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JONATHAN EDWARDS AND SANCTIFICATION:  
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS FOUND IN  
UNION AND OBEDIENCE

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A Dissertation  
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the Faculty of  
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by  
Kevin David Hall  
May 2017

**APPROVAL SHEET**

JONATHAN EDWARDS AND SANCTIFICATION:  
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS FOUND IN  
UNION AND OBEDIENCE

Kevin David Hall

Read and Approved by:

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Stephen J. Wellum (Chair)

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Michael A. G. Haykin

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Jonathan T. Pennington

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, David S. Hall, who was here when I began the process but has now passed on to see the beauty of God clearly with his own eyes; thank you for putting me amid beauty, for cultivating my love for it, and for pointing me to the One in whom true beauty is found.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*AYBD* D. N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*

TGC The Gospel Coalition

*WJE* *Works of the Jonathan Edwards*, 26 vols.

*WJEO* *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*, 73 vols.

*WLC* *The Westminster Larger Catechism: With Scriptural Proofs*

## PREFACE

As is true for many high school students of American Literature, my first introduction to Jonathan Edwards was with “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” It was a time in class that stood out, much for the same reason that it does for many students: it highlights one aspect of God, many times from a bias against the God of Scripture and the God of Edwards. Not until seminary did I pick up Edwards again and saw a God of beauty and happiness, which made me rethink the motives I have for living and serving such a big and glorious God.

Many people have influenced me in this journey with Jonathan Edwards and sanctification. I am thankful for all the folks who guided me to a beautiful God by living a winsome life pointing to the God of beauty. I am grateful for Jack Hannah, who pointed my father to this God of all beauty. I am also thankful for the people at Evangelical Free Church of Fresno, and Fresno Christian Schools, who continued to foster what I received from home in a love for God’s Word and the God of beauty who stood behind it.

I am thankful for John Hannah, who provided my first introduction to Jonathan Edwards academically, outside of sophomore English. He has since told me that I could not have picked a better subject. I could not agree more. To Jonathan Pennington, who not only has been my professor and boss but also has become a good friend, thank you for suggesting that I pursue a history of interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount through the work of Jonathan Edwards; that assignment is what I needed to start my journey toward this dissertation. The subject has not been dull, and in the process, it has captured my heart. To Kyle Strobel, who has given his time, wisdom, and direction in helping me understand Edwards better, and who sat down with me on a beautiful southern California day to help map out this dissertation. Your support has been indispensable in this endeavor, giving me a helpful introduction to Edwards on this

subject, and in the process, you have been kind enough to introduce me to Edwards scholars such as Robert Caldwell and Oliver Crisp, who have also been gracious with their time and wisdom. Thanks also go to Stephen Wellum, my adviser, who not only has given advice and encouragement as I have traversed the rough waters of a Ph.D. program but also was willing to advise me on the dissertation on Jonathan Edwards and sanctification. I am also grateful for Michael Haykin, who joins Stephen Wellum and Jonathan Pennington on my dissertation committee; I am also indebted for his help, kindness, and input.

I am thankful to my father, David Hall, whose love for beauty is also in me, who continually put me amid beauty, cultivating a love for it, and in the process pointed me to One in whom true beauty is found. To my mother, Rose Hall, who not only put up with my father and his continual adventures into the beauty of the Sierras, but has been a rock for me, as well as my editor through all my graduate work. Thank you for always being in my corner, for your continued listening ear, and for always praying for me. For Maxwell, our son, who came along during the writing of this dissertation, my hope is that you would know the One who is most beautiful and that it would drive you to a relationship with him. To my wife, whom I married because of my love for beauty, thank you for your heart of obedience to the God whose plan is most beautiful, and for taking this step with me toward the doctorate. I would probably not be here if not for you, and even if I were, as you continually remind me, my life would be dull and full of only many dusty books. Above all, I am thankful to God, who is sovereign in his beauty and worth all the difficulty that this life brings in this journey of sanctification.

Kevin D. Hall

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2017

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Few theologians have combined head and heart as Jonathan Edwards did. He wrote with such a combination of truth and pathos that the reader can scarcely go away but to long for the God of whom he wrote, to see what he saw in the Person of God. The power of this God-centeredness is true, not for the fact of Edwards's acumen or the effort he put into his craft of writing, although one cannot deny his academic aptitude, but for the fact that he sought truth concerning God as revealed in Scripture. At the heart of his work Edwards reminds the reader that God created humanity for a relationship with himself. He elucidated on this topic often in conjunction with sanctification, as seen in this concise, yet weighty turn of phrase scribbled in one of his miscellanies: "True weanedness from the world don't consist in being beat off from the world by the affection of it, but a being drawn off by the sight of something better."<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, a surplus of study on Jonathan Edwards, at both the popular and academic levels, has often attempted to capture the ethos of his God-centeredness in the Christian life. Even though many works deal with aspects of Edwards's explication on the Christian life, much less work has been done specifically on his doctrine of sanctification. What could Edwards contribute to the conversation today in Reformed

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 501-832*, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 352. Edwards would add a similar, yet different nuanced thought in his sermon, "The True Christian's Life a Journey Towards Heaven." He contended, "In heaven alone is attainment of our highest good. God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper happiness, and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here: better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean." Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 437-38.

thinking on this important doctrine? How does Edwards combine the truth of this doctrine of sanctification with the heart of obedience for what is commanded in Scripture again and again? This research explores these initial questions.

Jonathan Edwards brings not only philosophical credentials but, more importantly, a theological background and concern to the doctrine of sanctification.<sup>2</sup> Many consider Edwards, as one writer claimed, an “intellectual, theological, philosophical, spiritual, and homiletical *supernova*, the brilliance of whose light still continues to illuminate and bless those that will sit at his feet two and half centuries later.”<sup>3</sup> He was also a concerned Reformed pastor who although he powerfully preached revival through the message of justification by grace through faith, also pushed his congregation to understand the necessity and blessing of evangelical obedience. In this regard, William Frankena would exclaim, “In no field is his power more manifest than in his moral philosophy.”<sup>4</sup> This can be coupled with the declaration of John Smith who proclaimed concerning *Freedom of the Will*, “Despite the great length and intricacies of Edwards’s argument, his position rests, like a huge tower, on one foundation: God alone is the cause of all and to allow ‘secondary causes’ is tantamount to denying the reality of God altogether.”<sup>5</sup> These credentials only draw the reader to Edwards all the more, for the

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<sup>2</sup>This theological bent in Edwards is significant considering the contemporary revival in virtue ethics that leans heavily on the work of Aristotle, as well as considering the scholars today who see Edwards more as a philosopher than as a theologian, as this research will show. For a consideration of the revival of virtue ethics see Roger Crisp and Michael A. Slote, *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Gene Outka, “The Particularist Turn in Theological and Philosophical Ethics,” in *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill and James F. Childress (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996), 93-118. Wilson adds, “Whatever further detail this and other exegetical works on the unfolding *Works of Jonathan Edwards* provides, I believe the most profound applications for ethics are likely to come from that most distinctively Edwardsean balance of Calvinism and moral sense.” Stephen A. Wilson, “Jonathan Edwards's Virtue: Diverse Sources, Multiple Meanings, and the Lessons of History for Ethics,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 222.

<sup>3</sup>John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth, 2008), 460. In speaking of Edwards’s orthodox view of justification, which could be true of much of his doctrine, Moody writes, “Yet, as ever, Edwards with his orthodoxy has more than a little dash of creativity, spice, and derring do.” Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and Justification* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 13.

<sup>4</sup>The quote is from William Frankena in his introduction to Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, Aa37 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960), v.

<sup>5</sup>John E. Smith, *Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 1. This quote does not intimate that Edwards does not allow

questions being asked today are in response to the tensions that are found in Scripture in dealing with a sovereign God as well as the culpability of people created in his image. These issues call us to examine the work of those, like Edwards, who have gone before us. Undergirding his doctrine of the Christian life is Edwards's God-entranced worldview, a lost theme of which Mark Noll laments,

Edwards piety continued on in the revivalist tradition, his theology continued on in academic Calvinism, but there were no successors to his God-entranced worldview. . . . The disappearance of Edwards's perspective in American Christian history has been a tragedy.<sup>6</sup>

This theological foundation is the main reason why this research looks to Edwards, to learn what he gleaned from Scripture in trying to answer some of the very same queries that come with today's debate concerning sanctification.<sup>7</sup>

The subject of sanctification saturates the work of Jonathan Edwards because it not only was a part of the Puritan tradition in which Edwards was raised and to which he then contributed, but also because it permeates the pages of Scripture.<sup>8</sup> The definition of sanctification is multilayered with the term in Scripture meaning "holiness" and "consecration" coming from the root "to make holy."<sup>9</sup> In the OT it can refer to God's

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secondary causes, but shows that God's sovereignty is tantamount. Holmes points out concerning *Freedom of the Will*, "If only we are prepared to listen to Edwards's diagnosis in all its strangeness, he will enable us to see that positions that go unquestioned in our time, even in our churches, are in fact deeply illogical, utterly inimical to the gospel of Christ, and seriously damaging to any serious ethical reflection. Edwards can speak to us as a shocking modern prophet, diagnosing the ills of our own time because he saw their roots in his, but that demands that we take him seriously, and do not write him off as a sad anachronism even in his own day." Stephen R. Holmes, *Listening to the Past: The Place of Tradition in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 87.

<sup>6</sup>Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards, Moral Philosophy, and the Secularization of American Christian Thought: Two Important Books," *Reformed Journal* 33:22-28 (Feb 1983): 26.

<sup>7</sup>Holmes, *Listening to the Past*, 1-17.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan Edwards has often been called the last of the Puritans, see Joel Beeke and Randall Pederson, *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 191; David C. Brand, *Profile of the Last Puritan: Jonathan Edwards, Self-Love, and the Dawn of the Beatific* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991). Also, influencing Edwards's theology was the Reformed tradition with the work of both Peter van Mastricht and Francis Turretin being prominent. See Peter van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia: Qua, Per Singula Capita Theologica, Pars Exegetica, Dogmatica, Elenctica & Practica, Perpetua Successione Conjugantur* (Utrecht, Netherlands: ThomË Appels, 1699); Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992).

<sup>9</sup>The noun and the verb that is used in the Old Testament for "sanctify" are from the root קדש (*qds*) in the Hebrew, meaning "to be set apart, consecrated." Francis Brown et al., *The New Brown, Driver,*

work in consecrating an item, a person, or a nation for his use. This definition applied to salvation in the NT refers to the transformation in the believer's life regarding position. Theologically the term can also mean the process that is then worked out from justification to glorification.<sup>10</sup> The subject is relevant and practical in its implications regarding the Christian life, yet it is a doctrine that has caused considerable debate over the centuries.<sup>11</sup> It is also a topic that has recently been brought to the forefront of evangelical thinking in a mounting debate in Reformed circles.<sup>12</sup>

The current debate is just one of the latest manifestations in the ongoing discussion that surrounds the substantial, ponderous, and critical doctrine of sanctification.<sup>13</sup> It is a doctrine through which every Christian will wrestle to some extent. The struggle can be observed in the current debates, the distinctions found in the term sanctification itself, as well as with the tension witnessed throughout Scripture concerning God's work and the Christian's responsibility.<sup>14</sup> Also looming large in the

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Briggs, *Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 872. In the Greek the root for "sanctification" is ἅγιος (*hagios*), which means to "consecrate, dedicate, sanctify," being "a cultic concept, of the quality possessed by things and persons that could approach divinity." Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and William Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 10. The actual term for "sanctification" is ἁγιασμός (*hagiasmos*) which has the import of "holiness, consecration, sanctification." Bauer et. al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 10.

<sup>10</sup>These aspects of sanctification can be called "definitive" and "progressive." See Peterson, who makes a plea for giving the definitive its proper place in understanding the doctrine of sanctification from a biblical standpoint. David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 13-15.

<sup>11</sup>See a summary of the different views in Donald Alexander and Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

<sup>12</sup>This debate has many voices, but can be noted most notably in the work of Tullian Tchividjian and Mark Jones. See Tullian Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); Mark Jones, *Antinomianism: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013).

<sup>13</sup>The flames of this dialogue, lamentably, will only continue to be stoked with Tchividjian's fall from ministry. See Bob Smietana, "Tullian Tchividjian Resigns after Admitting 'Inappropriate Relationship,'" *Christianity Today*, June 21, 2015, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2015/june/tullian-tchividjian-resigns-after-admitting-inappropriate-re.html>.

<sup>14</sup>The struggle over this doctrine throughout the centuries has also expressed itself in the two opposite tendencies of quietism and pietism. See P. N. Hillyer, "Quietism," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair Ferguson and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 554-55; Mark A. Noll, "Pietism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker

discussion is the remaining sinful flesh. These issues concern the reality of the already and not yet of position, coupled with the imperatives found in the NT in the call to obedience. Of this phenomenon, Kelly Kopic explains,

Evangelicalism appears to be in a season of struggling with how best to think about sanctification. What is the relationship between ‘faith’ and human responsibility? How might human agency relate not only to questions of God’s saving grace but also to the way he sustains and preserves us by his grace? Does effort undermine the role of faith? How does all of this relate to our creaturely existence as it is fundamentally empowered by the Spirit? How do we understand the promises of God as we live in the eschatological tension of the now and not yet?<sup>15</sup>

The questions revolving around sanctification come from the tension observed in Scripture. One author argues for upholding grace against legalism stating, “The Christian life commences with grace, continues with grace, and concludes with grace.”<sup>16</sup> This theological truth is essential and needs to be understood; yet he also writes, “It is the Spirit that daily reorients us to the liberating reality that there is nothing left to do.”<sup>17</sup> This statement does not sound like the NT, which is full of imperatives in language as strong as “put to death the deeds of the body” (Rom 8:13 ESV). The issue of sanctification is being brought before evangelicalism today, which is the battle between the Scylla of legalism on the one side, and the Charybdis of antinomianism on the other.

The place where the evangelical debate has begun, in Reformed circles, is another compelling factor in this current discussion involving sanctification. The sphere of Reformed thinking is a place where God’s sovereignty and grace are the foundations for everything in salvation, and yet in this context, philosophically, there can be a dilemma for many between God’s sovereign work of grace and the responsibility of the Christian. This debate also comes amid a culture where the Arminian view is now almost

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Academic, 2001), 924-25.

<sup>15</sup>Kelly M. Kopic, *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 10.

<sup>16</sup>Tullian Tchividjian, “Grace > Performance,” *Liberate*, September 26, 2014, accessed October 4, 2014, <http://www.pastortullian.com/2014/09/26/grace-performance/>.

<sup>17</sup>Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing*, 137.



universal.<sup>18</sup> These issues point to the reality of the struggle that is found in trying to understand what is in Scripture regarding sanctification and obedience and, ultimately, that to which the believer is called. Considering this dilemma, what is the Christian to understand and what is he or she to do regarding the truth of grace and the imperatives of Scripture? When one gets down to the crux of the issue, the question that needs to be answered is, “How should the Christian understand obedience?” More specifically the question becomes, “What should be the overarching motivation in the believer’s obedience and how does this fit into the doctrine of sanctification?”<sup>19</sup>

### **Thesis**

This dissertation argues that Jonathan Edwards’s concept of happiness in sanctification enables contemporary Reformed theology to address many of the questions surrounding the matter of obedience, dealing specifically with the difficulties surrounding the issues of motive and ability. Edwards helps in bringing to the discussion the neglected feature of happiness in sanctification, because the Christian was created and recreated to be satisfied and to rejoice in God, being captivated by the beauty of his Person. For Edwards sanctification in the life of a believer is the continued progression in holiness anchored in a vision of God’s beauty that begins and then proceeds from union coming through regeneration in a pilgrimage that ends in the glory of heaven, which ultimately concerns happiness. This focus will not only aid with questions of motive in obedience, primarily answering why the Christian should obey, but also in answering many of the queries concerning sanctification that are being asked today regarding ability. These

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<sup>18</sup>Holmes, *Listening to the Past*, 87. Holmes goes on to state, “For arguably the first time in the history of the Church, the ‘post-Christian’ world, at least, finds itself Pelagian, and its people seem happy that it should be so.” *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>19</sup>This question must be answered by both the academy and the church, especially considering the “American theology” or a “cultural theology” that has begun to seep into the church, which embraces what sociologist Christian Smith has named “moralistic therapeutic deism” (MTD). See Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162-70. See also Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

questions involve the tension between faith and human responsibility, the place of human agency in light of the work of grace in position with the continued place of grace in the process of sanctification, as well as dealing with the eschatological tension of the already and not yet. Ultimately this missing piece of happiness in sanctification points to a sapiential theology where Edwards's assertion concerning the believer that "God is their good" becomes the driving factor in obedience because God is the One in whom true happiness is found.<sup>20</sup> This truth underlines the importance of God's sovereign work in providing the benefits of union with Christ, as well as the involvement of the believer's responsibility and dependent response through relationship in what Edwards called evangelical obedience or true virtue, all of which drives the Christian to the heart of why humanity was created.

### **Methodology**

This study hopes to contribute not only to the work done on Jonathan Edwards, specifically in his theological understanding of sanctification that is an area of need in the study of this eminent theologian but also on current Reformed thinking on this important doctrine in answer to many of the questions being asked. This research will endeavor to move into an awareness of how Edwards, from the compendium of his work, grasped the truth of the doctrine of sanctification and thus obedience in dealing with many of the same concerns that are observed throughout the evangelical landscape today. Edwards dealt with sanctification in a way that gets to the theologically rich motivation behind obedience for the Christian in a relationship with the Creator of the universe through union with Christ. All the while the answers that Edwards provides are multifaceted and indicative of his Reformed, albeit idiosyncratic doctrine, which can be refined down to the issue of happiness as it covers everything from Creator/creature distinctions to why

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<sup>20</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 459.

humankind was created, with its end being God's glory.

## **General Approach**

The research of this dissertation will begin with the works of Jonathan Edwards as found in both the Yale works (*WJE*)<sup>21</sup> and the online database (*WJEO*).<sup>22</sup> There will also be interaction with his ideas concerning Scripture in observing how Edwards comes to the conclusions that he posits, as well as work within the corpus of soteriological studies that deal with the subject matter of sanctification. This research will also look to other Edwards scholars in seeing how to understand the work of this American theologian, all the while trying to be true to the theology and thinking of Edwards amid it all, and gain whatever help that can be given on this important, yet sometimes complicated doctrine. This research will limit itself to the particulars of how Edwards can aid in the theological conversation today in Reformed circles, particularly on the issue of happiness in union and obedience as it connects to the doctrine of sanctification.

## **Specific Argumentation**

Chapter 1 will introduce the topic of Jonathan Edwards and sanctification. This introduction will set forth the need for this research culminating in the main question that is being asked and thus answered in this contribution on Edwards's doctrine of sanctification, namely, "What should be the overarching motivation in the believer's obedience and how does this fit into the doctrine of sanctification?" The thesis will be brought to the reader's attention concerning Edwards's driving factor of happiness in

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<sup>21</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *WJE*, 26 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957-2008).

<sup>22</sup>The primary works that will be used from the online database will be sermons that interact with the issue of sanctification as approached in this dissertation Jonathan Edwards, *WJEO*, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/research/browse>. Also consulted are other formerly unpublished sermons as found in Jonathan Edwards, *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003); Jonathan Edwards, *The Glory and Honor of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2004).

demonstrating what a look at Edwards's theology concerning sanctification will contribute to answering the current questions regarding the tension in this critical doctrine. A methodology will also be laid out along with a modern history of research.

Chapter 2 surveys the evangelical and Reformed landscape concerning the doctrine of sanctification. This chapter will continue to discuss the need for this scholarship in a breakdown of the current debate, so that the reader can see the contemporary theological backdrop surrounding the doctrine of sanctification. The research will then bridge the contexts of this present time to Jonathan Edwards's time in laying out the theological landscape of Edwards's day in the questions he was trying to answer concerning sanctification. The chapter then will broach the missing element of happiness that Edwards can contribute to these debates today. This missing element, as in Edwards's day, is a pointer to the importance of ability and motive in union and obedience, demonstrating that obedience is not a negative but a positive component in the life of a believer that involves the affections. The chapter will conclude with the setting of a definition for happiness that will provide a rubric for understanding Edwards's argument and thus the direction of this research in answering the questions circling the doctrine of sanctification today.

Chapter 3 lays the groundwork for Jonathan Edwards in the doctrine of sanctification. Specifically, the subjects of holiness, grace, and happiness will be surveyed as seen in their source, which is God. In looking at sanctification, especially as it is connected to a bigger whole in union with Christ, one must look to the cause of salvation and thus sanctification.<sup>23</sup> As John Webster articulates, "Soteriology is a derivative doctrine, and no derivative doctrine may occupy the material place which is

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<sup>23</sup>In Edwards's work salvation is not simply equal to conversion, as was the case in some traditions, as noted by McClymond and McDermott who state concerning salvation, "Its first visible manifestation in an individual is at conversion, which signals justification and begins sanctification." Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 357.

properly reserved for the Christian doctrine of God, from which all other doctrines derive.”<sup>24</sup> The understanding of the source of sanctification, in a proper understanding of Edwards’s reliance on the Trinity, is crucial for all he did doctrinally. This foundation is especially vital in the areas of holiness, grace, and happiness, which will set the course for everything that will follow in this argument concerning the important place that participation in the happiness of God plays in the doctrine of sanctification in the theology of Edwards.

Chapter 4 looks at Jonathan Edwards’s holistic understanding of redemption, particularly delving into the outcome of the economic work of the Trinity in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification all by the work of Word and Spirit, looking at how this relates to participation in the happiness of God by his grace. First, the chapter will consider the objective work of the Word in mediation by the incarnate Word, the purchase by the Word, and justification through the Word. Second, the topic of union will be presented, which in Edwards’s work becomes an important connecting point from the objective work of the Word to the subjective work of the Holy Spirit, showing from where the ability and motive in obedience comes. This emphasis on union will also allow the study to approach the significant subject of *theosis* as it concerns the Northampton pastor. Third, the chapter turns to the subjective work of the Spirit in redemption looking chiefly at the Spirit’s work of illumination, the infusion of the Spirit, and then the sanctification brought by the Spirit, where a definition of sanctification from Edwards’s work is given. Fourth, and finally, the consummation of the objective and subjective work of Word and Spirit concludes this chapter in looking to the realization of full

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<sup>24</sup>John Webster, “It Was the Will of the Lord to Bruise Him: Soteriology and the Doctrine of God,” in *God of Salvation: Soteriology in Theological Perspective*, ed. Ivor J. Davidson and Murray A. Rae (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011). Elsewhere Webster states, “All creaturely acts are to be understood by first considering the divine works which cause creatures to live and move. It is of the essence of creaturely activity that it is a derivative, action which is set in motion and continues by virtue of antecedent principles. Because of this, the theology of the Christian life is an extension and application of the doctrine of the triune God.” John Webster, “Communion with Christ: Mortification and Vivification,” in *Sanctified by Grace: A Theology of the Christian Life*, ed. Kent Eilers and Kyle Strobel (New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 122.

sanctification in glory.

Chapter 5 harmonizes the ideas of beauty, happiness and glory in Jonathan Edwards and how these realities in the Christian life bring clarity to the motivation of the believer in obedience. Here the work of Edwards as primarily recognized in *Freedom of the Will*, *Religious Affections*, and his *Ethical Works* will be covered. This focus will demonstrate the connections to these overarching themes in Edwards's theology. Specifically, the chapter will demonstrate the progression of the work of sanctification by the Godhead looking at the elements of beauty, happiness, and glory that make up the drive, forging, and result of the Christian life. These elements all coalesce in pointing to the ultimate motive in obedience in progressive sanctification in the person of God, who is not only the object of the believer's affection in all his beauty but also the Christian's good and the purpose for which he or she was created. A key in the argument of this chapter and the dissertation will be a look at the importance that Edwards placed on the understanding of the knowledge of the excellency of God in the work of conversion in the life of the believer. This argument allows for the understanding to be affected by true knowledge through the work of the Holy Spirit, which then affects the heart and thus the motive in progressive sanctification in striving for something better, which is found in the person and will of God, rather than in what sin offers.

Chapter 6 will describe the means to happiness as articulated by Jonathan Edwards in looking specifically at the means of grace. This discussion on the means to happiness will center on the principal means of grace found in Edwards's work and will be a practicum in answer to the question of what fuels happiness and sanctification as it works itself out in the life of the believer. The heart of these means indisputably is the Word of God, which will be broached first in what is observed in Edwards's theology as the instrument that unlocks beauty, the instrument used by the Holy Spirit, and how that instrument is highlighted in the hands of the minister. The second means presented from the theology of Edwards is the church in the believer's life, where specifically the

research will look at baptism and the Lord's supper in the Northampton preacher's teaching. The third means offered is prayer, specifically prayer indicative of communion, prayer that ignites the affections, and prayer that is dependent trust. This section will also look at the place of faith in these means in the onward journey to heaven as happiness continues to drive the believer and is ultimately culminated in glorification through relationship to the One for whom the world was created. Finally, the question of whose work is involved in sanctification is approached. This query will look at the centrality of God in bringing Edwards's work into the context of the work in virtue ethics today. Finally, the chapter will discuss the issue of the compatibility of God's work and the believer's responsibility in the resolutions of Edwards and the practice of piety.

Chapter 7 shows that Jonathan Edwards's doctrine is undergirded by a biblical foundation; the chapter also looks at the integrity of Edwards's work as it is systematized theologically in answering the question, "so what?" The research shows that happiness and ultimately God's glory, in connection to union with Christ, is indeed the purpose for which humanity was created. Edwards masterfully looks at the whole in relation to its parts from creation to consummation. This evaluation will specifically take what has been observed thus far in the research in Edwards's Trinitarian focus, holistic redemption, union, sanctification and obedience, the means of grace, and happiness, with a final section on some of the considerations in Edwards's theology that could bring some concern to the reader. Ultimately, a biblical and theologically sound argument is observed in Edwards that does not make room for sin but still takes into consideration the eschatological not yet, all the while giving a robust argument for obedience in light of the new creation. It is an obedience that is based not upon duty only, but on a relationship, finding happiness in union, and union applied in action as an outgrowth of that happiness.

Chapter 8 concludes this research by summarizing the arguments established throughout the dissertation. It demonstrates that Jonathan Edwards supplies a needed and often missing component in looking at the doctrine of sanctification. In this argument

Edwards establishes that happiness is crucial and points to the One in whom true happiness is found, underlining the importance of union as well as evangelical obedience which helps maintain the necessary tension of God's work and the Christian's responsibility. The conclusion will also aim to provide an understanding of the theological legacy of Edwards in the doctrine of sanctification, which points to his dogmatic Reformed doctrine that he links with the truth of the experience that one can have with God all in the language of felicity. Edwards provides a vision that is based on the centrality and excellence of God who alone can bring happiness in relationship to him and forms a springboard to an obedience that is commanded and for which one should strive and fight.

### **A Modern History of Research**

The focus of this dissertation embraces two related subjects in academic and popular writing, Jonathan Edwards and sanctification. The topic of sanctification is found in much of the works of Edwards, in his contribution to both philosophy, and especially theology. Several other subjects, such as Trinitarian studies, regeneration and justification, union, glorification, and means of grace, will be covered by way of inclusion. Even though the work on Jonathan Edwards is voluminous, so much so that in the resurrection of Edwardsean studies one author quipped, "The academic study of Edwards continues to be an industry whose production outpaces several third-world countries,"<sup>25</sup> the door is wide open for more work academically in this area of Jonathan Edwards and sanctification.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Sean Michael Lucas, "Jonathan Edwards between Church and Academy: A Bibliographic Essay," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 235. Lucas canvasses the landscape of Edwards scholarship from the Academy to the popular level, giving broad strokes of the brush, with Lesser giving a more comprehensive look at the work done by the New England divine. Also, see M. X. Lesser, *Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729-2005* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>26</sup>This truth about the opening for this kind of work was confirmed in an interview with Kyle Strobel, who said that although it seems impossible, there is a need for this kind of work in Edwards scholarship. Kyle Strobel, interview by Kevin Hall, July 9, 2015. In Strobel's work, he uses the interpretive



## Jonathan Edwards

The work on Jonathan Edwards comes alongside his ample body of work as evidenced in the Yale works, both in the twenty-six bound volumes (*WJE*) and in the extended seventy-three volumes found online (*WJEO*). The principle works from which this dissertation will be working are *Freedom of the Will*, *Original Sin*, *Religious Affections*, *Ethical Writings*, and *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, with sections from the several volumes covering *Sermons and Discourses* and *The “Miscellanies.”*<sup>27</sup> A heavy emphasis will be placed on Edwards’s work that comprises his *Ethical Writings*, with *Charity and its Fruits* and the two dissertations on *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World* and *The Nature of True Virtue*, although there will be a significant pull from much of his work that involves the issues of union, happiness, obedience and sanctification.<sup>28</sup>

Although the person of Jonathan Edwards has always been in the DNA of American history, retaining followers since his ministry, there has been a revival, as

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key of God’s “personal beatific-delight,” or “religious affection in pure act” which he proclaims still “needs to be utilized to address key areas of specific soteriological loci,” from which this research has benefited. See Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 233; Kyle Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards’s Trinitarian Aesthetics,” in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders Crisp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 148.

<sup>27</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957); Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook, *WJE*, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1970); Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959); Edwards, *Ethical Writings*; Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema, *WJE*, vol. 14 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*; Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, *WJE*, vol. 25, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: 501-832*; Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 1153-1320*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney, *WJE*, vol. 23 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>28</sup>This work will also consider some of his unpublished sermons. See Edwards, *The Blessing of God*; Edwards, *The Glory and Honor of God*.

mentioned, in the study of the Northampton preacher that began with the work of Perry Miller.<sup>29</sup> Miller, whose interest in Edwards was purely intellectual, gave the world an Edwards who was bigger than life in the realm of the intellect. Concerning this turn of events Kyle Strobel writes, “In one of the great turns of irony in God’s providential plan, it was an atheist who resurrected Edwards from obscurity, disregarding the church’s neglect and raising him as an example of a thinker of the highest order.”<sup>30</sup>

From Perry Miller’s foundation, a portion of the work on Jonathan Edwards has continued until today. This ominous beginning has caused a rift in the writing on Edwards that can be split into two schools of thought concerning this American scholar. One school looks to Edwards as the preeminent philosopher and then theologian and is comprised of adherents like Perry Miller, Sang Hyun Lee, Anri Morimoto, Michael McClymond, and Gerald McDermott.<sup>31</sup> The other school sees Edwards as a theologian first and foremost, and a philosopher second. Some of the most notable scholars in this second school are Conrad Cherry, Stephen Holmes, Oliver Crisp, and Kyle Strobel to name a few.<sup>32</sup> This paper will follow the second school, seeing Edwards not only as a

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<sup>29</sup>Miller’s work was then followed by the Yale series, which has now not only published the authoritative volumes on Edwards works but is continuing to work on his material so that it is accessible to scholars and people interested in Edwards and his work.

<sup>30</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*, 1. Strobel continues to describe what Miller did, contending, “Unfortunately, Miller bequeathed more to Edwards studies than the revival of one of the great thinkers of the church. Miller, rather, presented a thinker who transcended even himself—an isolated genius whose work we are only now catching up with—a thinker whose theological depth was secondary, rather than primary, to his brilliance. This imprint on Edwards studies has coloured modern interpretation to the degree that the flood of monographs and articles has not resulted in an equally overwhelming deluge of the true Edwards.” Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>See Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, The American Men of Letters Series (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1949); Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Michael James McClymond, *Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Religion in America Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gerald R. McDermott, *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America’s Theologian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*.

