards was not only indifferent to social ethics, but had a hatred for Christians to participate in political realms, and ameliorate the community beyond the confines of the Church. According to Mead, "Edwards was a narrow-minded zealot who saw no possibility of peaceful coexistence between the Church and the larger society."<sup>182</sup> However, more recent scholarship has adjusted this view. Gerald McDermott, among others, offers the most comprehensive treatment of Edwards's social vision. He says that

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<sup>178</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:373-74.

<sup>179</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 132.

<sup>180</sup>Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards's Sociology of the Great Awakening," *New England Quarterly* 21 (1948): 51, cited in Gerald R. McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 94.

<sup>181</sup>Herbert Schneider, *The Puritan Mind* (New York, 1930), 106, cited in Gerhard Alexis, "Jonathan Edwards and the Theocratic Ideal," *Church History* 35 (1966): 329.

Edwards was to a great extent concerned with social and political issues as well as personal conversion. Although his social vision was not well equipped with a form of theory, Edwards's ethics does indeed encompass social and communal aspects.

If one conceives of Edwards's ethical writings as theological and theocentric, as examined above, one might say that Edwards's social and political perspectives are based on his general ethical principles. For Edwards, God's being is a 'disposition' or 'habits' and God repeatedly exercises for his own already perfect actuality through further exercises. Although in the inner-Trinitarian relationships God does not need to add his actuality, his divine disposition is essentially productive and relational.<sup>183</sup> For the sake of his delight in himself and his own goodness, God is in an endless process of enlarging his own being by creating his handiwork. And, as God is dynamic and active, every created being is dispositional and relational. This is all the more true for Christians, because a regenerate human being's disposition is in fact God's disposition infused into it.<sup>184</sup>

So the regenerate person has the same tendency to reach out to other human beings to know and love them. By this tendency the being of the regenerated person, according to Edwards, is enlarged, just as God enlarges himself as he extends himself in more and more

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<sup>182</sup>Cited in McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society*, 95.

<sup>183</sup>Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 34-46. Even though Edwards's doctrine of God includes the element of process, it must be distinguished from the understanding of God in the Process theology. God's movement of glorification through human history is not the movement for God's self-actualization. The Process theology explains that God is in the 'process' of actualizing and accomplishing Himself. However, Edwards argues that God's self-enlargement means a self-repetition. God need not accomplish Himself through historical processes. Rather, God repeats and enlarges the already complete inner-Trinitarian life through them. See Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Social Science Book Store, 1929); Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948).

<sup>184</sup>The core of Edwards's thought is a regeneration infused by the Holy Spirit. According to Edwards, regeneration is that "grace is infused by God and God will produce the change in the heart by which men become gracious and holy." Edwards, "Miscellanies," no. 1029, *WJE*, 20:366. Once the Holy Spirit is infused in the heart, "it consists in a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things." This sense of the heart is no other than a faith. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards 2, Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 272.

relationships.<sup>185</sup>

Edwards's understanding of God's work does not permit a passive attitude toward human history and life. God is not a spectator, watching human affairs from a transcendental world. Instead, God reproduces his glory in every sphere of his creatures. In the first place, God glorifies himself by the creation and redemption of humanity. God is most glorified in direct relationship with humanity—when his chosen people know, rejoice in and love Him, but God wants to be glorified through family, institutions and social realms as well, without any exceptions.

God's sovereignty is at the heart of Edwards's thought. The principle of absolute sovereignty plays an essential role in his theology.<sup>186</sup> Thus, behind Edwards's social vision or dynamic understanding of history, there must be a dynamic understanding of God's absolute sovereignty.<sup>187</sup> In Edwards's system, God's absolute sovereignty can be explained by the notion of the movement of glorification. In *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*, Edwards sees that God constantly represents His own glory in every sphere of creation. In Edwards's view, God created the world for His own glory and manages it in order to effect His purpose.<sup>188</sup> Edwards unfolds his understanding of God's glory, by emphasizing God's absolute sovereignty. This glory is the ultimate goal of God's redemptive works. In other words, God's glory, which has been full already from the beginning of the world, is reflected to creatures through His Work of creation and redemption, and returns back to God through human knowledge and participation. Once again, we are confronted with the theology of glorification,

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<sup>185</sup>McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society*, 100.

<sup>186</sup>Wallace Anderson, "Editor's Introduction," *Scientific and Philosophical Writings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 26-27.

<sup>187</sup>Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 217-22.

<sup>188</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:445-63.

which is the divine movement of emanation and remanation.

In the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fullness is received and returned. Here is both an *emanation* and *remanation*. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. So that the whole is *of* God, and *in* God, and *to* God; and God is the beginning, middle and end in this affair.<sup>189</sup>

This movement of glorification provides the pivotal basis and the inclusive ground for Edwards's social ethics and political theory, and suggests two implications.<sup>190</sup> First of all, Edwards's social vision is continuously expanded. The kernel of Edwards's theology is located in the fact that humans participate in the process of God's glory in every realm of life. And the communal and social aspects cannot be ruled out from this movement of glorification. Secondly, for Edwards, the reason social theory should be considered as important is due to the fact that it plays a great role in representing the glory of God. Edwards's final goal is not just a happy life of community. This is because however excellent it may be, without the highest loyalty to the highest being, it must be nothing but idolatry.

### **Beauty and the Holy Spirit**

In Edwards's view, only one who has received divine love can lead a truly moral life. Edwards conceived of this 'divine love' as the essence of Christianity.<sup>191</sup> For Edwards, divine love enables us to "relish" or taste the sweetness of the divine relation. So "when once the soul is brought to relish the excellency of the divine nature, then it will naturally, and of course, incline

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<sup>189</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, WJE, 8:531.

<sup>190</sup>Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 221.

<sup>191</sup>Edwards, "Treatise on Grace," WJE, 21:168.

to God every way.”<sup>192</sup> According to Edwards, this divine love which is wholly poured forth into the hearts of men is the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is the divine love itself, the love of the Father and the Son.”<sup>193</sup> Therefore, only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit is one able to practice love to Being in general, which is a true virtue. “It is the Spirit itself that is the only principle of true virtue in the heart.”<sup>194</sup> Edwards maintains that

all gospel righteousness, virtue and holiness is called grace, not only because ‘tis entirely the free gift of God, but because ‘tis the Holy Spirit in man. This grace is the Holy Spirit; because it is said, we receive of Christ’s fullness, and grace for his grace (John 1:16).<sup>195</sup>

Naturally, one who leads a virtuous life can lead a spiritual life. While eighteenth century moral philosophers seek the source of virtue in “moral sense”, Edwards consistently emphasized that the source of morality originated not in humans, but in God. This is the reason why Edwards’s ethical theory is theocentric.

### **Conclusion: Homiletical Reflections on Edwards’s Sense of the Heart and Beauty**

Contemporary expository preachers can glean much wisdom from Edwards’s ideas on the sense of the heart. First, because the sense of the heart is inseparable from the grace of the Holy Spirit, the unregenerate man, who has no sense of the heart, cannot understand the Word of God beyond the knowledge given through common grace. The sense of the heart is the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, and the light of divine grace enables a person to see beyond what natural

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<sup>192</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:173.

<sup>193</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:186.

<sup>194</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:197. Edwards says, “Holy Ghost is DIVINE BEAUTY, love and joy” (*Discourse on the Trinity*, 144).

<sup>195</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 220, *WJE*, 13:345.

understanding reveals.<sup>196</sup> The preacher, too, must be empowered by the Spirit, so that he can perceive the things of God. Otherwise, he will become a hypocrite, telling others to see God's work and hear the Word of God, without the power to do so himself (Isaiah 43:19). In order to do see the "new things" that God is doing, preachers must submit themselves to the source of their hearts' power – the Holy Spirit.

Second, Edwards's emphasis on the affective aspect of the spiritual sense should remind expository preachers that effective preaching entails more than cognitive assent to doctrinal propositions. At the heart of Edwards's thought, there is a genuine engagement of the affections, or emotions, based on truth. For Edwards, where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine in the heart. Emotion divorced from reason and intellect does not indicate regeneration. Likewise, there is nothing divine in light without heat, or in a cold and unaffected heart.<sup>197</sup> Expository preachers must be convinced of the essential importance of powerful affections in preaching. Deep thought does not have to dry up fervent affection. John Piper reiterates this idea, stating, "Strong affections for God, rooted in and shaped by the truth of Scripture – this is the bone and marrow of biblical worship."<sup>198</sup> True Spirit-centered expository preaching, therefore, should oppose to all attempts to drive a wedge between deep thought and deep feeling, rather than seeking to gratify "itching ears" with intellectual, but disengaging, discourse. Heat and light always must go hand in hand.

Third, Edwards insisted that the Spirit of God never negates natural human faculties. While Edwards insists on the necessity of divine grace as a prerequisite to experiencing God, any

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<sup>196</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 24.

<sup>197</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:120.

<sup>198</sup>John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986), 81.

religious experience does not nullify or destroy ordinary sense experience but rather perfects it. This can be seen in Edwardsean creative synthesis of Calvinism and Enlightenment. Along with the adherence to Puritanism and Calvinism, Edwards embraced Locke's epistemological mechanics. This reminds us that preachers have to consider the natural faculties of the listeners. We cannot directly perceive God. Instead, we understand divine reality through everyday experience. Recognizing this, preachers should take a keen interest in whether or not their message stimulates their listeners in order to help for listeners focus on the sermon. But, at the same time, while Edwards stresses the natural human faculties, he also establishes supernatural and divine grace as a priority.

Fourth, this chapter specifically argued that the concept of beauty might play a significant role in expository preaching. In fact, beauty has seldom been a word that comes to mind when one thinks of expository preaching. Since the biggest concern for expository preaching has been drawing objective meaning from a biblical text, expository preachers' tendency has recently been to separate the concept of beauty from exactitude and objectivity of the text's meaning. Jonathan Edwards, by contrast, recognizes beauty at the center of the universe and sees it as both eternally and infinitely significant and as the basis for the most practical Christian fervor. Because of its intra-Trinitarian origins, beauty for Edwards is essentially personal. Any true encounter with such personified beauty has a power to transform people. It draws their highest love to it. It captures their most fundamental affections. Their will, driven by their affections, is transformed to love what God loves, which is the fundamental goal of our preaching. Hence beauty is the source of fervent action based on love to God and all God's creatures. Edwards understood the experience of God's beauty as genuine religious experience.

## CHAPTER 3

### EDWARDSEAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING

This dissertation began by looking critically at how expository preaching has discredited religious experience.<sup>1</sup> While this study has examined the effects of true religious experience in the heart of a believer, it has not yet explained the nature of such experiences as they relate to expository preaching. In order to discuss the restoration of religious experience in expository preaching, one must first define the term, especially as Jonathan Edwards understood it.<sup>2</sup> Lloyd-Jones provides a necessity why Jonathan Edwards comes to the fore: “If you want to know anything about the psychology of religion, conversion, revivals, read Jonathan Edwards. When you have read him you will find that William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience* is like turning from a solid book to a paper-back. . . . In this field Edwards stands out supremely and without a peer.”<sup>3</sup> As examined in the previous chapter, Jonathan Edwards is well known for his insistence on the experimental religion which engages the human heart, and his writings frequently work to join reason and emotion. This study has already noted that at its essence of his experience is a sense of God’s beauty and excellency.

This chapter attempts to describe, if not unequivocally because of the multitude of approaches to it, the concept of religious experience. In what follows, it will examine Edwards’s

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhardt Ebeling complained that experience has been absent in present-day theology for a long time. Hans Geybels, *Cognitio Dei Experimentalis* (Dudley, MA: Leuven University Press, 2007), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Concerning religious experience in Edwardsean sense, see section “Religious Experience in Edwardsean Sense” in chap. 1.

<sup>3</sup>D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth

view as compared with two other prominent views on religious experience and compare them with Edwards's beliefs. It will also identify, using Scripture and Edwards's reasoning, the relationship between reading the Word of God and experiencing God's presence and revelation. One can assume that all human experiences are contingent or accidental according to subjects and are essentially subjective because total detachment or complete objectivity when studying anything – including both science and theology<sup>4</sup> – is impossible. Everyone has theological presuppositions that color their view of religious experience.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, experiences are intersubjectively sharable in the sense that they are framed within the pre-existent theoretical structures.<sup>6</sup> The examination of these background structures is the primary concern of this chapter. I propose three different ways of defining religious experience: “experiential-expressive” structure of Schleiermacher, “cultural-linguistic” approach of George Lindbeck, and “spiritual-linguistic” approach of Jonathan Edwards.<sup>7</sup> Schleiermacher is the first to reflect extensively on religious experience, and to systematize his insights in his theology. His *experiential-expressive approach* will be critically explored.<sup>8</sup> Dissatisfied with Schleiermacher's discussion of the

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Trust, 1987), 361.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Polanyi has done some ground-breaking work in this regard. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). I am indebted to Polanyi and Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt & Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 39-44.

<sup>5</sup>See Rudolf Bultmann, *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann* (Cleveland: World, 1960), 289-96. He notes that “no exegesis is without presuppositions, inasmuch as the exegete is not a *tabula rasa*, but on the contrary, approaches the text with specific questions or with a specific way of raising questions and thus has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned.”

<sup>6</sup>Geybels argues that this aspect of experience makes it plausible to represent experience as an object of research. Geybels, *Cognitio Dei Experimentalis*, 5.

<sup>7</sup>On the analysis of these interpretative models, I am greatly indebted to Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005).

<sup>8</sup>The “experiential-expressive” approach is Lindbeck's term. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 16. According to this approach, religious experience is interpreted as

subject, Lindbeck proposes his *cultural-linguistic approach*, emphasizing the priority of language and cultural systems in religious experience. While this dissertation thoroughly examines each of these models, and recognizes the strengths of each, it proposes a directive alternative. This chapter puts forth Jonathan Edwards's *spiritual-linguistic model* as a more proper account of the nature of religious experience.

### **Schleiermacher's Modern Turn to the Subject: The Experiential-Expressive Approach**

German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher anonymously published *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* in 1799, against the backdrop of eighteenth century rationalism. Immanuel Kant, among others, proposed the view that the idea of God is necessary only for morality, but that God does not literally have to exist. Kant attempted to remove the need for a transcendental being while retaining the idea of a higher good. In response to Kant, Schleiermacher sought to save theology and reintroduce religion to a generation of the "sons of the Enlightenment" who understood religion not only as an unnecessary practice, but also as a relic of the past that would soon disappear.<sup>9</sup> The methodology of Schleiermacher's project can be termed the "turn to the subject" in theology.<sup>10</sup> In *On Religion* and *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher held that the essence of "piety" must be sought neither in beliefs nor in moral behaviors but in subjective "feeling," by which he meant the immediate self consciousness

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"noninformative and nondiscursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations."

<sup>9</sup>Christopher Marsh, *Religion and the State in Russia and China: Suppression, Survival, and Revival* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 20.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas M. Kelly, *Theology at the Void: The Retrieval of Experience* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), xiv. Kelly argues that the turn to the subject in Schleiermacher's thought occurs in three major stages: first, in the apologia for religion; second, in the later theological appropriation of an experiential starting point for dogmatic theology; and third, in a theological treatment of doctrine enabled by a turn to the subject in hermeneutics.

underlying all our knowledge and action.<sup>11</sup> Hence, religion is a matter of describing God-consciousness without being aware of it.

Edwards and Schleiermacher agree at various points. They both sought to overcome narrow interpretations that defined religion as only an intellectual assent to doctrinal propositions.<sup>12</sup> For Schleiermacher, as for Edwards, “Christian doctrines are accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech.”<sup>13</sup> They both valued emotion and highlighted the element of immediacy in religious experience. In McClymond’s words, “Edwards’s ‘spiritual sense’ has something in common with Schleiermacher’s ‘intuition’ or ‘feeling’ of the Infinite.”<sup>14</sup>

However, irreconcilable points between the two exist as well. First, Schleiermacher declares the independence of religion from the sphere of knowledge, saying that “Religion is essentially contemplative. . . . Religion is not knowledge and science, either of the world or of God. . . . In itself it is an affection, a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it is God.” In another passage from *On Religion*, he states, “I cannot hold religion the highest knowledge, or indeed knowledge at all.”<sup>15</sup> Schleiermacher strove to preserve a place for religion in the context of a highly critical post-Enlightenment culture by weakening the connection between faith and knowledge.<sup>16</sup> He excludes the mind or understanding from the realm of the

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<sup>11</sup>B. A. Gerrish, “Friedrich Schleiermacher,” in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, vol. 1, ed. Ninian Smart, John Clayton, Steven Katz and Patrick Sherry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 135.

<sup>12</sup>Michael J. McClymond, *Encounter with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22.

<sup>13</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 76.

<sup>14</sup>McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 22.

<sup>15</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. John Oman (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 36, 102.

<sup>16</sup>Kant, in the preface of *Critique of Pure Reason*, also commented, “I have therefore found it necessary

religion. In contrast, for Edwards, faith in itself includes not only an affective aspect, but also a form of knowledge in the human relationship to God.<sup>17</sup>

Second, Schleiermacher adheres to the universality of religion presented as the feeling of absolute dependence on God. For him, religion is an invariant feature of human existence. All persons within all cultures thus have the consciousness of the Infinite, that is, God. They also have a “sense of absolute dependence” that points back to God, who is the “Whence” of the experience of “absolute dependence.”<sup>18</sup> This is the case even when humans do not recognize their dependence upon God.<sup>19</sup> Schleiermacher wrote in his *Addresses on Religion* (1789):

Religion is the outcome neither of the fear of death, nor of the fear of God. It answers a deep need in man. It is neither a metaphysic, nor a morality, but above all and essentially an intuition and a feeling. . . . Religion is the miracle of direct relationship with the infinite; and dogmas are the reflection of this miracle. Similarly belief in God, and in personal immortality, are not necessarily a part of religion; one can conceive of a religion without God, and it would be pure contemplation of the universe.<sup>20</sup>

In Schleiermacher’s view, true religious experience has nothing to do with belief or behavior. It does not require the existence of a personal God.<sup>21</sup> Edwards, however, would have not accepted Schleiermacher’s contention that humans can experience God without any recognition of God as

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to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), 29, cited in McClymond, *Encounter with God*, 23.

<sup>17</sup>Edwards states, “There is no true religion where there is no religious affections.” But at the same time, “there must be light in the understanding as well as an affected fervent heart,” because without light “there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:120.

<sup>18</sup>Vanhoozer mentions the relationship between doctrines and absolute dependence like this: “The doctrines of creation, sin, and salvation are descriptions of the consciousness of absolute dependence, guilt, and grace, respectively.” Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 91.

<sup>19</sup>Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 12-26.

<sup>20</sup>Cited in Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993), 18

<sup>21</sup>Quoting Lonergan, Lindbeck summarizes Schleiermacher’s position: “Inasmuch as it is conscious without being known, the gift of God’s love is an experience of the holy, of Rudolf Otto’s *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*. It is what Paul Tillich named a being grasped by ultimate concern. It is what corresponds to Ignatius Loyola’s consolation that has no cause, as expounded by Karl Rahner.” Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 31.

the object of the experience. For Edwards, genuine religious experience, as articulated in the previous chapter, is to see or relish the very “beauty” of God.<sup>22</sup> Above all, Edwards would have refuted the universality of religion as well as a sense of absolute dependence. While Schleiermacher argues that every human intrinsically possesses the capacity for religious feeling in their nature, Edwards distinguishes between the capacity of the regenerate and that of the unregenerate. In Edwards’s view, only those who God favors can have a genuine spiritual perception through the sense of the heart.

The problem of Schleiermacher’s experiential-expressive approach is that people have different inner feelings about the same affairs. As a consequence, this approach cannot guarantee experiential stability or objective religious experience.<sup>23</sup> Another problem with Schleiermacher’s view, as Kevin Vanhoozer comments, is that “Putting one’s experience into words is less a truth claim than a satisfaction of the need for self-expression.”<sup>24</sup> Religious experience should be more than information, more even than a description of the feeling of absolute dependence on God. Kant may be correct in saying, “There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience,”<sup>25</sup> but if all knowledge ends there too, then we are without any means to arbitrate

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<sup>22</sup>Edwards writes, “When a man is certain he sees those things, he is certain he sees that which he calls divine. He is certain he feels those things to which he annexes the term God; that is he is certain that what he sees and feels, he sees and feels; and he knows that what he then sees and feels is the same thing he used to call God.” *WJE*, 13:177.

<sup>23</sup>Lindbeck argues that Schleiermacher’s experiential approach may result in an unsatisfactory formation of religious experience: “The general principle is that insofar as doctrines function as nondiscursive symbols, they are polyvalent in import and therefore subject to changes of meaning or even to a total loss of meaningfulness, to what Tillich calls their death. They are not crucial for religious agreement or disagreement, because these are constituted by harmony or conflict in underlying feelings, attitudes, existential orientations, or practices, rather than by what happens on the level of symbolic (including doctrinal) objectifications.” Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 17.

<sup>24</sup>Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 91. Quoting Hegel, Vanhoozer adds that “lyric strives toward the ‘self-expression of the subjective life’ and that ‘instead of proceeding to action, [subjective] remains alone with itself as inwardness.’”

<sup>25</sup>Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 41.

between conflicting views on what true and authentic experience looks like.

### **George Lindbeck's Postmodern Turn to the Church: The Cultural-Linguistic Turn**

George Lindbeck, who published *The Nature of Doctrine* nearly 200 years after Schleiermacher's *On Religion*, groups common theological approaches to doctrine into three broad categories: propositionalism, experiential-expressive model, and a combination of these two approaches.<sup>26</sup> Propositionalism emphasizes the cognitive aspects of religion and experiential-expressive approach emphasizes the experiential aspect of religion. The third category considers both as religiously significant and valid. The first category, he argues, is too rigid, the second is too elastic, and the third is simply too complex to be easily intelligible.<sup>27</sup> Instead, Lindbeck proposes an alternative: the cultural-linguistic approach. Lindbeck writes,

Religions resemble languages together with their correlative forms of life and are thus similar to cultures. The function of church doctrines that becomes most prominent in this perspective is their use, not as expressive symbols or as truth claims, but as communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action. This general way of conceptualizing religion will be called in what follows a "cultural-linguistic" approach.<sup>28</sup>

Lindbeck draws heavily from Ludwig Wittgenstein's language theory, which argues that linguistic meaning depends upon a language use, and that linguistic usage varies according to the forms of life or practices, namely, cultures that users inhabit.<sup>29</sup> This insight of Wittgenstein's theory enables us to understand the relationship Lindbeck proposes between religious experience and language. The ability to communicate the meaning of an experience is

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<sup>26</sup>Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 16.

<sup>27</sup>Kelly, *Theology at the Void*, 75.

<sup>28</sup>Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 17-18.

<sup>29</sup>Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 10.

the possibility for the experience. In other words, experience in itself can never be separated from what it symbolizes, and language is the precondition for the possibility of experience. On this view, Lindbeck continues to say that “the means of communication and expression are a precondition, a kind of quasi-transcendental (i.e., culturally formed) a priori for the possibility of experience.”<sup>30</sup> If this is the case, the understanding of language and culture has far-reaching consequences for religious experience. Above all, since religious experience in this approach is understood as the diverse accumulation of cultural and linguistic factors, when it comes to the authenticity of the experience there is no criteria to discern right or wrong. In addition, religious experience of the human subject is always already shaped by a tradition of the use of language. As a result, just as Schleiermacher’s approach falls into subjectivism, the cultural-linguistic understanding of religious experience cannot avoid relativism. This is an inevitable consequence, since under this view culture and language structure the human subject’s experience, yet neither culture nor language are eternal or invariable things, but changeable and relative to time and place. In addition, Lindbeck does not limit his discussion of religious experience to Christianity. Thus in Lindbeck’s writings on this matter, there is no reference to the Holy Spirit transcending time, culture, tradition and language.

The cultural-linguistic turn denies both the absolute objectivity of propositionalism and the absolute subjectivity of experiential-expressive model. Instead, it embraces “the authority of communal tradition,” that is to say, “relatively absolute intersubjectivity.”<sup>31</sup> This leads us to the *tradition-based experience*. In this framework, the authenticity of the experience

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<sup>30</sup>Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, 36. Kelly summarizes Lindbeck’s position as “without language, outside of language, or beyond language, experience is not available.” Kelly, *Theology at the Void*, 79.

<sup>31</sup>Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 10.

precisely depends upon whether the tradition of religious community approves of the experience. The problem with this approach is that criteria of legitimacy or authenticity of religious experience is located not in Scripture, but in tradition and culture. In Kelly's words, "While the experiential-expressive approach to religion views itself as a *product* of a religious experience, the cultural-linguistic approach views itself as a *producer* of religious experience."<sup>32</sup> In contrast, for Edwards, genuine religious experience is *Spirit-led experience*: the Holy Spirit is the producer of genuine religious experience through the word of God. Edwardsean religious experience has its seat primarily in the sense of the heart of the saints. In the following section, I will explore Edwards's understanding of the nature of religious experience.

### **Edwardsean Religious Experience**

One of Edwards's most crucial answers about the nature of true religious experience is that in analyzing religious experience one must always distinguish between the *accidental* and the *essential*. Whatever the unregenerate may experience in common with the regenerate is accidental. True religious experience is the exclusive work of the Spirit of God which the world, those outside of Christ's redemption, can neither receive nor know. While both sinners and saints can experience phenomena that look like true spiritual experience, only the saints can have essential religious experiences through the work of the Holy Spirit. While the essential religious experience is in accordance with the "positive signs," previously discussed, the accidental religious experience aligns with the "negative signs" in *The Distinguishing Marks of the Spirit of God*.<sup>33</sup> These are signs that may occur in both the lives of the regenerate and the unregenerate,

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<sup>32</sup>Kelly, *Theology at the Void*, 78.

<sup>33</sup>For the summary of nine 'negative signs' and five 'positive signs,' see Michael A. G. Haykin,

but that do not necessarily prove the affection of the Holy Spirit.

Richard Hutch appraises Edwards's sense of religious experience from three perspectives: the cultural and historical setting in which he lived, his psychological understanding of human nature, and his theological analysis.<sup>34</sup> Hutch particularly considers the culture of Puritanism, in which Edwards wrote and formed his theological views, and the historical context of the Great Awakening.<sup>35</sup> Edwards's psychological understanding of religious experience is indeed related to the concept of "sense of the heart" and his holistic view of the human personality.<sup>36</sup> In this present section, I will focus on Edwards's theological understanding of religious experience. To define the concept of Edwardsean religious experience, this study will investigate the legacy of Calvin.<sup>37</sup> Much research has already been done concerning the views on religious experience held by this theological giant, so this dissertation will provide an overview in order to clarify only Edwards's relation with him, rather than embarking on a detailed study. I will also examine Edwards's developing understanding of religious experience through the Northampton revival and the Great Awakening. After that, Edwards's conversion experience in the *Personal Narrative* and case histories will follow. In clarifying the Edwardsean sense of religious experience, his view on the Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit is of

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*Jonathan Edwards: The Holy Spirit in Revival* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2005), 92-101.