<sup>32</sup>See Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966); Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*.

theologian first, with theology serving as his guide, but also as a Reformed theologian and pastor. As a theologian and pastor Edwards fought many issues of his day that would threaten the truth of the sovereign and gracious God of Scripture, or what one author calls a “theocentric view of reality.”<sup>33</sup>

This work focuses on the issue of sanctification in the work of Jonathan Edwards, but especially the place of the happiness of God in the believers’ process of sanctification. The work will begin with the foundation of the Trinity and the happiness of God in the harmony of the Godhead. As Kyle Strobel alerts the reader, “Interpreters find in Edwards a robust Trinitarian foundation orienting the whole of his theological programme,”<sup>34</sup> which is “in part because of Edwards’s understanding of the interconnectivity of God’s internal life and his work within creation.”<sup>35</sup> This priority, of turning to God first, dominated Edwards’s thinking, no matter what the topic, and was something that bled into everything he did. This foundation, well explored by authors such as Steven Studebaker, Robert Caldwell, Sang Hyun Lee, Kyle Strobel, Amy Plantinga Pauw, William Danaher, and Oliver Crisp will be the springboard for looking at the doctrine of sanctification in Edwards.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 2. This is also not to say that at times Edwards’s philosophical interests in Locke and others, most notably seen in his Neo-Platonic thought, did influence his thinking, but in surveying his overall work, it becomes evident that his theology trumped much of this kind of proclivity in areas of concern regarding the doctrine of sanctification.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. See Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith* by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 3.

<sup>36</sup>Steven M. Studebaker and Robert W. Caldwell, *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012); Steven M. Studebaker, “Jonathan Edwards’s Social Augustinian Trinitarianism: An Alternative to a Recent Trend,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003) 268-85; Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*; Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 1-71; Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father”; Amy Plantinga Pauw, “*The Supreme Harmony of All*”: *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); Oliver Crisp, “Jonathan Edwards’s God: Trinity, Individuation, and Divine Simplicity,” in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). Much of the chapters in Crisp’s edited work are also helpful in navigating issues in the doctrine of God with Edwards. Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Tan highlights the processions in the Godhead, which helps in understanding Edwards’s Trinitarian foundation and what that involves participation. See Seng-Kong Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*:

The question of Jonathan Edwards's thinking on salvation, particularly on his understanding of justification, has also been a topic of much debate and thus the spilling of much ink. A divide exists on whether Edwards was a true Reformed theologian, or merely a Catholic sympathizer theologically. Here one can see the work of Gerald McDermott and especially Anri Morimoto in associating his use of "infusion" with Catholic theology.<sup>37</sup> This misconstruing of Edwards causes harm in understanding his work, as has been explained by several works, with one of the most helpful and concise being the edited work by Josh Moody.<sup>38</sup> This reality needs to be understood in looking at the subject of union and what God does in the believer and how justification is both different than sanctification and is connected to it,<sup>39</sup> also connecting the work of

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*Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>37</sup>This dispute of Catholic doctoral affirmation brings up a point of contention with these authors, and the conclusions argued in this dissertation. See Gerald R. McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith—More Protestant or Catholic?" *Pro Ecclesia* 17, no. 1 (2008) 92-111; Morimoto, *Edwards and the Catholic Vision*. See also McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 389-404; Thomas A. Schafer, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith," *Church History* 20, no. 4 (1951): 746-62.

<sup>38</sup>Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*. The chapters are broken down as follows: Josh Moody, "Edwards and Justification Today," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 17-43; Kyle Strobel, "By Word and Spirit: Jonathan Edwards on Redemption, Justification, and Regeneration," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 45-69; Rhys Bezzant, "The Gospel of Justification and Edwards's Social Vision," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 71-94; Samuel T. Logan, Jr., "Justification and Evangelical Obedience," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 95-127. See also John J. Bombaro, "Jonathan Edwards's Vision of Salvation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65, no. 1 (2003): 45-67; Jeffery C. Waddington, "Jonathan Edwards's 'Ambiguous and Somewhat Precarious' Doctrine of Justification," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 357-72. On both sides of the argument, see George Hunsinger, "Dispositional Soteriology: Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith Alone," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 1 (2004): 107-20; George Hunsinger, "A Tale of Two Simultaneities: Justification and Sanctification in Calvin and Barth," in *Conversing with Barth*, ed. John McDowell and Mike Higton (London: Ashgate, 2004), 68-89; Samuel T. Logan, Jr., "The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards," *Westminster Theological Journal* 46, no. 1 (1984) 26-52; Michael McClenahan, *Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012); Douglas A. Sweeney, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification: The Rest of the Story," in *Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee*, ed. Don Schweitzer (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 151-73.

<sup>39</sup>Note Lee's introduction, "Edwards' position, in a nutshell, is this: there is in a believing sinner a holy disposition and its holy exercises, which are absolutely without merit for justification and so, from God's point of view, unacceptable as holiness. What we have here in Edwards is a reaffirmation of the Reformation doctrine of the justification of the ungodly, as well as an articulation of the ontological (dispositional) grounding in the sinner for Christian practice, which is considered holiness only after justification through God's unmerited grace alone. Edwards is in complete agreement with Calvin's view that justification and sanctification constitute a 'double grace' through the union with Christ. Edwards would applaud Calvin's insistence that 'Christ justifies no one who he does not sanctify at the same time.' But he is adding something to Calvin's doctrine of 'double grace,' namely, an ontological (dispositional) foundation for sanctified life, without making such a foundation or its exercises in any way meritorious for

redemption to the work of the Trinity and God's end for creation, which unites redemption to God's glory and participating in his happiness.<sup>40</sup> For Edwards, these subcategories of redemption all come under the blessing of union, which dominated his thinking and writing on the subject.<sup>41</sup> This focus on union also gets into issues of *theosis*, which this dissertation will discuss.<sup>42</sup> Here the topic of hamartiology in Edwards also becomes important, as well as the place of faith in the work of God.<sup>43</sup> What is seen in this look at the history of research is that there is a need for a more concentrated work on the doctrine of sanctification in Edwards's theology.<sup>44</sup>

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justification. Edwards has, in effect, carefully expanded the Reformed doctrines of regeneration and sanctification." He also states, "Following his Reformed predecessors, Edwards wanted to sharply distinguish justification from sanctification as well as see the two as inseparably related." Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 73, 86.

<sup>40</sup>Lee also asserts, "From our discussion of the immanent Trinity, we can see that Edwards' discussion of grace, justification, and sanctification would be an elaboration of the external and redemptive activities of the Trinity, or the economic Trinity, and the nature of the human participation in those activities." *Ibid.*, 34, 38.

<sup>41</sup>See Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007); Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 149-242; Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*; Moody, "Edwards and Justification Today," 24-43; Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 45-69; Logan, "Justification and Evangelical Obedience," 95-127; Ross Hastings, *Jonathan Edwards and the Life of God: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Participation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015); Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); William M. Schweitzer, *God Is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (New York: T & T Clark, 2012).

<sup>42</sup>Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards and the Polemics of Theosis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 259-79; Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," *Harvard Theological Review* 109, no. 3 (2016): 371-99. See also Michael McCymond, "Salvation and Divinization: Jonathan Edwards, Gregory Palamas and Theological Uses of Neoplatonism," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Paul Helm (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004); Crisp, *Edwards in God and Creation*, 275-85.

<sup>43</sup>Crisp, *Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin*; Scott K. Oliphint, "Jonathan Edwards on Apologetics: Reason and the Noetic Effects of Sin," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 131-46; Conrad Cherry, "Conversion: Nature and Grace," in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), 76-88; Arthur Bamford Crabtree, *Jonathan Edwards' View of Man: A Study in Eighteenth Century Calvinism* (Wallington, England: Religious Education Press, 1948); Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 12-43.

<sup>44</sup>See Walther Knöpp, "Jonathan Edwards: Der Weg Der Heiligung" (Ph.D. diss., The Hartford Theological Seminary, 1937). Besides this dissertation the only works that are explicitly on Jonathan Edwards and sanctification are the chapter on "Justification and Sanctification" in McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 389-409; Hastings's approach to the idea of participation in his argument as a whole, and then his chapter "Participation in the Spirit in Justification for Sanctification or for Sanctification and Justification," in Hastings, *Edwards and the Life of God*, 323-75; and John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhatan, VA: Berea Publications, 1991), 3:224-58. See also on the more popular level, Dane Calvin Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to*

When approaching the idiosyncrasies of Jonathan Edwards's Reformed and orthodox doctrine of redemption generally, a topic into which many have delved, and here with sanctification specifically, it is important to note the place of beauty and glory in his thinking. It is no wonder, for it is a truth that begins to grip the heart for humanity's purpose and ultimately deals with topic of happiness. It is seen in many of the works that take a larger look at Edwards's theology,<sup>45</sup> to works that have at their heart the idea of beauty and happiness in the theology of this renowned theologian.<sup>46</sup> In dealing with these overarching ideas of beauty and happiness in Edwards, Kyle Strobel offers a heuristic key to understanding God's work from creation to consummation, which is God's own "personal beatific-delight" within the Trinity or what he has re-coined "religious affection in pure act," in which the believer can participate because of union through redemption to

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*the Beauty of God*, Theologians on the Christian Life (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014). Morimoto's chapter on "Sanctification and Glorification" is also helpful, even though he is coming from a different angle, Morimoto, *Edwards and the Catholic Vision*, 131-56. Also, included here should be an interesting chapter in a recent book: Alexis Torrance, "Seeking Salvation: Jonathan Edwards and Nicholas Cabasilas on Life in Christ," in *The Ecumenical Edwards: Jonathan Edwards and the Theologians*, ed. Kyle Strobel (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 11-32. See also Cherry's section on "The Life of Faith" and "Controversy Over Faith" the later section having a chapter on "Neonomianism and Antinomianism." Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 126-58, 160-215.

<sup>45</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 93-101; Jenson, *America's Theologian*, 15-22; Crisp, *Edwards in God and Creation*, 94-116; Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 191-228; Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment: Knowing the Presence of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 104-18; Roland A. Delattre, "Beauty and Theology: A Reappraisal of Jonathan Edwards," in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), 136-50; Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 147-69; Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 49-55; John E. Smith, "Religious Affections and a 'Sense of the Heart'," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 103-14; David P. Barshinger, *Jonathan Edwards and the Psalms: A Redemptive-Historical Vision of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 273-308; Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 80-82.

<sup>46</sup>Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation, and Heart Religion*, Studies in American Religion (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2002); Terrence Erdt, *Jonathan Edwards, Art and the Sense of the Heart* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards; Morality and Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1973); Roland André Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards; an Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968); William J. Danaher, "Beauty, Benevolence, and Virtue in Jonathan Edwards's the Nature of True Virtue," *Journal of Religion* 87, no. 3 (2007): 386-410; Delattre, "Beauty and Theology: A Reappraisal of Jonathan Edwards," 136-50; Belden C. Lane, "Jonathan Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World," *Theological Studies* 65, no. 1 (2004): 44-72; Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life*; William C. Spohn, "Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue," *Theological Studies* 42, no. 3 (1981): 394-421; Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170-210.

the glory of God.<sup>47</sup> This work will borrow from Strobel's heuristic key in looking at the doctrine of sanctification in Edwards, which will help to lay a foundation as well as pull together much of what will be covered in this research.

The means of grace is a topic that this dissertation will need to approach in looking at how Jonathan Edwards can help one understand what the believer is given to appropriate the truth of God's work and promises in seeking sanctification, growing in obedience, and thus happiness in relationship with the Creator. Stephen Holmes' work helps in defining grace, which is the place to begin in looking at the means of grace, along with helpful insights from Robert Jensen and Anri Morimoto in observing the Northampton preacher's basis for the means by considering the meaning of grace.<sup>48</sup> As to the means of grace, Kyle Strobel's work is most helpful in looking into this subject matter, along with Sean Michael Lucas's work placing the means of grace within the whole of Edwards's theological vision.<sup>49</sup> Also helpful here are Samuel Logan, Michael Haykin, Rhys Bezzant, Conrad Cherry, Peter Beck, Glenn Kreider, and Michael McClymond, Gerald McDermott,<sup>50</sup> as well as on the more popular/thoughtful level the

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<sup>47</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 26; Kyle Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards's Trinitarian Aesthetics" in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 148. He argues, "As a true theologian of the highest order, then, Edwards wandered into the desert of theological discourse, searching for the only fountain that would offer him eternal substance. The fountain Edwards found, the spring that nourishes his thought, is the triune God of glory. What propelled Edwards was a desire to speak meaningfully about the God who confronted him as the beautiful one who took on flesh for the sake of his beloved." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 2. See also Kyle Strobel, "The Beauty of Christ: Edwards and Balthasar on Theological Aesthetics," in *The Ecumenical Edwards*, ed. Kyle Strobel (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 91-110. Strobel reminds the reader of the work done by Balthasar in this area. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics I: Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009).

<sup>48</sup>Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory*, 31-167; Jensen, *America's Theologian*, 91-139; Morimoto, *Edwards and the Catholic Vision*, 14-36. See also McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 357-71; Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 56-70. It should be noted that in the area of Edwards's understanding of grace, Morimoto gives good insight, while in the area of justification he comes to some puzzling conclusions.

<sup>49</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual Practices of Jonathan Edwards* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 103-89. Lucas deals specifically with the means of grace in three of his chapters, "Means of Grace: The Ministry of the Word," "Means of Grace: The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," and "Means of Grace: Prayer, Personal and Global."

<sup>50</sup>Logan, "Justification and Evangelical Obedience," 95-127; Jonathan Edwards and Michael

work of Dane Ortlund, Douglas Sweeney and Owen Strachan, and John Piper are beneficial.<sup>51</sup>

### **Sanctification, Union, and Happiness**

The latest debates show the need for this kind of scholarship, especially in Reformed circles on sanctification. The work exists, from Walter Marshall's classic work, especially in understanding how justification and sanctification cohere, to many more classic and Puritan works on the subject.<sup>52</sup> Some of the more modern classic works on the subject have been written by G. C. Berkouwer, Herman Bavinck, Karl Barth, and Richard Gaffin, with Berkouwer's work being often referenced today in this area of study,<sup>53</sup> not to mention the help one can find in many systematic theologies.<sup>54</sup> In some of

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A. G. Haykin, *"A Sweet Flame": Piety in the Letters of Jonathan Edwards*, Profiles in Reformed Spirituality (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007); Rhys S. Bezzant, *Jonathan Edwards and the Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 126-58; Peter Beck, *The Voice of Faith: Jonathan Edwards's Theology of Prayer* (Guelph, ON: Joshua Press, 2010); Glenn R. Kreider, "Jonathan Edwards's Theology of Prayer," *Bibliotheca sacra* 160, no. 640 (2003): 434-56; McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 528-48. See also Donald S. Whitney, *Finding God in Solitude: The Personal Piety of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) and Its Influence on His Pastoral Ministry*, American University Studies Series 7, Theology and Religion, (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

<sup>51</sup>Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life*; Owen Strachan and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards on the Good Life*, The Essential Edwards Collection (Chicago: Moody, 2010); John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003); John Piper, *Future Grace* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1995).

<sup>52</sup>Walter Marshall, *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification Opened, in Sundry Practical Directions* (New York: Southwick and Pelsue, 1811); Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948); John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.); Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955); J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (London: William Hunt & Co, 1889); Richard Sibbs, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbs, D. D.*, ed. Alexander Balloch Grosart, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862-64); Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices, Being a Companion for Christians of All Denominations* (Philadelphia: J. Pounder, 1810).

<sup>53</sup>G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 4, *The Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, vol. 4, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pt. 2 (London: T & T Clark, 2004); Richard B. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013). On a critique of the work of both Berkouwer and Bavinck on the topic of sanctification with a corrective from the work of Jonathan Edwards, see Dane Ortlund, "Sanctification by Justification: How Christians Change," accessed January 16, 2017, <http://www.theologynetwork.org/christian-beliefs/the-holy-spirit-and-christian-living/getting-stuck-in-sanctification-by-justification--how-christians-change.htm#sdfootnote32anc>.

<sup>54</sup>See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 2:535-1008; Francis Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:689-724; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Oak Harbor, WA:



the newer systematic theologies one can discover more in-depth work on sanctification in dealing specifically with some of the issues of legalism and antinomianism, such as Michael Horton, Michael Bird, and John Frame.<sup>55</sup> Overall, there is need for more work on the topic of sanctification at the systematic level, where it often merely inhabits a small section in these larger works.

In light of the current debates, Mark Jones has been on the front lines arguing against what he considers antinomian tendencies, which often downplay any talk of responsibility or third use of the law, all the while warning of the specter of legalism.<sup>56</sup> Other helpful works have similar concerns, or deal with this area of sanctification in some manner, including books on the biblical understanding of sanctification<sup>57</sup> and issues of the third use of the law,<sup>58</sup> as well as work on the doctrine of sanctification specifically,

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Logos Research Systems, 1997), 3:213-58; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 527-44; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 980-95; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 746-63; Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 755-64; James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 2:356-72; John Theodore Mueller, *Dogmatic Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1934), 384-435; Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, Systematic Theology (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 212-57; Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 563-99; J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 2:83-117.

<sup>55</sup>Michael S. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 648-87; Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 513-607; John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 1099-115.

<sup>56</sup>Jones's whole book is a look at understanding antinomianism in the past so we can identify it today, bringing both past and present together to answer the assault seen in pulpits today. See Jones, *Antinomianism*. Here Jones does an excellent job of informing the reader of antinomianism in the past and defense of Reformed thinking today considering this discussion but does not work on the idea of happiness as Edwards does.

<sup>57</sup>Peterson, *Possessed by God*. See also Willem van Vlastuin, *Be Renewed: A Theology of Personal Renewal* (Bristol, CT: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); Bradley G. Green, *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014). Vlastuin has moments where he alludes to the ideas that will be presented in this dissertation, yet also misses the focus that is found in Edwards, as he is making some broader strokes of the brush regarding the doctrine of sanctification. Green also has a helpful small section on Edwards in his work. Green, *Covenant and Commandment*, 163-65.

<sup>58</sup>Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013). Other helpful works both old and new on the subject include Anthony Burgess, *A Vindication of the Moral Law and the Covenants, from Errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and More Especially Antinomians* (London: Underhill, 1646); William J. Dumbrell, "The Logic of the Role of the Law in Matthew 5:1-20," *Novum Testamentum* 23, no. 1 (1981); I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's Concept of the Law*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1992); Merwyn S. Johnson, "Calvin's Handling of the Third Use of the Law and Its

with the edited work of Kelly Kaptic being the most similar to what this dissertation is trying to do in answering the questions being asked today.<sup>59</sup> Another recently published work edited by Kent Eilers and Kyle Strobel approaches sanctification much as does this dissertation, in that it bases sanctification on the foundation of the Triune God of Scripture and thus works through four parts: (1) the gracious God who elects; (2) the graces of the Christian life; (3) the means of grace; and (4) the practices of grace.<sup>60</sup>

The topic of union with Christ recently has had the contribution of a great number of helpful works. The classic work of Andrew Murray on redemption is one of the older works, whose section on union is excellent, as well as the work of Michael Horton in this area, who not only brings helpful scholarship but also an adept look at what is happening in scholarship today from a Reformed and redemptive-historical perspective.<sup>61</sup> Grant Macaskill gives a helpful survey of this topic in his first chapter

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Problems,” in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, ed. Robert V. Schnucker, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1988); Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God: The Third Use of Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002); James Arne Nestingen, “Changing Definitions: The Law in Formula Vi,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 69, nos. 3-4 (2005); C. Marvin Pate, *The Reverse of the Curse: Paul, Wisdom, and the Law*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2 Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul: A Tradition Historical Enquiry into the Relation of Law, Wisdom, and Ethics*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2 Reihe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985); Timothy J. Wengert, *Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

<sup>59</sup>Kaptic, *Sanctification*. The work of Jonathan Edwards is mentioned twenty times, mostly in footnotes, but the term happiness is only used once in the book. However, most of the chapter contributions are extremely helpful, especially “Part One: Sanctified by Grace through Faith in Union with Christ” and “Part Two: Human Agency and Sanctification’s Relationship to Ethics,” although “Part Three: Theological and Pastoral Meditations on Sanctification” also proves to be helpful. Also, beneficial and working in the same direction is Jeffrey P. Greenman and George Kalantzis, eds., *Life in the Spirit: Spiritual Formation in Theological Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010). This work also helps to answer the questions that have arisen in modern study but does not emphasize the element of happiness that Edwards brings to the discussion.

<sup>60</sup>Kent Eilers, and Kyle Strobel, eds., *Sanctified by Grace: A Theology of the Christian Life* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014). This work has points of contact that are like themes that will come up in Edwards, from the Trinitarian foundation with which it uses to aspects of union, and its benefits as well as wisdom in the outworking of sanctification, yet there is still not the focus of happiness as the push and motivation in this area of theology as is seen in Edwards.

<sup>61</sup>John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 161-73; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007). Other works include Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 1997), 313-44; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*, Changing Paradigms in

“Participation and Union with Christ in New Testament scholarship,” which is of benefit in seeing some of the problematic directions in which some have gone with doctrine, from leanings toward mysticism to works based issues in the New Perspective, as well as problems with *theosis*, with some of these accusations being pointed at Jonathan Edwards’s theology.<sup>62</sup> In another newer work Marcus Johnson gives four reasons why this doctrine has not been incorporated into the heart of contemporary soteriological understanding: (1) it being subsumed in other theological categories in popular systematic theologies; (2) being assigned a secondary place after legal/forensic thinking; (3) a neglect of the study of church history; and (4) “reticence to embrace mystery at the heart of our confession.”<sup>63</sup> These works, and others like them, show a needed trend establishing a renewed interest in this essential doctrine of sanctification that has spawned so many works recently making it a popular doctrine.<sup>64</sup>

The idea and use of virtue in Jonathan Edwards becomes a fascinating occurrence, this especially considering the resurgence of the topic of virtue ethics. Although this dissertation is not about this resurgence, the topic of happiness, human flourishing, and ethics does come up and has influenced this work.<sup>65</sup> It is with the subject

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Historical and Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2008); Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Two-Fold Grace in Calvin’s Theology*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2008).

<sup>62</sup>Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17-31.

<sup>63</sup>Marcus Peter Johnson, *One with Christ: An Evangelical Theology of Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 25-28.

<sup>64</sup>Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011); James D. Gifford, *Perichoretic Salvation: The Believer’s Union with Christ as Third Type of Perichoresis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). A contemporary Reformed movement has union as a major part of its theology. Proponents want to be known for what they are instead of what they are against, as seen in, Myk Habets and Bobby Grow, *Evangelical Calvinism: Essays Resourcing the Continuing Reformation of the Church* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

<sup>65</sup>This research will refer to the work of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Augustine, but these are all authors whose books could not be found in Jonathan Edwards’s library. See Jonathan Edwards, *Catalogue*

of virtue ethics that Edwards becomes an engaging figure because he took the issue of happiness in conjunction with virtue, ethics, and thus obedience seriously, yet always with theology as his guide.<sup>66</sup> An important caveat is important to insert here, and this is where Edwards separates himself from much of the work in virtue ethics today, for he was at the end of the day a “true theologian.”<sup>67</sup> Here the schools of thought regarding Edwards, seeing Edwards as primarily a theologian or as primarily a philosopher, are important to note but it is sufficient to state that there are points of contact with Aristotelian thinking on the subjects of happiness and virtue, but in the end, Aristotle’s accounts fall short in Edwards’s moral anthropology.<sup>68</sup> In this point of contact there is a good amount of work that has been done on the topic of happiness,<sup>69</sup> with Ellen Charry documenting and continuing the philosophical and theological conversation.<sup>70</sup> Also worth noting and helpful is the work of Brent Strawn, Paul Wadell, Darrin McMahon, and especially N. T. Wright.<sup>71</sup> It is also important to note regarding happiness, that Edwards

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*of Books*, ed. Harry S. Stout, and Peter J. Thuesen, *WJE*, vol. 26 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 319-60. He very well could have had access to the works of these men when he was at Yale studying, as it regards the topic of human flourishing or happiness, but knowing what he had read and that with which he was familiar, cannot be known with certainty.

<sup>66</sup>Wilson and Porter claim, “He enters the philosophical debates of his time precisely as a theologian, and it is his theological perspective which grounds both his critical acuity and his originality. For this reason, if for no other, his writings offer much of interest and value, both to those interested in the general relation of moral beliefs to religious claims, and to those engaged in the task of constructive theological ethics.” Stephen A. Wilson and Jean Porter, “Jonathan Edwards,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 189.

<sup>67</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 2. Strobel states, “Grasping Edwards’s true vocation as a theologian enables us to see that Edwards’s thought is, ultimately, *theologically* oriented. Along these lines, I suggest that the Jonathan Edwards of history is the Jonathan Edwards found in his corpus—a *Reformed* theologian, pastor, apologist and missionary who interpreted all reality through the lens of the gospel and, ultimately, God’s own life, what Edwards depicted as the ‘supreme harmony of all.’ This harmony, *in nuce*, provides both the teleology for Edwards’s theological task and the interpretive scheme. Rather than seeing this theological task as secondary to the breadth of his thought, I take it to be the centerpiece, the fountain from which all else flows.” Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 2.

<sup>68</sup>See Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 143.

<sup>69</sup>Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Nicholas P. White, *A Brief History of Happiness* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006); Martha Craven Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); William C. Mattison, *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008).

<sup>70</sup>Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>71</sup>Brent A. Strawn, ed., *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness: What the Old and New*

was not the first to articulate that God, being the source of our happiness, is eternally happy,<sup>72</sup> yet it is a truth that needs to be brought to the conversation today on sanctification, for it is where one can receive a context regarding what happens in union that overflows in living out the Christian's position. This direction also anchors the Christian life to the Godhead.

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*Testaments Teach Us about the Good Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Paul J. Wadell, *Happiness and the Christian Moral Life: An Introduction to Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006); N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

<sup>72</sup>Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, *The Divine Essence and Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 381-82. Also, note the work of Augustine in this area. See Augustine, *Trilogy on Faith and Happiness*, The Augustine Series, vol. 6, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland J. Teske, Michael J. Campbell, and Ray Kearney (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2010).

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SANCTIFICATION DEBATE: BRIDGING CONTEXTS

In today's theological milieu the doctrine of sanctification is increasingly under discussion. As there is nothing new under the sun, that there is an ongoing debate concerning sanctification is not out of the ordinary. The contention on the doctrine of sanctification usually comes from the distinctions that are found in Reformed, Lutheran, Wesleyan, Pentecostal, Keswick and Contemplative traditions.<sup>1</sup> Today one can find the heaviest skirmishes in this debate occurring in Reformed circles, which hold the same theological presuppositions concerning Scripture and an emphasis on God's sovereignty in the work of salvation. The tensions found in Scripture concerning this essential doctrine, as this debate makes evident, do indeed need to be the focus of more in-depth study and scholarship. The Word of God needs to be the final arbiter concerning the truth of sanctification and thus the relationship to which every believer is called, all the while looking to the past to learn from it regarding the truth of this important doctrine as the Church steps towards tomorrow.

#### **The Current Sanctification Debate**

The battleground that has occupied the collective evangelical mindset over the last several decades has been in the fight for right thinking in the critical area of

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<sup>1</sup>The differences between these views on sanctification can be observed in Donald Alexander and Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988); Melvin Easterday Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987); Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology: Spirit-Given Life: God's People, Present and Future*, Integrative Theology, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 171-87; Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy, *Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 161-82; Christopher James Bosson, "A Scriptural Appraisal of the Necessary Connection between Progressive Sanctification and Compatibilist Freedom" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 67-107.

justification. Reformed academics have been on the frontlines of many of these crucial battles to establish the truth of justification by faith alone, yet a season of concerted effort in defense of justification has given way to what one author calls a “new season with new challenges.”<sup>2</sup> At the heart of these new challenges are the issues of grace and works, with the tension being between the work of God and what the believer is called to do in sanctification. One can observe this debate most notably over the argument over effort in the Christian life that occurred at the Gospel Coalition.<sup>3</sup> It is also an issue that goes deeper into the evangelical climate so that this interaction is just but an example of a continuing discussion.

### **The Reformed View of Sanctification**

In the *WLC* “sanctification” is defined in answer to question 75:

Sanctification is a work of God’s grace, whereby they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.<sup>4</sup>

In this precise definition, indicative of the Reformed view, one can see the definitive facet of sanctification in what God has done in Christ through the giving of the Holy Spirit at salvation, as well as the progressive aspect in the definitive position being worked out in the life of a believer. This already/not yet reality makes this definition faithful to the biblical witness, but also challenging to comprehend, making one realize

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<sup>2</sup>Kapic, *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 9. Kapic continues this thought elucidating, “Evangelicals in particular demonstrate strong signs of a growing need to revisit the topic of sanctification. Fresh concern about this vital theological locus is surfacing, which is wonderful since this is where the church so often lives and breathes.” Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>A summary of the debate with hyperlinks with both sides can be seen at Justin Taylor, “Gospel, Grace and Effort,” *The Gospel Coalition*, June 11, 2011, accessed September 21, 2015, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/06/14/gospel-grace-and-effort/>.

<sup>4</sup>*WLC* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), Question 75.

that there is more to sanctification than just a simple definition.<sup>5</sup> It is the truth of both the position of the believer as made holy by God’s grace, or determinative sanctification, and progressive sanctification, becoming in life what one already is in position that can be difficult to understand.<sup>6</sup> For Reformed evangelicals know that it is by grace through faith that anyone is saved (Eph 2:8-9), and thus the Christian is sanctified in position or definitively, which in a continued work of grace is worked out progressively in obedience and thus growth. But there are still questions surrounding the imperatives for believers that are found in Scripture and words like, “strive” as seen in 2 Peter 1:5, “put to death” in Romans 8:13, and “work out” in Philippians 2:12, to name a few.<sup>7</sup> These facets and distinctions, in sanctification, are important in this discussion, but also are at the heart of much of the dialogue concerning this doctrine.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Erickson, a moderate Calvinist, brings these two aspects together in his definition of sanctification: “The divine act of making the believer actually holy—that is, bringing the person’s moral condition into conformity with the legal status established in justification.” Millard J. Erickson, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 175.

<sup>6</sup>Frame helps to define these aspects of sanctification per the Reformed view: “The instantaneous beginning of sanctification is called *definitive sanctification*, contrasted with the ongoing process of *progressive sanctification*. The first is a single act of God that happens at a single point in time. The second is a continuing work of God with which he calls us to cooperate. This distinction reflects the fact we have noted, that for the believer holiness is both a fact and a command.” Later in dealing specifically with progressive sanctification he adds, “But sanctification is not only that initial reorientation. It is also our gradual growth in holiness and righteousness, our progress in God’s way, the way of good works. This is what we usually think of when we hear the word *sanctification*.” John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 986-87. See also John Murray, *The Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), 2:277-317.

<sup>7</sup>There is also the theological vernacular of both “passive” and “active” sanctification that comes into use because of the truth of both the determinative and progressive aspects of sanctification. This understanding points to the believer’s effort, or lack thereof, involved in these different facets of the work of God in employing the benefits of justification in sanctification. See Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 4, *The Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, vol. 4, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, pt. 2 (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 252-56.

<sup>8</sup>Peterson would see definitions that deal with the progressive aspect of sanctification, as inadequate. See David Peterson, *Transformed by God: New Covenant Life and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 13. Peterson cites Hoekema, “that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which he delivers us from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to him,” stating that this “obscures the distinctive meaning and value of the terminology in the New Testament, confusing sanctification with renewal and transformation.” See Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 192. Peterson points to the biblical precedent placed on the aspect of definitive aspect working through the texts of Scripture to prove his point, which is a point that is neglected all too often, yet in his exuberance to put the spotlight on definitive sanctification he misses what is often the most debated and confusing aspect of sanctification, which comes out of the definitive in progressive sanctification. Both aspects need to be understood, which comes together often with the emphasis in



Those holding an orthodox position of sanctification have always accepted that people are not only to believe, but also to live out the truth of the already/not yet reality, so the disagreements in today's debate primarily occur over the relationship between justification and sanctification.<sup>9</sup> It is with these disagreements that union, in the Reformed view, becomes an important component in the discussion.<sup>10</sup> It is because of the positional aspect of definitive sanctification that one has in being united to Christ, that the progressive aspect can then work its way out in obedience, which is all dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit. Murray can thus state,

The newness of life is not static but dynamic, needing continual renewal, growth, and transformation. A believer deeply conscious of his or her shortcoming does not need to say, because I am still a sinner, I cannot consider myself a new person. Rather, he or she should say, I am a new person, but I still have a lot of growing to do.<sup>11</sup>

It is in this vein that the Reformed view of Sanctification can often have the moniker of "Sanctification as Holiness in Christ and Personal Conduct,"<sup>12</sup> with a focus on union as well as mortification and vivification.<sup>13</sup>

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Reformed circles on the importance of union with Christ.

<sup>9</sup>Boyd and Eddy, *Across the Spectrum*, 162. The authors write, "All agree that believers are justified by grace through faith. But what then does sanctification accomplish? Does it in any sense make one more holy? Is it a necessary part of salvation? And how are Christians to grow in it?" Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>As Boyd and Eddy point out, the Reformed view anchors "its interpretation in the biblical teaching that believers are united with Christ in his death and resurrection through faith and that from participation in *Christ*, holiness in life can emerge." Ibid., 167. Ferguson, using Galatians 2:20, summarizes union by stating, "Sanctification is simply the outworking of this communion." Sinclair Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 74.

<sup>11</sup>Murray, *The Collected Writings*, 1:82.

<sup>12</sup>See Boyd and Eddy, *Across the Spectrum*, 167.

<sup>13</sup>This frame of thinking goes back to Calvin who wrote of the double grace one has by faith in justification and sanctification explaining, "Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 1:725. Yet Calvin also alluded to sanctification in terms of repentance stating, "Repentance can thus be well defined: it is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit." Ibid., 1:597. This later notion is most notably elucidated by another Reformed scholar in John Owen in his volume on "The Mortification of Sin." See John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 6 (Edinburgh:

## The Debate in Reformed Circles

If the standard Reformed response consists in what is indicative of the above argument, why are there any issues in Reformed circles? At the heart of this debate is the legitimate concern about the commands to obedience on the one side, and the abuse of grace in the Christian life on the other, with the primary contention being on the place of effort. More specifically, the questions in this debate involve the connection of the law with the gospel as it concerns obedience.<sup>14</sup>

The latest big debate began in a blog post by Kevin DeYoung in 2011, where he wrote that effort is no four-letter word, being commanded in passages such as 2 Peter 1:5 as well as in many more places in the New Testament.<sup>15</sup> This blog post began a back and forth between DeYoung and Tullian Tchividjian who answered back in a post he entitled, “Work Hard! But in Which Direction?”<sup>16</sup> The debate also ignited many more discussions that filled the blogosphere as well as an award-winning book from Tchividjian. In response to Tchividjian’s book Mark Jones provided a history of this debate and brought that to bear on what is happening in today’s discussion.<sup>17</sup>

Kevin DeYoung comes to the discussion regarding sanctification bringing the traditional Reformed rhetoric along with a good portion of Scriptural support (2 Pet 1:5;

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T & T Clark, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup>See Michael J. Kruger, “When You Fail to Distinguish Second and Third Use of the Law: A Response to Tullian Tchividjian,” *The Aquilla Report*, May 12, 2014, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://theaquilareport.com/when-you-fail-to-distinguish-second-and-third-use-of-the-law/>.

<sup>15</sup>Kevin DeYoung, “Make Every Effort,” *The Gospel Coalition*, June 7, 2011, accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2011/06/07/make-every-effort/>.

<sup>16</sup>Tchividjian’s posts have been taken down from the website because of the backlash from these online dialogues, and his own website *Liberate* has also been taken down because of his fall from ministry. The reader can still get an idea of the issues in DeYoung’s posts, as well as a mention of the debate in a post by Justin Taylor. See Taylor, “Gospel, Grace and Effort.”

<sup>17</sup>For a small offering that highlights some of the give and take see Daniel Townsend, “Tullian Tchividjian and the Sanctification Debate among Evangelicals,” *Examiner.com*, June 7, 2014, accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.examiner.com/article/tullian-tchividjian-and-the-sanctification-debate-among-evangelicals>. Tchividjian’s book garnered the Christianity Today’s 2012 Book of the Year, Tullian Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011). For Jones’s response see Mark Jones, *Antinomianism: Reformed Theology’s Unwelcome Guest?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013).

Rom 8:13; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:12; Luke 13:24; and Eph 2:12-13). On the other side of the argument, Tullian Tchividjian is responding from the standpoint of being disillusioned with all the talk of effort.<sup>18</sup> Here one can glean that Tchividjian is also concerned about legalism in the church, propounding that “many sermons today provide nothing more than a ‘to do’ list . . . it is all law (what we must do) and no gospel (what Jesus has done).”<sup>19</sup> These are valid concerns, for it is all too often a reality not only in many churches today, but also a struggle in the hearts of many believers coming to a proper understanding of the gospel in the truths of position and practice. The problem is the extent to which Tchividjian and those who argue this point have gone in deemphasizing obedience, so much so that there is a shift in the balance of the needed tension that the Bible puts on both the truth of grace as well as that of effort in obedience. It is because of this stance that some have called Tchividjian antinomian in his leanings.<sup>20</sup> It is here that Jones points to the consequences of this kind of rhetoric contending,

How does this fit with Paul’s exhortation to work out our salvation with fear and trembling? Paul surely did not reduce Christian living to contemplating Christ—after all, in 1 Thessalonians 5, toward the end of the chapter, Paul lists over fifteen imperatives. But Tchividjian’s type of antinomian-sounding exegesis impacts churches all over North America.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>DeYoung, “Make Every Effort.” Tchividjian outlines his personal journey in his book Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing*, 17-24.

<sup>19</sup>Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing*, 49.

<sup>20</sup>Packer informs about the position, “Antinomians among the Reformed have always seen themselves as reacting in the name of free grace against a hangover of legalistic, works-based bondage in personal discipleship. Characteristically, they have affirmed, not that the Mosaic law, under which Jesus lived and which was basic to his own moral teaching, does not after all state God’s true standards for human living, but that it and its sanctions have no direct relevance to us once we have closed with Christ. Distinctive to Reformed theology from its birth has been its insistence that salvation, both relationally in justification and transformationally in sanctification, is ours entirely by virtue of our grace-given union with Christ in his death and resurrection—a union that God the Holy Spirit creates and sustains. Within this biblical framework, the key error of antinomianism in all its forms has been to treat our union with Christ as involving in effect some degree of personal absorption into Christ, such that the law as a voice from God no longer speaks to us or of us directly. From this starting point, the phalanx of antinomian teachers spread out, celebrating different aspects of the assured confidence and joy in Christ that this supposedly biblical move of muzzling the law is thought to have opened for us.” J. I. Packer, foreword to *Antinomianism: Reformed Theology’s Unwelcomed Guest*, by Mark Jones (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013), ix-x.

<sup>21</sup>Jones, *Antinomianism*, 116. See also, Mark Jones, “Tullian’s Trench,” *Reformation 21*, May, 2014, accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/my-offer-to-publicly-debate.php>.

Tullian Tchividjian's main contention is, as mentioned in the introduction, that sanctification is "the daily hard work of going back to the reality of our justification."<sup>22</sup> It is here with this focus that one can assert that Tchividjian confuses the doctrines of justification and sanctification.<sup>23</sup> The mantra of grace, grace and more grace, although true, can be taken as not focusing enough on that to which God has called the Christian in grace; or focusing so much on the indicatives of Scripture without a proper focus on the imperatives.<sup>24</sup> This emphasis on grace is where Tchividjian brings some needed encouragement to the truth of position, which is solely by grace, and even in this acknowledges that effort is required; yet he misses the need and emphasis for action that is so much a part of Scripture.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately this contention escalated to the parting of ways of Tchividjian and The Gospel Coalition.<sup>26</sup> These events were then followed by a

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<sup>22</sup>Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing*, 95. He further argues, "God works his work in you, which is the work already accomplished by Christ. Our work, therefore, means coming to a greater understanding of his work," 96. Ultimately his definition of sanctification is, "the daily hard work of going back to the reality of our justification," 95. This sentiment is what Lutheran theologian Gerhard Forde argues, who states, "Sanctification is thus simply *the art of getting used to justification*" (italics original). Gerhard O. Forde, "The Lutheran View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 13. See also Mark A. Seifrid, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: An Introduction to the Distinction between Law and Gospel," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 56-68.

<sup>23</sup>Even though Tchividjian has stated that change is necessary for the Christian life, yet at times his rhetoric sounded a little too close to the criticism of Reformed justification that does not affect sanctification. As the Catholic historian Gilson purported, "For the first time, with the Reformation, there appeared this conception of a grace that saves a man without changing him, of a justice that redeems corrupted nature without restoring it, of a Christ who pardons the sinner for self-inflicted wounds but does not heal them." Etienne Gilson and Alfred Howard Campbell Downes, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Gifford Lectures (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1936), 421.

<sup>24</sup>Kevin DeYoung, "Gospel-Driven Effort," *The Gospel Coalition*, June 14, 2011, accessed September 28, 2011, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2011/06/14/gospel-driven-effort/>.

<sup>25</sup>DeYoung reminds the reader of the words of Ryle who asks "whether it is wise to speak of faith as the one thing needful, and the only thing required, as many seem to do nowadays in handling the doctrine of sanctification? Is it wise to proclaim in so bald, naked, and unqualified a way as many do that the holiness of converted people is by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion?" J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots* (London: William Hunt & Co, 1889), xvii-xviii. See DeYoung, "Gospel-Driven Effort."

<sup>26</sup>Here is TGC's response in the wake of parting ways, "In Tullian's case, it was obvious to observers that for some time there has been an increasingly strident debate going on around the issue of sanctification. The differences were doctrinal and probably even more matters of pastoral practice and wisdom. Recently it became clear that the dispute was becoming increasingly sharp and divisive rather than moving toward greater unity. Earlier in the year our executive director spent two days with Tullian in Florida. Coming out of that meeting, it was decided that Tullian would move his blog. Finally the Council at its meeting last week decided that Tullian should move his blog immediately, and we communicated this conclusion to Tullian." Tim Keller and D. A. Carson, "On Some Recent Changes at TGC," *The Gospel*

sad turn of events with Tchividjian stepping down from ministry for personal reasons. Even with Tchividjian's absence, however, this debate over sanctification is far from over.

Even though the players in the discussion on sanctification might change, the debate and struggle over sanctification will continue. These latest dialogues have, in a positive sense, put the spotlight on the essential doctrine of sanctification, with the continuing discussion of vital questions regarding the Christian life. This phenomenon is occurring, not only amid the debates that have been highlighted and taken so much room on blogs everywhere in the Reformed world but also at a time when there is a resurgence of Reformed thinking, which can also bring abuses of God's grace. These events also come at a time where holiness has become somewhat passé.<sup>27</sup> The focus on the important doctrine of sanctification is needed, for it is where the Christian lives. As one author reminds the church, "The theme of the Christian life or sanctification brings us to the very heart of Christian theology . . . . Every theology that fails to draw a line to the heart and life of the Christian is and remains theoretical."<sup>28</sup>

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*Coalition*, May 21, 2014, accessed October 3, 2014, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/on-some-recent-changes-at-tgc/>.

<sup>27</sup>Packer has reminded both the church and the academy of this often, explicating in one source, "As holiness is a neglected priority throughout the modern church generally, so it is specifically a fading glory in today's evangelical world. Historically, holiness has been a leading mark of evangelical people, just as it has been a central emphasis among their teachers. Think of Luther's stress on faith producing good works and of Calvin's insistence on the third use of the law as code and spur for God's children. Think of the Puritans demanding a changed life as evidence of regeneration and hammering away at the need for everything in personal and community life to be holiness to the Lord. Think of the Dutch and German Pietists stressing the need for a pure heart expressed in a pure life and of John Wesley proclaiming that "scriptural holiness" was Methodism's main message. Think of the so-called holiness revival of the second half of the nineteenth century and of the classic volume by J. C. Ryle, *Holiness* (still in print and selling well after more than 100 years), and of the thrust of the thought of such latter-day teachers as Oswald Chambers, Andrew Murray, A.W. Tozer, Watchman Nee, and John White. In the past, the uncompromising evangelical quest for holiness was awesome in its intensity. Yet that which was formerly a priority and a passion has become a secondary matter for us who bear the evangelical name today." J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 83.

<sup>28</sup>Willem van Vlastuin, *Be Renewed: A Theology of Personal Renewal* (Bristol, CT: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 13.

## Sanctification and the Context of Jonathan Edwards

The historical background of Jonathan Edwards's work and ministry was one that was dominated by the Enlightenment, yet also was one that was influenced by the Great Awakening of which Edwards played a part. This landscape challenged the Reformed views of the doctrine of sanctification that emphasized both the sovereignty of God in redemption as well as the necessity of obedience in the believer's life. An exuberance over the ability of humankind governed the thinking of the day that also came with the absence of God in much of the naturalism that was indicative of the age and worked itself out into a liberal form of Arminianism that put an undo emphasis on nature.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the work of God in the midst of the colonies in the Awakening fostered, in several circles, a flawed understanding of grace, where it overwhelmed nature in the process of sanctification with a bent toward enthusiasm in a growing antinomianism. These were two threats that Edwards would defend against throughout his ministry, responding as a Reformed academic and pastor.<sup>30</sup>

### Edwards and the Arminian Threat

On the one side of what Jonathan Edwards faced theologically, which Enlightenment thinking exacerbated, was the ubiquitous threat of Arminianism.<sup>31</sup> This

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<sup>29</sup>Chamberlain explicates, "Both antinomianism and Arminianism result from a similar, yet dialectically opposed, misunderstanding of the proper relation between nature and grace. Antinomianism allows grace to overwhelm nature, while Arminianism collapses the realm of grace into that of nature. An appropriate response to both heresies is, therefore, the construction of a relation between the two terms that, while preserving the integrity of human nature, permits the sovereign operation of grace. *Religious Affections* and *True Virtue* each uses this method as a response to the threat of heresy, but the specific argument in each text is shaped by the identity of its opponent and the character of the debate from which it arose." Ava Chamberlain, "Jonathan Edwards Against the Antinomians and Arminians" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1990), Abstract.

<sup>30</sup>Cho attests, "In this situation, Edwards, as a faithful Calvinist, realized that he should appropriately respond to such serious challenges to his Calvinistic tradition." Hyun-Jin Cho, *Jonathan Edwards on Justification* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2012), 48. Cho also alerts the reader to Moody's comment, "Edwards' target was not Arminius and the Remonstrance of 1610, nor was it the intricacies Deistic philosophy. Rather, under both these labels Edwards was aiming at what he took to be the humanization, the rationalization, the naturalization, of the gospel." Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment: Knowing the Presence of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 17.

<sup>31</sup>Chamberlain observes, "As the dialectical opposite of antinomianism, Arminianism develops whenever the desire to maintain the integrity of human nature acquires a force sufficient to affect a reformulation of the means of salvation. In consequence of this redistribution of emphases, the doctrines

thinking goes back to the work of Arminius,<sup>32</sup> yet it was in the context of Edwards's day that Calvinism faced a liberal Arminianism that was more indicative of the Age of Enlightenment, where a man-centered ethos was becoming more and more dominant.<sup>33</sup> Of this thinking, Edwards would declare that it "began the great noise that was in this part of the country about Arminianism, which seems to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here."<sup>34</sup> This extreme brand of works based theology against which Edwards would preach and write during his ministry bends the integrity of human nature. Ava Chamberlain argues that this "collapses the realm of grace into that of nature as a means of increasing the stature of human being and magnifying its capacities."<sup>35</sup> It was a focus on the extreme of nature and thus ability, which pushed the pendulum swing towards legalism.

Although Jonathan Edwards would defend Calvinistic doctrine concerning justification by faith alone, this Arminian thinking also affected a proper thinking on sanctification.<sup>36</sup> Edwards would speak against this threat in several monumental sermons in the 1730's. These addresses included, "God Glorified in Man's Dependence,"

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that appear to compromise creaturely integrity, such as predestination, total depravity, moral determinism and eternal damnation, are either rejected or reinterpreted. The individual acquires a degree of autonomy in the redemptive process at the expense of the divine initiative. And the interrelation between the constellation of attributes associated with the deity is appropriately modified." Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 219-20.

<sup>32</sup>Edwards gives a history of this thinking in Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson and John E. Smith, *WJE*, vol. 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 431-32.

<sup>33</sup>Sweeney articulates, "Arminian to Edwards, meant opposed to the Reformation and its glorious doctrines of grace, opposed to the biblical truth that sinners are saved supernaturally—and only supernaturally—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone." Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word: A Model of Faith and Thought* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 115. See also Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 53; Cho, *Edwards on Justification*, 55.

<sup>34</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. Harry S. Stout and C. C. Goen, *WJE*, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 148.

<sup>35</sup>Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 39.

<sup>36</sup>Lee points out, "Following his Reformed predecessors, Edwards wanted to sharply distinguish justification from sanctification as well as see the two as inseparably related." Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 86.

published as a pamphlet under the title, *God Glorified in the Work of Redemption* (1731), followed by a series of sermons on “Justification by Faith Alone,” and “A Divine and Supernatural Light.”<sup>37</sup> But it was with *Freedom of the Will, Original Sin*, and the two dissertations, *God’s End in Creation* and *True Virtue*, that Edwards would write a series of treatises against the specter of Arminianism that would attempt to wash out the sovereignty of God, placing man at the center of the universe.

In the main argument of Jonathan Edwards’s *magna opus*, *Freedom of the Will*, he unwraps the Arminian position showing that the will is not a creative entity, but something that responds to the influence of the mind in what is most desirable. It ultimately comes down to the question, “Who is the first cause in the determination of choices?” Is it humankind or God? The Arminian position would make the will an uncaused cause and confuses the effect for a cause, which turns the Scriptures and its view of God on its head.<sup>38</sup> Also the Arminian, in giving up the doctrine of total depravity, the importance of which is observed in Edwards’s work *Original Sin*, not only confuses the function of the will and the mind but also does not take into consideration the whole concept of real freedom regarding the plight of humanity because of the fall. According to Edwards, we are free, but not free to act contrary to our nature.<sup>39</sup> So for the non-redeemed, the freedom is there but the proper object, which is God, is missing. It is in

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<sup>37</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 200-16; Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 143-242; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 405-26.

<sup>38</sup>Chamberlain asserts that the liberal Arminian threat of Edwards day had re-conceptualized the Puritan God, having revolted against what they saw as Edwards’s depiction of God, who which was to them a God as tyrant conception. This revolt came to put benevolence over sovereignty as God’s primary attribute, which would turn everything regarding one’s understanding of God upside down with man in the center of it all. See Chamberlain, “Edwards Against the Antinomians,” 232; Jonathan Mayhew, *Two Sermons on the Nature, Extent and Perfection of the Divine Goodness. Delivered December 9. 1762, Being the Annual Thanksgiving of the Province, &C., on Psalm 145. 9* (Boston: Printed and sold by D. and J. Kneeland, opposite to the Probate-Office, 1763), 44.

<sup>39</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 305; Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: *Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 71.



this critical thought that Edwards would build a foundation that would have God as its center as the beauty of the object that is not only essential to salvation but also what will follow in the motive for obedience, which the Arminian framework was lacking.

Jonathan Edwards would continue his barrage against the Arminian threat, arguing along the same lines that were established in *Freedom of the Will*, and in his two dissertations *True Virtue* and *End for Which God Created the World*.<sup>40</sup> In these works Edwards labors to show the proper tension that is always constant in sanctification, of which Ava Chamberlain argues, “Edwards attempts to reestablish first from the perspective of human morality and then from the perspective of the divine agency the traditional distinction between nature and grace.”<sup>41</sup> It is here that Edwards deals with the issues of both ability as well as motive in sanctification. In these works Edwards argues not only concerning one coming to a knowledge of God in salvation but also that for which the Christian was created, thus articulating a theology of sanctification, based on what God had already done in justification all because of union with Christ. But Arminianism was not the only threat to sanctification that was seen during this time, for there was another abuse, which focused on the extreme of grace and thus motive, which loomed on the other side of the pendulum swing toward antinomianism and away from the necessary tension found in sanctification.

### **Edwards and Antinomian Threat**

On the other side of what Jonathan Edwards faced theologically were the

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<sup>40</sup>Note that Edwards was building an argument with the two dissertations, as Ramsey points in testifying concerning the necessary connection of these works: “Instead, Edwards’ argument is greatly foreshortened at that point in the text of *True Virtue*, so much so that to comprehend it would require rereading the argument of *End of Creation*. Edwards expected his readers already to have gone through *End of Creation*; and, with both dissertations in hand, to be able to refer to it, and reread, when first reading *True Virtue*. This internal evidence seems to me compelling. The reader now has the two dissertations before him in the sequence in which Edwards intended them to be understood—plus the prospect of beginning with Edwards’ first and major account of a truly virtuous and holy life, for which objective moral end God created the world.” Paul Ramsey, introduction to *Ethical Writings*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>41</sup>Chamberlain, “Edwards Against the Antinomians,” 242.

dangers of Antinomianism. The New England divine had inherited the effect of the Antinomian Controversy of 1636-38,<sup>42</sup> which was influencing the extreme of New Light radicals in Edwards's day.<sup>43</sup> Antinomianism, as Ava Chamberlain defines it, is "the product of a movement away from the orthodox equilibrium in the direction of grace."<sup>44</sup> Antinomianism was the issue in this New England controversy, with the heart of the issue being whether or not sanctification could evidence justification.<sup>45</sup> This context pointed to the fact that this dispute in the Massachusetts Bay Colony could be called, as Mark Jones dictates, the "free grace controversy."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>For a background of what was happening in the context of the controversy, which then also had repercussions for Edwards thinking and what he faced. See Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 13-33. What is compelling in this reading, specifically with this research, in the lines that were drawn between the "Intellectual Fathers" and the "Spiritual Brethren," is that Edwards would hold to a view that was *via media* between the two. He held to many of the tenants of the Intellectual Fathers, but also would lean in the direction of the Spiritual Brethren, of whom he was considered a part, in the outworking of classic Reformed doctrine.

<sup>43</sup>The New Lights were a group that grew out of the landscape of the revivals of the time. Edwards would align himself with the New Lights in embracing the Great Awakening, but also would distance himself from them. This distancing was because of the evangelical extremism of the New Lights in their theology of continuous revelation and for their antinomianism that showed signs of growth during and following the Great Awakening. Even though they were a minority group during this time, they were "enormous in the history of American Protestantism." Robert Brockway, "Theological Parties in New England and the Middle Colonies in the Early Eighteenth Century," *Crane Review* 8 (1966): 134. See also 127. Specifically the work of James Davenport who was an evangelist of time, who was a Great Awakening enthusiast plagued many who stood against this kind of antinomianism, see Harry S. Stout, introduction to *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Harry S. Stout, Nathan O. Hatch, and Kyle P. Farley, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 40-47.

<sup>44</sup>Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 61. Jinkins defines antinomianism as the name "applied with rancour to sectarians who promoted the view that Christians are free from obligation of observing the moral law." Michael Jinkins, "John Cotton and the Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Profile of Experiential Individualism in American Puritanism," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43, no. 3 (1990): 324.

<sup>45</sup>William K. B. Stoeber, "Nature, Grace and John Cotton: The Theological Dimension in the New England Antinomian Controversy," *Church History* 44, no. 1 (1975): 22. Chamberlain argues, "The Antinomianism that appeared in Massachusetts Bay in the 1630's is primarily defined by its theological objection to the orthodox claim that sanctification can function as evidence of justification. Arguing that the use of behavior as grounds for assurance results in a mere legal righteousness, Hutchinson and her followers advocated a doctrine of the immediate witness of the Spirit." Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 73.

<sup>46</sup>Jones, *Antinomianism*, 9. Jones takes this from Winship who posits concerning the controversy around John Cotton, stating, "the dispute revolved around how to best magnify the free grace of God, and to call it the free grace controversy seems both descriptively accurate and prejudicial to none of the actors." Michael P. Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1. Winthrop also points out that the theology of the "Hutchinsonians" worked its way out into practice, writing that they "grew (many of them) very loose and degenerate in their practices." John Winthrop, "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruine of the Antinomians, Familists and Libertines," in *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A*

The Antinomian Controversy, into which Jonathan Edwards would step, was one that began with the preaching and rhetoric of John Cotton and then was picked up by one of his parishioners Anne Hutchinson. It was because of the latter's immigration to New England that this controversy had been enlivened, bringing with her commitment to Cotton and contempt for every other preacher she deemed to be "preaching nothing more and nothing less than a covenant of works."<sup>47</sup> Cotton would later distance himself from Hutchinson as she was excommunicated from the Boston Church. The Synod of Elders considered the teachings at the heart of this antinomian thinking "unsafe,"<sup>48</sup> yet the heart of that which she would propagate would be assumed by radicals who would form the Antinomian threat of Edwards's day that came with the advent of the Great Awakening.

This new threat of antinomianism came with a group that embraced the Great Awakening with all that accompanied it, with all its subjectivism, enthusiasm and ecstatic response.<sup>49</sup> At the heart of the mantra perpetuated by the radicals of the day was "grace," which manifested itself in direct revelation. The emphasis with these radicals was on experience and subjective feelings, and a rejection of the law as a barometer to measure the piety of a believer, being what one called a "radical supernaturalism."<sup>50</sup> This emphasis on grace not only had enormous implications regarding the doctrine of justification but also concerning sanctification,<sup>51</sup> which can be seen in Jonathan

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*Documentary History*, ed. David D. Hall (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), 216.

<sup>47</sup>Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 289. See also Cho, *Edwards on Justification*, 60-61.

<sup>48</sup>Joseph Barlow Felt, *The Ecclesiastical History of New England* (Boston: Congregational Library Association, 1855), 1:318.

<sup>49</sup>There were several parties in this debate. The Old Lights opposed certain aspects of the revival of Great Awakening, while the New Lights embraced it, and then there was Edwards who was more a part of the New Lights, but also found himself many times in the middle, and was a part of what would be called the New Divinity. See Brockway, "Theological Parties in New England," 127.

<sup>50</sup>Cho, *Edwards on Justification*, 62, 64. This radical stance on grace is also like the thinking that Calvin warned concerning certain Anabaptists conjuring up "some sort of frenzied excess instead of spiritual regeneration." Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:606.

<sup>51</sup>Note Waddington's testimony, "Pastorally, Edwards wanted to avoid both dangers of legalism and antinomianism in his doctrine of justification by faith." Jeffery C. Waddington, "Jonathan Edwards's 'Ambiguous and Somewhat Precarious' Doctrine of Justification," *Westminster Theological*

Edwards's argument directly against this threat in detailing obedience or Christian practice as a sign of justification.<sup>52</sup>

It was in Jonathan Edwards's work *Religious Affections* that he would attack the overemphasis on grace observed in this kind of antinomianism. For in this labor Edwards would work through what had happened in the Great Awakening and thus attempt to think through what is acceptable religion in the sight of God.<sup>53</sup> Edwards would conclude that the actions spring from the affections that, as God transforms the heart in redemption and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, are changed from the world to God, seeing his beauty and thus being affected by it. The affections then are worked out in "lively actings" and thus are what is indicative of true religion.<sup>54</sup>

There is a connection to the antinomianism of Jonathan Edwards's day, although more radical, with the antinomianism found today. In both manifestations, grace is exalted at the expense of nature, which as Ava Chamberlain remarks, alters one's "conception of the nature and function of sanctification within religious life," eliminating sanctification altogether.<sup>55</sup> The extreme focus on grace takes away what redemption was to accomplish, which is the transformation of the believer in union with Christ. Union, according to Edwards, involves the infusion of the Holy Spirit which is necessary for the affections to be altered because of the beauty of the object, which in the believer is now God instead of self or the world. Edwards was also aware of a person's penchant for self-deception, arguing for the Reformed dependence on Christian practice, as seen in his

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*Journal* 66 (2004): 370.

<sup>52</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 407.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 98-99.

<sup>55</sup>Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 66. She continues concerning this imbalance, "Sanctification is thus eliminated from religious life both as a gradual process of subjection to the moral law, and the locus of assurance is a sign of this original disruption of the equilibrium." *Ibid.*, 72.

twelfth sign of religious affection.<sup>56</sup> In this position, one can also see Edwards arguing for the motive for obedience in response to God's beauty, and the necessity of both motive as well as the obedience that results from it.

### **Bridging the Contexts: Defining the Missing Element**

The circumstances may differ in the sanctification debate today from Jonathan Edwards's day, yet there are similarities in both settings that are important to note. Not only is there an underlying focus in both eras on grace divorced from the full testimony of the Scriptures, but also because of this divorce, a disruption of the tension in sanctification that is observed in the Word of God. The stark contrast in the misappropriations of grace in antinomianism, and of nature in the Arminianism found in Edwards's day finds vestiges of these two misunderstandings of sanctification holding sway today. These two extremes are at the heart of the issues being discussed and is thus creating the pendulum swing that is often witnessed throughout history regarding the theological discussion surrounding sanctification.<sup>57</sup> In this tension, Edwards can be helpful. For Edwards not only defended the Reformed viewpoint that upholds the equilibrium of both nature and grace,<sup>58</sup> but he also approaches the subject of redemption, and thus sanctification, from a position where God, in his beauty, happiness, and glory, is at the heart of the argument. For God is not only the reason that man was created, but he is also at the core of the motivation in answering the question of why a Christian should walk in obedience.

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<sup>56</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 383. See also Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," 158.

<sup>57</sup>This fact can be seen most apparently in the rhetoric of proponents of grace like Tchividjian, who not only put most of their focus on grace but also contend against Reformed doctrine that they deem as legalistic. See Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing*, 49.

<sup>58</sup> What Edwards brings is a view that preserves "the integrity of human nature," all the while permitting "the sovereign operation of grace" as contrasted with the abuse of antinomianism, which "allows grace to overwhelm nature, and Arminianism, which collapses "the realm of grace into that of nature." Chamberlain, "Edwards Against the Antinomians," Abstract. See also Conrad Cherry, "Conversion: Nature and Grace," in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), 76-88.

## The Missing Element of Happiness

It is interesting to think that the man who often gets placed into a caricature of a stiff, austere, and intimidating hellfire preacher through an introduction in sophomore English with “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” was a man who took happiness seriously. In Jonathan Edwards’ one can see someone who was seeking the end for which he was made, which comes through the affections, and has to do with understanding who God is from Scripture and the purpose he has for humanity. Unlike what many would think regarding Christianity, this purpose does not crush man’s happiness, but rather adds to it. The concepts of the glory of God and a person’s happiness are not at odds. Edwards outlines this truth clearly by stating,

That God in seeking his glory, therein seeks the good of his creatures: because the emanation of his glory (which he seeks and delights in, as he delights in himself and his own eternal glory) implies the communicated excellency and happiness of his creature. And that in communicating his fullness for them, he does it for himself: because their good, which he seeks, is so much in union and communion with himself. God is their good. Their excellency and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory: God in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks himself: and in seeking himself, i.e. himself diffused and expressed (which he delights in, as he delights in his own beauty and fullness), he seeks their glory and happiness.<sup>59</sup>

The idea of happiness in Jonathan Edwards, as one observes his work, is an all-encompassing theme.<sup>60</sup> For Edwards not only talked about the idea of happiness often but also spoke of the topic in the language of what was most beautiful and satisfying, which is God himself.<sup>61</sup> This focus can be seen explicitly in Edwards who claimed, “A man first

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<sup>59</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 459.

<sup>60</sup>This can be seen easily in a paragraph from Edwards’ work, *The End for Which God Created the World*, where he writes, “God’s respect to the creature’s good, and his respect to himself, is not a divided respect; but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at his happiness in union with himself. The creature is no further happy with this happiness which God makes his ultimate end, than he becomes one with God. The more happiness the greater union: when the happiness is perfect, the union is perfect. And as the happiness will be increasing to eternity, the union will become more and more strict and perfect; nearer and more like to that between God the Father and the Son; who are so united, that their interest is perfectly one.” Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 533-34.