<sup>34</sup>Richard A. Hutch, "Jonathan Edwards's Analysis of Religious Experience," *The Journal of Psychology and Theology* 6 (1978): 123-31.

<sup>35</sup>Hunch, "Jonathan Edwards's Analysis," 124. Because chap. 1 explored the Great Awakening, I need not discuss it again here. I will investigate the Puritan influence upon Edwards in the following section.

<sup>36</sup>Hunch, "Jonathan Edwards's Analysis," 125. Chap. 2 examined Edwards's epistemology and anthropology.

<sup>37</sup>The reason Calvin, among others, is important in this matter is that when Edwards discusses experimental religion he follows Calvinistic tradition and that the sense of the heart, more importantly, which

great importance. The Holy Spirit's relationship to the Word in Edwards's thought will be also examined in order to explore the nature of religious experience.

### **The Legacy of Calvin: Faith and Experience**

While there exist endless caricatures of John Calvin, as an iron theo-logician who values “an inexorable logic, a mathematically precise nature, a monomania, and a terrific and sinister self-assurance,”<sup>38</sup> Calvin's writings reveal something more than a mere logical certainty. He frequently appeals to human experience along with his appeal to Scripture.<sup>39</sup> For instance, in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin writes, “This recognition of [Christ] consists more in living experience than in vain and high-flown speculations.”<sup>40</sup> He also writes, “Indeed, with experience as our teacher, we find God just as He declares himself in his Word.”<sup>41</sup> Charles Partee, in his article “Calvin and Experience,” argues that this focus on experience reveals that “Calvin was not interested in speculation about God-in-himself but God in his relationship to us as revealed in his Word.”<sup>42</sup> Thus one can find Calvin's continuing influence not only in the coherence of his theological reasoning, but also in his description of the Christian experience of God.

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designates the religious experience, is fundamentally in Calvinism. See Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 20.

<sup>38</sup>Stefan Zweig, *The Right to Heresy*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Viking, 1936), 22, 27, 34, 35, cited in Charles Partee, “Calvin and Experience,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 169.

<sup>39</sup>Willem Balke, “The Word of God and Experientia according to Calvin,” in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Kampen: Kok B.V., 1980), 20.

<sup>40</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1. 10. 2, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

<sup>41</sup>Calvin, *Institutes*, 1, 10, 2.

<sup>42</sup>Partee, “Calvin and Experience,” 171.

Despite his belief that “experience” can act “as our teacher,” Calvin sometimes depicts experience as opposition to faith.<sup>43</sup> He is conscious that if our experience is not based on the word of God, it is easily exposed to the vagaries of feelings. Experience in itself is incomplete and inadequate.<sup>44</sup> But, in other cases, he understands religious experience as a tool for promoting faith. In the Commentary on Luke, for example, Calvin writes, “It is frequently the case that believers receive only a slight taste of the divine power from the word and are afterwards excited to admiration by experience.”<sup>45</sup> For Calvin, knowledge of God is two-fold: the knowledge of faith, received from the Word alone, and the knowledge of experience, which depends upon the working of the Word. Calvin grants absolute priority to the Word of God. Experience is always *a posteriori*.<sup>46</sup> Experience must be authenticated by the testimony of Scripture. In other words, experience is facilitated through the Word, and it confirms the Word’s reliability.<sup>47</sup> Calvin attached great value to experience in that through experience, faith demonstrates its current state. God’s goodness “cannot happen without our truly feeling its sweetness and *experiencing* it in ourselves.”<sup>48</sup> Further, man encounters with God’s working in the world around him through experience. In this sense, in Partee’s words, “Experience is the arena of human life in which

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<sup>43</sup>In a negative vein, Calvin wrote that “faith cannot arise from a naked experience of things but must have its origin in the Word of God.” Calvin, *Commentary* John 20:29 (CO 47, 445).

<sup>44</sup>Balke, “Experientia according to Calvin,” 23.

<sup>45</sup>Calvin, *Commentary* Luke 10:17 (CO 45, 315).

<sup>46</sup>Balke, “Experientia according to Calvin,” 25. Balke writes, “Experientia is born of faith in the Word and experience afterward establishes the trustworthiness of the Word.”

<sup>47</sup>For the similarity between Calvin and Edwards regarding the relationship between the word of God and experience, see the following section in this chapter, “The Word as the Mediator of Genuine Religious Experience.”

<sup>48</sup>Calvin, *Institutes*, 3. 2. 15. Emphasis added.

events occur which, properly interpreted, show that man deals with God in everything.”<sup>49</sup> Again, despite the importance of experience, *nuda experientia* is not enough. Experience needs the word of God and illumination of the Holy Spirit. Calvin’s position is directly reflected in Edwards’s understanding of the relationship between the word of God and religious experience.

### **Edwards’s Shifting Understanding of “Religious Experience” in His Works**

While *Religious Affections* may be the most commonly examined of Edwards’s works on religious experience, or even, as biographer Iain Murray says, one of the “most important” from any author,<sup>50</sup> Edwards explores this topic throughout several of his works. This section will explore some of the insights presented throughout Edwards’s works, in order to build a more complete picture of Edwards’s theories on religious experience. These works were written during the Great Awakening. In placing Edwards’s understanding of religious experience in historical context, one can better understand the motive and purpose with which Edwards wrote these works, and how his understanding of religious experience evolves and develops in the context of this particular period of revival.<sup>51</sup> This dissertation concurs with Douglas Winiarski who argues that Edwards’s several revival treatises should be understood as products of his changing thoughts, based on his ongoing experience with revival, and not as a seamless,

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<sup>49</sup>Partee, “Calvin and Experience,” 178.

<sup>50</sup>Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, 267.

<sup>51</sup>Concerning Edwards’s change in position on the revivals, I am very much indebted to John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 128-46.

unchanging whole.<sup>52</sup>

In his earliest published work on the subject, *A Faithful Narrative*, Edwards “dons the robe of the historian” and reports what took place during the 1734/1735 Northampton revival.<sup>53</sup> Edwards defends the validity of the events of 1735, noting that those who had experienced a conversion “generally seem to be persons who have had an *abiding change* wrought on them.”<sup>54</sup> For Edwards, transformation, or a life change, through a conversion experience was the touchstone of a work of God. Emotional and bodily experiences could be signs of a true converting work and yet such experiences could not be validated without a change of life.

In *The Distinguishing Marks*, Edwards also defends the revivals against the charges of enthusiasm.<sup>55</sup> He confesses that he knew a very few instances of those who “have for a short space been deprived, in some measure, of the use of reason,” but he “never knew one, lastingly deprived of their reason.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, as to the seeming imprudences, irregularities and even delusion, Edwards wrote that “a reformation, after a long continued and almost universal deadness, should at first when the revival is new, be attended with such things.”<sup>57</sup> Edwards defends the revival by providing those who consider it fraud, hypocrisy, and enthusiasm with a balanced perspective on religious experience.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, one can believe that Edwards, on the

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<sup>52</sup>Douglas L. Winiarski, “Jonathan Edwards, Enthusiast? Radical Revivalism and the Great Awakening in the Connecticut Valley,” *Church History* 74, no. 4 (2005): 691.

<sup>53</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 44.

<sup>54</sup>Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative,” *WJE*, 4:208. Italics added.

<sup>55</sup>Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 233-38.

<sup>56</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, *WJE*, 4:264.

<sup>57</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, *WJE*, 4:268.

<sup>58</sup>Edwards writes, “We can’t conclude that persons are under the influence of the true Spirit, because we see such effects upon their bodies . . . nor on the other hand, have we any reason to conclude, from any such outward appearances, that persons are not under the influence of the Spirit of God, because there is no rule of

whole, defends the revival in *A Faithful Narrative* and *The Distinguishing Marks*. Edwards experienced so-called radical revivalism in the upper Valley during the summer of 1741. After preaching in the Suffield meetinghouse, Edwards observed a deafening roar of “Sobs of bereaved Friends, Groans & Screaches as of Women in the Pains of Childbirth, Houlings and Yellings.”<sup>59</sup> Moreover, Edwards reports seeing people in such spiritual distress that they crumpled to the ground, their bodies twisting with such violence that anyone “would have thought their bones all broken, or rather that they had no bones.”<sup>60</sup> From this experience, writes Winiarski, Edwards became “an active promoter of the most radical dimensions” of new birth experience during the revivals.<sup>61</sup> This does not negate his belief that emotion and reason work together when the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of the saints. In *The Distinguishing Marks*, Edwards shows concern about labeling a loss of self-control as the work of the Spirit of God.<sup>62</sup> While he continues to support radical demonstrations of repentance, he also argues that a work of the Spirit of God should not “be judged of by any effects on the bodies of men; such as tears, trembling, groans, loud outcries, agonies of body, or the failing of bodily strength.”<sup>63</sup> These effects on the body may result from the Spirit’s work, but they cannot prove the authenticity of the spiritual state of the one experiencing them. Above all, as Edwards states, “the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God” should not “be determined by the degree of effect on men’s bodies,” nor should saints look

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Scripture given us to judge of spirits by, that does, either expressly or indirectly, exclude such effects on the body; nor does reason exclude them.” Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:230-31.

<sup>59</sup>Cited in Winiarski, “Jonathan Edwards, Enthusiast?” 684.

<sup>60</sup>Cited in Winiarski, “Jonathan Edwards, Enthusiast?” 738-39.

<sup>61</sup>Winiarski, “Jonathan Edwards, Enthusiast?” 689.

<sup>62</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 85.

<sup>63</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:230.

to these experiences as the truest marks of their salvation or justification before God.<sup>64</sup>

Meanwhile, enthusiasm continued to be a target for those who opposed the revivals, Charles Chauncy, among others. For Chauncy, the enthusiasm was “a kind of religious Phrenzy” and “one of the most dangerous enemies to the church of God” which made people under its influence believe that “God himself speaks inwardly and immediately to their souls,” “while they have been committing the most undoubted wickedness.”<sup>65</sup> In measured response to these continued attacks, Edwards began to write *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion* in 1742 as a more systematic defense.<sup>66</sup> The basic thrust of *Some Thoughts*, like the previous works, was to defend certain emotional excesses as a product of the extraordinary events. Edwards argued that no man is able to “behave himself in all respects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people.”<sup>67</sup> Edwards attempts to explain these excesses further, natural products of the Spirit’s work among a people. He writes,

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, and darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of God. . . . Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:268.

<sup>65</sup>Chauncy, “Enthusiasm,” in *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences*, 232-34, 237, 255; also see Edward M. Griffin, *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston 1705-1787* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 60-70.

<sup>66</sup>After James Davenport’s “fanatical” preaching tour through New England in 1742, Charles Chauncy published a sermon “Enthusiasm Described and Cautioned Against” that same year, denouncing the revivals in general. In this context, Edwards wrote *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival* in defense of the revivals and published it in March 1743. C. C. Goen, “Editor’s Introduction,” WJE, 4:65 n. 9.

<sup>67</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:317.

<sup>68</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4: 318, 326.

*Some Thoughts* reveals a consistent, and even more measured, view of the emotional response to the revivals as Edwards first explored in *A Faithful Narrative* and *The Distinguishing Marks*.

Despite the seemingly consistent stance on the enthusiasm of revivals, however, *Some Thoughts* reveals something of a shift in Edwards's thought. Whereas *A Faithful Narrative* and *The Distinguishing Marks* sought to minimize the errors of revivalists, *Some Thoughts* notes some serious missteps on their part. First, Edwards saw spiritual pride as "the worst cause of errors," which was apt to "suspect others" and "find fault with other saints."<sup>69</sup> Edwards argues that "the errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work."<sup>70</sup> Second, Edwards echoes Chauncy in accusing some revivalists of having practiced "wrong principles," including an insistence that they were guided by "inspiration or immediate revelation." By such a notion, warns Edwards, "the Devil has a great door opened" to him.<sup>71</sup> Edwards also criticizes some ministers for assuming "the same style" and speaking "with the same authority that the prophets of old did." Third, Edwards warns supporters of the revival that "it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal."<sup>72</sup> Finally, Edwards reminds his readers of the limitations of physical manifestations in the work of God: "Those are not always the best experiences that are attended with the most violent affections and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or that have the greatest

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<sup>69</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:414, 418.

<sup>70</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:411.

<sup>71</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:432.

<sup>72</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:459.

effects on the body.”<sup>73</sup> The book’s structure shows that Edwards’s understanding of the revival is shifting from a defensive position to a critical stance with regard to the imprudent excesses committed by the friends of the revival.<sup>74</sup> The largest part of the book focuses on how the friends of revival need to correct various problems in the work.<sup>75</sup>

In *Religious Affections*, written in 1746, rather than a simple defense of the revivals, Edwards rebukes the radical revivalists for promoting religious experience without a disciplined Christian life. In this regard, *Religious Affections* marks another change in Edwards’s ideas on religious experience in the revivals. The kernel of this treatise is to maintain that the effects on the body or transcendent experience did not, in and of themselves, prove the genuineness of a religious experience. Rather, sure evidence of genuine religion can be found in the way one lived one’s life, not in emotional experiences or feelings. This position of Edwards is quite different from his view on religious experience in the 1730s. In discerning genuine religious experience, the center of gravity was moved from emotional or bodily experience to Christian practice.

In the end, Edwards does not consider bodily experiences to be the standard for discerning spiritual authenticity. That does not mean Edwards rules out bodily experience as a symptom of the Spirit’s work. Rather, Edwards continues to argue throughout his writings that authenticity must be judged using Scripture as “our guide in such cases,” for it is “the great and standing rule which God has given to his church, to guide them in all things relating to the great concerns of their souls.”<sup>76</sup> Through this recommendation of Scripture as the “infallible and sufficient” judge for spiritual phenomena, the reader can conclude that “the extraordinary and

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<sup>73</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:465.

<sup>74</sup>Murray, *Jonathan Edwards*, 237-38.

<sup>75</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 110.

unusual degree of influence, and power of operation, if in its nature it be agreeable to the rules and marks given in the Scripture” are “a work of the Spirit of God.”<sup>77</sup> The reason for this is clear for Edwards. He writes,

The Spirit of God is sovereign in his operations; and we know that he uses a great variety; and we can't tell how great a variety he may use, within the compass of the rules he himself has fixed. We ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself. If a work be never so different from the work of God's Spirit that has formerly been, yet if it only agrees in those things that the Word of God has given us as the distinguishing signs of a work of his Spirit, that is sufficient to determine us entirely in its favor.<sup>78</sup>

Edwards confirms this position even in *Religious Affections*. While Edwards admits that great effects on the body cannot be sure evidences that affections are spiritual, he maintains that “I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Edwards's Personal Conversion Experience: *Personal Narrative***

On a spring day in 1721, while reading 1 Timothy 1:17, Jonathan Edwards experienced a sudden “sense of the glory of the divine being; a new sense, quite different from anything [he] ever experienced before.” In his account, he continues, “I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to prayer, to pray to God that I might enjoy him.”<sup>80</sup> This experience of a new sense of the heart enabled Edwards to apprehend

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<sup>76</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:227.

<sup>77</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:229.

<sup>78</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:229.

<sup>79</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:132. Edwards goes on to say that “true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body.” WJE, 2:133.

<sup>80</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:792.

the beauty of God and nature in an entirely new way. Edwards attempted to record his conversion experience in his essay *Personal Narrative*, tracing the changes in thought and behavior that the experience wrought in him as closely as he can. First, he records a change of thought about divine sovereignty. At the center was Edwards's vision of God's absolute and arbitrary sovereignty "in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he please," an idea against which he "had been wont to be full of objections" before his conversion. His conversion, in Edwards's words, had resulted in a "wonderful alteration" in his mind, so that, since then, divine sovereignty was "a *delightful* conviction" for him.<sup>81</sup> After the conversion experience, "the doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit" appeared to him as "sweet and glorious doctrines."<sup>82</sup> This experience was made possible because of the Holy Spirit's impartation of a divine and supernatural light which accounts for the sense of the heart of God's glory and beauty.<sup>83</sup> Second, Edwards's conversion experience includes a change of his attitude toward natural manifestations of God's power, such as thunderstorms:<sup>84</sup>

I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder; and it used to strike me with terror, when I saw a thunderstorm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunderstorm. And used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightening play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder: which often times was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet

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<sup>81</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:791-92. Emphasis mine.

<sup>82</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:799.

<sup>83</sup>McClymond understands *Personal Narrative* as "a treatise on the Christian life in autobiographical form, forming a kind of phenomenology of the believer's vision or perception of God." McClymond, *Encounters with God*, 42.

<sup>84</sup>Edwards thought that God's majesty can be known by immediate intuition as well as by reasoned reflection. Thunder is given as an example of the former: "The manifestations of God's majesty in heaven, and at the day of judgment, and in many of his works, as thunder and earthquakes, etc., tend immediately to impress the mind with a sense of majesty, without any reasoning or reflection." Edwards, "Miscellanies," no. 493, WJE, 13:537.

contemplations of my great and glorious God.<sup>85</sup>

The appearance of everything changed. Unlike the unregenerate Edwards, Edwards after regeneration took delight in natural phenomena. The physical sensory input remains the same, but the supernaturally regenerated heart, possessing a new sense, can appreciate beauty where it once perceived dissonance. After receiving the sense of the heart, all of nature became “aesthetically sacramental in that the entire created realm portrayed the beauty of God.”<sup>86</sup> Third, after his experience, Edwards received a heightened appreciation for the Scriptures:

I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt an harmony between something in my heart, and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light, exhibited by every sentence, and such refreshing ravishing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading. Used oftentimes to dwell long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.<sup>87</sup>

Edwards experienced real harmony between his Spirit-indwelt soul and the Spirit-inspired Scriptures. Every word in the Scriptures touched his heart and gave him the “greatest delight.”<sup>88</sup>

Through his spiritual autobiography, Edwards seeks to exemplify the principles of genuine religious experience, found later in the *Religious Affections*. In fact, much of the language and theology of the *Personal Narrative* reappear in the *Religious Affections*. Daniel Shea points out that, by narrative example, Edwards “will teach what is false and what is true in religious experience, giving another form to the argument he carried on elsewhere; and he hopes

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<sup>85</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:794.

<sup>86</sup>Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 87.

<sup>87</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:797.

<sup>88</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:797.

to affect his readers by both the content and the presentation of his exemplary experience.”<sup>89</sup>

Edwards’s understanding of religious experience revealed through his *Personal Narrative* can be summarized as follows. First, genuine religious experience becomes possible only through the Holy Spirit’s impartation of a divine and supernatural light. Second, God created all things and reveals himself to the saints through creation, so that genuine religious experience enables us to see, appreciate and rejoice in God’s beauty. Third, the word of God makes our experience genuine. Robert Jenson states that in Edwards’s understanding of religious experience, *Personal Narrative* plays an important role as the paradigmatic standard experience.<sup>90</sup>

### **Case Histories: Sarah Edwards and David Brainerd**

Edwards seeks to understand and promote revival by describing particular people’s experiences. Throughout his writings, Edwards offers case histories as evidence for the authenticity of revival. In this section, we will examine the two most significant. In *Some Thoughts*, Edwards offers the religious experience of his wife, Sarah Edwards, as evidence of affection resulting from the Spirit’s work. In *The Life of David Brainerd*, Edwards describes Brainerd’s experience as an Indian missionary, using Brainerd’s own religious experience as the case example for genuine religious experience. Edwards’s goal in using case histories was to

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<sup>89</sup>Daniel B. Shea, “The Art and Instruction of Jonathan Edwards’s Personal Narrative,” in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), 266. Originally published in *American Literature* 37 (1965): 17-32.

<sup>90</sup>Robert W. Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 15.

defend the “raised affections” of the revivals as not necessarily enthusiastic, and thus he offers the experience of Sarah and Brainerd as examples of “true, holy and solid affections.”<sup>91</sup>

**Sarah Edwards.** During the time of the Great Awakening, Sarah Edwards underwent an overwhelming experience of the Spirit.<sup>92</sup> Her husband asked her to write about it privately. Jonathan Edwards used Sarah’s account in *Some Thoughts*, in which he presents his wife as a model of a truly Spirit-filled person.<sup>93</sup>

Some understand Sarah’s experience as psychological, due to the frustrations and pressures of her life rather than a religious or spiritual experience. Elisabeth D. Dodds, among others, attributes Sarah’s experience to several possible factors, including her previous stoicism, financial stresses, Edwards’s criticism of her handling of a certain person, the strain of coping with a difficult husband and large family, and her jealousy over the success of visiting pastors.<sup>94</sup> For Edwards, however, she had “extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body.”<sup>95</sup> Edwards describes her soul as remaining “in a kind of heavenly Elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ’s love.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:299.

<sup>92</sup>For a more detailed account on Sarah’s spiritual experience, see Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 68-71; Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 115-19; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 239-52; and Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards*, 90-94.

<sup>93</sup>Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 111.

<sup>94</sup>Elisabeth D. Dodds, *Marriage to a Difficult Man: The Uncommon Union of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards* (Laurel, MS: Audubon Press, 2003), cited in Noël Piper, “Sarah Edwards: Jonathan’s Home and Heaven,” in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 68. See also Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards*, 114; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 240-49.

<sup>95</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:332.

<sup>96</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:332.

While Sarah had earlier suffered from “a vapory habit of body” and was “often subject to melancholy,” after her conversion, she “remained in a constant uninterrupted rest, and humble joy in God, and assurance of his favor, without one hour’s melancholy or darkness.”<sup>97</sup>

Edwards describes Sarah’s regenerate state as follows: “The soul in the meantime has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable.”<sup>98</sup> Edwards presents Sarah’s rapture as a genuine religious experience, not the result of enthusiasm or of a trance-like state, for several reasons. He later expresses these reasons as positive signs in the *Religious Affections*. First, Sarah’s sensibility of her own sinfulness was conjoined with a sense of the joy and the majesty of God: “This great rejoicing has been a rejoicing with trembling, i.e. attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person’s own exceeding littleness and vileness.”<sup>99</sup> These religious sensations appeared “not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behavior, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were a new person.”<sup>100</sup> Second, Sarah evidenced humility and meekness that kept her from judging the religious experience of other Christians.<sup>101</sup> She also exhibited a keen sense of “the importance of moral

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<sup>97</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:334-35.

<sup>98</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:332.

<sup>99</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:333. The sixth positive sign is that evangelical humiliation ingenerates the sensibility of the odiousness of sin and one’s own sinful condition. In addition, Sarah showed the tenth sign, which is “beautiful symmetry and proportion.” “An holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints. . . In the saints, joy and holy fear go together.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:312, 365, 366.

<sup>100</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:334.

<sup>101</sup>This is the eighth sign: “Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:344.

social duties” and responsibilities, and saw the necessity of manifesting her faith in practice.<sup>102</sup>

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Sarah possessed both a heavenly and an earthly mind.

Jonathan Edwards saw in his wife an unyielding commitment to God and described it as “a daily sensible doing and suffering everything for God for a long time past, eating for God, and working for God, and sleeping for God, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love.”<sup>103</sup> At the same time, she presented a sense of God in her everyday life.

Edwards takes some pains to emphasize Sarah’s “doing everything for God” as a frame of mind that translated to daily life. He writes,

High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer, and other exercises of devotion; but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God.<sup>104</sup>

Edwards seeks to clarify the relationship between the material and the spiritual through Sarah’s experience. For Edwards, the material is subordinate to the spiritual, and yet neither of them can be given up. In other words, Edwards is on earth, but looking to heaven. Sarah herself confesses that the business of life was “found to be as good as prayer.”<sup>105</sup> Thus Edwards exclaims to critics of the revivals: “Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious

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<sup>102</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:335. The twelfth sign of genuine religious experience states that “gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:383.

<sup>103</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:340.

<sup>104</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:340.

<sup>105</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:340. Here Sarah evidenced her beautiful symmetry and proportion, which is the tenth sign.

distraction.”<sup>106</sup>

The only question is how to interpret Sarah’s unusual bodily phenomena. When she felt the sense of the greatness of God, she lost all bodily strength.<sup>107</sup> The sense of the glory caused her body to faint.<sup>108</sup> On occasion, with joy and mighty exultation of soul, Sarah had “to leap with all the might.”<sup>109</sup> Yet, Edwards asserts that Sarah’s bodily responses are different from signs of enthusiasm and that, in contrast, she “had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest and humility that they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God’s honor, and watch and fight against sin.”<sup>110</sup> While not expressly condemning physical manifestations of the work of God, Edwards suggests that religious experiences “attended with the most violent affections and most vehement motions of the animal spirits” were “not always the best experience.”<sup>111</sup> Edwards believed that external acts of worship, consisting of “bodily gestures, words, and sounds,” are the “cheapest part of religion,” while obedience to God’s moral commands of “self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love” were “of vastly the

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<sup>106</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:341.

<sup>107</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:336.

<sup>108</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:336.

<sup>109</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:332. Concerning Sarah’s bodily responses, Edwards writes, “Extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clinched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of soul.” Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:332.

<sup>110</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:334. See the third positive sign in *Religious Affections*. “Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things. Or (to express it otherwise), a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:253-54.

<sup>111</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:465.

greatest importance in the Christian life.”<sup>112</sup> As a result, Edwards believed that Sarah’s experiences were not related to “any enthusiastic disposition to follow impulses or any supposed prophetic revelations,”<sup>113</sup> but genuine religious experiences. In describing the case of Sarah Edwards, Jonathan Edwards hopes to present clear evidence of the genuineness of the Spirit’s work in the revivals. As Sarah’s case shows, for Edwards, genuine religious experience includes heavenly transport and rapture of soul and yet is still grounded in the affairs of everyday life coupled with a steady piety.

**David Brainerd.** There is a controversy about whether the life of Brainerd can be called a standard Christian religious experience. David L. Weddle argues that since Brainerd grappled with his melancholy throughout his life, and since he was captured by excessive self-interest and morbid self-condemnation, the life of Brainerd is at best an ambiguous example of Edwards’s theology of religious experience.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, Edwards edited Brainerd’s diaries, published as *The Life of David Brainerd*, in order to portray Brainerd as a clear example of genuine religious experience, and to conceal some of Brainerd’s enthusiastic experiences.<sup>115</sup> Among other things, Edwards toned down Brainerd’s melancholic spirit and a disposition intensified by the disease which inflamed his body.<sup>116</sup> Pettit observes that Edwards “omitted those parts of the diary that he disliked, substituted his own summary of them, and at times

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<sup>112</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, *WJE*, 4:522-24.