<sup>61</sup>Strachan and Sweeney in introducing this kind of thinking explain, “As God, he is the embodiment of goodness. ‘The emanation of his glory (which he seeks and delights in, as he delights in himself and his own eternal glory),’ the, ‘implies the communicated excellency and happiness of the creature.’ Life as this kind and awesome God created it to be cannot be slavish or sad; it is filled with ‘excellency and happiness’ that flows from the divine fountain.” Owen Strachan and Douglas A. Sweeney,

must love God or have his heart united to him, before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the enjoying and glorifying of God as his happiness."<sup>62</sup>

This change occurs for a person as he first sees the beauty of God's majesty as seen in the attributes; it is only after this that a man can then seek his interest and happiness in God, with the opposite being false, when a man is drawn to God for what God can do for him. The former is the fountain of all good and loveliness of all kinds and is the gratitude for who God is in and of himself.

In the fall, however, humankind lost fellowship with God and thus contact with true happiness. His relationship with God, and thus the source of all true happiness, was replaced by a misdirected happiness, choosing lesser things, inferior principles, as opposed to the greatest Person in God and his divine superior principles. It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that this relationship could be restored.<sup>63</sup> It is this restored relationship and union that not only provides happiness and blessing, but also obedience that becomes a part of the whole equation for happiness. Happiness is that which is found in God and in doing his will, for as one does his will, he or she will also glorify God. For Jonathan Edwards, happiness and obedience went hand in hand and should never be separated, and is in the service of God's glory which allows people to love themselves best.<sup>64</sup> Edwards would explain that true virtue, "most essentially consists in benevolence to Being in general. Or perhaps to speak more accurately, it is the consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in a general good will."<sup>65</sup>

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*Jonathan Edwards on the Good Life*, The Essential Edwards Collection (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 30.

<sup>62</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 241.

<sup>63</sup>Strachan and Sweeney, *Edwards on the Good Life*, 49. See Edwards, *Original Sin*, 382.

<sup>64</sup>Strachan and Sweeney, *Edwards on the Good Life*, 32.

<sup>65</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 540. On this Strachan and Sweeney elaborate, "The 'Being' of which Edwards spoke was God and the system of creaturely being He had created. Living a life of 'benevolence' (or loving goodwill) toward God and His creatures meant that one possessed 'true virtue.' Virtue and happiness actually went hand in hand. When one enacted virtuously to others out of a desire to love God and preserve his soul, he found happiness. Happiness did not come from gratification of one's

Ultimately the end for which God created the world was himself. As Jonathan Edwards describes it, “A respect to himself, or an infinite propensity to, and delight in his own glory, is that which causes him to incline to its being abundantly diffused, and to delight in the emanation of it.”<sup>66</sup> It is this end that is the ground for true virtue, or biblical obedience, which is benevolence to God and love for who he is in the perfection of his character worked through the understanding, to the affections, which is then worked out in obedience that also benefits others.<sup>67</sup> Here too, Edwards would work out what the proper end of all things would be, which is God’s glory, making man’s happiness subordinate, yet a part of this ultimate end.<sup>68</sup>

### **Defining the Missing Element**

It is important to explain what Jonathan Edwards meant, and thus what is implied in this research, when looking at the concept of happiness, for the term is one that can mean very different things to those who hear it. It is important to note, as Klaus Issler explains, “Although in contemporary usage *happiness* denotes a feeling of satisfaction or pleasure, it is classically understood as a sustained sense of well-being and flourishing.”<sup>69</sup> Aristotle spoke of happiness as humankind’s highest good (*eudaimonia*) with Augustine

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selfish instincts, but rather from one’s desire to bless others and please the Lord.” Strachan and Sweeney, *Edwards on the Good Life*, 32.

<sup>66</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 439.

<sup>67</sup>Happiness and obedience because of God’s work of grace fit one of the most demanding texts of the new covenant, the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes set the context of the message of the Sermon as a whole as described by Davies and Allison, “We have argued (pp. 439–40) that the beatitudes are first of all blessings, not requirements. So by opening the sermon on the mount they place it within the context of grace, and their function is very similar to the function of 4:23–5:2: just as healing comes before imperative, so does blessing come before demand. The precedence of grace could not be plainer. The hard commands of Mt 5–7 presuppose God’s mercy and prior saving activity,” W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 1:466.

<sup>68</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 457–58, 421; Chamberlain, “Edwards against the Antinomians,” 251–54.

<sup>69</sup>Klaus Issler, “Happiness,” in *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Glen G. Scrogie (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 492.



writing on how happiness is found in God, and Aquinas pointing to the eschatological nature of happiness found in God, directing the reader to the experience of happiness as flourishing in this life.<sup>70</sup> John Calvin acknowledged, “If God contains the fullness of all things in himself like an inexhaustible fountain, nothing beyond him is to be sought by those who strive after the highest good and all the elements of happiness.”<sup>71</sup> In Edwards, one can observe aspects of all of these thoughts on happiness, yet with notable divergence with some, and a continuation of others.<sup>72</sup>

In this study, one needs to place the idea of happiness, as Jonathan Edwards used it, in the context of the time in which he used it.<sup>73</sup> As the subject of this happiness was transcendent, so also needs to be the definition of happiness that comes in union and thus relationship with the God of creation, getting back to the idea of blessedness. In this context, the ideas of supreme felicity, blessing, pleasure, and joy are ideas that would be apt in Edwards’s concept of happiness, along with the attainment of what is considered

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<sup>70</sup>Aristotle, “ETHICA NICOMACHEA,” in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, trans. W.D. Ross, vol. 9 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press), 1095a.15-24; Augustine, “The Confessions of St. Augustine,” in *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine with a Sketch of His Life and Work* ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 1:151; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oats & Washbourne, n.d.), I-II, q. 3-6.

<sup>71</sup>Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1:1005. See also Isslar, “Happiness,” 492.

<sup>72</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 254, 398; William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 143; Stephen A. Wilson, “The Possibility of a Habituation Model of Moral Development in Jonathan Edward’s Conception of the Will’s Freedom,” *Journal of Religion* 81, no. 1 (2001): 50; Paul Lewis, “The Springs of Motion’: Jonathan Edwards on Emotions, Character, and Agency,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22, no. 2 (1994): 279.

<sup>73</sup>Simpson and Weiner help in seeing how the word “happy” and “happiness” were being used in Edwards’s day, which was not only far removed from the time of Jesus, but also is now far removed from the present and how we understand “happy” today. They cite that during the time of Edwards’s use in these sermons (1720-1743) the term “happy” was used to mean: “Having good ‘hap’ or fortune; lucky, fortunate; favored by lot, position, or other external circumstance”; or “blessed, beatified”; or “Characterized by or involving good fortune; fortunate, lucky; prosperous; favourable, propitious”; or “Having a feeling of great pleasure or content mind, arising from satisfaction with one’s circumstances or condition; also in weakened sense: Glad, pleased”; or “Successful in performing what the circumstances require; apt, dexterous; felicitous”; and finally the use of “happiness” that is “The state of pleasurable content of mind, which results from success or the attainment of what is considered good.” J. A. Simpson, E. S. C. Weiner, and Oxford University Press, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6:1097-98. What is also interesting is where the term connects with the idea of “blessed/blest” with these two definitions being used during Edwards’s time: “Enjoying supreme felicity; happy, fortunate;” and “Bringing, or accompanied by, blessing or happiness; pleasurable, joyful, blissful.” *Ibid.*, 2:282.

good, since as he has demonstrated that, for the Christian, God is their good. Edwards asserted,

By “happy” in the Doctrine is not meant what in the most strict sense it is taken for, the actual enjoyment of the highest pleasure and perfection without the least mixture of the contrary, for that is reserved for every godly [person] to be enjoyed only after this life; but it is sufficient in our sense to make a man happy [if] his condition be very excellent, desirable and joyful; and we are now to show that the state of a good man is such, whatever his outward circumstances are.<sup>74</sup>

Much of what is seen in Edwards can be narrowed down to the idea of joy, delight, relish, satisfaction, appetite, ravishment, enjoyment and thus a robust understanding of the term happiness.<sup>75</sup> It is here where one needs to understand Edwards’s connection of humanity’s happiness to the Godhead. So, to talk about happiness is to talk about God, pushing one to go to the fount of happiness, which goes back to a relationship with the God of all beauty, and thus happiness.<sup>76</sup>

In working on the idea of happiness in his writings, Jonathan Edwards can be observed as defining this central idea in his writings as the “perception of excellency.” Edwards elaborates on this by stating,

It appears also from the nature of happiness, which is the perception of excellency; for intelligent beings are created to be the consciousness of the universe, that they may perceive what God is and does. This can be nothing else but to perceive the excellency of what he is and does. Yea, he is nothing but excellency; and all that he does, nothing but excellent.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 297.

<sup>75</sup>Lane mentions these terms as he elaborates on the Reformed legacy that Edwards continues stating, “Words like pleasure and delight, relish and appetite, ravishment and enjoyment continue to recur in Edwards’s writing, like Calvin and the Puritans before him.” Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 182.

<sup>76</sup>Edwards would speak of happiness as a “pleasedness,” which was connected to who God is in all his excellence. See Jonathan Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace Earl Anderson, *WJE*, vol. 6 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 332-39. Holbrook comments, trying to come to a definition of happiness in Edwards, “The upshot of this analysis of happiness is the realization that there is a structural basis of happiness laid in the ontological realm and that the happiness concurrent with true virtue is not just any kind of passing amiability, linking, or feeling, but a consent which is grounded in the nature of Being as such, or God.” Clyde A. Holbrook, *The Ethics of Jonathan Edwards: Morality and Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 154.

<sup>77</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 252.

The enjoyment of the excellency of God, and thus his glory, is the end for which humankind was made, to “receive the goodness of God, that is, that they may be happy.”<sup>78</sup> As he continues to work through these ideas in a further miscellany, he again acknowledges that “happiness is nothing, as we have showed, but the perception and the possession of excellency.”<sup>79</sup>

This excellency is found in God and has to do with one’s position in union with the God of all happiness, who has not only pardoned the Christian’s iniquities but also is the One for whom humankind was created.<sup>80</sup> This happiness also is worked out in a life of obedience, coming from one’s relationship with the God of all happiness, in not only enjoying a relationship with the God of all excellency, but also in experiencing the “excellent and desirable nature of true godliness,” a godliness which Edwards calls “the greatest wisdom.”<sup>81</sup> Concerning this wisdom, Edwards declares,

They certainly are the wisest men that do those things that make most for their happiness, and this in effect is acknowledged by all men in the world, for there is no man upon earth but what is earnestly seeking after happiness, and it appears abundantly by their so vigorously trying all manner of ways; they will twist and turn every way, ply all instruments, to make themselves happy men; some will wander all over the face of the earth to find [it]: they will seek it in the waters and dry land, under the waters and in the bowels of the earth, and although the true way to happiness lies right before ’em and they might easily step into it and walk in it and be brought in it to as great happiness as they desire, and greater than they can conceive of, yet they will not enter into it. They try all the false paths; they will spend and be spent, labor all their lives’ time, endanger their lives, will pass over mountains and valleys, go through fire and water, seeking for happiness amongst vanities, and are always disappointed, never find what they seek for; but yet like fools and madmen they violently rush forward, still in the same ways. But the righteous are not so; these only, have the wisdom to find the right paths to

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<sup>78</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 252. Edwards would also pick up this thought of happiness as the end of man in miscellany #3, “Happiness is the End of Creation.” Ibid., 199-200. This would correspond to his work in *Concerning the End for Which God Created the World*. One can see, once again, that the happiness of humankind is subordinate to the ultimate end of the glory of God, which keeps God and his glory at the center and not man’s happiness as the ultimate goal as the Arminian position in Edwards’s day did, seeing that man’s happiness found in God does glorify God. See Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 526-36.

<sup>79</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 277.

<sup>80</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 297-301.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 303.

happiness.<sup>82</sup>

It is wisdom; holiness and thus a happiness that finds its ground in the God of all holiness, happiness and grace, linking both determinative and progressive sanctification to the beauty and excellence found in the Godhead.

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<sup>82</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 303.

## CHAPTER 3

### EDWARDS AND THE TRINITY: THE GROUND OF ALL HOLINESS, HAPPINESS, AND GRACE

At the center of all that Jonathan Edwards's did theologically was the doctrine of the Trinity. This preoccupation becomes crucial to understanding his doctrine of redemption and thus sanctification, driving everything in his theology concerning the Christian life.<sup>1</sup> The priority of turning to God first dominated Edwards's thinking, no matter what the topic, being something that bled into everything he did. This tendency can be observed in Sang Hyun Lee's introduction to Edwards's work on the subject where he declares,

What is striking about Jonathan Edwards' writing on the Trinity is that there is none of this bifurcation between the doctrine of the Trinity and the Christian life of faith and practice. Everything Edwards wrote about the Trinity expresses the intertwining connectedness of the Trinity and the Christian's experience of God as the Creator, Savior, and Sanctifier, and thus between the immanent and economic Trinity.<sup>2</sup>

So, sanctification, and all its benefits, is something that is connected not only to the bigger rubric of redemption in Edwards but to the Trinitarian God of all goodness.<sup>3</sup> This connection is a key that is significant for any study in Edwards, and specifically for this

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<sup>1</sup>Strobel, in arguing that Edwards's theology was a theology of redemption, states that "it is clear that Edwards's Trinitarian thought is the engine of his theology." Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 3. See also Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 23. Specifically in speaking to the outworking of sanctification in the life of the believer, as the authors of one source quip, "More than one student of Edwards's ethics has observed that he based his conception of human morality on the character of God." Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 532. So, even those who see Edwards as a philosopher first and foremost still see this Trinitarian penchant in the Northampton divine.

<sup>3</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 263-64.

study of sanctification and its relationship to happiness.

The preoccupation with the Trinity in Jonathan Edwards's work points to the importance of looking at the doctrine of sanctification with biblical lenses, but also in seeing its connection to happiness. The ground of all holiness is God himself, and without a relationship with the God of all holiness there will be no sanctification of any kind in the life of a person. God's holiness is connected to his happiness, which resides in the fellowship of the Godhead from eternity past in all perfection. It is thus this holiness and happiness that is available because of God's goodness and grace so that humankind can participate in the very life of God in a relationship through union, underlining the truth that God is the believer's good. Therefore, it is imperative to see the ground of sanctification in Edwards; who is the God, and thus the ground, of all holiness, happiness, and grace.

### **The Ground of All Holiness**

In Jonathan Edwards's sermon, "The Way of Holiness," he defines the subject as "conformity of the heart and life unto God."<sup>4</sup> The starting point of the way of holiness is God, who is holy.<sup>5</sup> To be "set apart" is the idea that is often connected to holiness. While this definition is evident in Edwards, the Northampton sage digs deeper into what the holiness of God is. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards writes of the holiness of God in this manner,

So the holiness of God in the more extensive sense of the word, and the sense in which the word is commonly, if not universally used concerning God in Scripture, is

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<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 471.

<sup>5</sup>Edwards adds, "Holiness is the image of God, his likeness, in him that is holy. By being conformed unto God is not meant a conformity to him in his eternity, or infinity, or infinite power. These are God's inimitable and incommunicable attributes; but a conformity to his will, whereby he wills things that are just, right, and truly excellent and lovely; whereby he wills real perfection, and goodness; and perfectly abhors everything that is really evil, unjust, and unreasonable. And it is not only a willing as God wills, but also a doing as he doth: in acting holily and justly and wisely and mercifully, like him. It must become natural thus to be, and thus to act; it must be the constant inclination and new nature of the soul, and then the man is holy, and not before." *Ibid.*, 472.

the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness and goodness.<sup>6</sup>

In unwrapping this important concept in Edwards's work the reader can comprehend more of what sanctification means in the life of the believer and enables one to understand the idea of holiness within the Godhead in its relation to God's excellence, love, and happiness. As Strobel asserts, in arguing against the typical self-help idea that many Christians have today, "The call to be holy, however, is not the same as a call to do the right thing. *Holiness* is a term that describes God's own life, and therefore the call to be holy is a call to participate in God's own life of love."<sup>7</sup>

### **Holiness and Excellence**

Holiness, in the work of Jonathan Edwards, is directly related to the subject of excellence, which consumed his thinking. Excellence is thus essential to understanding his description of God in all his beauty and holiness. Edwards articulated that "excellence, to put it in other words, is that which is beautiful and lovely . . . . That which is beautiful with respect to the university of things has a generally extended excellence and a true beauty; and the more extended or limited its system is, the more confined or extended its beauty."<sup>8</sup> Here Edwards is referring to the heart of his argument concerning the three Persons of the Trinity, where the triunity of the Godhead was necessary for God's excellence or beauty to be true and enjoyed.<sup>9</sup> Holiness is the excellence of God's

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<sup>6</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 255.

<sup>7</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual Practices of Jonathan Edwards* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 71.

<sup>8</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace Earl Anderson, *WJE*, vol. 6 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 344. Crisp offers this summary of the theologian's thinking on the concept, "For excellency functions as a semi-technical term that has several constituents: an aesthetic component (having to do with beauty, symmetry, and 'similarity'); a relational component (having to do with 'agreement, consent,' and the 'equality' between parts of things of a whole, and their 'communication'); and an ontological component (having to do with being)." He adds in introducing this idea in Edwards, "His treatment of the topic can be somewhat baffling to the uninitiated because of the number of terms of art he deploys in doing so." Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 42.

<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol.

moral perfection, which is also a perfection of consent and agreement as seen in the Trinity.<sup>10</sup>

What strikes the reader about Jonathan Edwards's thinking on God regarding his excellence, and thus his holiness is the perfection of his Being and thus his beauty. It is a beauty that would consume Edwards's thinking on holiness, which also should capture the believer's affections. Or, as Edwards put it, "Holy persons, in the exercise of holy affections, do love divine things primarily for their holiness: they love God, in the first place, for the beauty of his holiness or moral perfection, as being supremely amiable in itself."<sup>11</sup> It is a reaction that is proper because "the true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings does primarily and most essentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness."<sup>12</sup> This reality, as ultimately indicative of God, would cause Edwards to write a flow of praise to the One who is the foundation of all holiness:

As the beauty of the divine nature does primarily consist in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are saints, or holy ones: 'tis the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are holy angels, and so not devils (Dan. 4:13, 17, 23; Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Acts 10:22; Rev. 14:10). Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so holy a religion. Herein consists the

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21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 113. Concerning this Stuebaker and Caldwell thus maintain concerning Edwards's theology proper that "plurality in the Godhead is necessary because the communication of the infinite happiness of God—divine love—requires an infinite object of goodness," and this goodness can also be seen in God's holiness. Steven M. Stuebaker and Robert W. Caldwell, *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 63. See also Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 43-44.

<sup>10</sup>Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, 337-38. Edwards clarifies his meaning of the term moral, regarding holiness by reminding the reader, "So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the moral perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's natural attributes or perfections, they mean those attributes, wherein, according to our way of conceiving of God, consists, not the holiness or moral goodness of God, but his greatness; such as his power, his knowledge whereby he knows all things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his omnipresence, and his awful and terrible majesty." Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 255.

<sup>11</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 256. He continues on this thought arguing, "The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the beauty of all his natural perfections. And so it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being: holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature." *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*



excellency of the Word of God, that it is so holy; “Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it” (Ps. 119:140). “I esteem all thy precepts, concerning all things, to be right; and I hate every false way” (ver. 128). “Thy testimonies, that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful” (ver. 138). And: “My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness” (ver. 172). And: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb” (Ps. 19:7–10). Herein does primarily consist the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely; even in that he is the holy One of God (Acts 3:14), and God’s holy Child (Acts 4:27), and “he that is holy, and he that is true” (Rev. 3:7). All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, consisting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and compassion to the miserable, etc. all is summed up in his holiness. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, does also primarily consist in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a holy gospel, and so bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ: herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines, or doctrines according to godliness. And herein does consist the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it [is] so holy a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the holy city, the holy Jerusalem, the habitation of God’s holiness, and so of his glory (Is. 63:15). All the beauties of the new Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation, are but various representations of this: see ch. 21:2, 10–11, 18, 21, 22; ch. 22:1, 3.<sup>13</sup>

There is also much more to who God is, in the complexity and perfection of his character, which has a connection to his excellence, beauty, and holiness as seen in the Trinity.

These relationships encompass how God’s excellence is worked out in his trinity in not only holiness, but also in love, and happiness. Edwards reasons,

As to God’s excellence, it is evident it consists in the love of himself. For he was as excellent before he created the universe as he is now. But if the excellence of spirits consists in their disposition and action, God could be excellent no other way at that time, for all the exertions of himself were towards himself. But he exerts himself towards himself no other way than in infinitely loving and delighting in himself, in the mutual love of the Father and the Son. This makes the third, the personal Holy Spirit or the holiness of God, which is his infinite beauty, and this is God’s infinite consent to being in general. And his love to the creature is his excellence, or the communication of himself, his complacency in them, according as they partake of more or less of excellence and beauty; that is, of holiness, which consists in love; that is, according as he communicates more or less of his Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 258-59.

<sup>14</sup>Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, 364. Caldwell demonstrates that a nearby neighbor of holiness is excellency. He explains the mix of these important and yet complex ideas: “Edwards utilizes the language of holiness to refer to a personal agent’s loving and radical God-

## Holiness and Love

In writing about the topic of holiness, Jonathan Edwards would break the mold of what is often typically thought concerning the doctrine today. He pointed out,

Holiness is a most beautiful, lovely thing. Men are apt to drink in strange notions of holiness from their childhood, as if it were a melancholy, morose, sour, and unpleasant thing; but there is nothing in it but what is sweet and ravishingly lovely. 'Tis the highest beauty and amiableness, vastly above all other beauties; 'tis a divine beauty.<sup>15</sup>

Holiness is not only that which is most beautiful, lovely and excellent, but it also encompasses love. For holiness, per Edwards, primarily involves the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Edwards argues, “Both the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in this love,” and this “especially in the perfect union and love between the Father and the Son,” with this love associated with the third person of the Trinity.<sup>16</sup> It is a love that is then spoken of in terms of joy and delight in the Person of the Holy Spirit, furthering Edwards’s Trinitarian undergirding of his theology.<sup>17</sup>

The relational truth of the Trinity becomes an important aspect of Jonathan Edwards’s foundation, and thus his doctoral mooring, for the doctrine of sanctification as connected to happiness. For God is not only moral perfection and thus the ground of holiness, and as such “set apart,” but he is also a God who is not isolated. So even though Edwards would affirm and argue for the aseity of God, he would also point to his perfect harmony that is “divine love, complacency, and joy” in his triunity.<sup>18</sup> As Edwards

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centeredness (in both Creator and created). Holiness is more of the teleological aspect of divine love, whereas excellency has more to do with the ontology or shape of divine love. Both, as we have been arguing, are different ways in which Edwards refers to the Holy Spirit.” Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007), 50-51.

<sup>15</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 478.

<sup>16</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 186.

<sup>17</sup>“Miscellany No. 364” states, “The Spirit of God is spiritual joy and delight,” Edwards, “*Miscellanies*,”: *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 436. Caldwell mentions the Spirit as God’s holiness, excellency, happiness, fullness, and grace under the title of facets of divine love. See Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 49-55.

<sup>18</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

declares, “God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above ’em, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty.”<sup>19</sup> The God of Scripture is a God who has understanding and will, which Edwards sees as the Son and Spirit, in perfection.<sup>20</sup> It is in this intra-trinitarian relationship that God loves himself most, with his holiness being all about his moral perfections and love between the Persons of the Trinity.

Jonathan Edwards intimately connected love and holiness. Love is a ground for holiness in the life of the believer. It is the overflow of the love that God has for himself, and thus the love that one has for the God of the universe.<sup>21</sup> It affects one morally, and ultimately it begins with a love of God’s holiness or perfection. Edwards proclaimed,

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God’s loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving of God) it derives its loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, till this is seen; and it is impossible that any perfection of the divine nature should be loved with true love, till this is loved.<sup>22</sup>

This understanding of who God is makes the two greatest commandments of love for God and love for others the logical conclusion of the overflow of God’s love in the life of the believer through grace. It is the beauty of God that draws the believer and then through regeneration is revealed in the saint. Edwards states, “God’s moral image in them,” is so much so that Christians shine, “by reflecting the light of the Sun of Righteousness,” and in doing so, “do shine with the same sort of brightness, the same

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<sup>19</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 298.

<sup>20</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

<sup>21</sup>Reeves reminds the reader, “The holiness of the triune God is the perfection, beauty and absolute purity of the love there is between the Father and Son. There is nothing grubby or abusive about the love of God—and thus he is holy. My love is naturally all perverse and misdirected; but his love is set apart from mine in perfection. And so, the holiness of the triune God does not moderate or cool his love; his holiness is the lucidity and spotlessness of his overflowing love.” Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 116.

<sup>22</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 257-58.

mild, sweet and pleasant beams.”<sup>23</sup>

### **The Ground of All Happiness**

The interconnectedness of God’s holiness, with the aspects of his excellency and love, continues to build on the truth of who he is with the concept of happiness. Jonathan Edwards contended, as asserted earlier, “Both the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in this love,” pointing to the importance of the perfection enjoyed within the Trinity.<sup>24</sup> This happiness is the result of who God is in relationship with himself. It is the subjective side of divine love, and as Robert Caldwell points out, it is often described in terms of “joy” and “delight” between the Persons of the Trinity that is then worked out in the economics of God’s Trinitarian work of redemption.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Happiness of God *ad intra***

Edwards, in an overview of his work on the Trinity, wrote,

When we speak of God’s happiness, the account that we are wont to give of it is that God is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, in perfectly beholding and infinitely loving, and rejoicing in, his own essence and perfections. And accordingly it must be supposed that God perpetually and eternally has a most perfect idea of himself, as it were an exact image and representation of himself ever before him and in actual view. And from hence a most pure and perfect energy in the Godhead, which is the divine love, complacence and joy.<sup>26</sup>

God is eternally happy. This idea, articulated in Edwards, although unique in some of its out workings, was not peculiar to the Northampton preacher,<sup>27</sup> yet is a truth that needs to

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<sup>23</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 256-347. See also Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 117.

<sup>24</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 186.

<sup>25</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 51.

<sup>26</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

<sup>27</sup>Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, *The Divine Essence and Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 381. Muller points to what was defended by the Reformed orthodox and something that returned after being absent. This line of thinking is to what van Mastricht was pointing concerning delight, happiness and blessedness, which “follow as a consequence of the goodness and sufficiency of God, who alone of all beings finds contentment in himself and whose blessedness is, therefore, the final goal of all creaturely existence: God is both the blessed *in se* and the source (*fontes*) of all blessedness (Ibid., 3:382). Muller continues by quoting Leigh, “In short, God’s blessedness ‘is that by which God is in himself, and of himself All-sufficient . . . that Attribute whereby God hath all fulness of

be brought to the conversation today on sanctification, for it is where one can receive a context regarding what happens in union that overflows in living out the Christian's position. This truth also anchors what happens with happiness in the Christian life to the Trinity.<sup>28</sup>

Many works have unpacked Jonathan Edwards's Trinitarian theology in understanding this essential foundation to his theological outlook,<sup>29</sup> yet it is important to note that Edwards saw the eternal Trinitarian procession as God the Father having a perfect idea of himself in intellect or a divine understanding that is the Son, with the will or divine love being the spiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Edwards would see plurality in the Godhead as necessary simply for the fact that God is good, and must share that

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delight and contentment in himself, and needeth nothing out of himself to make him happy.' Such blessedness is essential, primary, and original to God. It is also formal, in that God has his own goodness as the object of his contemplation; and objective, in that God is essentially blessed and happy; and effective, given that God 'makes his children happy' and is 'the author of all blessedness.'" Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 381. See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 37.

<sup>28</sup>McClymond and McDermott write, "The Trinity was fundamental to Edwards's most distinctive theological theme, the divine beauty, for 'true, spiritual original beauty' consists in 'a mutual propensity and affection of heart,' where prototype is the Trinity—"the supreme harmony of all.'" McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 193.

<sup>29</sup>The work on this Trinitarian emphasis and foundation in Edwards has swelled in the last decade as seen in Amy Plantinga Pauw, "*The Supreme Harmony of All*": *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*; Steven M. Studebaker, "Edwards's Social Augustinian Trinitarianism: An Alternative to the Recent Trend," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 268-85; Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 1-71; Kyle Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards's Trinitarian Aesthetics," in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver and Fred Sanders Crisp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 147-70; William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); Stephen R. Holmes, *God of Grace and God of Glory: An Account of the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Oliver Crisp, Jonathan Edwards's God: Trinity, Individuation, and Divine Simplicity," in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 83-103; Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*. Many of the chapters in Crisp's edited work are also helpful in navigating issues in the doctrine of God with Edwards. See Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Tan also does a good job in looking at the processions, which helps in understanding Edwards's Trinitarian bent and understanding and what that has to do with participation. See Seng-Kong Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned: Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). It is important to note that not all of these authors come to the same conclusions, but what can be observed in all these works is the importance of the subject in understanding Edwards.

<sup>30</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113. Studebaker and Caldwell note, "In the few places where he sketched out the eternal origins of the Godhead, he appears to unite two themes found in his doctrine of God: 1.) his theology of God's disposition to communicate happiness, and 2.) his affirmation that God is a divine mind who has two modalities of activity and procession: intellect (or divine understanding) and will (or divine love)." Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 62.

goodness.<sup>31</sup> As the Northampton preacher would state, “God must have a perfect exercise of his goodness, and therefore must have the fellowship of persons equal to himself.”<sup>32</sup> It is this goodness that is connected to happiness that is communicated, and a part of who God is in the Trinitarian harmony of the Godhead.<sup>33</sup>

In understanding Jonathan Edwards’s work and specifically his Trinitarian foundation, Kyle Strobel offers the phrase, “personal beatific-delight,” or “religious affection in pure act,” to encompass the New England divine’s outlook on the doctrine of God.<sup>34</sup> This description pulls three interrelated emphases of Edwards into one central idea; Edwards’s use of the psychological analogy in which a person is one in understanding and will, which are highlights of personhood in the Godhead,<sup>35</sup> with perception “as the Father gazes upon his perfect image and understanding” describing processions,<sup>36</sup> and affection, “delight” denoting Edwards’s aesthetics and the beatific life of God, specifically in the “flowing forth of the Holy Spirit as the will and love of God,” all within the *actus purus* tradition.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, 84, 337. This aspect of God’s Trinity can be described thus, “the self communicative nature of God can find realization only in a plurality of persons intrinsic to the Godhead.” Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 63.

<sup>32</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 264.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 263. See Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 62-63. Edwards would take the mutual love Trinitarian model as a framework handed down from Augustine, Bonaventure, and Aquinas, adding his own flare in bringing a Reformed theology of the Trinity by “engaging the best philosophies of the age and bringing them into the service of Reformed orthodoxy.” Ibid., 61. This Trinitarian model is the direction that this present research takes in seeing Edwards as theologian first, from the Reformed position, which then informs how one approaches the New England Divine.

<sup>34</sup>Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148. This change in wording is a clarifying of Strobel’s description of Edwards’s understanding of the Trinity from “personal beatific-delight,” which serves as a rubric for understanding Edwards’s theology. See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*, 26. The understanding of “religious affection in pure act” not only attempts to use, in Strobel’s words, “language I believe Edwards would have approved,” being true to Edwards’s as a theologian, but also understands Edwards “in light of the *actus purus* tradition.” Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148. See also Crisp, *Edwards in God and Creation*; Oliver Crisp, “Jonathan Edwards on the Divine Nature,” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3, no. 2 (2009): 175-201.

<sup>35</sup>Strobel, “Theology in Gaze of the Father,” 148. See also Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, XX.

<sup>36</sup>Strobel articulates this concept “in terms of an archetypal beatific envisaging within the inner life of God, where the Father gazes upon himself, or his perfect idea (Son), and the Son gazes back, spirating perfect happiness (Holy Spirit).” Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*, 27.