<sup>113</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, *WJE*, 4:335.

<sup>114</sup>David L. Weddle, “The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards’s Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality,” *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988): 298.

<sup>115</sup>For a more detailed analysis, see Norman Pettit, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 7:71-84; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 321-33. As he lay dying in Edwards’s home, Brainerd entrusted Edwards with his diary manuscript. Edwards worked on *The Life* through 1748 and 1749.

<sup>116</sup>Weddle, “Melancholy Saint,” 300.

changed Brainerd's wording."<sup>117</sup> Considering Edwards's intentions in editing the diary, Brainerd may appear as a problematic example. However, what Edwards most wants to point out is that Brainerd's life after conversion was a process of "progressive sanctification" and deepening "evangelical humiliation," whether or not he participated in enthusiastic experiences.<sup>118</sup> Joseph Conforti observes that "by casting the diary in the form of a case study of true holiness, Edwards made his interpretation of genuine spirituality accessible to ordinary evangelicals."<sup>119</sup> Thus, in examining Brainerd's edited diary, I will focus upon Edwards's understanding of the nature of genuine religious experience as described in *The Life of David Brainerd* rather than upon what kind of experience Brainerd went through.

*The Life of David Brainerd* was designed to show "not only what were the external circumstances and remarkable incidents" in Brainerd's life, but also "what passed in his own heart, the wonderful change that he experienced in his mind and disposition, the manner in which that change was brought to pass, how it continued, what were its consequences in his inward frames, thoughts, affections and secret exercises."<sup>120</sup> Edwards seems to view Brainerd as a real-life example of what he had argued in *Religious Affections*, giving clarity to the more abstract signs. George Marsden calls *The Life* "*Religious Affections* in the form of a spiritual biography."<sup>121</sup> Norman Pettit also argues that *The Life* acts as a concrete example of true and

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<sup>117</sup>Norman Pettit, "Editor's Introduction," *WJE*, 7:22. For examples, see *WJE*, 7:80-84.

<sup>118</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:511. Edwards commends Brainerd as the "excellent person" who has "a penetrating genius," "clear thought," "close reasoning, and a very exact judgment and knowledge" in religious matters "especially in things appertaining to inward experimental religion; most accurately distinguishing between real solid piety and enthusiasm." Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:92.

<sup>119</sup>Joseph Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work: 'The Life of David Brainerd' and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Culture," *Church History* 54 (1985): 195.

<sup>120</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:91.

<sup>121</sup>Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 331.

false religious experiences.<sup>122</sup>

Similar to Edwards, Brainerd experienced a new apprehension of God's beauty while reading 1 Peter 1:8.<sup>123</sup> He was so "captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness and other perfections of God," that he felt "swallowed up" by them.<sup>124</sup> Edwards notes in the appendix that Brainerd's conversion was "a great change and an abiding change, rendering him a new man, a new creature: not only a change as to hope and comfort . . . but a change of nature."<sup>125</sup> In Edwards's view, Brainerd's experience was authentic since it brought about a fundamental change in nature. After his conversion experience, Brainerd renounced a self-righteous foundation by the mere mercy of God. Instead, God gave him "on a sudden such a sense of [his] amazing danger and the wrath of God and hell . . . and [his] former good frames that [he] had pleased [him]self with, all presently vanished."<sup>126</sup> This was not the result of some type of enthusiastical vision, writes Edwards, "but a manifestation of God's glory and the beauty of his nature as supremely excellent in itself."<sup>127</sup> More importantly, Brainerd's life proves "the nature of true religion; and the manner of its operation," since his life "differed from that of some pretenders to the experience of a clear work of saving conversion."<sup>128</sup> For Brainerd, his conversion experience was not the end of the Spirit's work but rather the beginning of that

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<sup>122</sup>Pettit writes that Edwards saw in Brainerd a "virtuous man who exemplified the spiritual life." Norman Pettit, "Editor's Introduction," *WJE*, 7:22. Edwards believed that the diary is "a remarkable instance of true and eminent Christian piety in heart and practice . . . most worthy of imitation."

<sup>123</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:138.

<sup>124</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:139.

<sup>125</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:502.

<sup>126</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:105.

<sup>127</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:503.

<sup>128</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, *WJE*, 7:500.

work.<sup>129</sup>

Edwards specifically compares Brainerd's experience to the twelfth positive sign explicated in *Religious Affections*: Brainerd's life did not consist "only in experience, without practice. All his inward illuminations, affections, and comforts, seemed to have a direct tendency to practice, and to issue in it."<sup>130</sup> In a sermon preached at Brainerd's funeral, Edwards described Brainerd as a model for "the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice."<sup>131</sup> In observing Brainerd, Edwards found validity in the theoretical signs for distinguishing between true and false religious experiences, which he put forward in *Religious Affections*. Edwards calls Brainerd's life a process of "progressive sanctification," because of his ongoing struggle with depression and self-doubt.

Edwards represents both of these cases as exemplars of the authentic religious experience. He aims to defend the "raised affections" of the Great Awakening as not necessarily enthusiastic, and thus he describes the affective responses of Sarah Edwards and David Brainerd as examples of "truly, holy and solid affections."<sup>132</sup> In presenting the case histories, Edwards was concerned about how to interpret physical responses to a religious experience. He has a history of reprimanding ministers who seek concrete evidence of an individual's spiritual state in physical appearances. On the other hand, Edwards does not understand bodily exercises as necessarily the manifestations of deceptive demons or deluded converts. In *Religious Affections*,

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<sup>129</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, WJE, 7:501.

<sup>130</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, WJE, 7:510.

<sup>131</sup>Edwards, *The Life*, WJE, 7:553-54.

<sup>132</sup>Edwards writes, "Though there are false affections in religion, and affections that in some respects are raised high, that are flashy, yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy and solid affections; and the higher these are raised, the better: and if they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be thought meanly of or suspected, merely because of their great degree, but on the contrary to be esteemed and rejoiced in." Edwards, *Some*

Edwards argues that whatever occurs in the soul or mind will inevitably affect bodies.<sup>133</sup>

Edwards is convinced that a being affected with a view of God's glory could cause the body to faint.<sup>134</sup> However, changes in the body cannot be the evidence of authentic piety, for "we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things."<sup>135</sup> The bodily responses belong to "negative signs" at best. As expressed in *Distinguishing Marks*, negative signs such as strong emotions, loss of control and irregular worship practices neither confirm nor disprove the Spirit's presence and activity. Such responses may occur through the Spirit's work, but also be the products of religious hypocrites or even of the devil. "Positive signs," by contrast, includes "a greater regard to the Holy Scriptures,"<sup>136</sup> heartfelt appreciation of "a spirit of truth,"<sup>137</sup> and "a spirit of love to God and man."<sup>138</sup> All these things guarantee the Spirit's work and cannot be fabricated. By describing religious experiences of Sarah Edwards and David Brainerd, Edwards demonstrates that genuine religious experience is characterized by the experience of divine and spiritual reality through the sense of the heart.

### **The Word of God and the Holy Spirit in Religious Experience**

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*Thoughts*, WJE, 4:298-99.

<sup>133</sup>Edwards writes, "Such seems to be our nature, and such the laws of the union of soul and body, that there never is any case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous exercise of the will or inclination of the soul, without some effect upon the body, in some alteration of the motion of its fluids, and especially of the animal spirits. . . . From the same laws of the union of soul and body, the constitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exercise of the affections." Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:98.

<sup>134</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:132.

<sup>135</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:132.

<sup>136</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:253.

<sup>137</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:255.

<sup>138</sup>Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks*, WJE, 4:255.

The Spirit-illuminated word of God, as we examined in his conversion experience, enabled Edwards to experience a religious awakening. Thus, he gives the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit a prominent place in his understanding of religious experience. Since created man cannot experience God without mediation, due to man's fall recorded in Genesis 3, God reveals himself using of several *media*. While God is free to use many instruments for self-revelation, Edwards gives Jesus Christ priority as the singular *medium* of divine revelation.

Edwards explains this doctrine in his sermon "Approaching the End of God's Grand Design":

God has appointed but one head of the whole creation, and that one head is Jesus Christ, God-man: "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22); one head to both angels and men, Eph. 1:10, "all things in Christ." The one grand medium by which he glorifies himself in all is Jesus Christ. . . . 'Tis by this one grand medium that God communicates himself to all his elect creatures in heaven and earth. . . . Jesus Christ, and that as God-man, is the grand medium by which God attains his end, both in communicating himself to the creatures and [in] glorifying himself by the creation.<sup>139</sup>

Jesus Christ is the only grand medium of God's self-revelation. Yet underneath Christ, God makes use of subordinate means to communicate Himself.<sup>140</sup> For Edwards, Scripture as the word written is specifically an emanation of Jesus Christ as the essential Word of God.<sup>141</sup> In this section, I will focus on the Scripture through which God had graciously revealed Himself. The Spirit-illuminated word of God allows the saints to supernaturally experience God's beauty and glory. God speaks through Scripture and God's truth can be known and experienced in it.

Edwards writes, "There is no trusting in God without a firm belief of the Word of God, and the

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<sup>139</sup>Edwards, "Approaching the End of God's Grand Design," *WJE*, 25:116-17.

<sup>140</sup>William Schweitzer suggests Scripture, nature, and history as three means for God's communicative revelation, saying that "these are not ultimately detached from Christ himself but simply the modes of Christ's own revelation in space and time." William M. Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 30.

<sup>141</sup>Edwards, "Christ the Light of the World," *WJE*, 10:542.

revelation he has made concerning himself, especially his gracious promises.”<sup>142</sup> The Scripture is the “voice of God” that both warns and chastises through his holy law and invites us to blessedness and most glorious benefits through the promise of redemption.<sup>143</sup> Edwards believed that one cannot truly know God and receive his gracious promises without “a firm belief” that the word of God was the revelation of the Divine. Hence a genuine religious experience can only come through God’s Word, illuminated by the Spirit.

### **The Word as the Mediator of Genuine Religious Experience**

In spite of his reputation as philosopher, psychologist, and systematic theologian, Edwards was primarily a minister of the Word. Edwards was a lifelong student of the Bible,<sup>144</sup> but his emphasis on and use of Scripture has received relatively little attention, especially in recent scholarship, however. As Stephen Stein states, “the Bible, one of the shaping forces in the theological development of Jonathan Edwards, has largely been ignored in the assessment of this colonial divine,” and the “contemporary renaissance of interest in Edwards has hardly touched this dimension of his work.”<sup>145</sup> Samuel Hopkins, Edwards’s first biographer, spoke of Edwards’s priorities: “He studied the Bible more than all other Books, and more than most other Divines do. . . . He cast much light upon many parts of the Bible, which has escaped other interpreters.

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<sup>142</sup>Edwards, “Christian Safety,” *WJE*, 10:455. Edwards also states, “The Scriptures, which are our rule to go to heaven by, are the word of Christ; the ministers of the gospel speak nothing otherwise than representing their great master, Jesus Christ.” *WJE*, 10:526.

<sup>143</sup>Edwards, “The Duty of Harkening to God’s Voice,” *WJE*, 10:441.

<sup>144</sup>Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of Jonathan Edwards* (Northampton: S. E. Butler, 1804), 88, cited in Robert E. Brown, “The Bible,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 88.

<sup>145</sup>Stephen J. Stein, “The Quest for the Spiritual Sense: The Biblical Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards,” *Harvard Theological Review* 70 (1977): 99.

And by which his great and painful attention to the Bible, and making it the only rule of his faith, are manifest.”<sup>146</sup> Moreover, in his “Resolutions” and *Personal Narrative*, one can find that he sought to “study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same,” and that he took “the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever.”<sup>147</sup> This orientation persists through the whole of his life.<sup>148</sup> As Sereno Edwards Dwight confirmed, “No other divine has as yet appeared, who has studied the Scriptures more thoroughly, or who has been more successful in discovering the mind of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>149</sup> From the outset, thus, it must be pointed out that Edwards adheres to the high view of Scripture.

For Edwards, the Bible is the very Word of God.<sup>150</sup> Edwards has no doubt of its truthfulness as God’s actual Word to humanity.<sup>151</sup> The Bible serves as an absolute authority for

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<sup>146</sup>Brown, “The Bible,” 87.

<sup>147</sup>Edwards, “Resolutions” no. 28, *WJE*, 16:755; and Jonathan Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, *WJE*, 16:797. Edwards writes on the majesty of Scripture: “It is a greater blessedness to hear and keep the word of God than to be an apostle or to be endued with any of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, than to be able to heal the sick, or to speak with tongues, or to remove mountains.” Michael D. McMullen, ed., *The Glory and Honor of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 196. In the same sermon, Edwards mentions the worth of the preached Word of God. “Hence we see of how great worth is the written Word, how ought we to prize the Holy Scriptures and how should we value the Word preached. How should we prize therefore the advantage and price that we have in our hands, that precious tablet which Christ has committed to us, in that we do enjoy both the written and preached Word of God.” McMullen, *Glory and Honor*, 206.

<sup>148</sup>The fact that the second part of his last work, *Original Sin*, is “Containing Observations on Particular Parts of the Holy Scripture, Which Prove the Doctrine of Original Sin” is a good evidence that Edwards strove for the study of the Scripture throughout his life.

<sup>149</sup>Sereno E. Dwight, “Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman (1834; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), clxxxvii.

<sup>150</sup>The phrase of the “Word of God” appears almost 1200 times in his works.

<sup>151</sup>A quotation from the “Miscellanies” reveals Edwards’s attitude toward the Scripture: “It seems to me that God would have our whole dependence be upon the Scriptures, because the greater our dependence is on the Word of God, the more direct and immediate is our dependence on God himself. The more absolute and entire our dependence on the Word of God is, the greater respect shall we have to that Word, the more shall we esteem and honor and prize it; and this respect to the Word of God will lead us to have the greater respect to God himself.” Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 535, *WJE*, 18:80.

Edwards and his contemporaries, and does not require any kind of outside evidence to authenticate its claims. In his 1740 sermon on 1 Corinthians, Edwards preached that “divine Revelation . . . does not go a begging for credit and validity by approbation and applause of our understandings.”<sup>152</sup> Later, in *Religious Affections*, Edwards once again proclaims that the gospel does not “go abroad a begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself.”<sup>153</sup> In fact, since there is enough evidence within it for those who have spiritually enlightened sense of the heart, the Bible has no need of external evidences and arguments. As Stephen Stein states, “Edwards never doubted the credibility, authority, unity, or sufficiency of the Bible.”<sup>154</sup> Helen Westra also maintains that, for Edwards, “reason must always bow to divine revelation and the authority of Scripture.”<sup>155</sup> In the 1740 sermon on 1 Corinthians 2:11-13, Edwards clearly pronounced that “Ministers are not to preach those things which their own wisdom or reason suggests, but the things that are already dictated to them by the superior wisdom and knowledge of God.”<sup>156</sup> In other words, in Edwards’s mind, ministers have to say what God says in the Bible when they preach, mounting the pulpit with a conviction of the truth and sufficiency of God’s Word. Edwards often called the Scripture “the epistle of Christ that he has written to us,” “a perfect rule,” and “an infallible guide, a sure rule which if we follow we

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<sup>152</sup>Cited in Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:196.

<sup>153</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:307.

<sup>154</sup>Stein, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 15:21.

<sup>155</sup>Helen Petter Westra, “Jonathan Edwards and ‘What Reason teaches,’” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34 (1991): 497.

<sup>156</sup>Richard A. Bailey and Gregory A. Wills, eds., *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 111-32.

cannot err.”<sup>157</sup> This is Edwards’s high view of Scripture, the *sine qua non* of exposition.

Edwards’s discussion of the authority of the Bible was directed to the pressing challenge represented by deism.<sup>158</sup> While the English deists called for a modern religion of nature and reason, Edwards insisted on the necessity of transcendent, supernatural revelation.

Brown describes the deists’ criticism of Scripture:

Deism rejected the scandal of organized religion’s exclusivity and particularity, and therefore rejected the need for any direct, special revelation from God to a specific ethnic or religious community. . . . Deists therefore dismissed it[the Bible] as an authentic, necessary, or sufficient means to religious truth: at best, it was redundant of natural religion; at worst, it represented a form of primitive superstition, deception, and intolerance. . . . Deists and other skeptics were particularly keen to employ the results of the emerging field of biblical criticism in their attempts to undermine the Bible’s social authority.<sup>159</sup>

Edwards had to be involved in the biblical criticism of his day, since it was the “central front in the war over biblical authority.”<sup>160</sup> Deism’s goal was constructing a rational religion that was universally accessible and comprehensible beyond time and place.<sup>161</sup> In contrast, Edwards seeks to demonstrate the necessity of divine revelation. Edwards provides three reasons why revelation is necessary.<sup>162</sup> First, Edwards comments on the limits of human reason. He does not reject the force of reason, but rather allows it to aid in determining the authenticity of a revelation. As

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<sup>157</sup>Edwards, “The Way of Holiness,” *WJE*, 10:477; Edwards, “Divine Love Alone Lasts Eternally,” *WJE*, 8:363; and Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 5, *WJE*, 13:202.

<sup>158</sup>Regarding the origins and the nature of deism, see Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21-33.

<sup>159</sup>Brown, “The Bible,” 92.

<sup>160</sup>Schweitzer, *God is a Communicative Being*, 107. Schweitzer writes, “If the Bible is not the supernaturally inspired and superintended Word of God, then it must somehow be the product of ordinary human causality and the accidents of history.” See also Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible*, 33-34.

<sup>161</sup>Brown, “The Bible,” 91.

<sup>162</sup>Brown, “The Bible,” 92-93.

previously explored, however, Edwards does distinguish fallen reason from regenerate reason.<sup>163</sup> Second, divine revelation is necessary because of its relationship to “the proper way of spirits’ communicating one with another.”<sup>164</sup> God not only created human beings to communicate with each other, but also so that he could commune with them through the Bible.<sup>165</sup> God chose to make his word the mediator of religious experience so that he might explain his works of creation and providence to mankind.<sup>166</sup> Third, it is impossible for man to comprehend God’s redemptive work throughout history by means of mere rational reflection. In the last sermon included in *A History of the Work of Redemption*, Edwards provides an exposition of the Bible’s essential role in the revelation of God’s providence: “We may strongly argue that the Scriptures are the word of God because they alone inform what God is about or what he aims at in these works that he is doing in the world.”<sup>167</sup> Edwards goes on to state, “It is therefore reasonable to suppose that God has given mankind some revelation to inform them of this, but there is nothing else that does it but the Bible. In the Bible this is done.”<sup>168</sup> The Bible reveals God’s chief aims, his planned methods, and the processes by which he accomplishes his redemptive work.

Edwards’s personal writings and sermons confirm the crucial role of the Bible in his religious experience, showing that the Word of God, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, enabled him

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<sup>163</sup>Gerald R. McDermott, “Jonathan Edwards, Deism, and the Mystery of Revelation,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 77 (1999):223.

<sup>164</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 204, *WJE*, 13:339.

<sup>165</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 749. *WJE*, 18:392-98.

<sup>166</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 752. *WJE*, 18:401.

<sup>167</sup>Edwards, “Sermon Thirty,” *WJE*, 9:520. See also “Miscellanies,” nos. 514, 752, and 760.

<sup>168</sup>Edwards, “Sermon Thirty,” *WJE*, 9:522.

to experience spiritual transformation.<sup>169</sup> In reading Scripture, Edwards was able to comprehend supernatural realities otherwise unknown through natural means, and to sense the divine beauty previously hidden from him. In his sermon, “God’s Excellencies,” Edwards asserts that God’s divine attributes are beyond human natural faculties, and yet we have supernatural access to them through the medium of Scripture.<sup>170</sup> In sum, Edwards promotes Scripture as the primary means of experiencing the glory of God. The illumined word of God, for Edwards, is the primary mediator of genuine religious experience, just as Jesus Christ became the Mediator between God and man.

### **The Holy Spirit’s Relationship to the Word in Edwards’s Thought**

Edwards considered himself first and foremost a biblical pastor and a preacher seeking to be obedient to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.<sup>171</sup> The time he reports having spent in prayer and Scripture study attests to the role of the Word and the Holy Spirit in developing his theology of religious experience. We have already noted that Edwards himself experienced a religious awakening in his own life through his Spirit-illumined reading of Scripture. In the *Personal Narrative*, Edwards recalls that he newly perceived God’s sovereignty and glory in the Word by the “operation of God’s Holy Spirit.”<sup>172</sup> The Holy Spirit convinced him of the beauty of spiritual things in Scripture. As a result, Edwards’s theology of religious experience teaches that

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<sup>169</sup>See Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, *WJE*, 16:797. Also Edwards’s “Diary” shows his experience in the Word. Edwards, “Diary,” *WJE*, 16:769. By analyzing his New York sermons, Stetina demonstrates Edwards’s understanding of the Word as the medium of religious experience. See Karin Spiecker Stetina, *Jonathan Edwards’s Early Understanding of Religious Experience: His New York Sermons, 1720-1723* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2011), 119-41.

<sup>170</sup>Edwards, “God’s Excellencies,” *WJE*, 10:415-35.

<sup>171</sup>See Edwards, “Diary,” *WJE*, 16:762, “Resolutions,” 1, 4, 23, 27, 43, and 44, *WJE*, 16:753-56.

the Holy Spirit is essential to understanding the Word of God. Edwards goes so far as to claim that apart from the Spirit, the Word “is nothing but a dead letter.”<sup>173</sup> The Holy Spirit’s illuminating work gives a saint a new heart, removes from him his heart of stone, and gives him a heart of flesh so that the saint follows God’s decree and laws (Ezek 36:26). Edwards continues,

Though [the word] be sharper than a two-edged sword, it cannot divide a rocky heart except it be managed by an Almighty hand; the hammer will not break this rock in pieces, except God smites with it: but Jesus Christ, when he enlightens the mind, sends forth the Holy Spirit to dwell in the soul, to be as a continual internal light to manifest and make known spiritual things to the believer.<sup>174</sup>

Without the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit as God’s internal gift of grace, one cannot grasp and follow God’s truth in Scripture. Chapter two examined the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of the saints, arguing that the sense of the heart, which enables us to experience God’s infinite beauty and glory, is results from the Spirit’s infusion. The Holy Spirit, as the *producer* of genuine religious experience, makes possible any human perception of God’s beauty and excellency through a special empowerment. The spiritual experience becomes possible only through the inner enablement of the Holy Spirit.

For Edwards, the Spirit and the Word must not be separated.<sup>175</sup> Edwards sometimes gives the impression that he renounces the outer means of grace, namely, the Word of God, when he speaks of the “immediacy” of the Spirit. However, when it comes to an immediate sight of divinity through the sense of the heart, it must not be misunderstood. As John Smith correctly

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<sup>172</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:792.

<sup>173</sup>Edwards, “The Threefold Work of the Holy Ghost,” WJE, 14:433.

<sup>174</sup>Edwards, “Christ the Light,” WJE, 10:543.

<sup>175</sup>Calvin also said, “God works in his elect in two ways: within, through his Spirit; without, through his Word. By his Spirit, illuminating their minds and forming their hearts to the love and cultivation of righteousness, he makes them a new creation. By his Word, he arouses them to desire, to seek after, and to attain that same renewal.” Calvin, *Institutes*, 2. 5. 5.

writes, “it is not that the Spirit exercises some immediate forcing influence upon the will or inclination to accept what the understanding does not grasp.”<sup>176</sup> Instead, the Spirit uses our understanding, particularly of the Word, to enlighten saints or move them to action. In Cherry’s words, Edwards “sought to combine the objective and subjective principles of religion by maintaining a harmonious balance of Word and Spirit.”<sup>177</sup> Thus the Spirit is the “Worded Spirit,” and the Word is the “Spirited Word.”

The Word of God begins with inspiration, but divine communication of eternal truth can only be completed by illumination.<sup>178</sup> Illumination describes the work of the Holy Spirit to make the Word of God accomplish its purposes within the saints. And yet, concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the understanding of the word of God, there is some ambiguity between ‘common illumination’ or ‘common grace’ and ‘spiritual illumination’ or ‘saving grace.’ In his *Treatise on Grace*, Edwards writes that “there are many things in the minds of some natural men that are from the influence of the Spirit.”<sup>179</sup> He continues,

The common convictions and illuminations that natural men have are in some respects the nature of the Spirit of God: for there is light and understanding and conviction of truth in these common illuminations, and so they are of the nature of the Spirit of God— that is, a discerning spirit and a spirit of truth.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>Paul Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 2:34.

<sup>177</sup>Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (1966; repr., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 44.

<sup>178</sup>“Inspiration is a *completed* process that guaranteed the truthfulness of the Bible by the Spirit’s superintending of the revelation, whereas illumination is a *continuing* work of the Spirit that guides us into all truth.” Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 41.

<sup>179</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:179.

<sup>180</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:180.

Edwards seems to argue that the unregenerate sometimes may have a good understanding of the revealed Word of God. This can happen because the Holy Spirit is commonly active regardless of regeneration and he often grants people “light and understanding and conviction of truth.” However, Edwards explicitly holds fast to the opposite view at the same time, saying that “natural men are not in any degree spiritual.”<sup>181</sup> Since they are not spiritual, writes Edwards, “natural men are so totally destitute of that which is Spirit, that they know nothing about it.”<sup>182</sup> 1 Corinthian 2:14 confirms that natural men are ignorant of the Spirit and his work. Paul says, “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Then, what did Edwards want to tell, distinguishing between “common illumination” and “spiritual illumination”? What is the distinctive role of spiritual illumination?

The defining difference between natural and spiritual men is the continuous influence of the Word of God, or lack thereof. “Natural men,” says Edwards, “do not understand the Word of God, in that they are no more influenced by it.”<sup>183</sup> In contrast to the Holy Spirit’s common illumination, his spiritual illumination not only enables people to understand the Word of God, but also changes their dispositions and actions, so that their changed dispositions “would certainly influence men to choose God, to love him, and admire him.”<sup>184</sup> In the end, the role of the Holy Spirit is not limited to granting only speculative knowledge of God’s word. Rather, it makes people “partake of the nature of that Spirit that it is from, which the common grace of the

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<sup>181</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:180.

<sup>182</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:180.

<sup>183</sup>Edwards, “Profitable Hearers of the Word,” *WJE*, 14:254.

<sup>184</sup>Edwards, “Profitable Hearers of the Word,” *WJE*, 14:254.

Spirit does not.”<sup>185</sup>

To understand the relationship between spiritual illumination and the Word of God, one needs to remember Edwards’s distinction between speculative knowledge and spiritual knowledge. As a reminder, for Edwards, speculative or natural knowledge remains “head” knowledge. It does not necessarily change a person’s actions or habits. Such knowledge comes from the natural exercise of human faculties without any special illumination from the Spirit of God. Spiritual understanding, however, “rests not entirely in the head, or in the speculative ideas of things, but the heart is concerned in it: it principally consists in the sense of the heart.”

Edwards goes on,

The mere intellect, without the will or the inclination, is not the seat of it. And it may not only be called seeing, but feeling or tasting. Thus there is a difference between having a right speculative notion of the doctrines contained in the Word of God, and having a due sense of them in the heart. In the former consists the speculative or natural knowledge; in the latter, consists the spiritual or practical knowledge of them.<sup>186</sup>

Hence, contrary to common illumination, spiritual illumination includes a person’s being enabled rightly to understand and experience the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit enables people to be “inwardly sensible of the divine excellency, giving a new spiritual sense, [or] a new sense of [the] heart, a new spiritual relish.”<sup>187</sup> In Edwards’s view, the Holy Spirit leads people to an apprehension of the truth that has already been revealed in Scripture. Therefore, spiritual illumination can only come from the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is the

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<sup>185</sup>Edwards, “Treatise on Grace,” *WJE*, 21:180. Edwards writes, “But yet saving grace, by its being called spiritual, as though it were thereby distinguished from all other gifts of the Spirit, seems to partake of the nature of the Spirit of God in some very peculiar manner.”

<sup>186</sup>Edwards, “Christian Knowledge,” *WJE*, 54.

<sup>187</sup>Edwards, “Graces of the Spirit,” *WJE*, 25:303.

producer of spiritual experience.

When the Word is illumined by the Holy Spirit, the saint gains a “new sense and taste” of Scripture, which means both a deeper spiritual knowledge and a “spiritual application” of the Scripture as the Word of God. This new sense results in the affective cognition in the minds of the saints. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards explains,

A spiritual application of the Word of God consists in applying it to the heart, in spiritually enlightening, sanctifying influences. A spiritual application of an invitation or offer of the gospel consists in giving the soul a spiritual sense or relish of the holy and divine blessings offered, and also the sweet and wonderful grace of the offerer, in making so gracious an offer, and of his holy excellency and faithfulness to fulfill what he offers, and his glorious sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the heart to embrace the offer; and thus giving the man evidence of his title to the thing offered. And so a spiritual application of the promises of Scripture, for the comfort of the saints, consists in enlightening their minds to see the holy excellency and sweetness of the blessings promised, and also the holy excellency of the promiser, and his faithfulness and sufficiency; thus drawing forth their hearts to embrace the promiser, and thing promised; and by this means, giving the sensible actings of grace, enabling them to see their grace, and so their title to the promise.<sup>188</sup>

The inward work of the Spirit activates within a believer the blessings and promises of Scripture. Then he heartily embraces God who offers the gifts, as well as the scriptural blessings and promises themselves.<sup>189</sup> The saving Spirit graciously gives the saints “eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand” in faith the statutes, precepts, and promises already contained in Scripture.<sup>190</sup> In sum, Edwards would not divorce the testimony of the Word of God and the testimony of the Holy Spirit working in the saints’ heart. They are “functionally one term.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:225.

<sup>189</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 52.

<sup>190</sup>Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, WJE, 4:437.

<sup>191</sup>Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 117, cited in Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 45.

## **Edwardsean Religious Experience: The Spiritual-Linguistic Approach**

As previously examined, both Schleiermacher's experiential-expressive approach and Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach are limited in their ability to interpret the meaning of religious experience. The former excludes the mind or understanding from religion by weakening the connection between faith and knowledge. In addition, Schleiermacher is unable to objectify religious experience, since the feeling of absolute dependence on God cannot guarantee the experiential stability. On the other hand, Lindbeck places tradition and culture before the authority of the Scripture and his model does not explain the source of religious experience. As an alternative to these two approaches, I propose Edwards's understanding of religious experience as *the spiritual-linguistic approach*, which is a more satisfying account of the nature of religious experience. This approach is spiritual in that the Spirit is the producer of genuine religious experience and gives the saints the sense of the heart, through which all spiritual knowledge is possible, and which enables the saints to attain a new habit or disposition of the heart that brings about the new affections. The approach is linguistic in that both the word of God illuminated by the Holy Spirit and the words of preachers in the form of language enable people to experience God's beauty and glory.

This approach has much in common with the cultural-linguistic approach. Both agree that meaning derived from a religious experience is closely related to the word. However, Edwards means "linguistic" in a very different way, since Lindbeck's meaning was influenced by Wittgenstein's language games. Wittgenstein argues that human words convey their own meaning, since their meaning depends upon the context in which they are being applied. Therefore, one encounters as many meanings for a word as there are language games in which it is used. While the net result of Lindbeck's linguistic turn was to remove prestige from reason

and add it to *tradition*, understood as a community's language use,<sup>192</sup> Edwardsean linguistic model fully acknowledges the absolute authority of *the Word of God*. At the heart of Edwards's spiritual-linguistic approach is the proposal that the authenticity of religious experience depends upon the sense of the heart rather than tradition or culture. The sense of religious experience that expository preaching must restore does not consist of new truths or knowledge not contained in the word of God. Rather it can be defined as a Spirit-led understanding of those things which the Scripture teaches.

The spiritual-linguistic approach posits the Bible not as a textbook only filled with propositional information but as God's word which possesses aesthetic and affective qualities. Edwards frequently complains about propositionalism because of its reductionistic character. Propositionalism tends to see all of Scripture in terms of conveying information. For Edwards, however, an acquisition of truth content does not necessarily denote a genuine religious experience, since this kind of knowledge belongs to even Satan and his devils.<sup>193</sup> This does not mean that there is no place for rationality and cognition in the meaning of Edwardsean religious experience. Edwards embraces a *scientia* as well as a *sapientia* of Scripture, the mind as well as the will, namely, head as well as heart. Hence Edwards's spiritual-linguistic model goes beyond propositionalism without leaving propositions behind.<sup>194</sup> Genuine religious experience must involve a genuine knowledge and understanding of the word of God.

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<sup>192</sup>Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 10.

<sup>193</sup>For Edwards, salvation is not a matter of information, or speculative faith. Satan "was witness to the creation and all the great achievements of Christ . . . Moreover, Satan has become a veritable divinity student as a result of his struggles with God over the hearts of men throughout history during the work of redemption." Wilson Kimmach, "True Grace, Distinguished From The Experience Of Devils," *WJE*, 25:605.

<sup>194</sup>For this paragraph, I was indebted to Vanhoozer's discussion about a postpropositionalist theology.

There is more to the link between the spiritual-linguistic approach and his view of language or human words. Edwards understands language as a system of signs whose primary purpose is the communication of knowledge, and he understands possibility within language to communicate deep truths. But are the words of a preacher the proper vehicle to express spiritual things? In *Freedom of the Will*, Edwards has a negative stance toward the ability of language to communicate spiritual things:

Language is indeed very deficient, in regard of terms to express precise truth concerning our own minds, and their faculties and operations. Words were first formed to express external things; and those that are applied to express things internal and spiritual, are almost all borrowed, and used in a sort of figurative sense.<sup>195</sup>

In this regard, Edwards holds the same view with Locke's conception of language. According to Locke, since words are dependent on the speaker's own ideas, the speaker's words may fail to excite in others the same ideas he intends: "no one hath the power to make others have the same ideas in their minds that he has, when they use the same words he does."<sup>196</sup> Against Locke, however, Edwards argues that nature, or rather God, regularly works to give the same essential qualities to things tied together under a general name. Language is a good example of this. Because language belongs to the natural world, Edwards argues that words are connected to real essences. For Edwards, the natural world was "full of images of divine things," and these images were but shadows of what Edwards calls the more substantial spiritual world.<sup>197</sup> He believed that the material world is inhered with spiritual truths, which means that material language is capable of reaching spiritual truths. In other words, language may be a human construct, but the material

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See Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 266-78.

<sup>195</sup>Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, *WJE*, 1:376.

<sup>196</sup>Locke, *Essay*, 2. 2. 8.

<sup>197</sup>Edwards, "Types," *WJE*, 11:152.

world itself is full of images of the divine. Language thus, for Edwards, could reflect the divine.<sup>198</sup> Above all, Edwards holds fast to a positive position on language because “God is a communicative being.”<sup>199</sup> While human language is imperfect, it can grasp the spiritual truth by way of God’s communication of his own being. In a nutshell, by accepting language as part of the natural world and by understanding the natural world as the shadowy reflection of the divine, Edwards embraces the possibility of religious experience through human words.<sup>200</sup>

### Conclusion

Despite recognizing the importance of the experiential aspect of preaching, expository preaching does not attach the highest value to the creation of a gospel experience for the listener. The primary goal of this chapter was to explore the nature of “religious experience,” so that expository preaching might rejoin the discussion on it. This dissertation proposes the spiritual-linguistic model as a proper approach to understanding religious experience. For Edwards, genuine religious experience is defined as the Spirit-led experience through the word of God. Edwards’s concept of the “sense of the heart” provides modern expositors with a reappraisal of religious experience in expository preaching.

I do not believe that expository preachers should exclude the creation of an experience in their preaching, even though experience is one of the foundational tenets of the New Homiletic. Many homileticians consider an emphasis on experience in opposition to a

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<sup>198</sup>As to the analogy between the world and language, Edwards makes a direct comparison: “I believe that the whole universe, heaven and earth, air and seas, and the divine constitution and history of the holy Scriptures, be full of images of divine things, as full as a language is of words.” Edwards, “Images of Divine Things,” *WJE*, 11: 152.

<sup>199</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 332, *WJE*, 13:410.

<sup>200</sup>Edwards’s doctrine of typology is one of the important subjects in the next chapter.

propositional privileging of content, and perhaps as a result, expository preachers have likewise come to see this as polarized.<sup>201</sup> However, nothing could be further from the truth. Why do we suppose that the conviction of the authority of the word of God and the encouragement of religious experience in our preaching are incompatible? Expository preaching must pay careful attention to both. Expository preaching can embrace the concept of Edwardsean religious experience, since it is the word of God that makes our experience genuine. Thus, so long as expository preaching retains the conviction of the authority of the Scripture, the more experiences through the Scripture, the better.

As in the case of Edwards's own conversion experience and the case histories he presented, genuine religious experience is nothing less than seeing and appreciating God's beauty and glory which cannot be experienced without the sense of the heart. Therefore, all genuine religious experience consists of sensible knowledge in contrast to speculative knowledge. In addition, this dissertation proposes that Edwardsean religious experience has nothing to do with either anti-intellectual enthusiasm or unemotional rationalism. Genuine religious experience is also quite different from mysticism in the sense that it places a priority on the affairs of everyday life, coupling steady piety with heavenly delight. In the next chapter, I will investigate Edwards's understanding of religious experience as presented in his preaching, centering around its affective aspect, his doctrine of typology and his use of imagery in his sermons.

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<sup>201</sup>Robert Reid, Jeffrey Bullock, and David Fleer, "Preaching as the Creation of an Experience: The Not-So-Rational Revolution of the New Homiletic," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 18 (1995): 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE THROUGH “SENSE OF THE HEART” IN EDWARDS’S SERMONS

The importance of the sermon to Edwards’s life and work is difficult to overestimate.<sup>1</sup>

Edwards considered preaching of paramount importance for helping people see and taste the reality of spiritual things. Edwards’s preaching style and skill is an oft-analyzed subject in Edwardsean studies and other academic realms.<sup>2</sup> Scholars argue that the main reason for the success of Edwards’s sermons was his powerful imagery.<sup>3</sup> Wilson Kimmach also notes his effective appeal, maintaining that the persuasive power of the sermons is attributable to the use of vivid images and metaphors.<sup>4</sup> Despite the abundant scholarship on Edwards’s use of imagery

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson H. Kimmach, Kenneth P. Minkema, Jr., and Douglas A. Sweeney, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), ix. The editors attest to the significance of the sermons. “The sheer mass of Edwards’s sermons also says something about the importance of the sermon to his life and work. Edwards was first and foremost a preacher and pastor leading souls to the truth as he saw it and interpreting the religious experiences of his listeners. His primary tool in achieving these goals was the sermon, the spoken word of God” (x).

<sup>2</sup>Regarding Edwards’s sermon style, structure, and his oratorical technique, see Lorenzo Sears, *American Literature in Colonial and National Periods* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1902), 91-94; Thomas H. Johnson, “Jonathan Edwards as a Man of Letters” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1932); Orville Hitchcock, “A Critical Study of the Oratorical Technique of Jonathan Edwards” (Ph.D. diss., State University of Iowa, 1936). In addition to his detailed analysis of the sentence length, parallel structures, and scriptural phrasing in the sermons, Hitchcock reminds readers that these pieces were written to be read aloud, designed to be heard, and their style, claims Hitchcock, is good oral technique, but “indifferent literary style” (81).

<sup>3</sup>Edwin H. Cady, “The Artistry of Jonathan Edwards,” *New England Quarterly* 22 (1949): 71; James C. Cowan, “Jonathan Edwards’s Sermon Style: The Future Punishment of the Wicked Unavoidable and Intolerable,” *South-Central Bulletin* 29 (1969): 119-22; and Willis J. Buckingham, “Stylistic Artistry in the Sermons of Jonathan Edwards,” *Papers on Language and Literature* 6 (1970): 136-51.

<sup>4</sup>Wilson Kimmach, “The Brazen Trumpet: Jonathan Edwards’s Conception of the Sermon,” in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 278. Also see Paul R. Baumgartner, “Jonathan Edwards: The Theory Behind His Use of Figurative Language,” *Journal of the Modern Language Association of America* 78 (1963): 321-25; Conrad Cherry, “Imagery and Analysis: Jonathan Edwards on Revivals of Religion,” in *Jonathan Edwards: His Life and Influence*, ed. Charles Angoff (London: Associated University Presses, 1975), 19-28; William J. Scheick, *The Written of Jonathan Edwards: Theme, Motif, and Style* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1975).

within particular sermons, however, the relationship between his images and his concept of “the sense of the heart” has been largely ignored. The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the sense of the heart’s role in Edwards’s sermons and how contemporary expository preaching might recover religious experience. In order to examine Edwards’s affective preaching, this chapter first explores the Puritan influence on Edwards’s preaching ministry, because the Puritans believed that touching and appealing to the heart as well as the mind is the essential part of preaching. Edwards tried to emulate his Puritan forebears. It also analyzes the use of imagery and metaphor in his sermons in relation to his understanding of religious experience through the sense of the heart, which is the most prominent characteristic of Edwards’s sermon. Lastly, I will examine two of Edwards’s sermons, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” one of the most famous awakening sermons, and “Heaven is a World of Love,” which is as dramatic and vivid in its depiction of Heaven as “Sinners” is in its picture of Hell. Through my analysis, I will demonstrate the power of Edwards’s use of imagery and his homiletical strategies.

### **Affective Aspect of Edwards’s Preaching**

Edwards believed that the effect a sermon has on a congregation cannot be separated from a preacher’s understanding of the truth of the Bible and its delivery, namely, the way in which it affected the hearers. In other words, effective preaching must include both the head and the heart of the listeners. For Edwards, the sermon is not only the vehicle for delivering propositions requiring belief, it is a catalyst for spiritual transformation that engages the emotions. While Edwards may not have been the most scintillating communicator of his age, he was an affectionate preacher whose sermons had an enormous impact during the Great

Awakening.<sup>5</sup> Samuel Hopkins thought that Edwards's effectiveness derived from his "great acquaintance with his own Heart, his inward Sense and high Relish of divine Truths, and the high Exercise of true, experimental Religion."<sup>6</sup> Edwards revealed in his preaching "a great degree of inward fervor."<sup>7</sup> While Edwards did not possess the powerful voice and dramatic delivery of someone like George Whitefield, his preaching "feel with great weight on the Minds of his Hearers."<sup>8</sup> The goal of preaching, for Edwards, was to leave a lasting impact to the listeners. The reason Edwards spent his sermons "laying bare ideas", making them as clear as possible, was that he recognized affections were roused when a person understood or grasped those ideas.<sup>9</sup> In *Religious Affections*, as examined in chapter 2, Edwards made it clear that an affective response to a thing has a close connection to the understanding of it.<sup>10</sup> True knowledge of a thing should change a person's understanding and then, it follows, his habit. To be *effective* it must be *affective*.<sup>11</sup> In the same way, for Edwards, effective preaching must be affective

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<sup>5</sup>Oliver D. Crisp, "'The Excellency of Jesus Christ': Affective Doctrine in the Sermons of Jonathan Edwards," in *Delivering the Word: Preaching and Exegesis in the Western Christian Tradition*, ed. William J. Lyons and Isabella Sandwell (Sheffield: Equinox, 2012), 153.

<sup>6</sup>Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of Jonathan Edwards* (Northampton: S. E. Butler, 1804), 47, cited in Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 78.

<sup>7</sup>Hopkins, *The Life and Character*, 48, cited in Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards*, 78.

<sup>8</sup>Hopkins, *The Life and Character*, 48, cited in Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards*, 78.

<sup>9</sup>Edwards's desire to "lay bare the idea" was a Locke-inspired notion from which Edwards never departed.

<sup>10</sup>George Marsden expresses it this way: "Preaching should be designed primarily to awaken, to shake people out of their blind slumbers in the addictive comforts of their sins. Though only God can give new eyes to see, preaching should be designed to jolt the unconverted or the converted who doze back into their sin (as do all) into recognizing their true estate." George Marsden, "Foreword," in *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Richard A. Bailey and Gregory A. Wills (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 11-12.

<sup>11</sup>Affective knowledge is nothing less than sensible knowledge or heart knowledge, which is obtained through the sense of the heart.

preaching.

Affective preaching can be best explained by a distinction between knowledge by *notion* and knowledge by *acquaintance*. A man born blind can know of color in theory, without having experienced it. This is knowledge by notion. Without acquaintance, such knowledge is never affective. In contrast, knowledge by acquaintance is experiential knowledge. Edwards understands the effective sermon as bringing about in the listeners an affecting response by generating acquainted knowledge with the word of God. Genuine religious affections, as examined in chapter two, can come only through the sense of the heart.

### **Puritan Homiletical Tradition and Jonathan Edwards's Preaching**

Edwards was a preacher who stood firmly within the inherited Puritan preaching tradition and never departed from its form. Wilson Kinnach argues that his sermons “had strict formal limitations, being designed to convey (theoretically) unchanging dogmatic essentials through a verbal structure which was eminently public, conventional, and fixed, so that the listeners might never be lost through a lack of familiar signs.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, Edwards did not follow the tradition and conventions of his day uncritically. Regardless of his background and training, Edwards proved his “characteristic propensity to rethink every important aspect of his life from the ground up.”<sup>13</sup> Edwards's sermons betray “the ability to reshape ideas inherited from abroad in light of the needs and interests of the American situation.”<sup>14</sup> In the following sections, I will

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<sup>12</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:167.

<sup>13</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:21.

<sup>14</sup>John E. Smith, *Jonathan Edwards, Puritan, Preacher and Philosopher* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 1. Kinnach also writes, “Within the generally fixed form of the sermon, and despite a strict consistency in doctrine, Edwards did experiment and innovate.” Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*,

first trace the influence of Puritan preaching upon Edwards's preaching theology and then examine characteristics particular to Edwards's sermons.

## The Legacy of Puritan Preaching

**Plain style preaching.** As a "fourth-generation" Puritan preacher, Edwards assimilated "a rich tradition of English pulpit oratory and sermon literature" shaped by "a century of development in New England and the literary productions of many eminent preachers."<sup>15</sup> Among others, William Perkins stands as a pioneering figure in the formation of Puritan preaching tradition. Edwards was largely influenced by the treatise *The Arte of Prophecyng*, in which Perkins gave a classic exposition on preaching.<sup>16</sup> Perkins promoted the Puritan plain style in preaching, writing that preaching "must be plain, perspicuous, and evident. . . . It is a byword among us: It was a very plain sermon. And I say again, *the plainer, the better.*"<sup>17</sup> Perkins believed that preacher should manifest only the work of the Spirit rather than human wisdom or skill.<sup>18</sup> According to Raymond Blacketer's account, Perkins understands the plain style of preaching as follows:

While the preacher must use the arts of grammar and rhetoric to get at the meaning and

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10:167-68.

<sup>15</sup>Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6; Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:10.

<sup>16</sup>Ralph G. Turnbull, "Jonathan Edwards – Bible Interpreter," *Interpretation* 6, no. 4 (1952): 430. Turnbull argues that "No other exerted a greater influence upon Edwards as a literary model." Turnbull, *Jonathan Edwards the Preacher*, 54. William Ames, in his work *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, accepted Perkins' concept of preaching in light of Ramean rhetoric. Miller reports that most American Puritans encountered Ramean logic through Ames, most notably at Harvard. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Beacon, 1961), 339.

<sup>17</sup>Cited in Joel Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 689.

<sup>18</sup>Perkins wrote, "The preaching of the word is the testimony of God, and the profession of the knowledge of Christ, and not of human skill. Furthermore, the hearers ought not to ascribe their faith to the gifts of men, but to the power of God's word." Cited in Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 690.

application of the biblical text, they must be concealed in the delivery of the sermon, so that the only thing on display is the Spirit of God, and not the eloquence of the preacher. Greek and Latin terms should be absent from the sermon. Thus the plain style of preaching required the use, but not the display, of learning.<sup>19</sup>

The Puritan plain style preaching, therefore, avoided all that was not clear or perspicuous to an ordinary listener. For the sake of plainness, the preacher denied himself in his style of preaching so that only Christ and the gospel might be extolled.<sup>20</sup>

To keep their sermons plain, the Puritans followed the text-doctrine-application structure as the defining form of the sermon. This plain style of preaching became the hallmark of the Puritan sermon and is easily identifiable in the Jonathan Edwards's preaching as a result.<sup>21</sup> The sermon begins with reading a portion of Scripture in its context. The initial text asserts the priority of the Bible as the source of all ultimate truth.<sup>22</sup> After a short exposition of it, the preacher presents doctrine, which is the major portion of the sermon. Doctrine consists of a number of propositions drawn from the text itself, which amplify the passage's main idea and subpoints.<sup>23</sup> The sermon finishes up with the application, in which he applied his Scripture doctrine to his listeners' daily lives.

**Primacy of preaching.** The Puritans had a firm belief that God built His church through

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<sup>19</sup>Raymond A. Blacketer, "William Perkins," in *The Pietist Theologians : An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 46. In discussing the Puritan plain style, Thomas Hooker wrote, "That plainness and perspicuity, both for matter and manner of expression, are the things, that I have conscientiously endeavored in the whole debate. . . and I have accounted it the chiefest part of judicious learning, to make a hard point easy and familiar in explication." Thomas Hooker, *The Puritans*, vol. 2, ed. Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 665.

<sup>20</sup>Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 695

<sup>21</sup>Stephen J. Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 156.

<sup>22</sup>Kimnach, Minkema, and Sweeney, *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, xiii.

<sup>23</sup>Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty*, 159.

the instrument of preaching, which is God's great converting ordinance. The Puritan concept of preaching is the proclamation of the Word of God, in contrast with the Roman Catholics, who explained the dogma in their preaching. Thus if a preacher delivers a faithful exposition of Scripture, then the Puritans believe God is speaking. John Owen explains preaching as follows: "The word is like the sun in the firmament. [ . . . ] It hath virtually in it all spiritual light and heat. But the preaching of the word is as the motion and beams of the sun, which actually and effectually doth communicate that light and heat unto all creatures."<sup>24</sup> D.M. Lloyd-Jones also writes about the value the Puritans placed on preaching, illustrating Calvin's high view of the Lord's Supper:

[Calvin] believed in a spiritual Real Presence in the Lord's Supper; but he said that 'the communion without a sermon is but a dumb show.' . . . It is the preaching that conveys the Word to us, and the sacraments seal it, confirm it to us, certify it to us. So we must give supremacy to the preaching over against a sacrament.<sup>25</sup>

For the Puritans, the sermon is more important than the sacrament and liturgy. In this way, they considered preaching of paramount importance for the good of people's soul. When preachers spoke the word of God, they acted as the very voice of the great God. In a 1743 ordination sermon, "The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls,"<sup>26</sup> Edwards argued that the words of faithful ministers are the most impressive means through which people experience God's grace and salvation. In the sermon, Edwards imagines a minister standing before the heavenly throne in the Day of Judgment to answer for his care of a number of souls committed into his charge. God interrogates the minister: "Here are not all the souls that I committed to you to bring home to me;

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<sup>24</sup>John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 7:312-13, quoted in Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 684.

<sup>25</sup>D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 380.

<sup>26</sup>Edwards, "The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls," *WJE*, 25:62-81.

there is such an one missing. What is become of it? Has it perished through your neglect!” The imagined minister, namely Edwards, responds,

Lord, it was not through my neglect; I have done what in me lay for his salvation . . . I have not neglected this and other souls that thou didst commit to me . . . I have given myself wholly to this work, laboring therein night and day; I have been ready, Lord, as thou knowest, to sacrifice my own ease, and profit, and pleasure, and temporal convenience, and the good will of my neighbors, for the sake of the good of the souls I had the charge of; . . . I sought out *acceptable words*, and studied for the most likely means to be used for his saving good.<sup>27</sup>

Both the content and forms of 1200 extant sermons are the product of Edwards’s assiduous search for “acceptable words.” In “A Farewell Sermon,” delivered in 1750 as he retired from his pastorate at Northampton, Edwards reemphasizes the importance of “acceptable words.”

I have studied to represent the misery and necessity of your circumstances in the clearest manner possible. . . . I have diligently endeavored to find out and use the most powerful motives to persuade you to take care for your own welfare and salvation. I have not only endeavored to awaken you that you might be moved with fear, but I have used my utmost endeavors to win you: I have sought out *acceptable words*, . . . I have spent my strength very much in these things.<sup>28</sup>

Edwards studied thirteen hours a day including preparing for his sermons. Edwards was well aware of the emphasis that his tradition placed upon the reading, interpreting and preaching of the Word.<sup>29</sup> Hence one must not overshadow the importance of Edwards as a preeminent preacher by limiting his own interest only to Edwards as a theologian or philosopher.

**Emphasis upon the whole man in preaching.** In response to the style of Anglican preaching,<sup>30</sup> the Puritans developed a preaching theology that addressed the whole man: mind,

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<sup>27</sup>Edwards, “The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls,” *WJE*, 25:73. Italics added.

<sup>28</sup>Edwards, “A Farewell Sermon,” *WJE*, 25:480. Italics added.

<sup>29</sup>Smith, *Jonathan Edwards*, 138.