<sup>37</sup>Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148; Crisp, “Edwards on the Divine Nature,”

There are many intricacies in Jonathan Edwards's work on what is already a complex doctrine, yet what is observed is the establishment not only of the Trinitarian personhood of God, but also of a God of happiness.<sup>38</sup> Concerning this focus Kyle Strobel argues, "Edwards's God is the God of happiness whose inner life is effusive love and perfection. This God has his own image ever before him, and 'pure and perfect energy' of love, complacency, and joy pours forth in an infinite fountain."<sup>39</sup> In this overflow of God's love and happiness, there is not only the truth of what happens within intra-Trinitarian relationship, but it is also fullness that then flows out to his creation. As Edwards recognized,

This twofold way of the Deity's flowing forth *ad extra* answers to the twofold way of the Deity's proceeding *ad intra*, in the proceeding and generation of the Son and the proceeding and breathing forth of the Holy Spirit; and indeed is only a kind of second proceeding of the same persons, their going forth *ad extra*, as before they proceeded *ad intra*.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Happiness of God *ad extra***

As one would expect from Jonathan Edwards's work, this American theologian shows that in the economy, the Godhead's roles in redemption, that God shares his happiness in an overflowing of love to the elect.<sup>41</sup> It is this truth of who God is in his glory and excellence that causes Edwards to conclude that it "is the highest theme that ever man, that ever archangel, yes, that ever the man Christ Jesus, entered upon yet; yea, it is the theme which is, to speak after the manner of men, the highest contemplation, and

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175-201. Strobel also mentions that this idea also is observed in Edwards's "discussions of the beatific life of God, calling out the Spirit's emanation as the happiness and love of the Godhead." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 27.

<sup>38</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 28. See Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

<sup>39</sup>Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father," 149.

<sup>40</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 466. Also, see Stuebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 87.

<sup>41</sup>See Edwards, "Miscellanies": 833-1152, 430-44, see Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father," 152.

the infinite happiness, of Jehovah himself.”<sup>42</sup> Here the understanding of Edwards’s doctrine of God as “affection in pure act” not only assumes personhood, but also points to the God of all happiness and perfection.<sup>43</sup> The staggering realization in comprehending this truth is that the Christian can also know this happiness. For it is the sharing of God’s very life, which comes from the fount of happiness, in the mediation of happiness in the Son’s work of redemption, all through the infusion of the Holy Spirit, and thus happiness, in union.

**The work of God the Father: The fount of all happiness.** Although the Father in the economy does not occupy as much space in Jonathan Edwards’s writings, he does occupy the first place in the Godhead.<sup>44</sup> Edwards points to the Father as the fount of the Godhead, being the source of the divine processions, and also is consistent in reflecting the Father’s “priority of subsistence and works.”<sup>45</sup> Steven Studebaker and Robert Caldwell underline one of the more important and misunderstood aspects of Edwards in speaking of the economy, specifically regarding the Father, for they argue, “Because he is unbegotten, he alone is rightly understood as the one to whom Scripture refers when using the generic term God.”<sup>46</sup>

If God the Father is the fount of the Godhead, he is also the fount of all happiness. Here Edwards’s attention on the personhood of each in the Trinity is underlined by Krister Sairsingh, who calls attention to the New England theologian’s

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<sup>42</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 417.

<sup>43</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113; Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148-49.

<sup>44</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 131. Much can be seen in Edwards’s section “On the Equality of the Persons of the Trinity.” *Ibid.*, 146-48.

<sup>45</sup>Studebaker and Caldwell, *Trinitarian Theology of Edwards*, 66.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.* This assertion is a needed point to understand, for Edwards has been called out as being too pneumatologically focused, where the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized to the exclusion of a more robust Christology specifically, and also a theology proper by direction of the argument. See Ross Hastings, *Jonathan Edwards and the Life of God: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Participation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 265-321.



stress on the distinctive and unique roles in the Godhead, with the Father being the principle of the Godhead's happiness.<sup>47</sup> This emphasis on the personhood and happiness of God can be seen again and again in the Northampton theologian's theology proper, of which Robert Jenson exclaims, "He [God] is absolute in that in him the elements of the consciousness make a communal Harmony in themselves, thus he can . . . delight in his own beauty within himself."<sup>48</sup> It is a beauty and a delight that is then, by God's grace, embodied and then mediated through the work of the second Person of the Trinity to the elect.

**The work of God the Son: The mediation of happiness.** The second person of the Trinity is coequal with the Father, the most immediate representation of the Godhead, the face of God, the Word of God, and the wisdom of God.<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Edwards argues, "And we have shown also, that the Father's begetting of the Son is a complete communication of all his happiness, and so an eternal, adequate and infinite exercise of perfect goodness, that is completely equal to such an inclination in perfection."<sup>50</sup> Edwards saw the Son as the principle of knowledge and understanding,<sup>51</sup> and in his Christological construction, he was driven by the soteriological.<sup>52</sup> The happiness of God is evident in the work of redemption, with its aim being the intimate and happy

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<sup>47</sup>Krister Sairsingh, "Jonathan Edwards and the Idea of Divine Glory: His Foundational Trinitarianism and Its Ecclesial Import: A Thesis" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986), 198.

<sup>48</sup>Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 98.

<sup>49</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 116-21. Here Edwards describes the Son as "that idea which God hath of himself," which "is absolutely himself." He goes on to state, "Hereby there is another person begotten; there is another infinite, eternal, almighty, and most holy and the same God, the very same divine nature." *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>50</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 272.

<sup>51</sup>Sairsingh, "Jonathan Edwards and the Idea of Divine Glory," 149.

<sup>52</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 73. It should be noted that Edwards saw the Covenant of Redemption to be subsequent to the economy of the persons of the Trinity. See Edwards, "*Miscellanies*:" *833-1152*, 433-34.

fellowship with God all for the ultimate aim of his glory.<sup>53</sup> It is Christ who makes God known, as Edwards articulates, “It was so ordered that Christ should be the great means of bringing the world from heathenism, to the knowledge of the true God and the true religion . . . Christ [is] the grand medium of all communications of grace and happiness from God, by which especially God glorifies himself.”<sup>54</sup>

The mediator becomes the vital link in this covenant that would allow humankind to know and enjoy the Creator, which then has implications for how one lives.<sup>55</sup> For Jonathan Edwards saw the whole of salvation in view when he spoke of the responsibility and the joy that one can have not only in relationship with the God of all happiness, but also in what follows in evangelical obedience, all because of union. It is here that Edwards also includes the Spirit in the Mediation, showing that what is given in union is God himself. Edwards contends, “Christ purchased glory for us in another world,

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<sup>53</sup>Pauw writes concerning the work of redemption, “Its aim is intimate, eternal fellowship between God and human creatures, and their mutual glory and happiness: ‘the happiness of deity, as all other true happiness, consists in love and society.’” Pauw, *Supreme Harmony*, 119-20. Regarding this union, Billings writes, “Since the ‘perfection of human happiness is to be united to God,’ this union takes place in redemption. ‘We are united to God by Christ,’ Calvin writes. ‘We can only be joined to Christ if God abides in us.’ In this way, ‘men are so united to Christ by faith that Christ unites them to God.’ Indeed, believers shall ‘be really and fully united to Thee [Almighty God] through Christ our Lord,’” J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 65-66. See John Calvin, *1 John, Calvin’s Commentaries*, electronic ed. (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), 1 John 4:15.

<sup>54</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: Entry Nos. 501-832, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 70. McClymond and McDermott observe, “Christ’s work is to glorify God: ‘Jesus Christ has this honor, to be the greatest instrument of glorifying God that ever was.’ He does this making God known to human beings, whose participation in God’s joy and love constitutes redemption. In that work of redemption, Christ is ‘the instrument of God’s glory that drives [the] pattern of emanation and return from God’s inner life into creation and back to God.’ The assignment of that work and the deliberations about the manner of its accomplishment began in the inner-Trinitarian ‘covenant of redemption.’” McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 244-45. The covenant of redemption was a familiar topic in Puritan theology, as McClymond and McDermott point out and can be seen detailed in the work of van Mastricht. See Peter van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia: Qua, Per Singula Capita Theologica, Pars Exegetica, Dogmatica, Elenctica & Practica, Perpetua Successione Conjugantur* (Utrecht, Netherlands: ThomÉ Appels, 1699), II.24.

<sup>55</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 146-47. For the uniqueness of this mediator, see Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards in Four Volumes with Valuable Additions and a Copious General Index, and a Complete Index of Scripture Texts* (New York: R. Carter, 1864), 135-36. In speaking of what the Godhead is doing in this transaction of salvation, Edwards states, “All that we have, wisdom, and the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance into God’s favor, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, we have from God by a Mediator; and that Mediator is God, which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon, as he *through* whom we receive all.” Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 206-07.

that we should be like God, that we should be perfect in holiness and happiness; which still is comprised in that, in having the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>56</sup>

**The work of God the Holy Spirit: The reality of union and happiness.** The happiness of God is particularly associated with the Holy Spirit in the work of Jonathan Edwards, who is the bond of love, that is spirated from the Father and the Son and thus flows to the believer because of union. In Christ’s work of redemption, he purchased the Spirit for the elect, who is then infused in the life of the believer in union, thus enabling participation in the very holiness and happiness of God. For it is the Spirit of joy and delight that is the “earnest” of our inheritance and “first-fruits” (Rom 8:23), which is “that happiness spoken of that God will give his saints, is nothing but a fullness of his Spirit.”<sup>57</sup> It is a happiness that includes God’s excellence and holiness, and thus comprises his love, which connects humankind to the Creator, because he is the God of all grace.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Ground of All Grace**

The concept of grace is nothing new in the theological construct of Reformed thinkers both now and in the past. The term is rich in meaning, often being defined as God’s dealing with humankind in underserved ways, which flows from his goodness and generosity.<sup>59</sup> This idea is consistent in Jonathan Edwards, who writes, “There is no gift or benefit that is so much in God, that is so much of himself, of his nature, that is so much a

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<sup>56</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 467.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 436.

<sup>58</sup>Caldwell brings an important connection to the fore in stating, “Happiness exults in God himself, yet Edwards often links it with the perception of excellency: ‘happiness is the perception and possession of excellency.’ Thus merely to perceive spiritual harmonies is to be enveloped in this divine happiness. God’s own perception of his glorious excellencies, which he ‘views’ in the Son, is intimately linked with the act of divine love and the affection of infinite happiness. This again reminds us of the very close association between perception and affection, intellect and will, and ultimately Son and Spirit in Edwards’s thought.” Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 51.

<sup>59</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 82.

communication of the Deity, as grace is; 'tis as much a communication of the Deity, as light [is] a communication of the sun.”<sup>60</sup> Grace is thus God’s self-giving, where the treasure is not just forgiveness, which is a part of what is given by God’s grace, but it is Christ and the Spirit who are the treasure.<sup>61</sup> It is according to God’s nature to give and to communicate his goodness, and ultimately to exhibit his glory, yet his grace is something that is also given according to his sovereign pleasure. As Edwards asserted,

As this may show us, why God will bestow this good more immediately and directly; so also, why he will especially exercise and manifest his sovereignty and free pleasure in bestowing of this gift. God’s grace is eminently his own. God’s creatures, the sun, moon and stars, etc., are his own to dispose of as he pleases; but with more eminent reason, that which is so nearly pertaining to the very nature of God, as his grace, the actings and influences of his own Spirit, the communications of his own beauty and his own happiness. God will therefore make his sovereign right here more eminently to appear, in the bestowment of this.<sup>62</sup>

God’s grace forms a transition for this research, as the happiness of God *ad extra*, but even more acutely. For in observing the ground of all holiness, happiness, and grace there is seen in God’s grace specifically, which is indicative and finds its ground in God, identification with the Spirit and thus the work of the Godhead *ad extra*. This work *ad extra* is the work of Christ, which is all of grace. As Jonathan Edwards proclaims,

there is nothing wanting but our willing and hearty reception of Christ; yet we shall eternally perish yet, if God is not gracious to us, and don’t make application of Christ’s benefits to our souls. We are dependent on free grace, even for ability to lay hold in Christ already offered, so entirely is the gospel dispensation of mere grace. Eph. 2:8–10, “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves:

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<sup>60</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 82. Edwards continues, “’Tis therefore fit that when it is bestowed, it should be so much the more immediately given, from himself and by himself. There is no good that we want or are capable of, so nextly in God; and therefore ’tis fit that there should be none so nextly from him.” Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Kyle Strobel, “By Word and Spirit: Jonathan Edwards on Redemption, Justification, and Regeneration,” in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 54. See also Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 298; Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 167-70. Although there is rightful contention with Morimoto on the issue of Edwards being more Catholic than Reformed, he does help in understanding the concept of grace in Edwards. See Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 39-50. This holy action of God’s grace can be seen in the mediation of the Son as Edwards puts forth, “Therefore is Christ the grand medium of all communications of grace and happiness from God, by which especially God glorifies himself. Christ has this honor, that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands.” Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 70.

<sup>62</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 83.

it is the gift of God.”<sup>63</sup>

In Edwards, this grace of God applied can be understood as God’s divine love that is externalized so much that the outworking of God’s grace in the individual and can be summarized as “the third person of the Trinity dwelling in the souls of the redeemed.”<sup>64</sup>

Edwards elaborates,

So that that holy, divine principle, which we have observed does radically and essentially consist in divine love, is no other than a communication and participation of that same infinite divine love, which is God, and in which the Godhead is eternally breathed forth and subsists in the third person in the blessed Trinity. So that true saving grace is no other than that very love of God; that is, God, in one of the persons of the Trinity, uniting himself to the soul of a creature as a vital principle, dwelling there and exerting himself by the faculties of the soul of man, in his own proper nature, after the manner of a principle of nature.<sup>65</sup>

God, the fountain of sanctification, is the most important part of the equation. He is the foundation, and connection to true happiness in relationship, that is often forgotten as self-centered thinking often pervades the life of the Christian, even in the pursuit of this biblical doctrine. But in the language of Robert Caldwell, the reader can see the needed “structural scaffolding” of Jonathan Edwards’s thought, and thus the ground of all grace, happiness and holiness.<sup>66</sup> This scaffolding highlights the issues of ability in God’s grace that paves the way for holiness in position and practice, which then

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<sup>63</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 394-95.

<sup>64</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 53.

<sup>65</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 194. Caldwell in developing Edwards’s thinking regarding the Holy Spirit summarizes many of these issues in this chapter stating, “God’s holiness constitutes divine love from the standpoint of the Deity in general, without reference to the inner-trinitarian community. From ‘outside’ of the Trinity holiness consists in God’s radical theocentricism, while the same reality viewed from ‘inside’ the Trinity is more properly termed divine love. Excellency, like holiness, comprises divine love from more of an ontological angle, respecting the spiritual harmonies, mutual consent, and divine beauty that eternally obtains among Trinitarian persons, rather than from the teleological angle which the term holiness captures. By contrast God’s happiness, joy, and delight, all synonymous concepts, denote the ‘subjective side’ of divine love, illuminating the affectional experience of God’s self-viewing and approving of his own perfections. We noted that God’s fullness, in a narrow sense, is a ‘summary’ term comprising all that divine love does, and as such is a term that is as extensive as love. Yet in a broader sense, God’s fullness comprises all that God possesses, which includes his knowledge, and thus does not necessarily refer to the Holy Spirit in this more expansive sense. Lastly, we observed the grace is none other than divine love *ad extra*. These concepts form much of the structural scaffolding of his thought. Because he identifies each of them with the third person of the Trinity at one point or another, his theology thus becomes charged with a hidden and luminous pneumatological presence.” Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 54.

<sup>66</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 54.

establishes the way to issue of motive in obedience in sanctification in happiness and holiness. All of this is connected to God's goodness, for it is the goodness of God to want to share his happiness.<sup>67</sup> Edwards argues,

We have proved that the end of creation must needs be happiness and the communication of the goodness of God; and that nothing but the Almighty's inclination to communicate of his own happiness, could be the motive to him to create the world; and that man, or intelligent being, is the immediate object of this goodness, and subject of this communicated happiness.<sup>68</sup>

It is through this desire and end, with the ultimate end being God's glory that not only humankind was created, but that God also would provide redemption through the outworking of his divine love.<sup>69</sup> This divine love finds its foundation in the Trinity, which then flows out to humanity in the work of redemption that involves participation in God's holiness, happiness, and grace all for his glory. This participation is one of relationship that comes through grace in union with Christ through the work and infusion of the Holy Spirit, or what Edwards would call the work of "Word and Spirit."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Edwards remarks, "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. And as this is in itself excellent, so a disposition to this in the Divine Being must be looked upon as a perfection or an excellent disposition; such an emanation of good is, in some sense, a multiplication of it; so far as the communication or external stream may be looked upon as anything besides the fountain, so far it may be looked on as an increase of good. And if the fullness of good that is in the fountain is in itself excellent and worthy to exist, then the emanation, or that which is as it were an increase, repetition or multiplication of it, is excellent and worthy to exist. Thus it is fit, since there is an infinite fountain of light and knowledge, that this light should shine forth in beams of communicated knowledge and understanding: and as there is an infinite fountain of holiness, moral excellence and beauty, so it should flow out in communicated holiness. And that as there is an infinite fullness of joy and happiness, so these should have an emanation, and become a fountain flowing out in abundant streams, as beams from the sun." Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 432-33.

<sup>68</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 272.

<sup>69</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 421-22; 436-44.

<sup>70</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 460.

## CHAPTER 4

### EDWARDS ON REDEMPTION: SANCTIFICATION IN CONTEXT OF WORD AND SPIRIT

When Jonathan Edwards spoke of the concept of sanctification, he did so in the language of something greater. For in speaking on the topic of sanctification Edwards would do so in the context of the work of redemption by Word and Spirit, keying on a relationship with the God of the universe. It must also be noted that the topic of redemption, and sanctification as an aspect of an even bigger picture, fits into an even greater context that involves beauty, happiness, and glory that is found in the goal of redemption, which is God himself. Even in Edwards's vernacular, when he spoke on the topic of sanctification, he would refer to true religion, true virtue, or simply the Christian life. These concepts in Edwards's theology point to the outworking of the pursuit of beauty, happiness and the glory of God in a redemption established by, centered on, and found in the Godhead. It is here in the larger look at redemption, and in the specifics of the Christian life, that one can see the centerpiece of religious affection in pure act worked out, *ad extra*, in the economy through redemption.<sup>1</sup>

It is the connection to the Godhead that becomes key to understanding Jonathan Edwards on the work of redemption, and it is what fuels his understanding of the doctrine of sanctification. Edwards broaches the subject of the work of the Trinity concerning both creation and redemption writing,

“Let us make man.” Here is a consultation of the persons of the Trinity about the creation of man, for every person had his particular and distinct concern in it, as well as in the redemption of man. The Father employed the Son and the Holy Ghost

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<sup>1</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 145-46.

in this work. The Son endued man with understanding and reason. The Holy Ghost endued him with a holy will and inclination, with original righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

The whole of redemption is connected by the work of Word and Spirit. Here Edwards, as Conrad Cherry outlines, “sought to combine both the objective and subjective principles of religion by maintaining a harmonious balance of Word and Spirit,” which function as “one term.”<sup>3</sup> Thus this research now turns to sanctification in Edwards’s theology placed in context, which is through the work of the Trinity in redemption, seeing both the objective and subjective sides of the one work in the economy of the God of all holiness, happiness, and grace.

### **The Objective Work of Redemption: By the Word**

The Word in the economy is the work of the second Person of the Trinity in redemption, who works as the perfect mediator within history procuring not only justification but purchasing the Holy Spirit who establishes union with himself. The objective side of redemption is thus the work that is done through Christ in his incarnation, death, and resurrection, yet, the work of redemption, both objective and subjective, is still one work. It is a work in which Christ secures salvation and thus sanctification, that is much bigger than simply living the Christian life because of what Christ, as the Mediator, does in calling a humanity to himself. Even here, with the emphasis on the Son, one can see the work of the Spirit in the ministry of what Christ, as the Mediator, does in securing redemption through his work.<sup>4</sup> This objective work, done

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<sup>2</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Blank Bible”: Part 1 & 2*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, 2 vols., *WJE*, vol. 24 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 126.

<sup>3</sup>Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), 44-45. The context of this quote is enlightening for this current research because Cherry would introduce this quote by describing the issues of Edwards’s day. He writes, “The desire to avoid spiritualist subjectivism has led, in the history of Christian thought, to the opposite extreme: a concentration on the ‘objective’ Word largely to the exclusion of vital, individual experience. If the tendency of Quakerism was toward the subjectivism, the tendency of Puritanism was toward legalism and authoritarianism. Edwards, like his English contemporary John Wesley, sought to combine the objective and subjective principles of religion by maintaining a harmonious balance of Word and Spirit.” *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 501-832*, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 411; Seng-Kong Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned: Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 113-15; Kyle Strobel, “Jonathan Edwards’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” *Harvard Theological Review* 109, no. 3 (2016): 380-



in history in the Person of Christ, thus becomes the “immediate object” to faith’s orientation functioning together with the internal work of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Conrad Cherry interjects on this subject, “The Spirit, the inward divine possibility of faith, is the Worded Spirit, and the Word, the outward divine point of orientation of faith, is the Spirited Word.”<sup>6</sup> In understanding this relationship, Jonathan Edwards points the reader to the mediation of the incarnate Word, the purchase by the Word, and the work of justification by the Word, all of which connect the objective and subjective work by the Word and Spirit in the reality of union.

### **Mediation by the Incarnate Word**

The term mediation speaks of a go-between, or in the context of Jonathan Edwards’s work on redemption, the work by the Word in the incarnation. Concerning the work of the Word Edwards wrote,

The business of a mediator is as a middle person between two parties, at a distance and at variance, to make peace between them. Christ is Mediator between God and man to make peace between them, by reconciling God to man [and man] to God. He alone is fit to be the Mediator. He only of the persons of the Trinity is fit, being the middle person between the Father and the Holy Ghost, and so only is fit to be a mediator between the Father and sinners, in order to their holiness and happiness.<sup>7</sup>

The mediating work of the Word is much more than just the mediation of happiness,<sup>8</sup> which although an important and often neglected aspect today, is just a part of the

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<sup>5</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 45. See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 2:322; Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 117.

<sup>6</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 45.

<sup>7</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 419.

<sup>8</sup>The topic of mediation was broached earlier in this research regarding happiness, which is a big part of the main claim of this work on sanctification in the Christian, who then can be united to the God of all happiness through the work of Christ. Although important in looking at the missing element of happiness, it is necessary to see the overall argument concerning the mediation of Christ and what all is involved in Edwards’s theology of redemption.

equation.<sup>9</sup> For when God sends his Son as the Mediator between God and man, he is giving himself, which then affects all the benefits of redemption with happiness being one result because of relationship. The Word is God incarnate or the Master Image, sanctified by the Spirit in his flesh, and is the One who lives a life of obedience where all the rest of humankind fails; being a better mediator than what preceded him in salvation history.

The God of Jonathan Edwards is a God of communication with the incarnation being his greatest statement. In Edwards's work, one gets the sense that all of creation is a part of the communication of God, as he states, "The beauties of nature are really emanations, or shadows, of the excellencies of the Son of God."<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt as Conrad Cherry testifies, "Divine words and images of nature are incomprehensible apart from the Master Image, the Divine *Logos* incarnate in Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup> It is this truth incarnate that is the Master Image given in history that then will clarify everything else.<sup>12</sup> In connecting the truth of the Master Image, one understands with more comprehension the design of the *pactum salutis*, or covenant of redemption, where God determines to redeem a humanity for himself through the incarnation.<sup>13</sup> Edwards contends,

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<sup>9</sup>Lucas states concerning this in looking at the big picture concerning Edwards's theology, "Creation itself serves as the stage in which God gains great glory for himself in redeeming human beings through the mediator, Jesus Christ." Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 37.

<sup>10</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 279.

<sup>11</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 46.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>The *pactum salutis* refers to the covenant of redemption of which Muller elaborates, "In Reformed federalism, the pretemporal, intratrinitarian agreement of the Father and the Son concerning the covenant of grace and its ratification in and through the work of the Son incarnate. The Son covenants with the Father, in the unity of the Godhead, to be the temporal *sponsor* of the Father's *testamentum* (q.v.) in and through the work of the Mediator. In that work, the Son fulfills his *sponsio* (q.v.) or *fideiussio* (q.v.), i.e., his guarantee of payment of the debt of sin in ratification of the Father's *testamentum*. The roots of this idea of an eternal intratrinitarian *pactum* are clearly present in late sixteenth-century Reformed thought, but the concept itself derives from Cocceius's theology and stands as his single major contribution to Reformed system. Although seemingly speculative, the idea of the *pactum salutis* is to emphasize the eternal, inviolable, and trinitarian foundation of the temporal *foedus gratiae* (q.v.), much in the way that the eternal decree underlies and guarantees the *ordo salutis*." Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker,

Again it shows how much God designed to communicate himself to men, that he so communicated himself to the first and chief of elect men, the elder brother and the head and representative of the rest, even so that this man should be the same person with one of the persons of the Trinity. It seems by this to have been God's design to admit man as it were to the inmost fellowship with the deity.<sup>14</sup>

Here the words of Seng-Kong Tan are appropriate, for he writes, "Ultimately, human participation in God is only arrived at through the Son's participation in human nature—a work that is carried out by the entire Trinity."<sup>15</sup> In this Trinitarian work it is Christ who is the Mediator securing redemption, as Jonathan Edwards explains, "The Son, he is the Redeemer. He is he that actually procures salvation, that lays down his life; he redeems by merit, as he is the high priest, and by power as he is the king of his church."<sup>16</sup>

In Jonathan Edwards's work on the Sermon on the Mount, one can observe Jesus as the perfect Mediator, who goes up the mountain as he seeks "a place that is befitting his weighty words."<sup>17</sup> This place is not only reminiscent of the mountain of the first giving of the Law by Moses but also a pointer to the fulfillment of someone who is greater than Moses, God in the flesh, the Giver and Standard of the Law himself. It is from this point of juxtaposition of the two liberators, Moses and Jesus, on two different mountains, in two different dispensations, that one can see the perfection of the radical message of the gospel and the Person giving the Sermon.<sup>18</sup> Edwards points first to Christ, in speaking of the responsibility of the Christian. As Davies and Allison would point out centuries later, arguing that "the obligation to obey the commands of Matt 5-7 is grounded in Christology, in the person of Jesus; and Matthew has set up his gospel so

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1985), 217. See Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, 97.

<sup>14</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 367.

<sup>15</sup>Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, 97.

<sup>16</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema, *WJE*, vol. 14 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 434.

<sup>17</sup>W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols., *The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 1:423.

<sup>18</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kinnach, *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 493.

that one may first confess Jesus' unique status and then recognize the obligation of his commandments."<sup>19</sup> Here Edwards' pastoral side can also be observed, who as a heralded preacher was also a concerned minister spending "years shepherding parishioners through awakenings and declines," struggling to point his people to Christ.<sup>20</sup> He saw in the Beatitudes the radical message of the gospel that was fulfilled in the new covenant through Christ. For it was on this mountain where Christ proclaims blessing and not cursing and wherein lies a person's happiness, with Christ ultimately purchasing this blessing for them as priest and thus as a better mediator, and yet also as a bestowing King.<sup>21</sup>

It was with the theme of a better mediator, as seen in the text that Jonathan Edwards would show how Jesus would prepare his hearers for all that would follow in the Sermon on the Mount. In doing so, as Edwards demonstrates, Jesus would open the door to seeing and participating in the excellence of God and his happiness through redemption. The emphasis of a better mediator can be viewed in the words of Edwards himself as he introduces his message on Matt 5:8:

His face was beheld freely by all that were about him. His voice was heard without those terrors which made the children desire that God might speak to them immediately no more. And the revelation which he makes of God's mind is more clear and perfect and fuller of the discoveries of the spiritual duties, the spiritual nature of the command of God, and of our spiritual and true happiness, and of mercy and grace to mankind; John 1:17, 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:426.

<sup>20</sup>George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 1. Carrick comments, "It is important to note, therefore, not only that Edwards constantly points to Christ in his preaching, but also that he provides what must rank as some of the loveliest detailed descriptions of Christ in the whole range of homiletical literature." John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth, 2008), 103.

<sup>21</sup>Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 229, Matt. 5:44," in *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 47, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40NTozLndqZW8=>.

<sup>22</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 59.

This statement is based on the truth of the better mediator, who was the One who gave the first Law, and who has now come in the flesh. So, when the crowd heard the words of Christ, they were hearing the voice of the Lawgiver with a focus on the internal which works its way to the external and comes only in a relationship with him, for he came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it.<sup>23</sup>

It is in the truth of the incarnation of the Master Image and thus a perfect Mediator that the work by the Word and Spirit is observed as “one work,” where the work of the Holy Spirit in the humanity of Christ is noted in Jonathan Edwards as a sanctifying force.<sup>24</sup> This “one work” mingles the subjective and objective in the ministry of the Word, showing the interconnectedness of the work of the Trinity in a Spirit-Christology through the outworking of redemption.<sup>25</sup> The incarnation would begin with the work of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Christ and follow through his ministry in the anointing of the Spirit that he would receive at his baptism, showing the connection that is the union of the man Jesus to the divine *Logos*. As Edwards proclaims,

By sending the Spirit, assuming his flesh into being and into the person of the divine Logos, at the same time and by the same act, the Father sent him into the world, or incarnated him by an act of sanctification; for the incarnation was assuming flesh, or human nature, into the person of the Son, or giving communion of the divine personality to human nature, in giving that human nature being. And this was done by giving the Holy Spirit in such a manner and measure to that human nature in making it; and this was sanctifying that human nature. By this sanctifying was given communion in divine personality to human nature. But the giving such communion in the personality of the eternal Son to human [nature], was the very same as sending Christ into the world; there is no other sending the Son into the world. And

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<sup>23</sup>Here Carrick makes an assertion that clarifies Edwards’s thinking, especially in light of today’s conversation on virtue ethics: “It is evident from Edwards’ sermons that his preaching was powerfully Christ-centered and Christ-exalting. ‘What deserves attention,’ observes Wilson, ‘is his high and conventional Christology. In this he stood securely in the Calvinistic tradition, and his Christocentric position is evident.’ It is important to note, moreover, that this Christocentricity on Edwards’ part never degenerates into Christomonism precisely because of the power of his Applications; it is also important precisely because of the power of his Christocentricity.” Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards*, 111.

<sup>24</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 333-34; Edwards, “*Blank Bible*,” 767-68.

<sup>25</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 529. Here Strobel connects Edwards with Owen’s Spirit-Christology, with the “Holy Spirit being the bond of union between the divine and human natures of Christ.” Strobel, “Edward’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” 380. Strobel steers the reader to Oliver Crisp, *Revisioning Christology: Theology in the Reformed Tradition* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 168-98. Also see Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, 113-15.

here is the force of Christ's argument: seeing the Father hath sanctified him and sent him into the world, he has given his manhood being, so as to be the Son of God. It was not properly the making the flesh of Christ that was sending Christ into the world, but *making the Word flesh*. It was not merely giving being to the manhood of Christ, but the communicating the divine personality from heaven to earth in giving being to Christ's manhood, that was sending Christ into the world. And this God did by an act of sanctification, or by an imparting of the Spirit of holiness.<sup>26</sup>

So, the work of the Godhead in salvation is seen as a whole work as God implemented his divine plan in sending the Son, who in his humanity was sanctified by the Spirit.<sup>27</sup> It is a sanctification that not only points to the benefits of union for the believer, but also was a part of the overall work, which included the fulfilling of the law and prophets in living a life of obedience, and by making a purchase in his death.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Purchase by the Word**

The objective work of the Word continues with an emphasis on the Godhead and the continued economic work of the Trinity by pointing to the purchase of the Holy Spirit that the Son made from the Father for the believer. As Jonathan Edwards declared concerning this purchase, "The Holy Spirit is the great purchase of Christ. God the Father is the person of whom the purchase is made; God the Son is the person who makes the purchase, and the Holy Spirit is the gift purchased."<sup>29</sup> In this purchase one can see the importance of who Christ is in this transaction, reconciling God and man in his person.<sup>30</sup> Christ is thus the second Adam, and as the federal head he "does not simply act for his own sake, but to purchase salvation through his obedience for the elect," with the result

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<sup>26</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": 501-832, 334.

<sup>27</sup>See Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, 107-121.

<sup>28</sup>There is a connection with sanctification of the Son and the believer, but it is important to note that Edwards did see the incarnation as unique in kind, or as he states, "In a peculiar and inconceivable manner, and not by measure." Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 529. See Tan, *Fullness Received and Returned*, 113-21; Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 280-81.

<sup>29</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 353.

<sup>30</sup>Edwards writes, "Inasmuch as he was a divine person, he brought God down to man, and then he ascended to God. Inasmuch as he was in the human nature, he carried up humanity with him to God." Jonathan Edwards, *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 322-23.

that believers are now in him.<sup>31</sup> The amazing part of this look at redemption in Edwards's work is the emphasis that it is not just for the benefits that the believer receives in God's work through Christ, but it is God himself who is given in union with Christ through the purchase of the Holy Spirit.<sup>32</sup> It is thus communion and participation in the very life of God, because of the person of Christ that points to an intimate relationship,<sup>33</sup> so that Edwards can remark, "We shall in a sort be partakers of his relation to the Father or his communion with him in his Sonship. We shall not only be the sons of God by regeneration but a kind of participation of the Sonship of the eternal Son."<sup>34</sup> It is a relational participation, which is by the Spirit, who is not only the bond of love in the Godhead but also between God and humanity.<sup>35</sup>

The connection of humanity to God is through the Word by the Holy Spirit, yet it is the Mediator who is the very idea of God, the Master Image, Divine *Logos*, and thus a better mediator who purchases the Holy Spirit from God so that the believer can know and partake of Christ's justification and fullness in union.<sup>36</sup> In the words of Edwards,

All the blessedness of the redeemed consists in their partaking of Christ's fullness,

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<sup>31</sup>Kyle Strobel, "By Word and Spirit: Jonathan Edwards on Redemption, Justification, and Regeneration," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 47. Strobel continues, "It is by being in this new 'Adam' that believers are saved, and it is through the purchase made on their behalf that they are found to be truly *in* him." Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 353. This idea of the purchase of the Holy Spirit is somewhat unique in that the purchase that usually comes to mind regarding what Christ did in Redemption is salvation. But Edwards would focus on the gift, which is a person and not a thing, for it is the Spirit that is purchased in salvation, which then connects the believer, in relationship, to the benefits of Christ's work and to the Godhead.

<sup>33</sup>Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 48. It is important to note as Strobel clarifies, "This participation is not mediated in a metaphysical register, as if humanity were somehow to merge into the essence of God, but is fundamentally a relational notion (upholding persons as such)." Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Edwards, *The Blessing of God*, 177.

<sup>35</sup>Strobel states, "This relational participation with God is given through the Spirit, the bond of love by which God communes with his creatures." Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 48. See Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 122, 129, 593. See also Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007), 41-55.

<sup>36</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": 501-832, 146-47; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 493; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 59.

which consists in partaking of that Spirit which is given not by measure unto him. The oil that is poured on the head of the church runs down to the members of his body and to the skirts of his garment (Ps. 133:2). Christ purchased for us that we should have the favor of God and might enjoy his love; but this love is the Holy Ghost. Christ purchased for us true spiritual excellency, grace and holiness, the sum of which is love to God, which is but only the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart. Christ purchased for us spiritual joy and comfort, which is in a participation of God's joy and happiness; which joy and happiness is the Holy Ghost, as we have shown. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all good things. Good things and the Holy Spirit are synonymous expressions in Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

The purchase that Christ makes of the Holy Spirit emphasizes not only the idea of participation, where the benefits of salvation are rendered, but it also, more importantly, stresses God's self-giving, all of which point to who God is in his grace.<sup>38</sup> The "benefits" rendered include justification specifically, redemption generally, not to mention positional sanctification, but as Jonathan Edwards includes the idea of participation in union, there is also rendered the ability as well as the motive in what today theologians call the process of sanctification. This understanding establishes not only the "doctrinal moorings" within the doctrine of redemption,<sup>39</sup> but also shows how inseparably related, in this Reformed theologian, are the doctrines of justification and sanctification, and as will be observed, how sharply they should be distinguished as the whole spectrum of redemption is worked out.<sup>40</sup>

### **Justification through the Word**

The doctrine of justification in Jonathan Edwards is the necessary next step in comprehending the extensive nature of what union with Christ means in his theological understanding regarding redemption and thus sanctification. For the judicial was crucial in Edwards, yet when he spoke of justification it was because of the position of the

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<sup>37</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 136.

<sup>38</sup>Strobel elaborates that in this purchase what is emphasized is, "God's *self*-giving rather than the idea that God gives certain benefits." Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 47.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>40</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 86.



believer in being placed “in Christ.” As Thomas Schafer points out, “It is its actual union with Christ which renders the soul acceptable to God and is the ‘ground’ of justification.”<sup>41</sup> Union, which will be picked up in the next section because of Edwards’s connecting so much with the Holy Spirit as the bond of union,<sup>42</sup> is thus the basis on which the work of Christ is applied in Edwards, from his life of obedience and his death as a penal substitute to his resurrection from the dead.<sup>43</sup> This topic of union and

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<sup>41</sup>Thomas A. Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith,” *Church History* 20, no. 4 (1951): 58.

<sup>42</sup>Caldwell reminds the reader, “The Holy Spirit is the central agent in Edwards’s discussions on union.” Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 195. Caldwell also helps in defining union in Edwards, of which he states, “Given what we have studied, a good case can be made that the fundamental concept of spiritual union for Edwards consists in a sharing of divine knowledge and divine affection. To be more precise, the common denominator of the inner-trinitarian union, the *hypostatic* union, and the saints’ union with Christ appears to be the shared possession of divine knowledge *within* the affection or love that is the divine will. Experiencing this affection for the knowledge of God is to be brought in a relation of union with God. Edwards closely identifies this divine affection with the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.” *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>43</sup>The issue of penal substitution is one that is somewhat complicated in Edwards. There are some who question Edwards thinking regarding penal substitution, stating that he was more governmental in his theory of the Atonement and thus saw Christ as a *penal example* rather than a *penal substitute*, which is argued against in Joseph Harountunian, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of New England Theology from Edwards to Taylor* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006). Although Harountunian might be right in his overall direction of arguing for penal substitution, to which Edwards did hold, it might not be as clear cut as he argues. For one see in Edwards, as Crisp argues, strong vestiges of the Old Lights regarding penal substitution, but there are also leanings toward what the New Divinity would teach, having some of this moralistic thinking in embryonic form. See Oliver Crisp, “The Moral Government of God: Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Bellamy on the Atonement,” in *After Edwards: The Courses of New England Theology*, ed. Oliver and Douglas A. Sweeney Crisp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 78-90; Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 124-42. That Edwards held to penal substitution is clear from his words, with a full-blown moralism being true of those who followed him historically rather than of him. Edwards writes, “What I think we may rationally and truly suppose concerning this matter, is this: that as of old God was long preparing his church to receive the doctrine of an atonement for sin by the sufferings of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, and imputing his sufferings to the sinner as one that in that matter stood for the sinner and was his representative, by representing himself as appeased and pardoning the sinner on the account of the sacrifices and vicarious sufferings and death of brute animals, and so long using his church and accustoming the world of mankind to the notion of an atonement by vicarious sufferings.” Jonathan Edwards, *Controversies Notebook, WJEO*, vol. 27, accessed April 21, 2014, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy4yNjozOjA6LTE6NzIud2plby4xOTQyMDY=>. Edwards also stated, “God dealt with him as if he had been exceedingly angry with him, and as though he had been the object of his dreadful wrath. This made all the sufferings of Christ the more terrible to him, because they were from the hand of his Father, whom he infinitely loved, and whose infinite love he had had eternal experience of. Besides, it was an effect of God’s wrath that he forsook Christ. This caused Christ to cry out; ‘My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ This was infinitely terrible to Christ. Christ’s knowledge of the glory of the Father, and his love to the Father, and the sense and experience he had had of the worth of the Father’s love to him, made the withholding the pleasant ideas and manifestations of his Father’s love as terrible to him, as the sense and knowledge of his hatred is to the damned, that have no knowledge of God’s excellency, no love to him, nor any experience of the infinite sweetness of his love.” Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 333-34. See also S. Mark Hamilton, “Jonathan Edwards on the Atonement,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 4 (2013): 394-415; S. Mark Hamilton, “Jonathan Edwards, Anselmic Satisfaction and God’s Moral Government,” *International Journal of Systematic*

justification then becomes a necessary gateway in this study because of the sheer amount of work that has questioned Edwards's thinking on justification in union, seeing him as more heterodox than orthodox.<sup>44</sup> Union is an area of doctrine that has defined Protestantism since the Reformation,<sup>45</sup> and one that, even though Edwards was creative in his approach, is nonetheless based on the Pauline phrase "in Christ,"<sup>46</sup> and "articulates the Protestant Reformation view of justification in a way that addresses some of the contemporary questions that are posed to that view."<sup>47</sup>

The hinge of justification becomes vital in understanding Jonathan Edwards's understanding of redemption. In writing about Edwards's view on justification in the work of Christ, as it is connected to participation, Kyle Strobel gives a helpful illustration concerning this doctrine. He takes Calvin's illustration of justification as a "hinge" on

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*Theology* 17, no. 1 (2015): 46-67; William Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 177-204.

<sup>44</sup>These discussions are found in Schafer, "Edwards and Justification by Faith," 55-67; Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 389-409; Anri Morimoto, *Jonathan Edwards and the Catholic Vision of Salvation* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); George Hunsinger, "Dispositional Soteriology: Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith Alone," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 1 (2004): 107-20; Samuel T. Logan Jr., "The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards," *Westminster Theological Journal* 46, no. 1 (1984): 26-52.

<sup>45</sup>Both Calvin and Luther were strong in their views on the all-encompassing nature of union with Christ in the area of soteriology. Calvin stated, "First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us. Therefore, to share in what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us . . . for, as I have said, all that he possesses is nothing to us until we grow into one body with him." Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:537. Luther wrote, "But faith must be taught correctly, namely that by it you are so cemented to Christ that He and you are as one person, which cannot be separated but remains attached to Him forever and declares: 'I am as Christ.' And Christ, in turn, says: 'I am as the sinner who is attached to me and I to him. For by faith we are joined together into one flesh and bone.' Thus Eph. 5:30 says: 'We are members of the body of Christ and me more intimately than a husband is coupled to his wife.'" Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 26:168.

<sup>46</sup>Campbell comments, "The metatheme of *union, participation, identification, incorporation*, is regarded to be of utmost importance to Paul, yet does not occupy the 'centre' of his theological framework. It is, rather, the essential ingredient that binds all the elements together." Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 30.

<sup>47</sup>Josh Moody, "Edwards and Justification Today," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 18.

which religion turns to explain what is happening in Edwards's thinking.<sup>48</sup> He thus speaks of Edwards's doctrine of justification as "thin," not in the sense that it is minor or weak, but in the sense that it does not take up too much space doctrinally. Justification thus provides a hinge on which the whole of redemption is dependent, so that even though it is thin, it still establishes the whole identity of the door and is thus indispensable.<sup>49</sup>

The center of redemption remains the "economic movement of Word and Spirit,"<sup>50</sup> with justification showing how God works to declare fallen and depraved humanity righteous through imputation. Jonathan Edwards claims, "There can be no doubt that justification is a certain act of positive favor that not only frees a person from sin but also understood in fact as the approval of him as righteous through the righteousness of Christ both active and passive in both obedience and satisfaction."<sup>51</sup> Imputation is thus based on the broader work of Christ in both his active and passive obedience so that there is both pardon of sin as well as a positive righteousness through justification.<sup>52</sup> Edwards's assertion is evident as he articulates,

I would observe that both Christ's satisfaction for sin, and also his meriting happiness by his righteousness were carried on through the whole time of his humiliation. Christ's satisfaction for sin was not by his last sufferings only, though it was principally by them; but all his sufferings, and all his humiliation, from the first moment of his incarnation to his resurrection, were propitiatory or

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<sup>48</sup>Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:726.

<sup>49</sup>Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 49-50.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 396-97. In another sermon, Edwards states, similarly, "There are those that deny that Christ's active obedience to God's law is imputed to believers, or that it is any way available to their justification any otherwise than as a necessary qualification in order to render his sacrifice available. But 'tis very evident that Christ's active righteousness was necessary in order to our justification as well as his passive [righteousness]." Ibid., 60.

<sup>52</sup>Cherry encapsulates this in stating, "For our purposes what is significant in his theory of the 'at-one-ment' accomplished between God and man is the way in which the notion of imputation of righteousness is developed according to Christ's two major functions in relation to divine justice. Christ by his righteousness both satisfies the punitive demands of the law for sin and positively fulfills the law in order to achieve atonement. The former he accomplishes through his sufferings, the latter through his perfect obedience unto death." Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 93.

satisfactory.<sup>53</sup>

In expressing what is happening in Edwards's doctrine of redemption, Kyle Strobel pulls this insight together in understanding the whole and the center in union by stating, "The focus of Edwards's soteriology is undeniably the Son and the Spirit. The Spirit-filled Son is *the* justified One, and the Spirit-overflowing Son sends his Spirit to unite the elect to his own life."<sup>54</sup>

### **Connection of the Objective to Subjective: Union**

The focus in salvation for Jonathan Edwards was always Christological, with Christ as the center and foundation. The movement, though, continues in the economic out-workings of the Godhead in the application of Christ's work to the believer with the topic of union. It is in the person and work of Christ that justification occurs in the elect through participation in Christ's own justification. This emphasis on participation points to the fact that "Edwards's doctrine of justification stands and falls with his conception of union."<sup>55</sup> Union is obtained by faith, of which the work of the Holy Spirit, in illumination, is needed because of sin and enables one to respond in faith, seeing Christ in all his beauty and excellence.<sup>56</sup> But as this research continues to point out concerning Edwards's theology, union is much more than just justification; it is participation in the life of God.

The conversion in the life of the believer that occurs, by Word and Spirit, is "wrought at once." Jonathan Edwards elaborates, "That work of grace upon the soul

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<sup>53</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson and John E. Smith, *WJE*, vol. 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 306.

<sup>54</sup>Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 389.

<sup>55</sup>Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 61.

<sup>56</sup>Edwards calls this the "one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, and supreme amiableness of Jesus Christ," of which he states: "The sense of divine beauty, is the first thing in the actual change made in the soul, in true conversion, and is the foundation of everything else belonging to that change; as evidenced by those words of the Apostle, II Cor. 3:18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'" Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimmnach, *WJE*, vol. 25 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 636.

whereby a person is brought out of a state of total corruption and depravity into a state of grace . . . is in a moment.”<sup>57</sup> In the Northampton divine, one sees the necessity and importance of the hinge of justification, in the judicial pronouncement and penal substitution, but salvation in so much more. For salvation involves union and participation in what Christ has done, in imputation of both his life and death and even in the relationship that he has with the Father in the bond of love that is the Holy Spirit. In salvation, the believer gets a relationship with the Creator restored by union in the last Adam, accomplished through the economic activity of the Trinity. In union with Christ through the bond of the Spirit, Christ also gives the grace and desire to continue in the fruit of this relationship in what Edwards called evangelical obedience.

Participation is a powerful word. It makes one a part of something that is greater than oneself. So, when speaking of participation in connection to union with Christ, what has been declared in the Scriptures in speaking of salvation is much greater than one can think or imagine. Jonathan Edwards would speak of such union and participation in what is a strong Reformed doctrine of *theosis*.<sup>58</sup> Edwards would define

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<sup>57</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 161. Along these lines, Strobel helps in explaining, “While it is possible to make logical and semantic delineations between regeneration, conversion, justification, and adoption, they are in fact wrought through one act of Christ upon the soul of the unregenerate through a giving of his Spirit. This Spirit as love and grace itself, unites to Christ, illumines Christ, and works the very love of Christ (that is, love to Christ and Christ’s own love) into the heart of this person.” Strobel, “By Word and Spirit,” 64. This can be seen where Edwards states, “So that true saving grace is no other than that very love of God that is, God, in one of the persons of the Trinity, uniting himself to the soul of a creature as a vital principle, dwelling there are exerting himself by the faculties of the soul of man, in his own proper nature, after the manner of a principle of nature.” Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 194.

<sup>58</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 636-40. For a theological approach to *theosis* and Edwards, see Strobel, who shifts “our attention away from the neo-Platonic explanations of Edwardsian *theosis* and place it instead where Edwards himself focused—on the communicable nature of the triune God within the economy—we see that his notions of *theosis* rest on firmly Protestant foundations and result in recognizably Reformed conclusions.” Strobel, “Edward’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” 371; see also Kyle Strobel, “Jonathan Edwards and the Polemics of Theosis,” *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 259-77. See also Gannon Murphy, “Reformed Theosis?” *Theology Today* 65, no. 2 (2008): 191-212. For a more philosophical emphasis on the subject in Edwards see Michael J. McClymond: “Salvation as Divinization: Jonathan Edwards, Gregory Palamas and the Theological Uses of Neoplatonism,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Paul Helm (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004). For an argument against Edwards using *theosis* or divinization in his understanding of union see Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 192. Caldwell argues, “Edwards always places limits on this pushing-of the boundaries, especially with regard to the greatest theological and ontological distinction of all: the distinction between Creator and creature.” Crisp challenges this idea: “But this is mistaken. First, Edwards’s language about union with Christ is very strong indeed—despite his use of qualifying caveats like ‘as it were’ and ‘in some sense,’ noted by Caldwell. Second, Edwards never concedes that the Bride of

what he means by union in unabashedly proclaiming,

There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God does so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the saints being made “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), and having God dwelling in them, and they in God (1 John 4:12, 15–16, and ch. 3:21), and having Christ in them (John 17:21; Rom. 8:10), being the temples of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16), living by Christ’s life (Gal. 2:20), being made partakers of God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10), having Christ’s love dwelling in them (John 17:26), having his joy fulfilled in them (John 17:13), seeing light in God’s light, and being made to drink of the river of God’s pleasures (Ps. 36:8–9), having fellowship with God, or communicating and partaking with him (as the word signifies) (1 John 1:3). 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; but, to use the Scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God’s fullness (Eph. 3:17–19; John 1:16), that is, of God’s spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word “fullness” signifies in Scripture language. Grace in the hearts of the saints, being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner, above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate himself, and make the creature partaker of the divine nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper nature). This is what I mean by those influences that are divine, when I say that truly gracious affections do arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine.<sup>59</sup>

This emphasis on participation in Jonathan Edwards’s theology is that which

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Christ will become Christ. But a doctrine of *theosis* need not grant this; the idea is that one might be united to the divine. (Discussions of theosis often involve distinguishing becoming partakers of the divine nature (i.e. divinization), and become part of the divine essence, which would mean becoming somehow absorbed into God). Third, although Edwards does have a robust distinction between God and his creatures, there is a tension in his thought on the matter. For Edwards also endorsed a version of pantheism, according to which the world is somehow God’s body, the consequence of God’s desire to ‘expand himself’ in some qualified sense, to include the created order.” Oliver Crisp, *Retrieving Doctrine: Essays in Reformed Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 194-95. There is a strong Creator/creature distinction in Edwards. This is important to note because of the baggage that the concept of *theosis* brings, so one needs to be careful to understand what Edwards is saying, and to observe that the language Edwards uses is consistent with orthodox Reformed thinking. See Strobel, “Edward’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” 371-99; Murphy, “Reformed Theosis?,” 191-212.

<sup>59</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 203. There is also a mystery that Edwards would admit concerning what has always been known as mystical union, in which he acknowledged: “What insight I have of the nature of minds, I am convinced that there is no guessing what kind of union and mixtion, by consciousness or otherwise, there may be between them. So that all difficulty is removed in believing what the Scripture declares about spiritual unions—of the persons of the Trinity, of the two natures of Christ, of Christ and the minds of saints.” Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 330. Caldwell also mentions a complicated nature of Edwards’s view on union. He attests, “One of the difficulties we confront in tracking down the theme of union found in Edwards’s doctrine of sanctification, lies in the fact that he did not articulate the Spirit’s work of union from a single vantage point. As his doctrine of the Christian life is complex and varied, so too is his discussion of the Spirit’s work.” Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 139. He does go on to three of these perspectives of the Spirit’s work as the bond of union for the believer in sanctification. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 139-41.

has been evident in the work of other Reformed scholars, yet with an added aspect of his uniqueness brought to the doctrine.<sup>60</sup> For Edwards the concept of *theosis* does not speak of sharing the essence of God, but speaks of relationship in union. In Edwards's unique approach to the attributes of God, it is God's understanding (synonymous with wisdom and image) in the Person of the Son, and will (synonymous with love, peace, beauty, and glory) in the Person of the Holy Spirit, which are that of which the Christian partakes.<sup>61</sup> It is thus a robust view of union that Edwards gives, yet also one that is nuanced as to maneuver around much of what has been assumed problematic about the concept of *theosis*, pushing one's understanding in what salvation and thus sanctification is, all within the bounds of Reformed doctrine.<sup>62</sup>

The work of redemption happens through the justification of Christ before the Father in his life, death, and resurrection, and then is applied by the believer being united to Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, whom Christ purchased for the elect.<sup>63</sup> Union is what makes imputation possible. The result of redemption is thus tremendous

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<sup>60</sup>See John Calvin, *2 Peter: Commentary on the Catholic Epistles, Calvin's Commentaries*, electronic ed. (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998), 2 Peter 1:4. Strobel states, "Edwards follows Calvin in his use of the 'divine nature' to signify a communicable feature of God's life, but does so through his unique development of the Trinity and divine attributes." Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 26. See Carl Mosser, "The Greatest Possible Blessing: Calvin and Deification," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55, no. 1 (2002): 191-212; J. Todd Billings, "United to God through Christ: Assessing Calvin on the Question of Deification," *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 3 (2005): 315-34.

<sup>61</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 118-31. Strobel unravels this thinking in looking at the key to Edwards's theology by articulating, "To partake in God's nature, therefore, on Edwards's understanding, is to partake in God's self-understanding and self-willing. This is how Edwards defines religious affection. God's life is religious affection in pure act, and creatures come to partake of this life through the giving of the Son (understanding and image) and Spirit (will and love). To have understanding without love would be mere speculative knowledge, and therefore could not be a participation in God's self-knowing (which is affectionate self-knowledge)." Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 394. Strobel adds, "*Theosis*, and its grammar of participation, forms Edwards's soteriology and orients it to its ultimate goal—an increasing union, communion, and participation with God in Christ for eternity." Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 389.

<sup>62</sup>Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*," 392-99.

<sup>63</sup>Bezzant points out, "Significantly, Edwards creates a turning point in the *History of the Work of Redemption* not out of Christ's death alone, but out of the whole period of Christ's incarnate life, from his conception to his ascension, through which he fulfilled all righteousness. The comprehensive character of Edwards's formulation of justification is likewise to be seen when he joins together the Christian believer's *freedom from* God's wrath with reception of 'divine favor.'" Rhys Bezzant, "The Gospel of Justification and Edwards's Social Vision," in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 74.

and promotes a fuller picture of salvation which Kyle Strobel addresses:

Christ's role as mediator and federal head involves not only his obedience, but also his justification. Christ does not procure a treasure and then hand it out to those with faith; *Christ* and the *Spirit* are the treasure. The Spirit is given to unite to Christ, where righteousness, redemption, and justification reside. Speaking of redemption, in other words, is not primarily talk about justification, as important as that is, but is first and foremost a discussion of participation in Christ through his Spirit.<sup>64</sup>

The order of salvation in Jonathan Edwards's theological understanding is also important in comprehending the importance of union, which points to the sweeping nature of salvation that is far from just legal. In Edwards, there was a concern with a bigger picture of salvation. The question that has often been asked is whether Edwards switched the order of salvation with sanctification preceding justification,<sup>65</sup> thus making him closer to Catholic doctrine than Protestant, or even more in line with N. T. Wright and the New Perspective in speaking of today's discussions on justification.<sup>66</sup> The main argument that has caused much of this debate comes from Edwards's most famous sermon on the issue of justification, "Justification by Faith Alone," with the quote, "What is real in the union between Christ and his people is the foundation of what is legal."<sup>67</sup> This language could be read in several different ways, but when considered in context is very Reformed and centers on union as the foundation for what is legal. For one realizes that Edwards "is arguing that what is 'real' in the union of the believer with Christ is the real person of Jesus Christ himself. It is his merits, his righteousness" so that it is "Christ

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<sup>64</sup>Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 54.

<sup>65</sup>This concern was brought up in George Nye Boardman, *A History of New England Theology, American Religious Thought of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (New York: Garland, 1987), 155-56; Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards, The American Men of Letters Series* (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1949), 76; Schafer, "Edwards and Justification by Faith," 64. See Morimoto, *Edwards and the Catholic Vision*, 114-21.

<sup>66</sup>N. T. Wright, "New Perspective on Paul," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 255-56.

<sup>67</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 158.



himself that is ‘real’ and the ‘foundation of what is legal.’”<sup>68</sup> He is not stating that sanctification precedes justification, for the legal aspects are there and essential for Edwards, as seen in his sermon that is cited,<sup>69</sup> yet the importance of union with Christ shows that salvation is all encompassing in what it means for the believer. Union is the ground for justification, so the legal, although important, is far from the only benefit of regeneration.<sup>70</sup> Union in the work of Edwards is central, as well as complex, for it involves the restoration of the believer for that which humankind was originally created, which is identification with Christ in his death and resurrection. In this focus there is also an emphasis on the Holy Spirit with the fact that in Edwards’s work “the fundamental concept of spiritual union consists in a sharing of divine knowledge and divine affection,” which also points to the complexity of his writing on the topic.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Moody, “Edwards and Justification Today,” 27.

<sup>69</sup>Edwards maintains a forensic focus as seen throughout “Justification by Faith Alone” in Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 156, 188-91. There he focuses the attention on the person of Christ himself in speaking of the legal union between the believer and Christ, which again is only possible because of the union that is there because of faith. As to his orthodoxy as Bombaro asserts, “Edwards unapologetically professed himself Christian, confessional, Calvinist.” John J. Bombaro, “Dispositional Peculiarity, History, and Edwards’s Evangelistic Appeal to Self-Love,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, no. 1 (2004): 120. This emphasis can be seen in Edwards’s words in a letter to John Erskine where he writes, “As to my subscribing to the substance of the Westminster Confession, there would be no difficulty.” Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn, *WJE*, vol. 16 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 355. Also, see the overall thrust of *Freedom of the Will*, where Edwards proclaims, “I should not take it all amiss, to be called a Calvinist.” Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 131. It should also be mentioned that in this work Edwards was writing to counter what was happening as the result of the Enlightenment and its influence as manifested in the anthropocentric leanings of Arminianism or what was called religious rationalism, which would mitigate against him taking any kind of view that would have him arguing for sanctification preceding justification or any other works based doctrine.

<sup>70</sup>Edwards’s miscellanies have often been brought up in this conversation. See Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 245. Cherry mentions that what Edwards means by “sanctification” should be read as “regeneration,” which “by no means falls away from his Reformed tradition in meaning.” Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 42-43.

<sup>71</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 198. In continuing to speak of this trait in Edwards’s work, Caldwell adds before he comes to this definition, “It is perhaps this characteristic of his theology of union which has the potential to lead to confusion. Scripture does not present us with a systematic theology detailing the intricacies of the saints’ union with God. It speaks of ‘partaking in the divine nature,’ of being ‘in Christ,’ and of both God’s love and Christ himself dwelling in the saints, and does not present a complete picture of these staggering realities. By sticking close to Scripture’s categories and refraining from excessive speculation, Edwards’s thought on spiritual union evidences a similar trait: we glimpse the wonderful reality of spiritual union in his writings, while questions remain regarding the exact nature of this union. Such is the nature of pneumatology and spiritual union: no matter how much theological precision we bring to these issues, new questions arise and great mysteries remain.” *Ibid.*, 195.

## **The Subjective Work of Redemption: By the Spirit**

The work of the Word establishes the foundation for what the Spirit brings to the believer in the one work of redemption. It is a work in total that is intermingled by both the Word and Spirit in the economy of the Trinity through redemption, yet, on the subjective side, one can observe the communicating of redemption in the work of the Holy Spirit in the economy through illumination, infusion, and sanctification.<sup>72</sup> The Holy Spirit is, as stressed in Jonathan Edwards's work, the holiness, happiness, and grace of the Godhead. He is the One who illumines the Word as he is infused into the life of a believer, which then produces sanctification that is determinative in nature, the Holy Spirit being the very holiness of God that is purchased for the believer. The gift of the Holy Spirit gives the believer the ability to obey and to make the pilgrimage in what is known today as progressive sanctification, which is in dependence on God's work that culminates with glorification in heaven, which is to the glory of God.

### **Illumination by the Spirit**

The work of the Holy Spirit as seen in the subjective aspect of redemption begins with the crucial enterprise of illumination. It is important to note that in Jonathan Edwards's theology the subjective work of the Spirit on the souls of the saints is an immediate work that produces conversion, changing the nature of the individual, because of illumination in the work of infusion.<sup>73</sup> The truth of the work of illumination along with infusion with it becomes an important part of the equation in considering the doctrine of sanctification. As Edwards declared,

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<sup>72</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 45.

<sup>73</sup>Strobel writes of this connection of illumination and infusion, "While our discussion differentiates these two interconnected realities, it is important to note that they are two efforts of one act of the Spirit and therefore cannot truly be abstracted from one another." He further elucidates on this topic, "Edwards soteriology is organized by the economic activity of Son and Spirit and not by an individual chronological process (e.g. justification by faith). One of the reasons why commentators differ so radically and fail to follow the logic of Edwards's account is because they miss this point." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 180. See also Strobel, "By Word and Spirit," 45-69; and Valeri's introduction to the sermon, "A Divine and Supernatural Light," where he states, "The infusion of the divine supernatural light." Mark Valeri, introduction to "A Divine and Supernatural Light" in *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Mark Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 406.

A natural man may choose deliverance from hell; but no man doth ever heartily choose God, and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and happiness of God's people, till he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them; he has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of the inestimable worth and value of them.<sup>74</sup>

It is in illumination, in the opening of the eyes of an individual, where the central theme of the beauty and excellence of God in Edwards's theology. Illumination enables the person to see the spiritual reality of how things actually are, so this is not new truth, but truth to which the unregenerate are completely blind, being a sight that the Holy Spirit gives that was utterly destroyed in the fall.<sup>75</sup>

The aspect of illumination in redemption is a part of the whole that allows an individual to see according to the truth of reality. As Jonathan Edwards explains, "The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim, and obscure, are by this means impressed with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them; so that the mind can better judge of them."<sup>76</sup> This illumination is, in Edwards's words, "The due apprehension of those things that are taught in the Word of God," or more robustly, "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, thence arising."<sup>77</sup>

In illumination, Jonathan Edwards sees God as dealing with humankind according to their nature as rational creatures, or stated more plainly, as persons in this work of the illumination of the Word by the work of the Spirit.<sup>78</sup> Edwards contends, "The

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<sup>74</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 314.

<sup>75</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 411-12.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 412, 13. Cherry points to the work of the Spirit in the Word, by stating, "The Scripture and the language of the preacher become the Word of God only through the power of God's Spirit. It is in this context that we must understand Edwards' reference to the operation of the Spirit as 'immediate.'" Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 47. Strobel explains the particulars of Edwards's thinking of this sight that is had in illumination: "This sight is accomplished in two ways: First, illumination offers, '[a] true sense of the divine superlative excellency of the things of religion.' This light in other words, illumines revelation so as to reveal the excellency of God in Christ and his working of redemption. Furthermore, this light illumines in such a way, or better, illumines such a subject, that it provides a *sense of his* excellency and glory." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 182-83. See Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416-17.