<sup>30</sup>The Anglicans represents the established church in England. Puritans believed that Anglican sermons lacked “urgency and holy zeal and were too focused on displaying the preacher’s classical learning.” Beeke, *A*

conscience, and heart. First, Puritan preaching addressed the mind with clarity, refusing to set the mind and heart against each other. For the Puritans, “knowledge was the soil in which the Spirit planted the seed of regeneration.”<sup>31</sup> Holiness is not only a matter of emotions, but also closely related to understanding. Edwards was also emphatic about possessing a speculative knowledge of divine things, even though speculative knowledge without spiritual knowledge is worthless. In his sermon, “Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth,” Edwards asserts the importance of cognitive understanding of divine things: “The more you have of a rational knowledge of the things of the gospel, the more opportunity will there be, when the Spirit shall be breathed into your heart, to see the excellency of these things, and to taste the sweetness of them.”<sup>32</sup> Knowledge to the mind is “of infinite importance” because “without it we can have no spiritual or practical knowledge.”<sup>33</sup> Second, puritan preaching pointedly confronted the conscience. The Puritans preached *urgently* to the conscience, believing that many of their listeners were on their way to hell. Richard Baxter describes preaching as “a dying man speaking to dying men.”<sup>34</sup> Third, puritan preaching worked to woo the heart with passion. Their preaching was affectionate, zealous, and optimistic. They did not just reason with the mind and confront the conscience; they also appealed to the heart. The Puritans believed that reaching the heart is the most important part of preaching. Edwards, likewise, understood the person as an integrated whole, so that for him, effective preaching was neither solely a matter of presenting information objectively nor of

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*Puritan Theology*, 686.

<sup>31</sup>Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 687.

<sup>32</sup>Edwards, “Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth,” *WJE*, 22:100. In the same sermon, Edwards argues: “The heart cannot be set upon an object of which there is no idea in the understanding.” *WJE*, 22:88.

<sup>33</sup>Edwards, “Christian Knowledge,” cited in Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 502-03.

<sup>34</sup>Cited in Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 686.

touching people's heartstrings, but an authentic proclamation of the Word to the whole person. Edwards was convinced that only preaching which addresses the whole person can have "the essential power to effect an authentic inner response of the listener."<sup>35</sup>

**The influence of Solomon Stoddard.** The people of Northampton highly regarded Solomon Stoddard, Edwards's maternal grandfather, "almost as a sort of deity."<sup>36</sup> Stoddard was a force throughout the region, and a powerful preacher.<sup>37</sup> He heavily influenced Edwards's preaching philosophy, especially his use of rhetoric and emphasis on conversion experience.<sup>38</sup> Stoddard moved away from the detached, logical Puritan style toward a more affecting style that appealed emotion, which influenced Edwards's understanding of the power of affective preaching.<sup>39</sup> As Kinnach states, "The elaborate logical schemes which seemed to justify the old sermon form were either ignored or explicitly discredited by both the example of Stoddard and the most influential books on the art of preaching that Edwards read."<sup>40</sup> Kinnach goes on,

For Stoddard, 'rhetoric' was power. . . . Stoddard discovered hidden rhetorical resources in the 'plain style' by insisting upon the evaluation of rhetoric in psychological terms that were more comprehensive and subtle than either the old Ramean logic or the new Reason. Certainly, Edwards grappled for most of his life with rhetorical and artistic issues – not to mention the ecclesiastical ones – that were prompted by Stoddard.<sup>41</sup>

Stoddard's sermons were "simple in diction, graphic in imagery, and filled with emotional

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<sup>35</sup>Thomas R. Swears, *Preaching to Head and Heart* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 20-21.

<sup>36</sup>Edwards, "To the Reverend Thomas Gillespie," *WJE*, 16:385.

<sup>37</sup>Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 114.

<sup>38</sup>For more on Stoddard's influence on Edwards, see Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:11-21.

<sup>39</sup>Orville A. Hitchcock, "Jonathan Edwards," in *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, ed. William N. Brigance (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943), 232-34.

<sup>40</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE* 10:20. In the hands of Stoddard, the plain style sermon form "had become a finely tuned instrument of psychological manipulation." *WJE*, 10:15.

<sup>41</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:15.

overtones.”<sup>42</sup> His use of words was the rhetorical nucleus which made a tremendous impression on Edwards.

Stoddard wanted to transmit an authentic experience to his listeners through his rhetoric. In his sermon, “The Presence of Christ with the Ministers” (1718), Stoddard asserts that only experimental knowledge of God enables the minister to communicate effectively and the minister’s words to resonate with the audience.<sup>43</sup> Again, by “experimental” Stoddard means knowledge by acquaintance. In another 1724 sermon, “The Defects of Preachers Reproved,” Stoddard argues that religious experience is necessary if ministers are to have any success in the pulpit. In this sermon, Stoddard insists upon using the preacher’s personal experience in the sermon rather than a mere speculative understanding. Stoddard writes, “Some Preachers are men of Learning & Moral men” but “they want Experience.”<sup>44</sup> Stoddard is aware that this emphasis upon experience could lead to dangerous enthusiasm, but he himself, “was no enthusiast, and he asked his auditors to hear sermons with a cautious ear and to read their own experiences with careful discernment.”<sup>45</sup>

Stoddard was known as an awakening preacher who fervently advocated the “hellfire” strategy, believing that most people are more readily motivated by fear than by love or hope. Stoddard declared, “The Pretense that they make . . . is, that they are afraid there is no Hope for them . . . but the true Reason is not that they want Hope, but they want Fears.”<sup>46</sup> He

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<sup>42</sup>Stout, *New England Soul*, 104.

<sup>43</sup>Natalie D. Spar, “This Loquacious Soil: Language and Religious Experience in Early America” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2011), 195.

<sup>44</sup>Solomon Stoddard, *The Defects of Preachers Reproved* (Boston: Kneeland, 1724), 7.

<sup>45</sup>Spar, “This Loquacious Soil,” 195.

<sup>46</sup>Solomon Stoddard, *The Benefit of the Gospel, to those that are Wounded in Spirit* (Boston: Three Bibles and Crown, 1713), 181, cited in Wilson H. Kinnach, “The Literary Life of Jonathan Edwards,” in

insisted that people “need to be terrified and have the arrows of the Almighty in them that they may be Converted.”<sup>47</sup> Edwards learned the concept of the sermon as a heart-piercing implement and efficient, yet terrible device from his grandfather.

### **Characteristics of Edwards’s Preaching**

Despite the influences of Puritan homiletical tradition, Edwards did not slavishly adopt the legacy of his predecessors. He used inherited sermon forms, but changed them to more closely fit his preaching philosophy. About one of the essential purposes of preaching, Edwards writes,

*A fit means* to affect sinners, with the importance of the things of religion, and their own misery, and necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided; and to stir up the pure minds of the saints, and quicken their affection, by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and setting them before them in their proper colors, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already (II Pet. 1:12-13).<sup>48</sup>

Edwards has confidence that as a “fit means” of delivering the Word, sermons serve as a “great and main end” to impress “the divine things on the heart and affections of men.”<sup>49</sup> Regarding the role the sermon plays in convincing the heart and instilling a knowledge of divine things, Kinnach points out some significant changes in Edwards’s “attitude toward the interrelationship between reason and emotion in human nature, the nature of knowledge, and the function of

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*Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America’s Theologian*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 139.

<sup>47</sup>Stoddard, *The Defects*, 14. He also argued that “when men don’t Preach much about the danger of Damnation, there is want of good preaching.” Stoddard, *The Defects*, 13.

<sup>48</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:115-16. Italics added.

<sup>49</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:115.

language.”<sup>50</sup>

According to Kinnach, Edwards at the outset held the belief that he could control listeners’ minds and opinions by the sheer power of his arguments. However, after his own personal religious experience, combined with writing “The Mind” in 1723, he realized that speculative intellect is irrelevant to the production of religious experience and that reason and logical discourse alone cannot touch the heart, the affection, or the will.<sup>51</sup> After all, Edwards faced the crucial question on religious experience: “Though reason and logical arguments may make theological dogmas seem *true*, do they make them seem *real*? Is there a due sense of the message as well as a mere understanding of it as an abstract principle?”<sup>52</sup> Edwards came to believe that the importance of preaching lies not only in providing the congregation with speculative understanding, but also in enabling them to sense or perceive truth through their own experience.

Edwards realized that effective preaching engenders a fit or suitable condition in which listeners can experience saving grace through hearing the Word preached. In his sermon “Profitable Hearers of the Word,” Edwards explains the end of preaching the Word of God as following: “The profitable hearers of God’s Word are distinguished from all others. Spiritual understanding is not mere speculation that rests in the head and reaches not the heart. It is not of an unactive or barren nature, but will surely be producing of good fruits.”<sup>53</sup> This section will

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<sup>50</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:200.

<sup>51</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:201.

<sup>52</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:201-02

<sup>53</sup>Edwards, “Profitable Hearers of the Word,” *WJE*, 14:256.

examine Edwards's homiletical strategies with which he sought to maximize the effectiveness of the preaching as a fit vehicle for transmitting the Word. It will specifically focus on Edwards's use of rhetorical devices, such as imagery, typology, repetition, and his use of Scripture. However, Edwards was fully aware that God's grace cannot be commanded or conditioned by preachers' effectiveness or listeners' attentiveness. In order for preaching to be a useful instrument, an infusion of supernatural divine light should accompany it. Ultimately, only God can give people eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart full of affections for Him, a fact that is consistently present in all of Edwards's writings.

The most powerful weapon in Edwards's preaching arsenal was his unparalleled use of imagery.<sup>54</sup> Edwards recognized the power of "the armor-piercing device of sensational imagery."<sup>55</sup> Harry Stout and Nathan Hatch, the Yale co-editors, also point out that "What Whitefield accomplished in sheer drama, Edwards achieved in verbal imagery. . . Edwards employed a great panoply of images and metaphors designed to reach all the human emotions"<sup>56</sup> The power of Edwards's sermons lied in his rhetorical genius in using verbal imagery, which enabled him to preach affectively.

Another frequently used rhetorical device, along with the use of images, is typology, which runs through Edwards's sermons as a leitmotif.<sup>57</sup> Edwards adhered to typology throughout

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<sup>54</sup>Concerning Edwards's use of imagery, see John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), 191-211. A more detailed discussion about the subject is in the next section, "Typology for the Use of Imagery in Edwards's Thought."

<sup>55</sup>Kimnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:171.

<sup>56</sup>Stout and Hatch, *WJE*, 22:262-63.

<sup>57</sup>More on Edwards's idea of typology, see Tibor Fabiny, "Edwards and Biblical Typology," in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards*, 91-108; Janice Knight, "Learning the Language of God: Jonathan Edwards and the Typology of Nature," *William & Mary Quarterly* 48 (1991): 531-51; Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 110-29. I will explore Edwards's idea of typology more in detail in the following section.

his ministry, seeing types of Christ in particular not just in Scripture, as earlier Calvinists were wont to do, but in nature as well. For Edwards, types are literally all over the world. In expanding the traditional understanding of typology into the natural world, according to Wallace Anderson, “Edwards attempted to free typology from the narrow correspondences of the two testaments without reverting to exaggerated medieval allegory.”<sup>58</sup> While Perry Miller thinks that Edwards’s extension of typology to nature resulted in an “exaltation of nature to a level of authority coequal with biblical revelation,”<sup>59</sup> Stephen Stein argues that Miller is mistaken to place nature on a par with Scripture: “Edwards never waffled on the primacy of Scripture as the principal source of divine revelation, nor on the usefulness of biblical typology as an interpretive device.”<sup>60</sup> Scripture always remained Edwards’s priority.

Another significant characteristic of Edwards’s preaching is his skillful use of repetition.<sup>61</sup> Kinnach refers to repetition as part of “Edwards’s essential rhetorical arsenal.”<sup>62</sup> Kinnach also reports that “a tendency to repetition was as innate in Edwards as his love of concrete images and details. But genius and toil turned what might well have been a rhetorically fatal vice into a source of formidable literary power.”<sup>63</sup> Above all, the use of repetition enhances the intensity of a sermon, which is one of Edwards’s homiletical forces. Intensity enhanced by

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<sup>58</sup>Anderson, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 11:33.

<sup>59</sup>Perry Miller, “Introduction” to Jonathan Edwards, *Images and Shadows of Divine Things* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), 28.

<sup>60</sup>Stephen J. Stein, “The Spirit and the Word: Jonathan Edwards and Spiritual Exegesis,” in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 125.

<sup>61</sup>Concerning Edwards’s use of repetition, see Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:237-53; Carrick, *Preaching of Jonathan Edwards*, 213-21.

<sup>62</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:294. “By restating, the preacher achieves both increased emphasis and the sense of continuity in time, dramatizing both the importance and the endurance of the subject handled.” Kinnach, “Pursuit of Reality,” in *Jonathan Edwards and American Experience*, 115.

repetition stirred up listeners' mind and contributed to Edwards's affective preaching.

Edwards's sermons also reveal his remarkable acquaintance with the Scriptures. Kinnach reports that "The aptitude and penetration displayed in his use of scriptural passages are truly extraordinary. Any consideration of Edwards's literary qualities must give priority to his use of the Scripture."<sup>64</sup> By excessive use of Scripture in his sermons, Edwards might intend to be seen as one "who would *Speak as the Oracles of God*," as Kinnach describes it as "a new type of rhetorical argument, incantation."<sup>65</sup> In any event, his sermons are filled with a very judicious selection and well-integrated use of the Scriptures. The Scripture is obviously one of the dominating intellectual and theological influences in his life.

The issue of Edwards's delivery is somewhat controversial. The traditional view on Edwards's delivery is that he was a great preacher according to the content of his message and style of writing, but that in delivery he was mediocre at best, reading from a manuscript, with no gestures or powerful voice. Kinnach concurs with this position, referring to Edwards as "the undramatic preacher with the unimpressive voice."<sup>66</sup> However, one must not ignore the development in delivery that occurred throughout his preaching ministry. As mentioned above, Solomon Stoddard, who preached extemporaneously and criticized those who did not, cannot but have influenced Edwards. Kinnach writes, "As Edwards gained mastery of the pulpit . . . he gradually began outlining sections of his sermons."<sup>67</sup> Jim Ehrhard put an end to the controversy.

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<sup>63</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:237.

<sup>64</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:207.

<sup>65</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:210. Kinnach defines incantation as "the ritual invocation of the Word through the quotation of Scripture passages at crucial points in the sermon."

<sup>66</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:114.

<sup>67</sup>Kinnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:102.

According to Ehrhard, an increasing tendency toward a more extemporaneous style can be seen in Edwards's sermons.<sup>68</sup> He concludes that "there appears to be no reason for continuing to hold to the idea of Edwards as a manuscript preacher."<sup>69</sup>

For the purpose of this dissertation, I will concentrate on Edwards's use of imagery, especially metaphor, in his sermons, which stands out the most regarding the sense of the heart. Edwards's belief in the doctrine of typology allowed him to freely employ imageries in his sermon, so I will further examine his unique belief in typology before analyzing his use of imagery.

### **Typology for the Use of Imagery in Edwards's Thought**

The Reformed Puritans believed in natural theology, which is the knowledge of God that is available through creation.<sup>70</sup> Edwards's use of natural types is not discontinuous with the practices of his Puritan predecessors. He argues that the natural world is full of images of things in the spiritual world.<sup>71</sup> God always makes himself known alike "by his *word* and *works*, i.e. in what he says, and in what he does."<sup>72</sup> This thought led Edwards to search the world as well as the Scriptures in order to see God's will and intent. He held that along with Scripture, nature and human history can be also legitimate sources of revelation, communicating God's design to his

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<sup>68</sup>Concerning the view that considers the momentum for Edwards's shift from writing out his manuscripts in full to outlining the thought as Whitefield's visit, see Stout and Hatch, "Preface to the Period," *WJE*, 22:31. Stout and Hatch write that Edwards "was obsessed with Whitefield, and in his own way he began to imitate him." *WJE*, 22:31.

<sup>69</sup>Jim Ehrhard, "A Critical Analysis of the Tradition of Jonathan Edwards as a Manuscript Preacher," *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (1998): 84.

<sup>70</sup>Concerning the Puritans on natural theology, see Beeke, *A Puritan Theology*, 11-26.

<sup>71</sup>Edwards, "Christ the Spiritual Sun," *WJE*, 22:52.

<sup>72</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, *WJE*, 8:422.

people. Everything in nature is communicative and creation is a sermon waiting to be heard.<sup>73</sup> He saw the drama of Christ's death and resurrection in the motions of the sun<sup>74</sup> and even in the silkworm from its cocoon.<sup>75</sup> In fact, for Edwards, every part of creation is emblematic of divine things. For example, even the tiniest leaf in a flower is a word from God, the sun shows forth God's glory, the clouds and mountains bespeak God's majesty, and the green fields and pleasant flowers testify to God's grace and mercy.<sup>76</sup> Typology is the interpretive key to these divine communications.<sup>77</sup> In its narrowest sense, typology is an ancient study of figurative interpretation of the Old Testament and implies a predetermined pattern of history, that is, certain events of the Old Testament are foreshadowings of the New.<sup>78</sup> Augustine corroborates this conservative doctrine of typology, writing that "in the Old Testament the New lies hid; in the New Testament,

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<sup>73</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 116.

<sup>74</sup>c"Images of Divine Things," no. 50 writes, "The rising and setting of the sun is a type of the death and resurrection of Christ." *WJE*, 11:64. Edwards's "Blank Bible" note on Luke 23:44 also states, "That the sun is a type of Christ was probably one reason why Christ's resurrection was about the time of the rising of the sun, i.e. its first rising by its light; because the rising of the sun is a type of the resurrection of Christ, as the sun's setting is a type of the death of Christ." *WJE*, 24:921.

<sup>75</sup>c"Images of Divine Things," no. 142 writes, "The silkworm is a remarkable type of Christ. Its greatest work is weaving something for our beautiful clothing, and it dies in this work. It spends its life in it, it finishes it in death, as Christ was obedient unto death; his righteousness was chiefly wrought out in dying. And then it rises again, a worm, as Christ was in his state of humiliation, but a more glorious creature." *WJE*, 11:100; see also nos. 35 and 46.

<sup>76</sup>Perry Miller, "Introduction" to *Images or Shadows*, 27; Edwards, "Miscellanies," no. 777, *WJE*, 18:429-30. In addition, the sun is a type of the Sun of Righteousness who heals the soul's afflictions; the stars are types of the saints in glory, and the moon is an image of earthly glory. Birds flying in the sky are also types of the saints in heaven, but "to a fainter degree" than the stars. Edwards, "Images of Divine Things," *WJE*, 11:85-86, 99.

<sup>77</sup>The type is radically distinct from allegory. "Allegory is essentially based on the Platonic conception of a spiritual universe that lies beyond the physical world, which is its representation or symbol only. In contrast, the type is historically true and eternally verifiable because it was instituted to perform a specific function in God's grand design." Mason I. Lowance, "Images or Shadows of Divine Things: The Typology of Jonathan Edwards," *Early American Literature* 5 (1970): 141.

<sup>78</sup>Marc Frank Lee, "A Literary Approach to Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1973), 52.

the meaning of the Old becomes clear.”<sup>79</sup> Samuel Mather, another conservative typologist, defends the literal historicity of types, arguing that a type is a “sensible thing ordained of God under the Old Testament to represent and hold forth something of Christ in the New.”<sup>80</sup> In Mason Lowance’s words, the conservative position places “great emphasis on the historical veracity of the type and the specific correspondence between type and antitype within the bounds of Scripture.”<sup>81</sup>

Edwards did not disagree with the more conservative typologists, but he did believe that “types” of Christ were abundant, and not only confined to the pages of Scripture. In *Images or Shadows of Divine Things*, Edwards transformed typology so that nature became another source of revelation. He saw typology as a “certain sort of Language . . . in which God is wont to speak to us.”<sup>82</sup> He understood the whole universe as the “voice of God to intelligent creatures,” proclaiming the glories of Christ and his redemption.<sup>83</sup> Edwards states, the whole outward creation is “but a kind of voice or language of God, to instruct intelligent beings in things pertaining to himself.”<sup>84</sup> Edwards sought to hear God’s voice and see God’s grand design in nature and in human history believing that sainthood comes with the sense of the heart to recognize divine things. With new eyes and ears, the true Christian can perceive spiritual things

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<sup>79</sup>Cited in Lowance, “Images or Shadows,” 141.

<sup>80</sup>Samuel Mather, *Figures or Types of the Old Testament, Opened and Explained* (London, 1705). Quoted in Lowance, “Images or Shadows,” 141.

<sup>81</sup>Lowance, “Images or Shadows,” 142.

<sup>82</sup>Edwards, “Types,” *WJE*, 11:150.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 1340, *WJE*, 23:359-76; Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, *WJE*, 9:218, 289; Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 702, *WJE*, 18:283-309.

<sup>84</sup>Edwards, “Images of Divine Things,” *WJE*, 11:67. For further comments on God’s works as a language, see “Types,” *WJE*, 11:146–53.

in daily life.

Miller, among others, argues that the innovation that separated Edwards from his Puritan ancestors was his “exaltation of nature to a level of authority coequal with revelation.”<sup>85</sup> However, Miller’s contention stands in contrast with Edwards’s belief that the Bible is “a perfect rule,” and “an infallible guide, a sure rule which if we follow we cannot err.” Nothing, including nature, can be placed on a level of authority coequal with Scripture, and Edwards does not give indications that he strayed from this truth. For Edwards, the Scriptures function as the hermeneutical standard for measuring all the other types found in nature and history.<sup>86</sup> In this section, I will further examine criticism of Edwards’s doctrine of typology and Edwards’s justification for the use of it. Moreover, this dissertation assumes that an understanding of typology is central to reading Edwards’s texts and to identifying the references of Edwards’s use of imagery.

### **The Charge of Subjectivism**

Edwards’s typological system operates in the natural world, so that the true believer who possesses the sense of the heart, the power of perception available only to the regenerate, could “read the book of nature.”<sup>87</sup> Edwards believed that this must be the case since, as he contends in his “Miscellanies,” “The whole outward creation, which is but the shadows of beings, is so made as to represent spiritual things.”<sup>88</sup> At first glance, Edwards seems to be claiming that

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<sup>85</sup>Miller, “Introduction” to *Images or Shadows*, 28. According to Miller, in the system of Edwards’s typological system, nature “was a living system of concepts; it was a complete, intelligible whole” (27).

<sup>86</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 122.

<sup>87</sup>Mason I. Lowance, Jr. “Introduction,” *WJE*, 11:161.

<sup>88</sup>Edwards, “The Miscellanies” no. 362, *WJE*, 13:434.

all objects in the natural world signify other spiritual truths. Being actually aware of criticism from his own contemporaries, Edwards reconfirms his position as follows:

I expect by very ridicule and contempt to be called a man of a very fruitful brain and copious fancy, but they are welcome to it. I am not ashamed to own that I believe that the whole universe, heaven and earth, air and seas, and the divine constitution and history of the holy Scriptures, be full of images of divine things, as full as a language is of words; and that the multitude of those things that I have mentioned are but a very small part of what is really intended to be signified and typified by these things.<sup>89</sup>

Edwards insists that all natural things are designed and ordained to represent spiritual or divine things. His essay “Images of Divine Things” was written to offer philosophical and scriptural arguments to support this position. “So it is God’s way in the natural world,” Edwards writes in entry no. 19, “to make inferior things in conformity and analogy to the superior, so as to be the images of them.”<sup>90</sup> Entry no. 8 also says that “Why should not we suppose that he makes the inferior in imitation of the superior, the material of the spiritual, on purpose to have a resemblance and shadow of them?”<sup>91</sup> Edwards, in effect, assumes a “consentaneity” between the natural, visible world and the spiritual, invisible world.<sup>92</sup>

According to Wallace Anderson, three groups denied the Edwardsean use of typology: the rationalists, the Catholics and high-church Anglicans, and Reformed evangelicals of Puritan dissent.<sup>93</sup> Tibor Fabiny points out that Edwards took a *via media* between three groups.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Edwards, “Types,” *WJE*, 11:152.

<sup>90</sup>Edwards, “Images of Divine Things,” *WJE*, 11:55.

<sup>91</sup>Edwards, “Images of Divine Things,” *WJE*, 11:53.

<sup>92</sup>In Edwards’s words, “It is apparent and allowed that there is a great and remarkable analogy in God’s works. There is a wonderful resemblance in the effects which God produces, and *consentaneity* in his manner of working in one thing and another, throughout all nature. It is very observable in the visible world.” Edwards, “Images of Divine Things,” *WJE*, 11:53. Italics added.

<sup>93</sup>Anderson, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 11:32.

<sup>94</sup>Tibor Fabiny, “Edwards and Biblical Typology,” in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An*

Nevertheless, he was also a liberal in his view of typology in that he held that every inferior being is a shadow of its superior. As a consequence, Edwards's natural typology involves a much more expansive approach to this doctrine than is normally entertained in Reformed circles. The real issue with Edwards's typology, as explored in this section, however, is that since everything in nature is representative of a spiritual being or truth, Edwards "types" seem to represent different truths or divine objects at different times. In John Carrick's words, Edwards's typology makes it impossible to "establish in practice its precise extent and limits or to establish the precise correspondences that pertains between these two worlds" and thus "it is vulnerable to the charge of subjectivism on his part."<sup>95</sup> For example, in "Images of Divine Things," Edwards asserts,

Water . . . is a type of sin or the corruption of man and of the state of misery that is the consequence of it. It is like sin in its flattering discoveries . . . . Thus when we stand on the banks of a lake or river, how flattering and pleasant does it oftentimes appear . . . . But indeed it is all a cheat: if we should descend into it, instead of finding pleasant, delightful groves and a garden of pleasure in its clearness, we should meet with nothing but death, a land of darkness, or darkness itself, etc.<sup>96</sup>

Contrary to this image, and as Edwards well knows, water is frequently used in Scripture as an image of the Holy Spirit. Who decides the antitype of water? In this instance, William Wainwright comments, Edwards's typology seems "subjective, arbitrary, or at least idiosyncratic."<sup>97</sup> In this regard, McDermott's warning is very suggestive: "The Types do not have power in and for themselves to portray the spiritual world. The typological system is not

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*Introduction to America's Theologian*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98-101.

<sup>95</sup>Carrick, *Preaching of Jonathan Edwards*, 195. See Carrick's negative evaluation on Edwards's typology: "His approach to imagery and symbolism was one that made him vulnerable to the charge of being speculative and fanciful" (199).

<sup>96</sup>Edwards, "Images of Divine Things," *WJE*, 11:94-95.

<sup>97</sup>William J. Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards and the Language of God," *The Journal of the American*

transparent to all, but only to ‘a mind so prepared and exercised.’”<sup>98</sup> What is the criterion with which the interpretation of the book of nature can avoid subjectivism? What prevents the interpretation from being arbitrary or capricious?