<sup>78</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 184. Strobel cites that this is the standard way of

natural faculties are the subject of this light: and they are the subject in such a manner, that they are not merely passive, but are active in it; and acts and exercises of man's understanding are concerned and made use of in it."<sup>79</sup> It then brings a love for God that is indicative of the work of the Holy Spirit *ad intra*, which is mirrored in his work *ad extra*.<sup>80</sup> This work *ad extra* begins with knowledge of the truth in illumination, which brings change as Edwards attests,

This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Savior; it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect, cleaving to it with full inclination and affection. And it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.<sup>81</sup>

Illumination thus affects the believer's understanding and involves a sense of the heart, a change of the affections. It is with the affections that the implications of this work of illumination by the Holy Spirit continue throughout the life of the believer in the process of sanctification, in which the truth of the apprehension of the beauty of God continues to affect the soul.<sup>82</sup> It affects the soul because it is a "sense of God's glory as

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thinking in Reformed thinking. See John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.), 3:221-28, 238-40, 261-62; Peter van Mastricht, *A Treatise on Regeneration* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002), 22-26; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 2:522-23.

<sup>79</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416.

<sup>80</sup>Caldwell writes, "The central role the Spirit plays in regeneration is not unlike his role within the Trinity. There the Spirit highlights the Son's glorious excellences to the Father and quite literally *is* the Father's infinite love to the Son. Likewise, the Spirit *ad extra* highlights the Son to the elect, and unites them to Christ in love. Conversely, within the Trinity the Spirit is the Son's own love to the Father, and it is *in the Spirit* where the Father and Son commune. Likewise, in redemption the Spirit is mysteriously the saint's love to the Father through the Son, and it is in the realm of the Spirit where they commune with their Redeemer and with God the Father. While these parallels are not perfectly symmetrical, it will become clear in the remainder of our study that Edwards conceived the entire scope of redemption to be, in one sense, an 'externalization' of the Trinity, the Trinity turned 'inside-out.'" Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 102. Strobel adds, "Just as knowledge entails participation in Christ, God's self-understanding, so also regeneration, as being made holy, necessitates participation in the Holy Spirit as the divine principle of love grace, and holiness. Edwards, in conceiving of eternity as participation in the inner life of God, orients redemption around partaking in God's *own* personal beatific-delight, rather than around abstracted principles of grace." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 190.

<sup>81</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 424.

<sup>82</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 192. Strobel elsewhere speaks of this illumination, in the language of Edwards, as "a 'taste,' of glory and that taste, with the presence of the Spirit in the soul,

true beauty,” in which the heart is moved by love because of who Christ is, in this work that enlightens “the glory, holiness, and beauty of God in Christ.”<sup>83</sup>

### **Infusion of the Spirit**

Concurrent with the work of illumination as one act of the Spirit is the work that Jonathan Edwards termed “infusion,” which is an imparting of the third Person of the Trinity himself to the soul of the believer.<sup>84</sup> This topic has garnered much discussion in what exactly Edwards meant by this language. This focus by scholars is because of the Roman Catholic doctrine involving the same term which points to infused righteousness and a much different doctrine of justification than in Protestant orthodoxy.<sup>85</sup> But when Edwards talked of infusion, he was speaking not about what the Westminster Confession spoke against, but of regeneration and the experience of being united with Christ. The infusion here is an infusion of the Holy Spirit that changes the soul of man and is something that is done by the mighty arm of God. Edwards acknowledged,

And seeing it is thus, how analogous hereto is it to suppose that however God has

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helps to order the believer to beauty rather than destruction.” Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 188.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 183, 193. Strobel elaborates, “All ectypal knowledge is formed by the archetype of God’s all knowing and self-loving.” Ibid., 183.

<sup>84</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 158. See Morimoto for his argument comparing Edwards’s soteriology to the Roman Catholic view of soteriology. Morimoto, *Edwards and the Catholic Vision*, 105-30. To see a further critique of Morimoto’s work, see Bombaro, “Edwards’s Vision of Salvation,” 45-67; Moody, “Edwards and Justification Today,” 20-24.

<sup>85</sup>Demarest explains, “Viewing justification as a process, Catholicism speaks both of the inception and the increase of justification. Concerning the inception of justification, God through Christ’s merits and via the sacrament of baptism remits past sins and infuses into the soul new habits of grace. Although this first stage of justification makes persons inherently righteous via the impartation of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), ‘concupiscence’ (desire that is the seed-bed of sin but not itself sin) remains in Christians. Catholic authorities judge it inconceivable that the holy God would accept into his family those who remain contaminated by sin. Moreover, they insist that imputed righteousness would seriously undermine moral effort. Concerning the increase of justification, the baptized work for eternal life by means of love-inspired virtues that are the fruit of the grace infused into the soul. Rome upholds the ‘merit of worthiness’ (*meritum de condigno*)—i.e., the merit wrought by free moral acts performed in this state of grace. Justification is not a once-for-all event; righteousness increases or decreases proportional to the person’s faith and works. Traditional Roman Catholics, in other words, trust in God’s infusion of a new nature and plead the worth of their God-enabled works. Justification in Catholic theology is a comprehensive term that includes, among other things, what Protestants understand by regeneration and sanctification. For Rome, justification is not divine-wise an objective *pronouncement* of righteousness but is human-wise a lifelong *process* of becoming righteous.” Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 1997), 350.

left meaner gifts, qualifications and attainments in some measure in the hands of second causes, that yet true virtue and holiness, which is the highest and most noble of all the qualifications gifts and attainments of the reasonable creature, and is the crown and glory of the human, and that by which he is nearest to God and does partake of his image and nature, and is the highest beauty and glory of the whole creation, and is as it were the life and soul, that is given in the new creation or new birth, should be what God doesn't leave to the power of second causes, or honor any arm of flesh or created power of faculty to be the proper instrument of, but that he should reserve it in his own hands to be imparted immediately by himself, in the efficacious operation of his own Spirit.<sup>86</sup>

When Jonathan Edwards spoke of infusion, he did so from a Reformed foundation of God's sovereign act in the life of a believer, making him more in line with the Reformers than Rome. Infusion was the term he used to show the complete change that would occur in the life of the elect because of one's position in Christ and was that which was given in the new birth. Of this transformation Edwards argues,

Therefore it follows that saving grace in the heart, can't be produced in man by mere exercise of what perfections he has in him already, though never so much assisted by moral suasion, and never so much assisted in the exercise of his natural principles, unless there be something more than all this, viz. an immediate infusion or operation of the Divine Being upon the soul. Grace must be the immediate work of God, and properly a production of his almighty power on the soul.<sup>87</sup>

It is in this production of power that the Spirit renews the image of God. It is where reason is restored to the soul, so that "man is raised to the heavenly life so that he is enabled to live to God and to perform those actions that are for God's glory and for his own true happiness."<sup>88</sup>

In Jonathan Edwards's work, one can see that he had a desire to place the new creation into the experience of believers as Scripture does, because of their position in Christ. Salvation, then, is simply not just a judicial proclamation, but it is because of a living and real relationship. A relationship that is because of one's position in Christ that is all-encompassing that brings about the judicial, not only changing the believer's standing before God, but in the process, one's entire thinking, affections, and behavior.

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<sup>86</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": 833-1152, 328.

<sup>87</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 165.

<sup>88</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 136.

Edwards thus contends,

As the new nature is from God, so it tends to God as its center; and as that which tends to its center is not quiet and at rest, till it has got quite to the very center, so the new nature that is in the saints never will it be at rest, till there is a perfect union with God and conformity to him, and so no separation, or alienation, or enmity remaining. The holy nature in the saints tends to the fountain whence it proceeds, and never will be at rest, till the soul is fully brought to that fountain, and all swallowed up in it. Hence there is an appetite in the soul of the godly after perfect holiness, and sometimes such longing desire after it, such hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. And hence it is impossible any sin known to be such should be stately allowed.<sup>89</sup>

This spiritual appetite is a contention that has significant application to what is observed in the continued work on the heart of the believer in sanctification, a work of sanctification that is both determinative, and progressive.

### **Sanctification by the Spirit**

The topic of sanctification, in what Jonathan Edwards called the Christian life or true religion, dominates the work of the Northampton divine.<sup>90</sup> From Edwards's sermons to his work on the affections and all that is found in his *Ethical Writings*, not to mention his miscellanies, the subject of the Christian life was of primary importance to the New England pastor.<sup>91</sup> In Edwards's work, there are both testimonies to the determinative as well as to the progressive aspect of sanctification. Determinative sanctification always lays an important foundation for what proceeds in living the

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<sup>89</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 692.

<sup>90</sup>Gerstner exclaims, "Of the twelve hundred plus sermons which Edwards wrote, I estimate that sanctification was the central and most emphasized theme." John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhatan, VA: Berea Publications, 1991), 3:224.

<sup>91</sup>Note also Edwards's work in a *Faithful Narrative* and then in *Some Thoughts concerning Revival* where this theme of sanctification gets significant coverage. See Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. Harry S. Stout and C. C. Goen, *WJE*, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 97-211; 289-530; Gerstner, *Rational Biblical Theology of Edwards*, 3:224. Even though the term sanctification in today's theological vernacular was not as prominent in Edwards's day, it should be of interest to note that in the printed Yale volumes the term "sanctification" is mentioned 183 times in 21 of the volumes. Edwards's *Ecclesiastical Writings* has the most occurrences at 22, and his *Writings on Trinity, Grace, and Faith* mentions the term sanctification 20 times. In *WJEO* of the online 73 volumes, this term occurs 281 times. For a comparison, the phrase "Christian life" occurs 126 times, "true religion" occurs 460 times, and "true virtue" occurs 667 times in the 26 volumes of *WJE*.

Christian life.<sup>92</sup> Even so, the subject of progressive sanctification in the Christian life would be a dominant theme in the work of Jonathan Edwards, always connected to his worldview. It is a doctrine that also was never divorced from the Godhead and the entire work of regeneration particularly in the concept of the beatific vision of Christ and union with Christ as the second Adam. It is because of this union with Christ that the Christian life involves happiness, all within the idea pilgrimage.

**Beauty.** The overarching concept of the beatific vision dominates the doctrine of sanctification in Jonathan Edwards as it does in much of his work. It is the focus on the beauty of God that has drawn many to his work, through his writing on the religious affections and true religion, as well as his undertaking of the endeavor of why man was created. Here regeneration, and specifically sanctification often become the focus of the New England divine. The primary focus in these things is always God, in his beauty, excellence, glory, holiness, and goodness, which are all connected. Edwards would exclaim, “It is a truly happifying thing to see God,” which is the sight one gets in God’s work of regeneration that then becomes a continued desire and pursuit throughout the process of the Christian life.<sup>93</sup> Edwards articulated this drawing that happens in regeneration as follows,

A sight of the greatness of God in his attributes, may overwhelm men, and be more

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<sup>92</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 468; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 200; Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 833-1152, 72; Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 190. Strobel adds, “The sending of the Spirit brings about regeneration, justification, sanctification, and ultimately glorification. In regeneration ‘habits of true virtue and holiness’ are obtained and believers ‘come to have the character of true Christians.’ The ‘habit’ and character’ is nothing less than the habit and character of God’s own life—the *Holy Spirit*—or holiness itself indwelling in them. Christ loves the elect to such a degree, that his act of loving unites them to his own life of holiness. This parallels the Father sending the Spirit to love to incarnate the Logos as man Jesus, who is truly the Son of the Father because the Father sees him as such. Upon his ascension Jesus sends the Spirit to unite believers to himself, so that the Father looks upon believers as one with Christ, and therefore truly his own children. The Spirit’s vivifying activity turns the believer to Christ so that the believer receives him. This act of receiving, on the believer’s part, is faith. Therefore faith is based upon the real work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, and yet righteousness remains alien because only Christ is truly righteous.” Strobel, “Edward’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” 386. See Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook, *WJE*, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1970), 363; Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 124.

<sup>93</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 61.



than they can endure; but the enmity and opposition of the heart, may remain in its full strength, and the will remain inflexible; whereas, one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, and supreme amiableness of Jesus Christ, shining into the heart, overcomes and abolishes this opposition, and inclines the soul to Christ, as it were, by an omnipotent power: so that now, not only the understanding, but the will, and the whole soul receives and embraces the Savior.<sup>94</sup>

This drawing is not the end, but only the beginning of this truth that captures the heart so that the Christian is the one who is ravished by beauty. Edwards continues this idea writing,

This sight of the beauty of divine things, will excite true desires and longings of soul, after those things; not like the longings of devils, or any such forced desires, as those of a man in great danger of death, after some bitter medicine, that he hopes will save his life; but natural free desires, the desires of appetite; the thirstings of a new nature; as a new-born babe desires the mother's breast; and as a hungry man longs for some pleasant food he thinks of; or as the thirsty heart pants after the cool and clear stream.<sup>95</sup>

**Union.** Spiritual appetite for the beauty of God, primarily seen in the vision of Christ, occurs at the regeneration of an individual through the work of the Holy Spirit in union. It is also in union that one obtains the righteousness of Christ, and that one's righteousness is always Christ's righteousness. Union, as we have seen, is essential for Jonathan Edwards. For the truths of union and participation continue to have an all-encompassing effect on the believer as Kyle Strobel asserts, "Salvation, broadly speaking, is not primarily about forgiveness or even holiness (abstractly considered)", but it "is oriented by creaturely participation in God's own life."<sup>96</sup> Union and the sight of

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<sup>94</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 635.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 636. Elsewhere Edwards would describe the spiritually enlightened individual's sense of God's excellency, which is equated with God's beauty as follows, "He doesn't merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing; but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account; or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute." Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 413. See also Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 184.

<sup>96</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 201. Of this Edwards's writes, "They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency: God put his own beauty, i.e. his beautiful likeness, upon their souls . . . . The saints hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul . . . . The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in the Holy Ghost as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant is a vital principle in the soul." Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 208.

God's beauty are one thing, which then affects sanctification, or what Edwards called the Christian life. Thus, participation transpires because of the work of redemption through illumination (having one's eyes open), infusion, and union, which points to relationship. The Christian life is indicative of a relationship that is for God's glory and thus is manifested in what Edwards called evangelical obedience, true virtue, or true religion.<sup>97</sup>

**Pilgrimage.** The state of the individual thus changes drastically in receiving a proper vision of God's excellency through the work of regeneration in union. But this is just the beginning of the journey, for another essential component for sanctification, as Jonathan Edwards's articulates, is the notion of pilgrimage.<sup>98</sup> In this journey there is struggle, yet in this struggle with sin, there is always a turning to God. As Edwards attests, "Conversion is a turning from sin to God: but the work of sanctification, in the whole progress of it, is a turning from sin to God."<sup>99</sup> In this continual turning the Christian is on a journey toward heaven, where Edwards argues, "We ought to be continually growing in holiness and, in that respect, coming nearer and nearer to heaven."<sup>100</sup> As observed in the introduction the beatific vision coalesces with the idea of pilgrimage where God is at the heart in an essential quote of Edwards on sanctification:

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<sup>97</sup>Reinke explicates, "It's interesting how Edwards merges here two key themes of sanctification: (1) vital union with Christ in progressive sanctification, and (2) our sight of Christ's glory in progressive sanctification. Those two realities are really one reality for Edwards. To see Christ's glory is to experience unhindered union with Him. The beatific vision of Christ perfects our vital union with Christ. And it's at that point his holiness will then flow unhindered in our lives, to our delight and to God's glory." Tony Reinke, "Vital Union with Christ and Sanctification in Jonathan Edwards." October 1, 2012, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://tonyreinke.com/2012/10/01/vital-union-with-christ-and-sanctification-in-jonathan-edwards/>.

<sup>98</sup>Concerning this idea of pilgrimage in Edwards Strobel adds, "By failing to make a clean break between pilgrim and the beatific knowledge, opting instead for incremental advancement of purity (of sight) and union with Christ, Edwards casts the Christian life as a journey or pilgrimage specifically toward heaven." Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 174.

<sup>99</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, 191.

<sup>100</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 434. Considering glorification Chamberlain would write concerning Edwards, "Although Edwards insists that justification is not conferred as a reward for faith, he also claims that God 'does in some respect give [believers] happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works' (No. 627). In both the 'Miscellanies' and the discourse he attempts to resolve this apparent contradiction by differentiating between the quality of works before and following the union with Christ that occurs by faith. Before union there is nothing in human nature morally fit for a reward; following union, however, it is appropriate to speak of both moral fitness

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper happiness, and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here: better than fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, or children, of the company of any or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean. Therefore, it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven.<sup>101</sup>

The journey and thus the vision, enabled by union, begins in a world that is opposed to God and in a body, that is still hampered by the flesh in a sinful world. This is an issue on which Edwards gives continued help, so that he would exclaim, “The saint all the while he is in this world, is like a pilgrim in a dark wilderness.”<sup>102</sup>

For Jonathan Edwards sanctification in the life of a believer is the continued progression in holiness anchored in a vision of God’s beauty that begins and then proceeds from union coming through regeneration in a pilgrimage that ends in the glory of heaven.<sup>103</sup> Edwards would state this overall idea of sanctification in his sermon for David Brainerd’s funeral:

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and reward. The ‘good works’ of the saints ‘are not lovely to God in themselves,’ Edwards writes in No. 627; ‘they are lovely to him in Christ and beholding them not separately and by themselves, but as in Christ’ (see also No. 712). Because of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, works acquire a virtue or merit that renders them subject to reward. The reward that saints receive for the perceived holiness of their works is not justification, however, but glorification. To identify justification as the reward would contradict Edwards’ assertion that the relation between faith and justification is one of natural, not moral, fitness. It is ‘heaven itself with all its glory and happiness’ that is conferred upon the saints as a reward for the holiness of their works (No. 671; see also No. 793). Edwards can therefore maintain that the communion of saints in heaven is hierarchical. Although all who are justified will ultimately be glorified, ‘the degree of their happiness will be according to the degree of their holiness and good works’ (No. 671).” Ava Chamberlain, introduction to *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 501-832*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 17-18.

<sup>101</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 437-38. In his *Miscellanies*, Edwards would write, “Regeneration is that work of God’s Spirit, whereby the soul is brought back from that state of sin into which we fell by the first apostasy of mankind, and [the Spirit] restoring it to its former state of holiness, restoring the image of God to it that was lost by the fall; but this is done gradually through the whole work of the sanctification of the Spirit. The destruction and death that the nature of man fell under by Adam, and which it is subject to by the first birth, and that new birth, in which the soul is restored by Christ, are so related one to another, that one is to be measured by the other: one consists in the removal of the other, and in restoring the soul from the other. And therefore the new birth is not finished till the soul is fully restored, and till the corruption and death that came by Adam and the first birth is wholly removed.” Edwards, *“Miscellanies”*: 833-1152, 71.

<sup>102</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 730. Edwards would also note, “And Christ doth more and more deliver his people from the power of sin and Satan in sanctification. Those that are converted ben’t wholly delivered at once from these. Though their influence has received its deadly wound and is dying, yet it is not wholly dead; but still sin and Satan have their interest in the heart. But Christ will more and more deliver from it by mortifying sin and lust and carrying on his work of grace.” Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 423.

<sup>103</sup>Two definitions of Edwards view on sanctification need to be noted from Tony Reinke and

The souls of true saints, when absent from the body, go to be with Jesus Christ, as they are brought into a most perfect conformity to, and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body; here beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image: but when they come to see him as he is, in heaven, then they become like him, in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement and sinful unlikeness; as all darkness is abolished before the full blaze of the sun's meridian light: it is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light. So it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain, in such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in heaven when they see that Sun of righteousness without a cloud; they themselves shine forth as the sun, and shall be as little suns, without a spot.<sup>104</sup>

Sanctification is thus a vision begun by faith that draws the individual to the One who is most beautiful, worked out in a life that participates in the very holiness and happiness of God had through position in union until perfection in the glory of heaven in a life that being beautified itself.<sup>105</sup>

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Dane Ortlund. Reinke summarizes Edwards's thinking stating, "Sanctification is the progressive emerging of Christ's holiness in our lives through (a) our vision of Christ's glory, and (b) our union with Christ by the Spirit . . . . We see Christ's glory partially now, therefore our transformation can only be incomplete in this life . . . . We experience vital union with Christ partially now, therefore our holiness will never fully emerge in this life . . . . In death we behold Christ's full glory (beatific vision), and there our sanctification is complete (glorification) . . . . In death all hindrances to experiencing vital union with Christ are removed, and there our sanctification is complete (glorification), Reinke, "Vital Union with Christ and Sanctification in Jonathan Edwards." Ortlund gives this definition: "Sanctification is the joyous pilgrimage of a soul that through new birth has become alive to beauty. Put more briefly, for Edwards, to become sanctified is to become beautified." Dane Ortlund, "Increasingly Beautified: Jonathan Edwards' Theology of Sanctification." n.d.. accessed December 1, 2015. <https://www.uniontheology.org/resources/doctrine/increasingly-beautified-jonathan-edwards-theology-of-sanctification>.

<sup>104</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 230-31. Edwards continues, "The union of the heart of a believer to Christ is begun when his heart is drawn to Christ, by the first discovery of divine excellency, at conversion; and consequent on this drawing and closing of his heart with Christ, is established a vital union with Christ; whereby the believer becomes a living branch of the true vine, living by a communication of the sap and vital juice of the stock and root; and a member of Christ's mystical body, living by a communication of spiritual and vital influences from the head, and by a kind of participation of Christ's own life. But while the saints are in the body, there is much remaining distance between Christ and them: there are remainders of alienation, and the vital union is very imperfect; and so consequently, are the communication of spiritual life and vital influences: there is much between Christ and believers to keep them asunder, much indwelling sin, much temptation, an heavy-molded frail body, and a world of carnal objects, to keep off the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect coalescence. But when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hindrances shall be removed, every separating wall shall be broken down, and every impediment taken out of the way, and all distance shall cease; the heart shall be wholly and perfectly drawn, and most firmly and forever attached and bound to him, by a perfect view of his glory. And the vital union shall then be brought to perfection: the soul shall live perfectly in and upon Christ, being perfectly filled with his Spirit, and animated by his vital influences; living as it were only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life." *Ibid.*, 231-32. See also, Reinke, "Vital Union with Christ and Sanctification in Jonathan Edwards."

<sup>105</sup>In speaking on the topic of faith, Edwards states, "Lastly, besides all these, there is in saving faith a consent to Christ himself, or a closing of the heart or inclination with the person of Christ. This implies each of the three things forementioned, viz. humiliation, holiness and renouncing the world. It implies humiliation, for as long as men deify themselves, they will not adore Jesus Christ. It implies sanctification, for Christ's beauty, for which his person is delighted in and chosen, is especially his holiness. It implies forsaking the world, for as long as men set their hearts on the world as their chief good

## **Consummation of the Objective and Subjective: Glorification**

In the progression of redemption, the Spirit continues his work begun in illumination and infusion in bringing the saint to glory. This progression of redemption in the life of the believer comes to the destination of the pilgrimage of the Christian life to realize full sanctification in glory. Jonathan Edwards writes, “Then will all the work of sanctification and glorification of all the saints, begun in their conversion, be completed in its highest conformity to Christ’s glory by a work far greater than the creation of heaven and earth.”<sup>106</sup> The end of creation points not only to the glorification of the believer in the consummation of redemption individually, but also it is all ultimately to the glory of God in redemption of a humanity for himself, with the center being the beatific vision or the beatific delight of God. It is an eternity which “is an ever-increasing asymptotic increase in union and communion, where the glorified creature participates through Christ in the inner life of God.”<sup>107</sup> It is a Christocentric eternity of which Edwards proclaims that the saints “shall have the beatific vision of God because they will be full of God, filled with the Holy Spirit of God.”<sup>108</sup> Glorification for the believer is to be fully fit for heaven, where one’s sight is no longer through a glass darkly, but a special “seeing of God,” all of which has as its ultimate purpose the glory of God through

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and have that as the chief object of the relish and complacency of their minds, they wont relish and take complacency in Christ, and set their hearts on him as their best good.” Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 458. Also see Ortlund, “Increasingly Beautified.”

<sup>106</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 1153-1320*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney, *WJE*, vol. 23 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 211.

<sup>107</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 146. Strobel continues, “Glory has returned to its fountain because God made creatures such that they could receive emanation and remanate glory back to God. Or, in Edwards’s summary ‘From glory to glory,’ that is, changed from the glory of God, from a sight of his glory, ‘to glory,’ to a glory in ourselves like it. This is, in short, the structure of emanation and remanation, or as I have termed it, God’s beatific self-glorification. This engine that drives the wheels of redemption, each following a specific cycle until all ends when *the* wheel of history returns to God in judgment.” *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>Jonathan Edwards, “Transcription 373, Romans 2:10 Sermon,” *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 50, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40ODoyNi53amVv>.

eternity future.<sup>109</sup>

It is the nature of systematic theology to separate doctrines into categories, yet in this one can lose something of what Jonathan Edwards saw and regarded as the whole of redemption. This tendency is no different for the doctrine of glorification, which Edwards saw as the goal or end of the Christian life or even more simply, yet profoundly, redemption. Edwards explicated concerning Job, “And hence he hoped that he would redeem his body from the power of the grave. The resurrection of the body, and that glorification of the whole person that will then be, is especially called ‘redemption’ in the New Testament.”<sup>110</sup> It can then be observed, to which Caldwell points in Edwards’s theology, that what has been discovered in the pneumatological themes thus far in the work of the Spirit, can be seen as amplified in this sub-doctrine of redemption.<sup>111</sup> For the Holy Spirit is the One who has illuminated the eyes of the believer’s heart, infusing the believer and thus providing union and definitive sanctification, which then begins progressive sanctification, all culminating in the work of the Spirit in glorification. Here one can see that objective and subjective aspects of the work of the Word and Spirit break down, for glorification is something which happens objectively in the body of the believer because of union and the work of Christ, through the subjective, but real, work by the Spirit on the soul. Glorification is thus a goal of the objective and subjective work of the Word and the Spirit, which is to the glory of God.

The tremendous truth of this look at goal of redemption is that the coalescing

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<sup>109</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 65. Valeri mentions Edwards focus here stating, “*The Pure in Heart Blessed* clearly adumbrates Edwards’ more celebrated sermon on spiritual knowledge, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*. Both lectures show his increasing interest in putting into concrete language the nature of spiritual experience. Yet there are some notable differences. Here, Edwards struggles to define the experience of seeing God, and thus draws on the image of the saints in heaven and their joy.” Valeri, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, introduction, 57-58.

<sup>110</sup>Edwards, *The “Blank Bible,”* 440.

<sup>111</sup>Caldwell explains, “In this chapter we shall examine the Holy Spirit’s activity found in Edwards’s theology of glorification. Because the saints’ ultimate glorification represents the culmination of all the currents of redemptive history, we will discover that the pneumatological themes covered in this chapter are merely amplifications of themes we have analyzed in previous chapters.” Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 170.

of the work of the Trinity has as its outcome the glorification of the believer. A glorification with Christ is at the center occurring through the work of the Spirit, where the Christian is brought closer to the Father in relationship. The Christocentric aspect to heaven not only has to do with conformity with Christ that is a glorification in and of itself, but also the goal of the believer's good. As Jonathan Edwards states, "This glory, this excellency and happiness that consists in the saints' being conformed to Christ, is the sum of the good that they are predestinated to; and the whole of their conformity to Christ is what the Apostle has respect [to], and not only their being made like him in conversion and sanctification."<sup>112</sup> But this Christocentric emphasis also has the overarching facet of union, which dominates the soteriology of the New England divine. Robert Caldwell summarizes concerning the believer in heaven:

The delight of holiness, joy of happiness, and divine love that fills the saints of heaven is none other than the Spirit himself, united to their souls. The love by which they love God is not distinct from God's own self-love communicated *ad extra*. Furthermore, the Spirit's union to the saint's soul is christologically oriented, drawing her further into union with Christ and, by implication, into a participation of Christ's sonship under God the Father. This christocentricism that the Spirit effects in the lives of the elect is also evident in the powerful vision they have of God. The spiritual sight by which the saints see God in this lifetime is immensely magnified in heaven as the beatific vision, which the saints shall forever enjoy with increasing clarity unto eternity. Edwards is also fond of articulating the final state of the heavenly church as one of increasing union and communion with God. He does not envision the perfection of the saints' union with God in static categories. Rather, it is a state that admits degrees and growth. The more the saint's capacity is filled with divine knowledge and love, the more she will be drawn further into union with God.<sup>113</sup>

In speaking of glorification, Jonathan Edwards thus underlines the importance of union but also demonstrates throughout his work that the sight of the beatific vision is delineated according to different eras of heaven's history.<sup>114</sup> In the glorification of the believer the union or partaking of God in the beatific vision "is an immediate sight of

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<sup>112</sup>Edwards, *The "Blank Bible,"* 1020.

<sup>113</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit,* 170.

<sup>114</sup>Strobel, "Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis,*" 395.

God the Father, mediated by Christ in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>115</sup> It is a further work of Word and Spirit in glory, and a seeing of God of which Edwards comments, “is to have an immediate and certain understanding of God’s glorious excellency and love.”<sup>116</sup> This understanding of God’s excellency and love is what it means to be ushered into the happiness of heaven and “to admit man as it were to the inmost fellowship with the deity.”<sup>117</sup> In introducing this idea in his miscellanies, Edwards would announce,

There is scarce anything that can be conceived or expressed about the degree of the happiness of the saints in heaven, the degree of intimacy of union and communion with Christ, and fullness of enjoyment of God, but what the consideration of the nature and circumstances of our redemption by Christ do allow us, and encourage us, to hope for. This redemption leaves nothing to hinder our highest exaltation, and the utmost intimacy and fullness of enjoyment of God. Our being such guilty creatures need be no hindrance, because the blood of Christ has perfectly removed that; and by his obedience he hath procured the contrary for us, in the highest perfection and glory.<sup>118</sup>

As Amy Plantinga Pauw has proclaimed, “The work of redemption reveals the depth and ultimate triumph of God’s desire that the creation participate in the beauty and excellency of the Trinity.”<sup>119</sup> One can also add happiness. It is a happiness that is worked out in union, by Word and Spirit, which in glorification continues to grow in the knowledge and understanding of God throughout eternity that is to God’s ultimate glory, being the end for which humankind was created.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Strobel, “Edward’s Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” 395.

<sup>116</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 64.

<sup>117</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 367.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>119</sup>Amy Plantinga Pauw, “The Trinity,” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 54.

<sup>120</sup>Edwards argues, “Thus it appears reasonable to suppose that it was what God had respect to as an ultimate end of his creating the world, to communicate of his own infinite fullness of good; or rather it was his last end, that there might be a glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fullness of good *ad extra*, or without himself, and the disposition to communicate himself or diffuse his own *fullness*, which we must conceive of as being originally in God as a perfection of his nature, was what moved him to create the world.” Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 433-34.



## CHAPTER 5

### EDWARDS AND KEY UNDERCURRENTS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: BEAUTY, HAPPINESS, AND GLORY

The topics of beauty, happiness, and glory were a standard part of Jonathan Edwards's language when he spoke of the subject of sanctification. These elements of the Christian life also point to the why and how of obedience for the believer, highlighting the proper motive as well as to the matter of ability, which is given in redemption. The desire to obey comes through the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the believer and is the biggest difference between that to which Edwards points in true virtue than what Aristotelean virtue ethics proposes. It is also within redemption where the ability is given to obey, in the work of the Holy Spirit in drawing the individual, which God continues to use in the continual calling of the believer from the world to something better, namely a participation in the beauty, happiness, and glory of God. Here the research primarily turns to the motive behind obedience, or what Edwards called true virtue, in looking at the elements of beauty, happiness, and glory that make up the drive, forging, and result of the Christian life. These elements ultimately coalesce together pointing to God who is the goal of the Christian life.