### **Typology: Justification of the Use of Figurative Language**

Before investigating Edwards’s justification of typology, I need to clarify the claim that Edwards’s typology might turn into medieval allegory. Edwards’s typology is clearly contrasted with allegory. According to McDermott, the difference between typology and allegory is that “allegory was Greek (Platonic) and dealt with abstract essences; types were Jewish and concerned with *historical existence*.”<sup>99</sup> The greatest difference between the two can be seen by the concept of linear time. In other words, while allegory never considers time to be an important element, the type by definition precedes the antitype in time.<sup>100</sup> In fact, Edwards sometimes mixed allegory with traditional biblical typology. For instance, he wrote that “the church of God is often represented in Scripture by a palm tree or palm trees (Psalms 92:12). God’s people often [are] compared to trees (Isaiah 61:3 and Isaiah 60:21 and elsewhere).”<sup>101</sup> In McDermott’s words, “His vision of reality had so unified scripture and nature that any hard and fast separation of the two would be incoherent.”<sup>102</sup> Yet unlike the allegorists, Edwards apparently insisted upon “the

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*Academy of Religion* 48 (1980): 525.

<sup>98</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 116.

<sup>99</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 120. Italics added.

<sup>100</sup>Erich Auerbach writes that the type “deals with concrete events whether past, present or future, and not with concepts or abstractions,” quoted in McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 120.

<sup>101</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings, WJE*, 11:196.

<sup>102</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 121. Anderson states that “Edwards attempted to free typology from the narrow correspondences of the two testaments without reverting to exaggerated medieval

actual organic unity, temporal and spatial, of the cosmos.”<sup>103</sup> Therefore, while Edwards mixed allegory and traditional typology, both fitted into the organic unity of the work of redemption. In sum, Edwards was devoted to the primacy of the historical veracity of the type, and yet for him the antitypes were not limited to the scriptural events and persons but the entire drama of redemption.<sup>104</sup>

The justification of typology can be explained in terms of three of Edwards’s theories: the first concerns his aesthetic, the second has to do with the relation between God and the creatures, and the third is related to his epistemology and human capacity of receiving truth. First of all, Edwards’s use of typology is closely related to his idea of beauty. As discussed in chapter two, Edwards was preoccupied with the beauty or excellency of God. In his essay, “The Beauty of the World,” Edwards gives a broad hint that an inferior one in the natural world resembles a superior beauty:

The beauty of the world consists wholly of sweet mutual consents, either within itself, or with the Supreme Being. As to the corporeal world, though there are many other sorts of consents, yet the sweetest and most charming beauty of it is its resemblance of spiritual beauties. The reason is that spiritual beauties are infinitely the greatest, and bodies being but the shadows of beings, they must be so much the more charming as they shadow forth spiritual beauties. This beauty is peculiar to natural things, it surpassing the art of man.<sup>105</sup>

God created the world such a way that the inferior and shadowy part of his works represent those things that are more real and excellent, spiritual and divine.<sup>106</sup> Edwards, in his *The Nature of True Virtue*, distinguishes between primary beauty and secondary beauty. “Secondary beauty

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allegory.” Anderson, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 11:33.

<sup>103</sup>Kimmach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:229 n. 8.

<sup>104</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 121.

<sup>105</sup>Edwards, “The Beauty of the World,” *WJE*, 6:305.

<sup>106</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 362, *WJE*, 13:435.

consists in a mutual consent and agreement of different things in form, manner, quantity, and visible end or design, called by the various names of regularity, order, uniformity, symmetry, proportion, harmony, etc.”<sup>107</sup> In other words, secondary beauty is the image of primary beauty. Though the structure of beauty in itself does not prove the typological nature of secondary beauty, it provides the evidence for the system of correspondence between inferior, natural world and superior, spiritual truths.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, if one interprets a type without displaying the divine beauty, one misses its proper meaning.

Second, in Edwards’s view, the created universe is nothing less than the emanations of God’s internal glory externally communicated as God reveals himself to the world.<sup>109</sup> “Emanations” is a key word here, because it suggests that the types are a result of God’s glory naturally overflowing into the created world rather than having been constructed by man. Edwards writes that “the beauties of nature are really emanations, or shadows, of the excellencies of the Son of God.”<sup>110</sup> Thus all creatures in nature are beautiful precisely because they are

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<sup>107</sup>Edwards, “The Nature of True Virtue,” *WJE*, 8:540, 561.

<sup>108</sup>McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts*, 115.

<sup>109</sup>Edwards, *Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, *WJE*, 8:527. Regarding the subject of emanation, see Kyle C. Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 73-104; and Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 198-99.

<sup>110</sup>Edwards, “Miscellanies,” no. 108, *WJE*, 13:279. In the same Miscellany, Edwards explains this clearly. “So that when we are delighted with flowery meadows and gentle breezes of wind, we may consider that we only see the emanations of the sweet benevolence of Jesus Christ; when we behold the fragrant rose and lily, we see his love and purity. So the green trees and fields, and singing of birds, are the emanations of his infinite joy and benignity; the easiness and naturalness of trees and vines [are] shadows of his infinite beauty and loveliness; the crystal rivers and murmuring streams have the footsteps of his sweet grace and bounty. When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beauteous bow, we behold the adumbrations of his glory and goodness; and the blue skies, of his mildness and gentleness. There are also many things wherein we may behold his awful majesty: in the sun in his strength, in comets, in thunder, in the towering thunder clouds, in ragged rocks and the brows of mountains.”

emanations of the communicated excellency of God. For example, as Edwards confesses, “God’s excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature.”<sup>111</sup> Edwards’s doctrine of typology is more than mere accommodation to the fallen, blinded human sense of the heart. Typology can express the genuine relation between nature and God, between creature and Creator.

Above all, Edwards justifies the use of typology, referring to Jesus’s use of typology in his teaching: “Christ often makes use of representations of spiritual things in the constitution of the world for argument, as that the tree is known by its fruit (Matt 12:33). These things are not merely mentioned as illustrations of his meaning, but as illustrations and *evidences of the truth* of what he says.”<sup>112</sup> In addition, Edwards holds that Scripture itself justifies that “the things of the world are ordered and designed to shadow forth spiritual things.”<sup>113</sup> In general, Scripture employs “things in the constitution and ordinary state of human society and the world of mankind”<sup>114</sup> as types and emblems, thus showing “that the works of nature are intended and contrived of God to signify and indigitate spiritual things.”<sup>115</sup> In Wainwright’s words, the world of Scripture is in fact a world of types.<sup>116</sup> Edwards did not use typology in his sermons simply

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<sup>111</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE, 16:794. Strictly speaking, flowers, trees, moon, and stars have no beauty of their own, but only the communicated beauty of God.

<sup>112</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings*, WJE, 11:57. Italics added.

<sup>113</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings*, WJE, 11:53.

<sup>114</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings*, WJE, 11:54.

<sup>115</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings*, WJE, 11:66.

<sup>116</sup>Wainwright, “Jonathan Edwards,” 523. In Scripture, “Persons were typical persons; their actions were typical actions; the cities were typical cities; the nations . . . were typical nations . . . God’s providences . . . were typical providences . . . their houses were typical houses; their magistrates, typical magistrates; their clothes, typical clothes, and indeed the world was a typical world.” WJE, 13:435.

for embellishment or emotional effectiveness. Rather, for him, Scripture itself was the justification of typology's existence and the proof of its relation to truth.

Third, if, as we have seen, things in nature are simply the communication of God externalized, then all human knowledge about them is knowledge of God. The cycle occurs here: God communicates His knowledge through the created universe to human minds which, in the act of receiving the communication, return it to God. In Strobel's word, "Everything moves from God, and everything returns to him."<sup>117</sup> That is to say, God is the first cause of all things and the last end of all things.<sup>118</sup> Hence, all our knowledge and love of God is simply a participation of God's knowledge and love of Himself. This is the parallel of emanation, that is, *remanation*.<sup>119</sup> Edwards writes,

In the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fullness is received and returned. Here is both an *emanation* and *remanation*. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God, and are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is *of God*, and *in God*, and *to God*; and God is the beginning, middle and end in this affair.<sup>120</sup>

If the beams of glory from God upon things are returned or reflected back to God, then it is proper to think that those things which reflect God's glory must stimulate our senses, which

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<sup>117</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 5.

<sup>118</sup>The scriptural evidences support this. Isaiah 44:6, "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts, I am the first, I also am the last, and besides me there is no God." Isa 48:12, "I am the first, and I am the last." Rev 1:8, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev 1:11, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." Rev 1:17, "I am the first and the last." Rev 21:6, "And he said unto me, it is done, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Rev 22:13, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

<sup>119</sup>With respect to remanation, see Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 149-76.

<sup>120</sup>Edwards, *Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, WJE, 8:531.

perceive impressions from the things.<sup>121</sup> For instance, when we see the brilliant sun, we not only see its physical brightness, we also see God's infinite glory, and his passionate, warming love. Of course, for the unregenerate, these impressions are only notional or speculative knowledge. However, the regenerate, having the sense of the heart given by the Holy Spirit, can possess true or sensible knowledge: they really *experience* these impressions. Edwards writes about this in the vocabulary of typology: the regenerate soul is given the sense of the heart with which to see the world and God's self-communication in it. Put differently, typology and the use of imagery having an immediate appeal to our senses are an appropriate means.<sup>122</sup>

For these reasons, it is natural and justifiable that Edwards would use the images of nature in delivering spiritual truths in his preaching. Edwards's contribution was his justification of typology rather than a new use of types. Edwards has shown that it is reasonable to believe that our world is "a typical world," and to investigate the meaning of the types it contains.<sup>123</sup>

### **Examples of the Use of Imagery in Edwards's Sermons**

Accounts of Edwards's preaching reveal that the power in the sermon was "in his masterful use of language."<sup>124</sup> According to John Smith in *Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher*, Edwards "was meticulous in his choice of words in order to achieve the greatest accuracy in the ideas they were meant to convey and, above all, he was concerned to make these

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<sup>121</sup>This is the case since Edwards was influenced by the sensationalism of Locke. In Edwards's epistemology, the senses play an important role in the acquisition of the knowledge. See Baumgartner, "Jonathan Edwards," 323.

<sup>122</sup>Baumgartner, "Jonathan Edwards," 323.

<sup>123</sup>Wainwright, "Jonathan Edwards," 527.

<sup>124</sup>Smith, *Jonathan Edwards*, 139.

ideas ‘sensible’ through vivid images, metaphors and dramatic comparisons.”<sup>125</sup> Wilson Kinnach agrees, “After theology, Edwards thought most about expression: what is language, how it operates on the mind, and how its resources might be variously exploited.”<sup>126</sup> From the early days of preaching, Edwards learned from the manuals of John Edwards, Cotton Mather and William Perkins that preaching must be affectionate and passionate, appealing to emotion as well as reason. As noted in chapter two, Edwards found in John Locke’s work that human is not only a rational being but also an emotional being, and that all decisions in life are made at the level of affection, not in the realm of the mind and reason alone.<sup>127</sup>

Edwards realized that imagery, rather than rational or logical argument, appeals to the affections through the sense of the heart most effectively. When powerful imagery is combined with theological concepts, it touches the minds of listeners as well. Images, therefore, can be powerful means of persuasion. Concerning the use of images in Edwards’s sermons, Kinnach observes: “Possessed of an intensely concrete and particularistic imagination, Edwards’s abstract logic and his metaphors are alike vivified by simple but poignant (usually visual) images.”<sup>128</sup> For Edwards, the images constitute a ‘system of signs.’ In his sermons, Edwards employed an array of powerful images and metaphors designed to reach all the human affections by way of stirring up listeners’ sense of the heart. His use of verbal imagery virtually constitutes one of his great powers as a preacher.

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<sup>125</sup>Smith, *Jonathan Edwards*, 139.

<sup>126</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:xiii.

<sup>127</sup>John D. Hannah, “The Homiletical Skill of Jonathan Edwards,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (2002): 99-100.

<sup>128</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:213. According to Kinnach, vivid imagery is one of Edwards’s essential rhetorical arsenals. *WJE*, 10:294.

In order to exemplify how vivid and dramatic images are used in Edwards's sermons, I chose to analyze "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and "Heaven is a World of Love." Both sermons were given while Edwards was preaching at Northampton (1731-1750). During this period, in contrast to his earlier New York sermons (1720-1723) and subsequent Stockbridge sermons (1751-1757), his sermonic construction rhetorical style reached its peak. Hence these sermons are the most appropriate for the analysis of Edwards's developing style.<sup>129</sup> In analyzing these sermons in particular, the reader can see Edwards at his best, and perhaps at his truest. Second, "Sinners" is one of the finest examples of the power of images and metaphors. In this sermon, Edwards used a number of vividly delineated images, but the strength of the sermon is that the images fit together tightly.<sup>130</sup> "Heaven" also affirms the literary techniques and the rhetorical power of imagery. These sermons are examples of a masterpiece of rhetorical strategies. Instead of going through each sermon section by section, I shall briefly point out where and to what purpose quite a number of images are brought together.

### **"Sinners in the Hands of Angry God"**

It was certainly not because of his delivery that Edwards's most famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" achieved its success.<sup>131</sup> Edwards always preached in "a natural way of delivery, and without any agitation of body, or anything else in the manner to

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<sup>129</sup>Kinnach, "Sermon Mill," 168.

<sup>130</sup>Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards*, 76.

<sup>131</sup>Harry S. Stout says that this anthologized sermon is clearly not representative of his sermons, but illustrative of one type of sermon, the "awakening sermon." Stout, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," *WJE*, 22:402.

excite attention.”<sup>132</sup> Rather, it was Edwards’s language—specifically his effective and frequent use of images and metaphors to express God’s wrath and hell’s torments that made an impression on his listeners.<sup>133</sup> Edwards made hell so real that he could make the eternal consequences of God’s wrath seem a personal and an immediate thing for each member of the congregation. Kinnach regards the use of several different images presented together as integral to the remarkable success of this sermon: “The more images added, the sharper the sense of theme or doctrine, and the greater the diversity of images the more intense the light at the central point of fusion. “Sinners” is the renowned exemplar of this technique and certainly the purest example.”<sup>134</sup> Edwin H. Cady argues that “the emotional force of the sermon springs from the imagery itself.”<sup>135</sup> The reason why Edwards used images and metaphors so frequently is, as he states in an earlier sermon, not that the listeners doubted the truth of the Word, but that often it does not seem at all *real* to them. Thus Edwards needed to make a hypothetical experience real through the descriptive power of specification. The vividly delineated images enabled the congregation to *experience* their spiritual status. In Kinnach’s words, “images contribute much to the apparent density of thought and experiential immediacy that characterizes the sermons.”<sup>136</sup>

The text of the “Sinners” announces that sinners are standing in a slippery place and

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<sup>132</sup>Iain Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1987), 175.

<sup>133</sup>Several good essays have dealt with the sermon’s imagery; besides Cady, “Artistry of Jonathan Edwards,” and Scheick, *The Writings of Jonathan Edwards*, see Annette Kolodny, “Imagery in the Sermons of Jonathan Edwards,” *Early American Literature* 7 (1972): 172-82; Thomas J. Steele, and Eugene R. Delay, “Vertigo in History: The Threatening Tactility of *Sinners in the Hands*,” *Early American Literature* 18 (1983): 242-56; and Edward J. Gallagher, “‘Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God’: Some Unfinished Business,” *New England Quarterly* 73 (2000): 202-21.

<sup>134</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:217.

<sup>135</sup>Cady, “Artistry of Jonathan Edwards,” 71.

<sup>136</sup>Kinnach, “General Introduction,” *WJE*, 10:214.

that their feet will slide in due time. The sermon's core theme is that sinners are sliding into hell and that nothing was keeping them out but the mere pleasure of God. Edwards's aim in this sermon was to stir people's hearts, to stimulate their souls, and to turn them to the grace of God. Edwards was well aware that the sermon's great affective power comes fundamentally from its versatile imagery. Cady categorizes the most telling images in this sermon into three main groups: the fires of hell, the tension-pressure symbols of God's wrath, and the suspension-heaviness symbols of the predicament of the sinner.<sup>137</sup> His point is that contrary to the accepted interpretation, the pictures of hell-fire in the sermon are not the most vivid images. Besides the images of hell, the images of the threatening sword, the storm, the flood, the bow, the wine-press, and the grape-treading Deity which reveal the fearful wrath of God, are the most striking and distinctive ones. For Cady, however, kinesthetic or visceral suspension images as well as visual resulted in the peculiar success of the sermon. All of these images communicate the dynamic experience of God's wrath and thus appeal to the most fundamental human sense.<sup>138</sup> The secret of the effectiveness of "Sinners" resides in "the emotional force of the sermon springs from the imagery itself, especially from the freshly imaginative, native figures which burned into the minds of his audience Edwards's vision of the horrible predicament of the sinner without grace."<sup>139</sup>

This sermon contains approximately twenty-five important images. Although not all of the images are artistically effective,<sup>140</sup> opportunely and fittingly used images originated from his imagination made his message really impressive and unforgettable. In this sermon, Edwards

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<sup>137</sup>Cady, "Artistry of Jonathan Edwards," 68-69.

<sup>138</sup>Cady, "Artistry of Jonathan Edwards," 69.

<sup>139</sup>Cady, "Artistry of Jonathan Edwards," 71.

employs the imagination to convey a sense of the horrors of hell and to construct the image of a pit of fire over which the sinner hangs suspended. Strictly speaking, the Enfield sermon is not so much expository preaching as an attempt to elicit an affectionate response from listeners through a figurative representation of the significance of the trope, “their foot shall slide in due time” (Deut 32:35). Edwards uses the image of the sinner walking “over the pit of hell on a rotten covering,”<sup>141</sup> in order to emphasize the fact that the sinner faces innumerable possibilities of dying. In many places Edwards uses imaginative pictures that shows the sinner’s condition:

They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames.<sup>142</sup>

The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber, the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.<sup>143</sup>

Hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.<sup>144</sup>

Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won’t bear their weight, and these places are not seen.<sup>145</sup>

Edwards successfully depicts the spiritual condition of the sinner, who is totally dependent upon God’s arbitrary mercy. In addition, Edwards uses an array of picturesque metaphors to convey his message. For instance, he portrayed the wrath of God as heavy, black clouds about to burst

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<sup>140</sup>Cady, “Artistry of Jonathan Edwards,” 63-65.

<sup>141</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:407.

<sup>142</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:405.

<sup>143</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:406.

<sup>144</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:407.

<sup>145</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:407.

forth,<sup>146</sup> the earth's fragile crust about to crack,<sup>147</sup> and dams about to burst.<sup>148</sup> The wrath of God was effectively visualized as a bent bow with the arrow made ready on the string,<sup>149</sup> and justice bends the arrow at each man's heart, and strains the bow.<sup>150</sup> Edwards was a master in dealing with language in a beautiful way. He filled this sermon with images and metaphors. The atmosphere of the place where Edwards delivered the Enfield sermon was so tumultuous and cataclysmic that Edwards had to shout for order.<sup>151</sup>

### **“Heaven is a World of Love”**

While Edwards may now be better known by the fire and brimstone of “Sinners,” Harry Stout observes that “Edwards was far more concerned that his congregation come to a saving knowledge of God through an awareness of the beauty of God's great and powerful redemptive love for them.” Stout further argues that “even a cursory scan of the titles of Edwards's sermons will make this point forcefully.”<sup>152</sup> “Heaven is a World of Love” was the last sermon delivered in a sermon series, entitled *Charity and Its Fruits*, on 1 Corinthians 13. In contrast to “Sinners,” “Heaven,” vividly reveals God's infinite love toward the saints. The sermon series builds on the idea that love is the sum of all virtues, and that true Christians are distinguished by the love they show and by the love they have received from the Father. As the

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<sup>146</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:410.

<sup>147</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:410.

<sup>148</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:411.

<sup>149</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:411.

<sup>150</sup>Edwards, “Sinners,” *WJE*, 22:411.

<sup>151</sup>Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 220-21.

<sup>152</sup>Harry Stout, “Jonathan Edwards: Preacher,” <http://edwards.yale.edu/research/about-edwards/preacher>.

conclusion of the series, “Heaven” holds an important place in consideration of Edwards’s message of God’s love.<sup>153</sup> Unfortunately, Edwards’s emphasis on heaven is not well known in comparison with his emphasis on hell. Far too often, scholars looking at Edwards as a preacher have looked no further than his most frequently anthologized sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” It seems that the popular repetition of “Sinners” has resulted in a distorted view of Edwards’s preaching theology with a disproportional emphasis on hell. However, contrary to the general misrepresentation of Edwards as “hellfire” preacher, heaven, love, or beauty is more “central and pervasive” as a theme in Edwards’s works than “in any other text in the history of Christian theology.”<sup>154</sup> The Enfield sermon is not the only one in the Edwards corpus that paints spectacular pictures. Edwards’s sense of the beauty and love of God was equally as profound as his sense of sin and damnation.

With regard to the literary techniques and the rhetorical power in “Heaven is a World of Love,” Paul Ramsey argues that “Heaven” is rivaled only by Edwards’s other “virtuoso performance,” “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”<sup>155</sup> Concerning Edwards’s literary genius and the use of images in “Heaven,” Kinnach writes as follows: This is “a sermon of Dantean simplicity, scope, and grandeur. . . Its vision of heaven is perhaps the supreme example of

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<sup>153</sup>Hughes Oliphant Old describes “Heaven is a World of Love” as “one of the classics of the American pulpit.” Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 5:269. Besides this sermon, a number of Edwards’s greatest sermons deal with this theme: “True Saints, When Absent from the Body, Are Present with the Lord,” “The Portion of the Righteous,” “The Pure in Heart Blessed,” and “Praise, One of the Chief Employments in Heaven.”

<sup>154</sup>Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001), 43. Farley writes, “Edwards does not just theologize about beauty: beauty (loveliness, sweetness) is the fundamental motif through which he understands the world, God, virtue and ‘divine things.’ A double irony attends the suppression of Edwards in the history of aesthetics. It is ironic to reduce Edwards’s thought to the motif of the avenging God when, for Edwards, beauty is God’s primary attribute.”

<sup>155</sup>Paul Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” *WJE*, 8:61.

Edwards's systematic massing of images about a theme."<sup>156</sup> In this sermon, Edwards employs the entire repertoire of his essential divine images: sun, light, rays, flame, fountain, sky, garden, river, family, the body, and musical sound and so on.<sup>157</sup> In this section, I will present a case for Edwards's use of images to describe a world of heaven, and analyze the homiletical impact that Edwards intended through the use of them.

The sermon is based on 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, the promise of perfected love that awaits in heaven. In this sermon, the diverse images are interfused, where they vividly and graphically portray a world of heaven. The imagery employed consists primarily of comparisons and metaphors. In heaven, God is "the fountain of love, as the sun is the fountain of light,"<sup>158</sup> and "there the fountain overflows in streams and rivers of love and delight, enough for all to drink at, and to swim in."<sup>159</sup> Edwards describes the objects of love in heaven as "perfectly bright without darkness, perfectly clear without spot."<sup>160</sup> The Holy Spirit is compared to "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal."<sup>161</sup> The whole church shall appear as "a bride clothed in fine linen, clean and white, without spot or wrinkle."<sup>162</sup> The street of the heavenly city is made of "pure gold, like unto transparent glass."<sup>163</sup> All saints establish a household in heaven. Christ shall be "the Head of the whole society, and husband of the whole church of saints. All together shall constitute his

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<sup>156</sup>Kimnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:220.

<sup>157</sup>Wilson H. Kimnach, "The Literary Techniques of Jonathan Edwards" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1971), 327. Kimnach's estimation of Edwards's use of imagery in "Heaven is a World of Love" is that "Edwards has the truly integrative imagination of the finest metaphysical poets."

<sup>158</sup>Edwards, "Heaven," *WJE*, 8:369.

<sup>159</sup>Edwards, "Heaven," *WJE*, 8:370.

<sup>160</sup>Edwards, "Heaven," *WJE*, 8:371.

<sup>161</sup>Edwards, "Heaven," *WJE*, 8:371.

<sup>162</sup>Edwards, "Heaven," *WJE*, 8:371.

spouse, and they shall be related one to another as brethren.”<sup>164</sup> Heaven as the place of habitation is “a garden of pleasures,” and the glory of God is “the beautiful sight of the rainbow for its pleasantness and sweetness.”<sup>165</sup> Love in heaven shall “flourish in everyone’s breast as a flame which never decays. And the holy pleasure shall be as a river which ever runs.”<sup>166</sup> When Edwards described a world of heaven, he freely used metaphors and analogy with a number of vivid images. In addition, through the use of his own imagination, Edwards made a heaven real and compelling enough to draw in his congregation.

### **Conclusion: Preachers Need Brave New Words**

This chapter examined the affective aspect of Edwards’s preaching, specifically through his use of imagery. Edwards used vivid images and metaphor throughout his sermons because of his insistence that effective preaching should reach both the head and the heart. Through the influence of Puritan preaching theology, which emphasizes preaching to the whole person, Edwards learned the importance of religious affections through the sense of the heart. However, it should be noted that while the affections means an inclination of the heart, they necessarily include understanding.<sup>167</sup> This chapter, as in chapter two, acknowledges that Edwards understood both extremes of rationalism and enthusiasm as destructive to true religion.

I argued that although Edwards was influenced by the legacy of his Puritan predecessors, he also developed his own innovative rhetorical techniques. Above all, Edwards

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<sup>163</sup>Edwards, “Heaven,” *WJE*, 8:371.

<sup>164</sup>Edwards, “Heaven,” *WJE*, 8:380.

<sup>165</sup>Edwards, “Heaven,” *WJE*, 8:382.

<sup>166</sup>Edwards, “Heaven,” *WJE*, 8:383.

used vivid images in his sermons in order to stir the mind, the will and the heart, since he realized that speculative understanding alone is irrelevant to the genuine religious experience. Edwards sought to stimulate and stir his listeners' sense of the heart by using vivid imagery. I also asserted that the doctrine of typology justifies Edwards's use of imagery. Edwards did not employ vivid images and metaphors for their own sake, nor did he use them to embellish. His images function to clarify his message. One of the principal functions of metaphor was to clarify, usually by appeal to familiar experience. Aristotle states that metaphor appeals to the human senses, indeed, the entire range of human emotions. He elaborates in particular on the use of metaphor as an appeal to the sense of sight.<sup>168</sup>

The use of imagery in Edwards's sermons was meant to reach the religious affections of his listeners. The affections have the capacity to move the whole person towards God and to lead to determined action as "lively exercises of the will." Edwards's images are not mere rhetorical devices.<sup>169</sup> The vivid images in his sermons are, in Edwards's own words, not merely "images," but "shadows of divine things," which shine God's heavenly kingdom as surely as the light of day shines his earthly one. In this connection, the goal of our preaching is best done when both the mind and the heart of those who preach and of those who listen are engaged in the act of preaching, evoking from them the whole person's responses to the word of God that is spoken. Hence preachers should seek a balance between intellect and emotion that can address the mind and the heart. When this is effectively done, preaching can be wonderfully affective.

In conclusion, I propose that in order to reach the religious affections of listeners,

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<sup>167</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:266-67.

<sup>168</sup>Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3. 11. 2-4, cited in Collins, *The Power of Images*, 3.

<sup>169</sup>Miller, "Introduction" to *Images or Shadows*, 23.

preachers today need “brave new words.” A preacher’s choice of words has a profound impact on the vividness of the message. Specifically, picture language as communication is both an expression of an affection and the creator of an affection. Since God has made us visual creatures, the visual element of communication plays an essential role in determining whether or not people hear the content of a sermon. A preacher can stimulate many kinds of sensations and create mental images using pictorial words. In so doing, it causes listeners to *experience* preacher’s words, not just *understand* them.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Edwards was convinced that using vivid imagery and metaphorical language in his preaching could enable a message to reach both the heads and hearts of his listeners. In order for preaching to affect the whole person and open up listeners to the possibility of a religious experience in the preaching, preachers should stir up their congregants' "holy affections" through their sense of the heart. Such a way of preaching the Word is desirable, since it can deeply affect the hearts of those who hear the Word. The goal of this chapter is not to search for or formulate alternative understandings of expository preaching. Instead, based on what we have discussed so far, I will propose four implications of Edwards's understanding of religious experience and his doctrine of the sense of the heart, that can renew and complement contemporary expository preaching.

#### **Preaching as a Persuasion**

One interesting homiletical view proposes that preaching should not or perhaps even cannot be persuasion. In *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church*, Lucy Rose, a former president of the Academy of Homiletics, denies the view that "preaching's purpose, like that of rhetoric or oratory, is persuasion."<sup>1</sup> For Rose, persuasion in preaching connotes an authoritative preacher telling people why they should believe what they are being told. Such an

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<sup>1</sup>Lucy A. Rose, *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 14.

act, she says, is necessarily hierarchical, manipulative, and compulsory. Persuasion definitely has an aspect that encourages and preserves a gap between the preacher in the superior position and the compliant and passive congregation who must accept the preacher's objective, propositional truth. Ultimately, according to Rose, persuasion is the deceptive manipulation of a powerful individual over an inferior.<sup>2</sup>

Richard Lischer adds his voice to the calling for an end to preaching as a practice in persuasion.<sup>3</sup> He proposes a redefinition of preaching as a formation of faithful community rather than an individual experience of the Word and gives details of his objection to preaching as persuasion.<sup>4</sup> As long as preachers identify persuasion as the purpose of their preaching, he argues, they are concerned more with how to fit a particular congregation rather than the powerful presence of God. In Lischer's words, "Human eloquence fails against Babel. The voices of reason drown in Babel."<sup>5</sup>

Puritan preachers, disgusted by the "ornamental speech" of the Church of England, often held similar views, and strove to keep their speech plain and straightforward. However, Edwards might not have completely agreed with a rejection of persuasion, as he showed an interest in persuasion as more than mere expression.<sup>6</sup> For Edwards, the purpose of preaching was to arouse

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<sup>2</sup>Lucy L. Hogan, "Rethinking Persuasion: Developing an Incarnational Theology of Preaching," *Homiletic* 24, no. 2 (1990): 4.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Lischer, "Preaching as the Church's Language," in *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, ed. Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 119.

<sup>4</sup>Lischer's opinion and Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach have something in common in the sense that they both focus on community rather than the individual preacher.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Lischer, "After Babel: Acts 2:1-42," *Journal for Preachers* 18, no. 4 (1995): 9.

<sup>6</sup>Kimnach, "General Introduction," *WJE*, 10:180.

a desire for life change within an individual and to demand action. For this to happen, Edwards believed that the preacher must appeal to the heart as well as the head. As examined in the previous chapter, Edwards was second to none in using certain literary devices such as imagery or metaphor, resulting in subtle persuasion. While Edwards relied on logic and rational exposition for aesthetic effect, the ultimate goal of his preaching was to persuade people to experience God's beauty and glory through their sense of the heart. Hence preaching as persuasion is a corollary of Edwards's emphasis upon the sense of the heart. In this section, I will work to justify persuasion as one of preaching's unique purposes by demonstrating biblical foundation in Paul's use of persuasive rhetoric. Paul's preaching contains ample reasons to view preaching as a persuasive device. Using these reasons as examples, I will suggest a proper direction for contemporary expository preaching.

Several outstanding books discussing Paul's use of and attitude toward rhetoric have appeared in recent years.<sup>7</sup> Paul used rhetorical devices common in Greco-Roman culture in order to win people to Christ (1 Cor 9:19-22).<sup>8</sup> It must be mentioned, however, that Paul did not

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<sup>7</sup>At present, discussion of Paul's relationship to rhetoric seems to be experiencing a revival after decades of silence. See Hans D. Betz, "The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology according to the Apostle Paul," in *L'aportre Paul: Personnalitee, Style et Conceptions du Ministere*, ed. A. Vanhoye (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 16-37. Recently, the topic was taken up by Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); also see Stephen M. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia: The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992); Wilhelm Wuellner, "Greek Rhetoric and Pauline Argumentation," in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition, in honorem Robert M. Grant*, ed. William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979), 177-88; R. Dean Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998). Space prohibits listing individual articles or the volumes dealing with the rhetoric of individual books.

<sup>8</sup>In spite of his apparent rejection of rhetoric, Paul himself clearly made use of rhetorical techniques and devices, particularly in the Corinthian letters. Fred Danker recently argued that Paul was highly indebted to Demosthenes' *De Corona* in 2 Corinthians. Frederick W. Danker, "Paul's Debt to the *De Corona* of Demosthenes: A Study of Rhetorical Techniques in Second Corinthians," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. D. F. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 262-80; Glenn Holland argues that Paul's use of "foolishness" in 2 Cor 10-13 is a rhetorical ploy, using contrast to advance his argument.

slavishly follow after the social or rhetorical conventions of his day. The engaging issue is how far Paul accepted, and when and why he departed from those conventions and practices.

Although Greco-Roman rhetoric affected Paul, whether directly or indirectly, he adapted, modified, and transformed it in advancing and in service of the gospel. First Corinthians 1-4 elucidates this issue, addressing a rising problem within the Corinthian church and a potential pitfall for the modern church as well.

Factionalism was becoming a significant issue amongst the believers at Corinth, and the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians seek to resolve this problem. What concerns us here, however, is specifically 1 Corinthians 1:17 and 2:1-5. In these verses, Paul makes parallel statements concerning his preaching. What is clear is that Paul rejects something so as to affirm something else. What is less clear, however, is what precisely Paul is rejecting in these verses. In his seminal work, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation*, Duane Litfin investigates 1 Corinthians 1-4 by exploring the relationship between Greco-Roman rhetoric and Paul's own preaching theology. Litfin begins his argument with the assertion that "the people of Corinth loved eloquence, lionized its practitioners, and were concerned that their own youth excel in it."<sup>9</sup> Paul, however, consciously spoke in a way that contrasted with the persuasive orators of his day.<sup>10</sup> In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul reminds them of his previous decision to deliver his message plainly and unimpressively, contrary to their oratory expectations. According to Litfin, Paul refused to use the 'wisdom' of the day since that would only obfuscate the import of the gospel. Essentially, for Paul, the rhetorical form of human wisdom will nullify the power of the cross in preaching.

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Glenn Holland, "Speaking Like a Fool: Irony in 2 Corinthians 10-13," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 250-64.

<sup>9</sup>Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 145.

<sup>10</sup>Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 171.

To put it another way, the Corinthians longed for convincing eloquence that might affect their thoughts and minds by means of the power of the spoken word. Paul refuses to satisfy this desire because human influence, while powerful from its own standpoint, cannot operate as a vehicle for the Spirit's divine influence. Human attempts at persuasion can only impede the work of the Spirit. Litfin points out that, for Paul, these two persuasive dynamics – that of the rhetor and that of the cross – are diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive.<sup>11</sup> Hence, if a preacher presents the message of the cross using human wisdom, then the preacher has operated without the power of the Holy Spirit and has thus hollowed the gospel. Litfin, using C. K. Barrett's term, describes Paul's philosophy of preaching as the need to merely "placard" the message of the cross without voiding its power by engaging in the human act of persuasion.<sup>12</sup> For Litfin, to persuade the audience with the techniques of human wisdom would be only to usurp the power of the cross.<sup>13</sup>

Litfin rightly observes that the popular understanding of rhetoric in that culture involved eloquence and persuasion technique. However, he makes an unwarranted leap. As Litfin maintains, if human persuasion forfeits the power of the gospel message, then, as a corollary, Paul's preaching theology leaves no room for any form of persuasion. This understanding of Paul's argument is skewed because Litfin begins with the assumption that persuasion is unethical. Litfin describes persuasion as creating belief, or inducing the audience to yield to a belief.<sup>14</sup> Yet this presses persuasion to fit a definition that does not match its plain meaning. In a dishonest

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<sup>11</sup>Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 192.

<sup>12</sup>Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 196.

<sup>13</sup>Litfin assents to the fact that the Holy Spirit is not constrained by the use of persuasion. God can work through a persuasive speaker, but only in spite of his use of rhetorical persuasion. Litfin, "The Perils of Persuasive Preaching," *Cultic Studies Journal* 2, no. 2 (1985): 272. In any case, Litfin's position is that the use of persuasion is "to usurp the power of the cross." Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 195.

<sup>14</sup>Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology*, 195.

mouth, persuasion can be used to manipulate naïve listeners, but by itself, it is a tool that can be used for good or evil. While Litfin virtually demonizes this term by casting it only in the light of deceptive manipulation, persuasion does not mean only that. That Paul was rejecting something about a popular understanding of rhetoric is clear from the language he uses in his letter. Litfin's burden, however, is to show how his assumption that Paul is rejecting persuasion *in toto* can be proven. The burden lies with Litfin to demonstrate how persuasion, in and of itself, is contrary to Paul's thinking.

Stephen Pogoloff takes a slightly different approach to the same passage, suggesting that since the report of factions within the Corinthian church provides the impetus for Paul's response, his letter must be read as an attempt to effectively resolve the divisions forming within the church. Pogoloff provides insight into the phrase "not with wisdom of words" in 1 Cor 1:17. He claims that when wisdom and words are combined in ancient usage, "they frequently imply far more than just technical skill at language. Rather, they imply a whole world of social status related to speech."<sup>15</sup> Pogoloff sees "wisdom" in this context to refer to a characteristic of those who enjoy high social standing due to having been educated and cultured well. The "wise" orator was the speaker who was able to communicate in a way that showcased his education, culture, literacy and persuasiveness, and would thus have been granted upper class status.<sup>16</sup> According to Pogoloff, Paul does not reject the idea of rhetoric itself or even its use. Rather, he is rejecting the social role of rhetor. The erudite in Paul's day climbed the social ladder provided by the value-system of Greco-Roman context. Rhetoric was cherished and those who could wield it well would be lionized or held in high honor. Paul saw that the Corinthian congregation was being

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<sup>15</sup>Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 113.

<sup>16</sup>Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 119.

affected by this culture and experiencing divisions over the social privilege conferred to the rhetors of the gospel and the resulting social hierarchy that separated the church. Thus, in rejecting the “wisdom of words,” Paul did not reject rhetoric, but the social implications his audience connected to rhetoric.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Pogoloff asserts, Paul indeed uses rhetoric to attack the Corinthians’ association of rhetoric with status.<sup>18</sup> Paul found himself in a situation where he needed to implement rhetoric in order to reverse their attitude toward rhetoric. Paul was not rejecting rhetoric, but the role thrust upon him by his audience at Corinth.

In summary, Paul does not make rhetoric incompatible with proclaiming the message of the cross, but he shows how a fixation on rhetoric rather than what is being communicated through that rhetoric can empty the power of the cross. Thus, Paul does not reject the validity of eloquence and persuasion in his letter. He only rejects a fixation on rhetoric that eclipses the gospel message. His fear was that the Corinthians gathered around him, not to listen to a sermon but to hear a display of rhetoric, and he did not want his preaching to be confused with sophistry (2:6). This does not imply that Paul wanted to eliminate all signs of human wisdom from his proclamation. Rhetoric is intrinsically neutral, as long as it remains subservient to the divine work of the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Paul penned this letter intending to persuade the church at Corinth not to turn ministry into just another forum for glorifying rhetoric and its masters. Therefore, one must conclude with Pogoloff that Paul implemented persuasion in order to reverse the

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<sup>17</sup>Pogoloff includes a six-page section treating the relationship between wisdom and social status in the Roman world. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 121-27. Also, Pogoloff’s fifth chapter is devoted to delineating references by Paul (both explicit and implicit) linking the ideas of rhetoric and status. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 129-72.

<sup>18</sup>Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 197-212.

<sup>19</sup>Timothy H. Lim, “Not in Persuasive Words of Wisdom, but in the Demonstration of the Spirit and

Corinthians' understanding of wisdom, and that Paul, in fact, embraced eloquent style as a proper means to accomplish this.<sup>20</sup> Paul condemned the glorification of rhetoric, not the use of it.

Paul does not reject the idea of rhetoric itself and the use of it altogether, but the glorification of rhetoric and its social implications. In fact, Paul implemented elaborate persuasion in order to reverse the Corinthians' understanding of wisdom. The most significant implication of Paul's use of persuasion in 1 Corinthians derives from his fervent aspiration to win his audience to Christ. Paul's use of rhetoric reminds us that he was concerned to reach his audience and he used means of communication that worked with the largely Gentile audience. Paul wanted his preaching and proclamation to be a bullet on target and not merely buckshot in the dark.<sup>21</sup> This shows that Paul used all the available first century devices of persuasion to accomplish his goal to transform the lives of God's people. For Paul, the goal was to bring the hearers to a clearer understanding and fuller living of the gospel. As Hershael York rightly asserts, "our preaching should be neither deluged with data, nor should it engage in mere emotionalism. Rather, it should use both information and emotion in order to encourage and inspire obedience."<sup>22</sup> While Paul used rhetorical strategies, his primary purpose was not rhetoric itself; rather his real concern was the gospel and its effective and powerful expression. Paul was a successful communicator and preacher in the sense that he realized what he would and would

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Power," *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 149.

<sup>20</sup>Lim, "Not in Persuasive Words," 120-21.

<sup>21</sup>Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Message* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 33.

<sup>22</sup>Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 17.

not work with the people in the Greco-Roman world. One cannot deny that the modern world is also rhetorically saturated. Hence, a preacher's speech needs to be winsome in order to win people in the pew to Christ. York summarizes that, "the sermon carries God's Word to man's ears and on to his heart. So it is essential that we be committed both to biblical truth and also to culturally relevant styles of communication."<sup>23</sup>

### **The Sense of the Heart and Preacher's Imagination**

As examined in chapter 4, Edwards's use of imagery constitutes a major rhetorical device in his preaching. Such vivid imagery indicates Edwards's power of imagination.<sup>24</sup> Edwards was not merely seeking to reach his congregants' minds, but also their hearts. Edwards's favorite use of images and metaphors was capable of striking straight to the heart of the listeners, penetrating their intellect. According to Rachel Wheeler, Edwards, a master-logician, had at his disposal a powerful imaginative faculty and found a remarkable balance between his relentless logic and poetic sensibility, resulting in the effectiveness of his greatest sermons.<sup>25</sup>

### **Edwards's Conception of Imagination**

In chapter 1, I discussed Edwards's distinction between speculative knowledge and sensible knowledge. The former is "head knowledge" and pertains to rational understanding. The latter is "heart knowledge" and shows the way of genuine religious experience, derived through

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<sup>23</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 101.

<sup>24</sup>John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2008), 210. Harold Simpson also points out that the subject of imagination is closely related to Edwards's artistry. Harold P. Simpson, "Jonathan Edwards and the Imagination," *Andover Newton Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1975): 109.

<sup>25</sup>Rachel M. Wheeler, "Living upon Hope: Mahicans and Missionaries, 1730-1760" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1999), 211.

the sense of the heart. For Edwards, imagination is related to sensible knowledge. In other words, the function of imagination is to trigger the sense of the heart in the saint's mind and help him or her experience spiritual reality. By means of imagination, preachers are able to make the invisible visible to those listening to their sermons. When he began writing, Edwards never considered imagination to be a way to spiritual truths. In the *Religious Affections*, Edwards cites the English Puritan Anthony Burgess: "The imagination is that room of the soul, wherein the devil doth often appear."<sup>26</sup> As Paul Ramsey points out, Edwards thought that the imagination is always open to corruption and furnishes a constant source of temptation.<sup>27</sup> In addition, for Edwards, it is by the imagination that Satan has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it.<sup>28</sup> And yet, the reference here is to man's natural imagination, which is destitute of divine grace. The regenerate imagination, in contrast, is quite different from natural imagination in the sense that it presupposes the prior experience of the heart. Just as the saints can experience God's beauty or excellency only after receiving the sense of the heart at regeneration, if they could discern the full sacramental dimension of the whole universe, their imagination must be rooted in the sense of the heart. The regenerate imagination plays an essential role in religious experience. Edwards writes,

Such is our nature that we can't think of things invisible, without a degree of imagination. I dare appeal to any man, of the greatest powers of mind, whether or no he is able to fix his thoughts on God or Christ, or the things of another world, without imaginary ideas attending his meditations?<sup>29</sup>

Edwards recognizes the capacity of the imagination to conceive images in order to perceive of

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<sup>26</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:289.

<sup>27</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:71.

<sup>28</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:289.

<sup>29</sup>Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, WJE, 4:236.

invisible spiritual things. He believes that by means of the power of imagination one can conceptualize what cannot be sensed.

Edwards clearly distinguishes between “lively imaginations arising from strong affections, and strong affections arising from lively imaginations.”<sup>30</sup> Only the first indicates a regenerate imagination at work. The natural imagination, from which strong affections or emotions may arise, is nothing more than a common gift endowed to all men.<sup>31</sup> After the soul receives the sense of the heart, imagination discovers “the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of Divinity, the good of the infinite Fountain of Good.”<sup>32</sup> A person without the sense of the heart imagines nothing spiritual. Richard Kroner suggests that imagination “can perform its religious function only when man from whom imagination springs is included in the divine mystery, or, more precisely, when it is this mystery itself that works in man.”<sup>33</sup> The point is that only the imagination touched by grace is equipped to experience the divine.

Meanwhile, Edwards’s concept of imagination is a corollary of his doctrine of typology.<sup>34</sup> We saw in chapter four that Edwards understood the whole universe as the voice or language of God. God’s beauty appears in everything. Descriptions of the sun, moon, rivers, trees, mountains, and birds are not merely rhetorical ornaments, but “types” shadowing their spiritual antitypes.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:291.

<sup>31</sup>Edwards, *Some Thoughts*, WJE, 4:436. Concerning the natural imagination, Edwards writes, “Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit for a considerable time (Numbers 22).”

<sup>32</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:274.

<sup>33</sup>Richard Kroner, *The Religious Function of Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941), 37.

<sup>34</sup>I investigated Edwards’s doctrine of typology in chap. 4.

<sup>35</sup>See “Typology for the Use of Imagery in Edwards’s Thought” in chap. 4.

Edwards wanted to see God's beauty or excellency in nature and in history by exercising his regenerate imaginative power. Since nature is full of divine emanations, the power of imagination is not a matter of artistic creation but a matter of discovery.<sup>36</sup> In his preaching, Edwards employed the power of imagination, presenting vivid images to uncover spiritual antitypes for his congregation. It was his imagination and his power to describe the types he witnessed in nature and history that set his messages apart and gave them power.

### **Imagination: Friend or Foe?**

Fred Craddock emphasizes the necessity of imagination in a way that carries conviction. For him, imagination is fundamental to all thinking. He believes that imagination, unfortunately, has been misunderstood as unrestrained fantasy, reverie or daydreaming. In his famous book, *As One without Authority*, however, Craddock seeks to undo this, suggesting that the success of communication between the preacher and the congregation depends on "evocative images" rather than "conceptual structures."<sup>37</sup> This is because it is through imagination that our preaching is rescued from "dullness and impotence."<sup>38</sup> Craddock speaks of an empathetic imagination, or the "capacity to receive the sights, sounds, tastes, odors, and movements of the world."<sup>39</sup> The preacher should maintain this open receptivity toward life in order to use his imagination successfully. Craddock clearly elucidates a way for preachers to prepare their

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<sup>36</sup>Simpson, "Jonathan Edwards and the Imagination," 116. Simpson writes, "Edwards thought of the religious imagination as the capacity to discover what already exists and, in the end, to apprehend the full beauty and glory of the Creator" (116-17).

<sup>37</sup> Fred B. Craddock, *As One without Authority* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001), 63. Craddock argues that the preacher must not reduce "the sights and sounds of her experience to points, logical sequences, and moral applications."

<sup>38</sup>Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 65.

<sup>39</sup>Craddock, *As One without Authority*, 70.

sermons using their empathetic imagination and explains how it effectively works in the sermon delivery. In addition, he convincingly suggests the necessity and advantages of imagination. Craddock's empathetic imagination is good thing and no one negates its usefulness. However, Craddock remains silent on what keeps imagination from degenerating into just fantasy. Who has the right to discern "good" or "productive" imagination from bad? Simply put, imagination in Craddock's mind might be a foe to expository preaching.

In contrast, John Broadus puts forth a theory of "historical imagination" in *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, which is much more suggestive to expository preaching. The historical imagination, according to Broadus, is directed and controlled by what the Scriptures reveal. The preacher is able "to conceive and vividly to realize the Scripture revelations concerning the unseen world and the eternal future" by means of the historical imagination.<sup>40</sup> Broadus' historical imagination has methodological superiority over Craddock's emphatic imagination because the former presupposes that all the sources of imagination come from the Scripture, whereas the latter does not clarify the source of the imagination. Edwards, in the same vein, speaks of the sanctified imagination. At regeneration, he says, the saints receive not only the sense of the heart, but also a new imaginative power by which to apprehend what before was invisible.<sup>41</sup> With this imagination sanctified by the Holy Spirit, the saints can see God's beauty and excellency in everything. In this regard, Edwardsean imagination can be a friend of expository preaching.

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<sup>40</sup>John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Louisville: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 360.

<sup>41</sup>Simpson, "Jonathan Edwards and the Imagination," 115.

## Imagination and Expository Preaching

As should be clear by this point in the dissertation, preaching is not about just imparting true information or biblical knowledge. Its primary goal is “to see God change the lives of our listeners by the Word that is preached.”<sup>42</sup> And yet, people’s lives, as Edwards reiterates, change only when hearts have been affected. For life change to happen, people should not only know what the biblical text *means*, but also *feel* and *experience* what the text says. Hence, preachers should strive not only to offer relevant meaning but to be emotionally relevant as well. For example, expository preachers should seek to induce real feelings of fear, despair and horror, if the congregation is to have an accurate sense of what eternal punishment means. Likewise, they must be able to vividly describe heavenly delight, transport and joy in order for the congregation to pine for heaven. Preachers cannot enable the listeners to have an actual feeling and emotions only by conveying information or knowledge.

There have been many debates in New Homiletic circle regarding how imagination can be used in the sermon.<sup>43</sup> For some reason, however, expository preaching has not so far seriously discussed the subject of imagination.<sup>44</sup> Emphasis was placed on explaining the meaning of the text rather than its intent or mood. People in the pew must have information and meaning, but this does not necessarily mean our preaching have to be as unemotional, dry, unimaginative and uninvolved. Preachers should not assume that “intellectual” means “unemotional,” or that

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<sup>42</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 17.

<sup>43</sup>David Buttrick suggests a camera model to frame the image presented in the sermon. David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structure* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1987), 55-68. Richard Eslinger suggests the model of the video camera, which provides preachers with options of on-going action as well as sound. Richard Eslinger, *Narrative and Imagination: Preaching the Worlds that Shape Us* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 146-49.

<sup>44</sup>See Bryan Chapell’s word of caution about the use of imagination. Not totally rejecting imagination, Chapell is obviously privileging understanding rather than imaginary detail. Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 119.

“emotional” means “unintellectual.”<sup>45</sup> It is only possible to arouse life when that information reaches listeners’ hearts with great impact. Information must be coupled with imagination if there is to be “transformational” communication.<sup>46</sup> In a very visual culture, like modern society, expository preachers especially need to use imagination as a strategy for connecting with people.<sup>47</sup>

“Imagination must be fed,” writes Warren Wiersbe.<sup>48</sup> In order to develop his imagination, the preacher must face truth on many fronts as well as read the Bible. John Broadus proposes that imagination can be awakened and invigorated by communion with nature.<sup>49</sup> Broadus writes,

The systematic study of minerals, vegetables, animals, reveals to us new and wonderful things, teaches us to read, where we had not seen it before, the handwriting of our God. . . . If we wish for power of imagination, let us observe, contemplate, commune with nature.<sup>50</sup>

Broadus’ suggestion has something in common with Edwards’ doctrine of typology. For Edwards, nature is full of images of things in the spiritual world. Everything in nature is God’s communication, and all truth is God’s truth. Hence preachers should have a deep interest in other ways of experiencing the world, such as literature, painting, architecture, music and science, as

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<sup>45</sup>Peter Adam, *Speaking God’s Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2004), 169.

<sup>46</sup>Warren Wiersbe, “Imagination: The Preacher’s Neglected Ally,” in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig B. Larson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 562.

<sup>47</sup>Thomas H. Troeger, *Ten Strategies for Preaching in a Multi Media Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 39-47.

<sup>48</sup>Wiersbe, “Imagination,” 566.

<sup>49</sup>Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery*, 361.

<sup>50</sup>Broadus, *Preparation and Delivery*, 361 and 362.

well as Scripture. They need to be sensitive to the sights, sounds and flavors of life. In this respect, a preacher's pastoral involvement in the life of the congregation is essential to cultivate their imaginations.

In sum, in order for expository preaching to be *effective*, it must be *affective*, conveying the meaning of the passage, kindling the listeners' imagination, moving their emotions and giving a powerful impulse to their will. Through the use of imagination, in particular, preachers can touch the hearers' feelings, and thereby stir up their sense of the heart, which is the seat of genuine religious experience.

### **Edwardsean Piety for Contemporary Expository Preachers**

Edwards demonstrates a robust spirituality in the secret spiritual practices as well as in the private and public arena.<sup>51</sup> In this section, I will explore the nature of Edwardsean piety, his spiritual disciplines and his own personal use of spiritual practices, and the relationship between a preacher and personality. One thing that contemporary expository preachers should learn from Edwards, in particular, is his secret or personal spiritual practices, which acuminate and sharpen the sense of the heart.

### **Spirit-Led Preaching**

Genuine Christian piety is directly related to genuine religious affections because piety is the saint's inner state while gracious affections are the external expressions of that piety.

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<sup>51</sup>The Puritans typically approached spiritual disciplines by dividing them into three categories of secret, private, and public. "Secret" described the individual's personal spiritual practices, "private" refers to a small group such as a family or friends gathered in the house, and "public" described the larger gatherings in the church. Tom Schwanda, "'Hearts Sweetly Refreshed': Puritan Spiritual Practices Then and Now," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 3 (2010): 24.

Hence, for Edwards, and for contemporary preachers as well, true piety and gracious affections are two sides of the same coin and inseparable from one another. At the outset, this dissertation proposed that gracious affections are the results of the sense of the heart. One reaches a logical conclusion that genuine Christian piety is also the result of the sense of the heart. Therefore, in order for preachers to achieve true piety, they have to first acquire a taste for God through the sense of the heart and experience a profound sense of joy in divine things revealed in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit working within the believer makes this experience possible. As noted in chapter three, for Edwards, the Word and the Spirit are inseparable from one another. The Spirit is the Worded Spirit, and the Word is the Spirited Word. All of this leads to a dependence on Spirit-led preaching.

Since the publication of Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* in 1980, expository preaching has experienced a resurgence of interest, but many expository preachers have ignored or underemphasized the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching. As most expository textbooks reveal, expository homileticians have marginalized the ministry of the Holy Spirit, making the work of Spirit secondary to the meaning of the text. Hermeneutics takes precedence over pneumatology at least in the realm of expository preaching. Greg Heisler, in his book *Spirit-Led Preaching*, seeks to redress this inveterate problem by emphasizing "the powerful combination of Word and Spirit working together as the catalyst of all transformational preaching."<sup>52</sup> Heisler intends to move the Spirit to the foreground of preaching so that his role in preaching might be understood more clearly and depended upon more deeply. Heisler's idea of Spirit-led preaching is more about a mind-set than a method. It understands the role of the Holy Spirit, who inspired the biblical text, as ministering through that same text when a preacher correctly handles the word of

truth. It begins with an assumption that two ministers preach every sermon: the external minister, who holds forth the vocal word and it is received by ears, and the internal minister, the Holy Spirit, who truly communicates the thing proclaimed. Heisler maintains that “the preached message always finds its true source of power in the theological fusion of the Word of God and the Spirit of God joining together in Christological witness to the Son of God, coming through the proclamation of the man of God.”<sup>53</sup> While expository preaching has focused on the exposition of the Word of God, now it has to give attention to the combination of the Word and Spirit, where combustion happens and power results, because the Word of God and Spirit of God share a dynamic relationship of interdependence.<sup>54</sup>

### **“Try the Spirit”**

The nature of Edwardsean piety can be characterized by a piety that “tests the spirits.” The Apostle John warns, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Edwards sought to teach his contemporaries and church members to judge genuine from spurious piety through his spate of publications on revival, such as *Distinguishing Marks*, *Some Thoughts*, and *Religious Affections*. The last of these works represents the most important body of literature in all of Christian history on the challenge of discerning a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. The twelve positive signs of genuine affection are particularly useful in providing guidance for discerning a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. The last sign points to something of vital

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<sup>52</sup>Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H, 2007), xvi.

<sup>53</sup>Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 13.

<sup>54</sup>Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 61.

importance because of its consequences toward true piety. Edwards gives the largest measure of his attention to this final sign, calling it the “principal sign” by which we are to test true piety.<sup>55</sup> This principal sign turns out to be the Christian practice, or carrying out claims of faith in actions.<sup>56</sup> Emphasizing the importance of practice in the judging of true religion, Edwards writes, “Reason shows that men’s deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. . . . Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints.”<sup>57</sup> Practice is the best evidence of one’s godliness in the eyes of others. Edwards singled out Christian practice as the chief of all the signs of grace because he firmly believed that true piety must find concrete expression in the lives of the saints. True piety demands abiding efforts and is quite different from a complacent enjoyment of one’s own spiritual status. Likewise, preaching must be an outward expression of the Spirit’s working and of a grace-filled heart, pouring forth from a pastor’s communion with God. Hence, preachers must rid themselves of a dichotomy between the man behind the pulpit and the man in the world. Spurgeon gives sound advice here:

Let the minister take care that his personal character agrees in all respects with his ministry. We have all heard the story of the man who preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of it they all declared he never ought to enter it again. From the imitation of such a Janus may the Lord deliver us. May we never be priests of God at the altar, and sons of Belial outside the tabernacle door. . . . True ministers are always ministers.<sup>58</sup>

Preachers also must not become people-centered in their ministry. Just as preaching, for Edwards,

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<sup>55</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:406.

<sup>56</sup>Practice has something to do with right doing something. Donald S. Whitney, “Pursuing a Passion for God through Spiritual Disciplines: Learning from Jonathan Edwards,” in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 110.

<sup>57</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE, 2:409-10 and 411.

<sup>58</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students: First Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 12-13.

was a ministry which involves love to God and Christ, our primary responsibility in preaching must be the service of God and of Christ.

Most importantly, Edwards recognized the presence of many false spirits in the midst of his congregation. He did not comfort sinners anxious about the ultimate state of their souls by telling them God keeps his promises and works reliably through the usual means of grace, like Scripture, prayer and sacraments. His Puritan forebears thought that people may not be converted yet, but if they prepare themselves for conversion by repenting of their sins, they will be taking steps to salvation. Scholars call such morphology of conversion “preparationism.”<sup>59</sup> Edwards had scruples about it and did not consider all of the people in the pew to be converted. Edwards saw preparationist connive sinners in their sin and encourage spiritual complacency. One of the clearest examples of “testing the spirits” came in Edwards’s ministerial career. Edwards observed that the church in Northampton, where he ministered as the assistant and presumed successor of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard, expanded the Lord’s Table to all members including the non-Covenant members, who did not give evidence of conversion. Edwards disagreed with this practice and instructed that anyone taking communion must make profession of conversion. In a letter to John Erskine, a minister of the Church of Scotland, written on May 20, 1749, Edwards introduced the communion controversy:

A very great difficulty has arisen between me and my people, relating to qualifications for communion at the Lord’s table. My honored grandfather [Solomon] Stoddard, my predecessor in the ministry over this church, strenuously maintained the Lord’s Supper to be a converting ordinance; and urged all to come who were not of scandalous life, though they knew themselves to be unconverted. I formerly conformed to his practice, but I have had difficulties with respect to it, which have been long increasing; till I dared no longer to proceed in the former way: which has occasioned great uneasiness among my people, and

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<sup>59</sup>Concerning the Puritans’ “preparationism,” see Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

has filled all the country with noise.<sup>60</sup>

In all of this controversy, Edwards was fired by a vote of his congregation.<sup>61</sup> What are preachers today to learn from Edwards's case? At the heart of the Communion controversy is the concern for the *visibility* of the church. The saints should demonstrate their conversion and profess their faith. Edwards's "trying the spirits" piety did not allow for indifference or complacency about the purity of the church.

While the church should seek to welcome non-believers and present them with Christ's love, preachers are not called to make the church as accessible and comfortable as possible for the nonbeliever. Rather, the preacher's primary aim must be to proclaim the Word of God with bold assurance to keep the church pure and holy. Many churches today move in a dangerous direction that might compromise the very message of the gospel. Preachers' only concern must be whether they are faithful to the Word of God, manifesting the glory of God. Money and numbers of people have no place in Edwardsean piety. In this regard, Paul's preaching challenges us: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? [. . .] If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal 1:10).

## **Prayer and Study**

Since preaching is not merely the art of eloquence or persuasion but a proclamation of

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<sup>60</sup>Edwards, "To the Reverend John Erskine," *WJE*, 16:271.

<sup>61</sup>For a detailed discussion about Edwards's expulsion, see Mark Dever, "How Jonathan Edwards Got Fired, and Why It's Important for Us Today," in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John Pipers and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004): 129-44.

God's word for the sake of God's name, preachers should be qualified for a robust piety. Piety for preachers, in particular, consists of two fundamental elements: prayer before God's throne and the study of His Word. First, piety always directs a preacher to prayer expressed in earnest dependence upon the Holy Spirit.<sup>62</sup> Edwards was so devoted to prayer that he himself describes his life as continual communion with God. Edwards writes, "[I] was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seem'd to be natural to me; as the breath, by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent."<sup>63</sup> It is not too much to say that the source of Edwards's piety originates from his life of prayer. Likewise, preaching depends upon the Spirit of God for its preparation, its presentation and subsequent listeners' responses. The preacher is nothing more than the vessel or container that delivers the power of the Word and the Spirit to the congregation<sup>64</sup> and its importance cannot be overemphasized. Concerning the importance of preacher's prayer, Spurgeon writes, "The commentators are good instructors, but the Author himself is far better, and *prayer* makes a direct appeal to him and enlists him in our cause."<sup>65</sup> One bright benison that prayer brings upon the ministry is the anointing for preaching.<sup>66</sup> The Spirit who inspired the Word of God and who illumines the Word of God also proclaims the Word of God through preachers.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>For a recent overview of Jonathan Edwards's theology of prayer, see Peter Beck, "The Voice of Faith: Jonathan Edwards's Theology of Prayer" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

<sup>63</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:794.

<sup>64</sup>Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 67.

<sup>65</sup>Helmut Thielicke, *Encounter with Spurgeon*, trans. John W. Doberstein (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1978), 117.

<sup>66</sup>For a discussion about the Holy Spirit and the anointing, see Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, especially chap. 9.

<sup>67</sup>Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 70.

Second, Edwards demonstrated that piety is supposed to be manifest in the form of the life-long study of Scripture. Edwards recognized the importance of the study of the Scriptures early on, and resolved “to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.”<sup>68</sup> In practice, Edwards devoted most of his waking hours to meditating on Scripture, delving deeply into its contents, and reading biblical commentaries.<sup>69</sup> Since his conversion, the Bible has been central in all his preaching and piety.<sup>70</sup> Edwards viewed that the Holy Scripture, as one of the shaping forces of theological development, is “the light by which ministers must be enlightened and the light they are to hold forth to their hearers; and they are the fire whence their hearts and the hearts of their hearers must be enkindled.”<sup>71</sup> Edwards warns that “he that has a Bible, and doesn’t observe what is contained in it, is like a man that has a box full of silver and gold, and doesn’t know it.”<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, expository preaching is the most demanding way to preach in that a person cannot preach expository messages unless he is saturated with the Word of God.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, all of preachers who want to be expository preachers should adhere to the Holy Scripture with all their hearts and minds, making the study of it “a great part of the business of our lives.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Edwards, “Resolutions,” no. 28, *WJE*, 16:755.

<sup>69</sup>Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards*, 83.

<sup>70</sup>Haykin, *A Sweet Flame*, 5.

<sup>71</sup>Edwards, “The True Excellency Of A Minister Of The Gospel,” *WJE*, 25:100.

<sup>72</sup>Edwards, *The History of the Work of Redemption*, *WJE*, 9:291.

<sup>73</sup>York and Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance*, 18.

<sup>74</sup>Edwards, “The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth,” *WJE*, 22:94.

The practice of preaching can never be divorced from the person of the preacher.<sup>75</sup> Various definitions of preaching reveal the inseparable link between preacher's personality and preaching. Phillips Brooks gave the most widely known definition of preaching: "Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching. . . . Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality."<sup>76</sup> Thus a preacher, as Henry Beecher defines it, can be called in some degree "a reproduction of the truth in personal form."<sup>77</sup> Haddon Robinson, the father of contemporary expository preaching, also offers the thorough, yet concise definition of expository preaching: "The communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the *personality* and *experience* of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."<sup>78</sup> In this regard, we can say that the preacher and his personality are inseparable. The soil out of which powerful and effective preaching grows is the preacher's own personality.<sup>79</sup> And yet the personality is directly connected to his piety. Personality is, that is to say, piety. Consequently, preacher's piety directly influences his competence and qualification.

### **Experiencing God's Beauty through Our Preaching**

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<sup>75</sup>John R. W. Stott, *I Believe in Preaching* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 265.

<sup>76</sup>Phillip Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1900), 5.

<sup>77</sup>Henry W. Beecher, *Lectures on Preaching* (Costa Mesa, CA: Knowledge Resources, 1976), 3.

<sup>78</sup>Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Message* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21. Emphasis added.

<sup>79</sup>Quoted in Erroll Hulse, "The Preacher and Piety," in *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1986), 68.

Edwards understood genuine religious experience as an experience of God's beauty. Thus, in developing his idea of the sense of the heart, Edwards uses the vocabulary he developed for talking about beauty when explaining this experience. The beauty of God is fundamental to Edwards's understanding of genuine religious experience. His use of beauty has some implications for preachers today. First, according to Edwards, once one's eyes are open to perceive God's supreme beauty, his or her mind is also opened to perceive beauty in its creaturely manifestations. In other words, having seen and apprehended God's beauty, the heart can also comprehend those forms of beauty that reflect the creator, such as creation and even divine qualities. In his *Personal Narrative*, Edwards speaks of "the sense of the glory of the Divine Being," which altered his entire perspective on the world. He writes, "The appearance of everything was altered. . . . God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything."<sup>80</sup> He uses his former fear of thunder as an example. Before perceiving God's beauty, he says that the thunder terrified him, but, after he received the "new sense," he heard the voice of God in the thunder and rejoiced in it. Contemporary preachers can take important lessons from the changes Edwards observed in himself. The beauty of God which is the object of the sense of the heart, is not limited to God, but is widely applicable to each individual and the whole universe that God created, including each human hearing the word preached. Our preaching should thus reveal such cosmic beauty. For this to happen, preachers must have capacity for seeing God in and through the world of nature with spiritual sensitivity.<sup>81</sup> Preachers must be able to perceive divine beauty in the sun, moon, stars, in forests and mountains and all

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<sup>80</sup>Edwards, *Personal Narrative*, WJE, 16:793.

<sup>81</sup>Michael J. McClymond, *Encounter with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25. The creaturely ectype and the divine archetype were discussed in chap. 4. I discuss in detail the relationship between preacher and imagination in chap. 5.

nature as well as in the Bible. Thus every preacher must develop his powers of imagination. In addition, in order to enable the listeners to see God in the sermon, preachers need to understand the principle of visualization. Put differently, people have to be able to picture what the preacher says. A sermon is effective and compelling when the preacher understands the principle of visualization. It is a well-known fact that Edwards had remarkable powers of visualization. Many of his sermons were so vivid and so filled with sense appeal that people could paint pictures with his words. Likewise, expository preachers should make their sermons vivid and alive by helping congregants visualize. This will create more powerful, effective sermons.

Second, according to Edwards, it is “not ratiocination, but an aesthetic perception of the good, that determines human action.”<sup>82</sup> Edwards understood beauty as an attractive and motivating power. Once the saints have experienced God’s beauty through the sense of the heart, they should manifest that beauty in their life, becoming “partakers of God’s beauty and Christ’s joy.”<sup>83</sup> Edwards uses water and light to illustrate this belief. He writes that the saints do not merely drink the living water of the Holy Spirit, “but this living water becomes a well or fountain of water in the soul . . . and thus becomes a principle of life in them.”<sup>84</sup> Likewise, the light of Christ does not just shine upon the saints, “but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them.”<sup>85</sup> The fundamental goal of

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<sup>82</sup>Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 194.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:201. Edwards attempts to avoid an unnecessary misunderstanding on the meaning of “partakers.” He states that although the saints are “partakers of the divine nature,” they are not made partakers of the essence of God, they thus are not “Godded with God” or “Christed with Christ.” Rather they “are made partakers of God’s fullness (Eph. 3:17-19)” or “God’s spiritual beauty and happiness” according to their measure and capacity. Of importance is that true saints actually experience God’s beauty. *WJE*, 2:203.

<sup>84</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:200.

<sup>85</sup> Edwards, *Religious Affections*, *WJE*, 2:200.

preaching is to move listeners toward changes in their lives. And yet the power to transform the lives comes from the Holy Spirit, as he enables those same listeners to perceive God's beauty. This is because only if the affections of the people are triggered, will holy actions be possible and the fruit will follow. Therefore, our preaching must seek to reveal God's beauty.

Third, the climatic expression of God's beauty is the beauty of Christ. God's beauty is most prominent in the person and the work of Christ.<sup>86</sup> This leads preachers to a necessary emphasis on Christ-centered preaching. Except unhealthy excess, Christ-centered preaching is no less essential in contemporary preaching than it was in apostolic preaching.<sup>87</sup> Redemptive-historical preaching insists that no text may be fully understood apart from Christ. Therefore, every expository preacher should ask the fundamental question: "What is the meaning of the text in relation to the person and the work of Jesus Christ?"

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<sup>86</sup>George E. Ladd, *The Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 17.

<sup>87</sup>Richard B. Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987), 23. Poythress also writes, "Christ's life, death, and resurrection bear directly on every human act of interpretation." Vern S. Poythress, "Christ the Only Savior of Interpretation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 50 (1988): 307.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Jeremiah 17:9 says that “the heart is deceitful above all things.” All humans naturally possess fallen hearts. However, concerning the restoration of Israel, Ezekiel 36:26 says, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel uses the heart language to demonstrate that an infusion of a new divine spirit must occur before God’s people can have “hearts of flesh,” that is, a genuinely receptive disposition, which enables them to have genuine religious experience. The Israelites’ “stony” hearts imply stubbornness, coldness, or unresponsiveness to God. Ezekiel had ample experience with that kind of “heart.” He saw it throughout his nation at the time of his calling (2:4-10; 3:4-11), and had learned that only miraculous divine intervention could overcome such obstinacy. The sinful nature within the human heart cannot simply be trained or tamed; it must be surgically removed.<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel clearly shows that God has ordained this new divine initiative for man’s inner transformation. Only God is able to renew the very being of the people so that they might respond to God in obedience. All of this results in the covenant formula “you will be my people, and I shall be your God” (Ezek 36:28).

Jonathan Edwards noted a close resemblance between Ezekiel’s Israel and the people of Northampton during the revivals of 1734-35. Edwards believed that the spiritual state at the close of 1741 in New England, in general, and in Northampton, in

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<sup>1</sup>This is essentially the same as the Pauline teaching that we must die to sin by baptismal burial with Christ, so that we may rise to new life with him (Rom 6:1-4; Col 2:11-13).

particular, had been declining. He observed an overall loss of interest in religion. As examined in the previous chapters, people who had undergone a truly experiential conversion were resting contentedly in that one-time experience, without an ongoing demonstration of a life conformed to the will of God. Edwards pushed and prodded his congregation to walk with God in spreading revival, but things began to go downhill.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary listeners in the church are not different from the Israelite and the Northamptonite. People, in the postmodern world, have their own opinions and convictions and consider them equal, if not superior, to the word of God. The idea that there is no such thing as an absolute or universal truth and that truth is instead relative and subjective, has taken hold in nearly every aspect of our culture, and may even have begun to seep into our churches. John Stott, in *Between Two Worlds*, argues that the culture makes preaching and application difficult. He details contemporary objections to preaching, rooted in a contemporary disdain due to doubts over the authority of preaching, succumbing to the instant gratification of technological media, and the church's loss of confidence in the gospel. Thus, both preachers and congregations are impaired as the speaker begins to doubt his message and means of delivery, and as those listening long to be entertained, even on an emotional level. This dissertation attempted to offer theological, historical and homiletical answers to those objections.

This dissertation proposed an insight from Jonathan Edwards, who held similar

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<sup>2</sup>The sequence of events, such as the "Bad Book Controversy" in 1744, a conflict of opinions about his salary, and the epidemic illnesses of the later 1740s aggravated the spiritual situation in Northampton. Concerning the "Bad Book Controversy," Sweeney writes, "Several young men in town had viewed an illustrated manual for early modern midwives and had used it to harass several adolescent girls. Edwards cracked down hard on the boys, attacking the problem publicly (even from the pulpit), embarrassing the relatives of everyone involved, inciting the young culprits to rebel against his leadership and failing to facilitate a reconciliation." Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 138-39.

views to Ezekiel. Like the prophet, Edwards argues that people need a new heart and a new spirit and that in order to have a new “heart of flesh,” an outside force must initiate the change. This dissertation defined this outside force as a divine and supernatural light, namely the work of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines on the saints’ sense of the heart, which the Holy Spirit gives them in regeneration they can experience God’s beauty.

### **Summary of Arguments**

This dissertation has made a series of arguments about a new direction for expository preaching that culminate in its thesis: Jonathan Edwards’s “sense of the heart” as a principle of a new kind of perception or spiritual sensation given by the Spirit of God in regeneration, in which a believer tastes or sees God’s beauty, can provide expository preaching with a meaningful direction for the restoration of religious experience. This dissertation began with an assumption that the word of God must be experienced as well as understood and the goal of our preaching is to create a transforming experience in the hearts of the hearers.

Chapter 1 focused on the disappearance of religious experience in contemporary expository preaching and proposed three reasons why expository preaching became involved with unnecessary trauma over religious experience. Despite the negative aspects of religious experience, this chapter insisted that expository preaching must preserve the experiential baby, not throw it out with the New Homiletic bathwater. In addition, it argued that expository preaching should aim at affectional application because application is possible only when the listeners’ fundamental affections are reoriented. This chapter also offered the thesis, methodology and limitations of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 investigated Edwards's concept of the sense of the heart, through which the saints can experience God's beauty. The sense of the heart is necessary for genuine spiritual experience. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit gives the saints the sense of the heart. This new sense enables them to obtain a new habit of the heart that brings about new affections. This chapter argued that experiencing God's beauty through the sense of the heart is central to all genuine religious experiences. A comprehensive analysis of beauty confirms that Edwards understood genuine religious experience as an experience of God's beauty. In order for expository preaching to be effective preaching, it must be affective preaching, touching the listeners' hearts as well as their minds.

Chapter 3 began by evaluating Schleiermacher's experiential-expressive approach and Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic approach. It then described the nature of Edwardsean religious experience, defining it as a "spiritual-linguistic" approach. Edwards understood the Spirit, who gives the saints the sense of the heart, as the producer of genuine religious experience. Moreover, the word of God illuminated by the Holy Spirit enables people to experience God's beauty and glory. The chapter argued Calvin's influence on Edwards, the experiences of Sarah Edwards and David Brainerd, and Edwards's own personal experience validate the spiritual-linguistic model. Finally, it concluded that expository preaching should create an experience for the listener, in Edwardsean sense, assuming that the conviction of the authority of the word of God and the encouragement of religious experience are completely compatible.

Chapter 4 examined the affective aspect of Edwards's preaching, specifically through his use of imagery. Edwards believed that effective preaching leaves listeners a lasting impact by using vivid imagery to stimulate their sense of the heart. This chapter

closely examined two of Edwards's sermons, as prime examples of his rhetorical strategies, to demonstrate how vivid and dramatic images are used in his sermons. It explained Edwards's use of figurative language through his doctrine of typology and argued that emanation and remanation justify Edwards's typology. As a course of action for expository preachers, the chapter also suggested that expository sermons should pay more attention to language, just as Edwards recognized that the power in the sermon lies in the masterful use of language.

Chapter 5 proposed four implications which Edwards's doctrine of the sense of the heart and his understanding of religious experience can give contemporary expository preachers. First, after presenting arguments both for and against preaching as a means of persuasion, this chapter argued that Edwards's ultimate goal of his preaching was to persuade people to experience God's beauty and glory by stirring up their sense of the heart. It exemplified Paul's preaching, which implemented persuasion in order to win people to Christ. Second, this chapter focused on Edwards's power of imagination, arguing that imagination can trigger the sense of the heart in the saints' mind and help them experience spiritual reality. Through the imagination, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, preaching can have great impact on listeners' hearts. Third, this chapter explored the nature of Edwardsean piety, which is closely related to the sense of the heart. A study of genuine religious piety should remind preachers of the importance of Spirit-led preaching. The chapter defined the nature of Edwardsean piety as "testing the spirits." Fourth, this chapter insisted that expository preachers should see beauty as an attractive and motivating power, because God's beauty is the very structure of genuine religious experience.

Overall, this dissertation has attempted to reestablish the goal and task of expository preaching, encouraging religious experience through the sense of the heart. The goal of our preaching should be to touch the affections of our listener's hearts, to bring them beyond a merely theoretical knowledge of spiritual realities. This dissertation's contribution to Edwardsean scholarship is that it sought to articulate the nature of Edwardsean religious experience in relation to the sense of the heart.

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## ABSTRACT

### A REAPPRAISAL OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN EXPOSITORY PREACHING IN LIGHT OF JONATHAN EDWARDS'S SENSE OF THE HEART

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The primary aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate that Jonathan Edwards's "sense of the heart" as a principle of a new kind of perception or spiritual sensation given by the Spirit of God in regeneration, in which a believer tastes or sees God's beauty, can provide expository preaching with a meaningful direction for the restoration of religious experience.

Chapter 1 focuses on the disappearance of religious experience in contemporary expository preaching and introduces, by illustrating the debate between the Old and the New Light in the First Great Awakening, an uncomfortable phenomenon in expository preaching that polarizes affectionate religious experience and cognitive-propositional truth. It argues that expository preaching should aim at affectional application because application is possible only when the listeners' fundamental affections are reoriented.

Chapter 2 examines Jonathan Edwards's spiritual epistemology by analyzing Edwards's concept of the sense of the heart, through which the saints can experience God's beauty. The sense of the heart enables the saints to obtain a new habit or the heart that brings about new affections. The chapter contends that experiencing God's beauty through the sense of the heart is central to all genuine religious experiences.

Chapter 3 defines the nature of Edwardsean religious experience as a spiritual-linguistic approach in the sense that the Spirit is the producer of genuine religious experience and the word of God illuminated by the Holy Spirit enables people to experience God's beauty and glory. It argues that expository preaching should create an experience for the listener, in Edwardsean sense, assuming that the conviction of the authority of the word of God and the encouragement of religious experience are completely compatible.

Chapter 4 presents a homiletical analysis of Edwards's affective preaching. The chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of two of Edwards's sermons, as prime examples of his rhetorical strategies, to demonstrate how vivid and dramatic images are used in his sermons. The chapter suggests that expository sermons should pay more attention to language, just as Edwards recognized that the power in the sermon lies in the masterful use of language.

Chapter 5 provides helpful implications for contemporary expository preaching. First, the chapter proposes preaching as a persuasion by illustrating Paul's use of rhetoric. Second, it indicates Edwards's power of imagination and suggests that expository preachers should pursue affective preaching by the use of their imagination and imaginative language. Third, it examines the implication of Edwardsean piety for expository preaching. Fourth, it offers preaching as a means of experiencing God's beauty.

Chapter 6 summarizes the overall arguments established in the previous chapters. The goal of our preaching should be to touch the affections of our listener's hearts to bring them beyond a merely theoretical knowledge of spiritual realities.

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