#### **Beauty: The Drive of the Christian Life**

For Jonathan Edwards, the Christian was one who is captivated by beauty. Beauty was for the Northampton pastor that which is all around in the world that God has given humankind to inhabit, a world that for Edwards sang.<sup>1</sup> This beauty is something

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<sup>1</sup>Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170. Farley argues, "Beauty is more central and more pervasive than in any other text in the history of Christian theology." Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 43. Surely Edwards was not the first or the last in this

that is depictive of God, the Creator who stands behind creation, all which points to him, yet it was a beauty that was most apparent in understanding the gospel, found in Christ and in participation in union with the God whose beauty is beyond comprehension.<sup>2</sup> For as Edwards reminds the reader, God is distinguished and exalted from all other beings primarily by his beauty.<sup>3</sup> It is a beauty that is muted because of the curse in creation as well as the blindness of the hearts of humankind lost in sin. Thus, a “new spiritual sense” is needed that comes by Word and Spirit, and is that which opens the soul to the fullness of beauty.<sup>4</sup> As Kyle Strobel asserts, “In short, Edwards’s Trinitarian aesthetics grounds theology as a contemplative discipline, ordered by the God of beauty, for the purpose of beauty. True theology is, as it were, sapient theology; the task of ‘faith seeking beatification’ as it is faith captivated by beauty.”<sup>5</sup> For Edwards, it is the Christian being made alive to beauty that ultimately drives the Christian life because of the excellence of the Godhead. This transformation of thinking begins in the apperception of happiness in the beauty of God at salvation and continues in a growing knowledge and understanding of the beauty of God in Christ in living out the Christian life.

In salvation, as God works on the heart, the individual is given a new understanding in a proper vision of God. Jonathan Edwards writes concerning the gospel, “Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a holy gospel, and so bright

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conversation, with others like Augustine, van Mastricht, Calvin, and von Balthazar to mention a few. But the focus on beauty in Edwards’s writing in connection to the Christian life is indeed great and has been observed in the recent outpouring of work on the Northampton divine.

<sup>2</sup>Marsden states, “The key to Jonathan Edwards’ thought, is that everything is related because everything is related to God.” George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 460. Beauty for Edwards was what made God, God. Regarding creation Edwards explains, “Indeed the whole of outward creation, which is but the shadows of beings, is so made as to represent spiritual things.” Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: *Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 434.

<sup>3</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 298.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 271; Lane, *Ravished by Beauty*, 172.

<sup>5</sup>Kyle Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards’s Trinitarian Aesthetics,” in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver and Fred Sanders Crisp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 147.

an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ: herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines.”<sup>6</sup> It is because of this understanding that there possibly is no other place where the description of Edwards’s colossal legacy is more apt; it is first and foremost a theological legacy that helps in working through the hard issues of ability as well as the motives in obedience by going to the center and thus the drive of the Christian life. This theological move earns Edwards a very significant place in the church for pointing to the heart of the issue that begins and ends with God.<sup>7</sup> This emphasis can be observed in the introduction to Edwards’s sermon on Matthew 5:8. Mark Valeri declares, “Edwards uses a familiar beatitude to explore the nature of spiritual knowledge and its relation to human happiness.”<sup>8</sup> This undercurrent of thought is stressed in many of his works, *Freedom of the Will* being foremost, with the sermon on Matthew 5:8 also being one with which the topic is enumerated with force and yet also dexterity.<sup>9</sup> In examination, this theme has two emphases; the first being the spiritual knowledge of the beauty of God, and the second, a knowledge of the truth of the wages of sin which is contingent on seeing the excellency of God.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 259.

<sup>7</sup>John Carrick, *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth, 2008), 2. This theological bent in Edwards sees its foundation in the Scriptures, for which many have chided him, for Edwards demonstrated a proclivity to show how reason and the Scriptures work together, having the Scriptures as the mooring agent. This theological disposition in Edwards’s work demonstrates the bankruptcy of T. H. Johnson’s conclusion regarding Edwards where he asserts, “One of the greatest tragedies in Edwards’s life is strikingly seen in his refusal or failure to use with any breadth of application the full power of a mind that had rarely coupled talent for keen observation and philosophical synthesis . . . . One cannot refrain . . . from pondering what this intellectual arm might have accomplished had it not been so tightly bound by theological dogma.” Clyde A. Holbrook. “Jonathan Edwards and His Detractors,” *Theology Today* 10, no. 3 (1953): 389.

<sup>8</sup>Mark Valeri, introduction to “The Pure in Heart Blessed” in *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Mark Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 57.

<sup>9</sup>This message has two propositions with the first being a gradually developed examination of perception, and the second with a look at the idea of spiritual knowledge where one can see Edwards “putting into concrete language the nature of spiritual experience,” which is an experience only for those who are pure in heart. *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>In Edwards, God’s excellency is another way to talk about God’s beauty, of which Edwards proclaims, “The infinite excellency of Christ is described by his being the Rose of Sharon and Lily of the Valley, the most delightful, beautiful, and pleasing objects among created beings.” Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 416. See John J. Bombaro, *Jonathan Edwards's Vision of Reality: The Relationship of God to the World, Redemption History, and the Reprobate*, Princeton Theological

## The Apprehension of the Beauty of God

The theme of beauty that undergirds Jonathan Edwards's work theologically shatters, once again, the caricature that is often perpetuated of this American theologian. For, when he wrote and preached, he did so to point to the beauty, excellence, and glory of the One in whom true happiness is found.<sup>11</sup> Mark Valeri enumerates this tendency testifying,

He draws on the vocabulary of sensation, popular in eighteenth-century moral philosophy, to argue for an affective perception of God's glory. Spiritual sensation, he maintains, is the soul's perception of the divine attributes. An encounter with God's moral perfections yields joy and pleasure, so that a genuine sight of God yields happiness.<sup>12</sup>

It is with this theme that Edwards covers what would be a foundation for him in his work and ministry, namely that an understanding of the beauty and excellencies of God come through one's comprehension. It is knowledge that is more than just acknowledging God, for it involves an intuitive knowledge of his attributes, with the only way of knowing is to partake of God's own self-knowledge, which is Christ.

In the fall humanity lost fellowship with God and thus contact with true happiness. His relationship with God, and thus the source of all true happiness, was replaced by a misdirected happiness, choosing lesser things, inferior principles, then the greatest Person in God and his divine superior principles. Edwards elucidated on what the Fall did in humankind,

The ruin which the Fall brought upon the soul of man consists very much in that he lost his nobler and more extensive principles, and fell wholly under the government of self-love. He is debased in his nature and become little and ignoble. Immediately upon the Fall the mind of man shrunk from its primitive greatness and extensiveness into an exceeding diminution and confinedness. As in other respects, so in this, that whereas before his soul was under the government of that noble principle of divine love whereby it was, as it were, enlarged to a kind of comprehension of all his

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Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 58-74; Dane Calvin Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God*, Theologians on the Christian Life (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 24.

<sup>11</sup>Bombaro testifies, "Edwards was not obsessed by the wrath of God but by his beauty." Bombaro, *Edwards's Vision of Reality*, 14.

<sup>12</sup>Valeri, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, introduction, 57.

fellow creatures; and not only so, but was not confined within such strait limits as the bounds of the creation but was extended to the Creator, and dispersed itself abroad in that infinite ocean of good and was, as it were, swallowed up by it, and become one with it. But as soon as he had transgressed, those nobler principles were immediately lost and all this excellent enlargedness of his soul was gone and he thenceforward shrunk into a little point, circumscribed and closely shut up within itself to the exclusion of others. God was forsaken and fellow creatures forsaken, and man retired within himself and became wholly governed by narrow, selfish principles. Self-love became absolute master of his soul, the more noble and spiritual principles having taken warning and fled. But God hath in mercy to miserable man contrived in the work of redemption, and by the glorious gospel of his Son, to bring the soul of man out of its confinement, and again to infuse those noble and divine principles by which it was governed at first. And so Christianity restores an excellent enlargement and extensiveness to the soul. It again possesses it of divine love or that Christian charity of which we read in the text, whereby it again embraces its fellow creatures and is devoted to and swallowed up in the Creator. And thus charity, which is the sum of the Christian spirit, seeketh not her own or is contrary to a selfish spirit.<sup>13</sup>

Fallen humankind chooses that which is most beautiful to them, what they see as in their best interest. As Jonathan Edwards elaborates,

It is not rational to suppose, if there be any such excellency in divine things, that wicked men should see it. 'Tis not rational to suppose, that those whose minds are full of spiritual pollution, and under the power of filthy lusts, should have any relish or sense of divine beauty, or excellency; or that their minds should be susceptible of that light that is in its own nature so pure and heavenly.<sup>14</sup>

The Northampton preacher defined freedom as the ability to do as one wills, not the ability of a person to act contrary to his or her willingness and thus one's nature, which is depraved.<sup>15</sup> For Edwards, freedom is there but the object, and thus true happiness, is not in the natural man. The unbeliever is blinded to the beauty of Christ and so does not choose him. How then ultimately does the will choose to act? The will selects to its highest possible advantage, so that the will chooses that which looks most pleasing as it is

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<sup>13</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 252-54. Edwards would talk of a good type of self-love that has to do with happiness stating, "A Christian spirit is not contrary to all self-love. It is not a thing contrary to Christianity that a man should love himself; or what is the same thing, that he should love his own happiness. Christianity does not tend to destroy a man's love to his own happiness; it would therein tend to destroy the humanity. Christianity is not destructive of humanity. That a man should love his own happiness is necessary to his nature, as a faculty of will is; and it is impossible that it should be destroyed in any other way than by destroying his being." *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>14</sup>*Jonathan Edwards, Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 421.

<sup>15</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 301-05.

informed by the mind. So, in the unregenerate, the will chooses according to its nature and its highest good as it sees it, yet in salvation because of the work of Christ one's understanding is changed. As Edwards observed,

The Messiah came to save men from their sins, and deliver them from their spiritual enemies; that they might serve him in righteousness and holiness before him: he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And therefore his success consists in gaining men's hearts to virtue, in their being made God's willing people in the day of his power. His conquest of his enemies consists in his victory over men's corruptions and vices.<sup>16</sup>

It is only through the work of the Holy Spirit that the understanding and thus the heart is changed, where a relationship with the Creator is restored.<sup>17</sup> It is this restored relationship in union that provides not only happiness and blessing, but also obedience that becomes a part of the whole equation for happiness.

In the work of redemption there is an intellectual view of God in which he is beheld by the understanding where there is an immediate and direct sense of this glory, excellence, and beauty.<sup>18</sup> The mind becomes the mechanism, through the work of the Holy Spirit in union, in which the will works as it is informed. The will is simply something that is at the behest of mind and the information it has gathered. Jonathan Edwards writes, "It is always, and every individual act, necessarily determined by the strongest motive."<sup>19</sup> In this vision there is an "already" aspect of seeing and experiencing

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<sup>16</sup>Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 246.

<sup>17</sup>Owen Strachan and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards on the Good Life*, The Essential Edwards Collection (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 49. In speaking about original sin, Edwards contended, "These superior principles were given to possess the throne, and maintain an absolute dominion in the heart: the other, to be wholly subordinate and subservient. And while things continued thus, all things were in excellent order, peace and beautiful harmony, and in their proper and perfect state. These divine principles thus reigning, were the dignity, life, happiness, and glory of man's nature. When man sinned, and broke God's covenant, and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart: for indeed God then left him; that communion with God, on which these principles depended, entirely ceased; the Holy Spirit, that divine inhabitant, forsook the house." Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook, *WJE*, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1970), 382.

<sup>18</sup>N. T. Wright states, "For Paul, the mind is central to Christian character: virtue is the result of thought and choice." N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 154.

<sup>19</sup>Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 305.

God's glory and a love for the Scriptures, which must affect the mind and understanding as God works on the heart. But there is also a "not yet" realized truth in which "the more perfect views of God's glory and love in another world is especially called a seeing of God."<sup>20</sup> Even here one can observe that the pilgrimage that ends in heaven is still a continuation of learning, knowing and delighting. Edwards demonstrates this focus in looking at the Christian's new body, stating, "The beauty of the bodies of the saints in the earth . . . shall not only consist in the most charming proportion of features and parts of their bodies, and their light and proportion to colors, but much in the manifestation of the excellencies of the mind."<sup>21</sup> This apperception of the Christian, which continues in glory begins at salvation where, in Edwards's words, "The spiritualized regenerate soul sees a beauty and an amiableness, and tastes an incomparable sweetness, that is altogether hidden from the wicked."<sup>22</sup>

Jonathan Edwards argued that the reason God created humankind was for a relationship with the God of the universe that results in God's glory. Edwards would give the reader the reason for this purpose inherent in humankind and the only place where true happiness is found, which is because "God's excellence is the supreme excellence; when the understanding of the reasonable creature dwells here, it dwells at the fountain and swims in a boundless and bottomless sea."<sup>23</sup> Seeing God is a person's true happiness, which is not only the Christian's pleasure but also where one's perfection and one's own

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<sup>20</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 65. Valeri mentions Edwards's focus in this sermon, stating, "*The Pure in Heart Blessed* clearly adumbrates Edwards' more celebrated sermon on spiritual knowledge, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*. Both lectures show his increasing interest in putting into concrete language the nature of spiritual experience. Yet there are some notable differences. Here, Edwards struggles to define the experience of seeing God, and thus draws on the image of the saints in heaven and their joy. Later, Edwards would focus on the theological significance of divine illumination in terms of the necessity for a divinely given regeneration on earth." Valeri, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, introduction, 57-58.

<sup>21</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 301.

<sup>22</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema, *WJE*, vol. 14 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 179.

<sup>23</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 67.

true excellency are found. As Edwards articulates, “This is the soul’s seeing of God and that joy therein. When a man or any reasonable creature is once come to that . . . his excellency and joy are the same thing, then he is come to the right and real happiness, and not before.”<sup>24</sup> This understanding of happiness and the true beauty of God is something that is procured at salvation in the moment of conversion with the creation of union through the work of the Holy Spirit. But it is also something that grows through the continued work of the Spirit as one comes to the Word,<sup>25</sup> both individually and corporately, and thus needs to be pursued and for which one needs to fight in obedience, all of which is done in dependence.<sup>26</sup>

### **The Apprehension of the Ugliness of Sin**

The second aspect of spiritual knowledge, in relation to beauty, happiness, and glory, is a corollary of the first moment of apprehension where God is seen for who he is in his beauty and is thus desired. This second aspect of comprehension deals with the understanding of the reality of sin, in what it truly is as the converse of who God is and, in this, also seen for what it does to a relationship with the One in whom true beauty,

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<sup>24</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 68. In God giving this capacity to rational creatures, Edwards explains, “When God gave man his capacity of happiness, he doubtless made provision for the filling of it. There was some good that God had in his eye when he made the vessel, and made it of such dimensions, that he knew to be sufficient to fill it and to contain which the vessel was prepared; and doubtless that, whatever it be, is man’s true blessedness. And that good which is found not to be commensurate to men’s capacity and natural cravings, and never can equal it, it certainly denotes it not to be that wherein men’s happiness consists.” *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>25</sup>Edwards would state that sanctification is “one work of renovation . . . [from] the first dawning of grace in the soul until death . . . [for] Conversion is a turning from sin to God: but the work of sanctification, in the whole progress of it, is a turning from sin to God.” Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 190-91. He also would stress seeking after God. See Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn, *WJE*, vol. 16 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 91-92; Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 62-68; 404-09.

<sup>26</sup>See Edwards’s sermon, “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence,” in Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 200-14.



happiness, and glory are found.<sup>27</sup> If God is the believer's good, then sin is not.<sup>28</sup> It is this knowledge and the truth of what sin does in waging war against the soul that works in the follower of Christ so that happiness is chosen in the excellency of God rather than in the lust of deceit. Jonathan Edwards declared,

The wicked man serves sin with his soul. The sinner serves this master with his whole heart and soul, and all that is within him. His understanding is given up to the obedience of sin; [he] won't see the truth of the plainest thing in the world because sin bids him shut his eyes. [He] won't be made to understand any spiritual truth because sin won't allow of it. The eye of his reason must be open only to those things that sin allows him to see; he must keep his eyes fast shut, only when sin gives him leave to open them. Sin will not suffer the understanding of a sinner to see the gloriousness of God and the excellency of Christ, what is his own happiness, and the great danger he is in of misery. No, but sin makes him serve him blindfold and with his eyes shut.<sup>29</sup>

It is the pursuit of God and the beauty found in his excellence that brings happiness, pleasure and satisfaction, and does not bring bitterness, which is not the case with sin and carnal pleasure. Jonathan Edwards states that "carnal men are wont to place their happiness in," those things that "are bitter sweets; they afford a kind of pleasure for a moment in gratifying an appetite, but there is wormwood and gall mingled in the cup," for in these things "roses grow upon thorns, and there is a sting with their honey."<sup>30</sup> This

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<sup>27</sup>Edwards articulated, "Every man necessarily desires and seeks happiness; and natural men seek it partly without themselves, and partly within themselves. They seek it partly in objects that are without themselves, and these objects are worldly objects and enjoyments, worldly profits and pleasures, objects of their senses, the honor and applause of men. And they seek it partly within themselves, and that is in their own supposed excellency and dignity. Man having fallen from God, who only is good and who has in himself all excellency and glory, he is naturally inclined to set up himself in God's stead, and as it were to adore himself, and to seek that happiness in viewing his own supposed excellency that is to be enjoyed only in the beholding God's glory. God himself is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, and man, having fallen from God, seeks to make a god of himself, and affects to make those things his own that are peculiar to God, and so seeks to be happy in the enjoyment of his own dignity and excellency; which is a thing peculiar to the true God, who alone is self-sufficient, [who] only can be happy in himself. The natural disposition of man, is to affect to be a god, and so he delights in vaunting himself in his own supposed dignity, and he seeks rest for his soul in this." Jonathan Edwards, "The Pursuit of Happiness," in *Jonathan Edwards Sermons*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach (New Haven, CT: The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 1746), Isa 55:2.

<sup>28</sup>Edwards warned his congregation about what sin does in twisting the unbeliever's pursuit of true happiness: "You have not only neglected your salvation, but you have willfully taken direct courses to undo yourself. . . . You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself willfully." Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 200), 371.

<sup>29</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 343-44.

<sup>30</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 69. The difference can be seen in Edwards' elucidation of the knowledge that brings true happiness as he continues: "But the delight that the seeing

result is not so with the pursuit of the excellence of God, for where the one path leads with flowers, the way of sin ultimately finds its destination in destruction; the way of God is where mourning is turned to laughing.<sup>31</sup> It is a taste of something better, which occurs in the comprehension of beauty of the person of Christ, which is also a participation in the happiness of the Godhead through union, and is something that begins to be understood and lived out and thus enjoyed in this world.<sup>32</sup>

The excellency of God changes one's understanding of what is truly beautiful. It is here that one can see, following from the excellence that is found in God and participation in the very happiness of God, that to go headlong into sin would be a foolish thing. It would take one away not only from God, the source of happiness, but also would mean pursuit of that which is the lust of deceit, and thus would be an action against knowledge, happiness and beauty. Jonathan Edwards would proclaim in preaching on "Youth and the Pleasures of Piety,"

By this doctrine, one of the greatest objections of young people against religion are cut off. This is a main thing that hinders young people from embracing the ways of religion, that they are in pursuit of their pleasures. This is what they aim at, to spend their youth pleasantly; and they think, if they should forsake sin and youthful vanity, and betake themselves to a religious course of life, this will hinder them in this pursuit. They look upon religion as a very dull, melancholy thing, and think, if they embrace it, that they must have done in a great measure with their pleasures. But what has been now offered shows the fallaciousness of such an objection, and shows that religion, instead of being an hindrance to your spending youth pleasantly, will be the directest way to it, and indeed the only way; and that the pleasantness of no

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God affords to the soul brings no bitterness with it; it has nothing to be a damp to it. There is no disappointment accompanies it. It promises not more than it yields; but on the contrary, the pleasure is greater than could be imagined before God was seen. It brings no sting of conscience along with it. It brings no vexing care or anxiety. It leaves no loathing or disrelish behind it." Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 69.

<sup>31</sup>Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 227, Matt. 5:4(a)," *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 47, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdw aGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40NToxLndqZW8=>.

<sup>32</sup>Lane expresses this in stating, "What God's special grace does, on the other hand, is to transform this limited capacity that humans possess into a vibrant engagement of life in Christ. Edwards's goal was to see God's presence and power woven through all of human experience, infusing the ordinary with an entirely new spiritual vitality. He wanted to convey a deeper vision of God's work in *this* world, not simply an ethereal spiritual experience of an altogether different world." Lane, *Ravished by Beauty*, 185.

other kind of life is worthy to be compared to it.<sup>33</sup>

In Jonathan Edwards there is a connection with what Brian Rosner writes concerning the law as wisdom, or as Kyle Strobel mentions, a sapient theology, which has to do with how one views God and thus life.<sup>34</sup> Even though Edwards held to a third use of the law,<sup>35</sup> he would speak to the use of the mind in apprehending beauty and thus excellence; there is wisdom in heeding that law, which is based on God's character.<sup>36</sup> Choosing truth and thus happiness over deceit, which is only empty in its promises, is wisdom indeed. It is here where the veracity of union comes through, for the Christian to sin against God would also compromise the fellowship of that union in which the believer now enjoys the happiness of God, noting the beauty of God through the whole process that affects the mind, the will and the affections.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 89. Edwards would also elaborate on what others would speak of as the God-sized hole remarking, "It appears that man was intended for very great blessedness, inasmuch as God has created man with an earnest desire of very great felicity. 'Tis evident that every man in the world that has the use of his faculties, has a very desire to enjoy very great blessedness sometime or other, that makes every man so unsatiable, that nothing that can be found in the world will satisfy him. They who have nothing but this world that they set their hearts upon, they can never be satisfied with anything they can enjoy, yea, though they enjoy all that the earth can afford, as many kings and princes of the earth, and as Solomon in particular, did. 'Tis evident by experience that nothing upon [earth], yea, all the world, will not satisfy man; yea, the more he has, the more he craves. We see that man's desires will enlarge themselves without any bounds, and that no finite object can satisfy them at all." Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 151-52.

<sup>34</sup>Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 159-205; Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father," 147. See also Wright, *After You Believe*, 165-69.

<sup>35</sup>See Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 301. Spohn interjects, "Unlike a Lutheran suspicion of 'law' or an Anabaptist insistence on a radically distinctive ethics of discipleship to Jesus, Jonathan Edwards' version of Reformed ethics supports Calvin's third use of the law." William C. Spohn, "Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue," *Theological Studies* 42, no. 3 (1981): 421. Edwards would testify, "If we regard this law now given at Mount Sinai not as a covenant of works but as a rule of life, so it is made use [of] by the Redeemer from that time to the end of the world as a directory to his people, to show them the way in which they must walk, as they would go to heaven." Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson and John E. Smith, *WJE*, vol. 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 181.

<sup>36</sup>Rosner argues, "Rather than reading the law as *law*, Paul reads it *as wisdom* for living, in the sense that he has internalized the law, makes reflective and expansive applications, and takes careful notice of its basis in the order of creation and the character of God." Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 204.

<sup>37</sup>The unbeliever does not see or realize the beauty of the Savior, because that takes the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in union, as the Word informs the now opened eyes of the mind to see Christ for Who he is. For Edwards, humankind is not unable, but unwilling because of depravity and spiritual blindness. For Edwards, it always comes down to nature and object, just as the people of Christ's day were motivated by what looked best to them in their unregenerate state (i.e. the miracles, the food, etc.), so are people today drawn often to religion not for the object that is most beautiful and can bring true happiness, but for what morality can bring to their lives. They are close to the truth, but in choosing self-improvement, they miss the ultimate object with in which man is to be caught up, and satisfied, namely

## Happiness: The Forging of the Christian Life

The knowledge of God comes through the work of Word and Spirit, being a knowledge that is affectionate and it has as its developing feature, happiness. The forging of the Christian life for Jonathan Edwards had as its core the blessing of a relationship with God that was based on happiness, with the apparatus of this forging being the affections. An apparatus is “a set of materials or equipment designed for a particular use.”<sup>38</sup> The affections were something, in Edwards’s thinking, that were intended to show where the heart was literally affected through the instruction of the understanding in concert with the will. The affections were originally created to find enjoyment in relationship with God.<sup>39</sup> As several authors attest, “The human person for Edwards was a bundle of affections that determine nearly everything that person feels, thinks and does,”<sup>40</sup> so that they become the “springs of motion” for everything done by a person.<sup>41</sup> Edwards would describe how one begins to “see” or “understand” God’s excellence and beauty as follows:

There is therefore in this spiritual light . . . . A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion; a real sense of the excellency of God, and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature, than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing; but there is a sense of the loveliness of God’s holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account; or a sense of the beauty of this divine

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God himself. See Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 139.

<sup>38</sup>*Miriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (1996), s.v. “apparatus.”

<sup>39</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 96-98.

<sup>40</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 311.

<sup>41</sup>Edwards concludes, “These affections we see to be the springs that set men agoing, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all pursuits . . . so that in religious matters, the spring of their actions are very much religious affections: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.” Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 201. See also Paul Lewis, “‘The Springs of Motion’: Jonathan Edwards on Emotions, Character, and Agency,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22, no. 2 (1994): 275-97.

attribute.<sup>42</sup>

For Jonathan Edwards, the conversion of an individual will always entail the affections and a comprehension of who God is in his beauty as revealed by Christ and in the work of the Holy Spirit. Edwards states, “God is glorified not only by His glory’s being seen, but by its being rejoiced in. When those that see it delight in it, God is more glorified than if they only see it.”<sup>43</sup> In the transformation that occurs in redemption, Edwards would speak of it as the difference of knowing that honey is sweet and actually being able to taste that it is sweet, which provides a relevant analogy in *Religious Affections*.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately this taste or true understanding comes through a vision that occurs through “the great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God taking away the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh.”<sup>45</sup> In *Religious Affections*, there is, in fact, a huge undercurrent in speaking of true virtue, and thus obedience. As William Danaher explains,

For Edwards, Christian ethics proceeds from the character of God. As we have seen, holiness in ‘the more extensive sense of the word’ refers to God’s ‘moral excellency,’ or God’s ‘beauty as a moral agent.’ Likewise in humans, ‘holiness comprehends all the true virtue’ of a ‘good’ person particularly his or her ‘love to God,’ ‘gracious love’ to neighbors, or ‘charity,’ ‘gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other true Christian virtues.’ Human holiness is ‘but the image of God’s holiness: there are not more virtues belonging to the image than are in the original: derived holiness has not more in it, than is in the underived holiness, which is its

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<sup>42</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 413.

<sup>43</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 495.

<sup>44</sup>Edwards preached, “Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. 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 can’t have the latter, unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. There is a wide difference between mere speculative, rational judging anything to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness, and beauty. The former rests only in the head, speculation only is concerned in it; but the heart is concerned in the latter. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person’s being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is sweet and pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.” Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-33*, 414. See also Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 30-33, 270-83.

<sup>45</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 117.

fountain: there is no more than grace for grace, or grace in the image answerable to grace in the original.<sup>46</sup>

When speaking of evangelical obedience, the starting place for Jonathan Edwards's thinking is always God, and then what a proper vision of him in the beauty of his moral excellence can have on the one who receives it. The desire, then, is for the object and simply not what the object brings; for Edwards, it always comes down to object, nature, and motive. It is ultimately through the object that is God that happiness is found. It is because of the object of the affections that there is an earnestness of soul that must be affected by one's relationship with the foundation of all excellence, which is God. It is a relationship that connects the saint to holiness. As Edwards elaborated, "A true saint greatly delights in holiness: it is a most beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing soul, appears to him a most glorious work,"<sup>47</sup> and thus a relationship that in affecting one's understanding in the soul then instructs the will that moves the affections.<sup>48</sup>

In the New England divine, the importance of the inclinations and the place of the will of the soul stand out, or what he called "the fervent exercise of the heart" and how that is worked out in "lively actings."<sup>49</sup> This "fervent exercise of the heart" is of

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<sup>46</sup>William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 139-40.

<sup>47</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 184.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 97. Walton writes on Edwards's view of the heart, "Thus, 'heart' refers not only to volition and affection, but also to sensation, or perception, that is, to the understanding as simultaneously apprehending and as responding affectively to what it apprehends. In other words, the 'heart' has both a volitional-affective dimension, and also a cognitive dimension." Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections, and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation, and Heart Religion*, Studies in American Religion (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2002), 153.

<sup>49</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 98. It is these "lively actings" that also push the believer as Edwards notes in his sermon on Matthew 5:6: "Another thing that these desires are carried after is conformity to God as inherent righteousness and holiness, it thirsts to be more holy, to have more faith, to have more love and to live in conformity to God's law, and more to his glory and to bring forth more holy fruits," and as he concludes, "Tis the nature of these appetites to be active principles, they stir up to action and pursue after these things [and] happy are those that have such appetites, [for] these are the only really happy people . . . for those who have these hungerings will be satisfied." Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 229, Matt. 5:44," in *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 47, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40NTozLndqZW8=>.

what true religion consists per Jonathan Edwards. The Christian is one who has a “fervent spirit” that seeks to love God with all that he is, which is the change that is brought about by truth through a fervent heart. This is the heart that is involved in what the Scripture call exercise, engagement, running, wrestling and agonizing for the prize. This vigorous exercise is what Edwards calls true virtue or true religion and which is so much a part of the affections.<sup>50</sup> Actions spring from the affections, yet in the Christian, these affections are not for the world, but for God. Edwards argues, “Nothing is more manifest, in fact, that the things of religion take hold of men’s souls no further than they affect them.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Glory: The Result of the Christian Life**

Beauty and happiness have their consequences, which is the enlargement of self in humanity fully actualized or humanity fully alive.<sup>52</sup> Participation leads to beauty and happiness, which can also be called glory, all of which deals with the affections and then results in action, in a life that is made whole once again positionally on a pilgrimage to full wholeness in the consummation of union in glory. Jonathan Edwards would reason, “Therefore, we justly infer, that the same thing which God’s revealed law requires intelligent creatures to seek as their last end, that God their Creator has made their last need, and so the end of the creation of the world.”<sup>53</sup> Sean Michael Lucas summarizes Edwards’s thinking on this issue of God’s glory, “All of creation must seek

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<sup>50</sup>Edwards speaks to this in his sermon on Matthew 5:8, where he points out, “He that is pure in heart, his heart never will suffer him to live in any sin. If he be ever taken in a fault, he will return, and be cleansing himself again by repentance, and reformation, and a more earnest care, and prayer, that he may avoid that sin for the future. The remainders of corruption that are in his heart will be his great and continual burden, and he will be endeavoring to cleanse himself more and more. He won’t rest in any supposed degree of purity as long as he sees any degree of impurity remaining, but will be striving after progress in the mortification of sin and increase of holiness.” Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 80.

<sup>51</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 101.

<sup>52</sup>Irenaeus of Lyons, “Irenæus against Heresies,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1985), 1:490. See Kyle Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual Practices of Jonathan Edwards* (Downers Grove, IL: InerVatisty Press, 2013), 45.

<sup>53</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 473.

God's glory; that is the purpose for which it was made, to reflect back God's glory to himself."<sup>54</sup> Thus in the aftermath of the work of the Trinity in union, where God enables believers to enjoy the happiness of the Godhead, and where the mind and the affections are changed, there will be a glory and wholeness enjoyed that then also brings about a beauty, happiness, and glory the in outworking of their lives in fruit and thus evangelical obedience, or what Edwards called true virtue. This is what man was created to do and be, being created for relationship and glory, the culmination of which is then reflected back to God.<sup>55</sup>

The sum and substance for Jonathan Edwards in relation to true virtue was that he "construes true virtue to be grounded in a divine sense of beauty which evokes affections that are embodied in actions and practices which serve God's glory by promoting the well-being of the whole creation."<sup>56</sup> Habit, or evangelical obedience, is not something that can be self-generated, but is dependent on the work of God in the heart through the Holy Spirit. When this God dependent obedience occurs, believers can participate in the life of God which enables them to act in love, which is best for Being in general and thus for the whole creation. All of this also involves duty to the divine commands or what one has called the "beauty of duty,"<sup>57</sup> which consists in receiving and returning Divine love.<sup>58</sup> Practice springs from the affections and finds its aftermath in

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<sup>54</sup>Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 40. See Jonathan Edwards, *Typological Writings*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 11 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 53.

<sup>55</sup>Lucas states, "The ultimate end that God had for creating the world was glory—the communication of his glory to his creation and the reflection of that glory back to God's own self." Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 46.

<sup>56</sup>Lewis, "The Springs of Motion," 282.

<sup>57</sup>Spohn, "Sovereign Beauty," 414.

<sup>58</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 325. See also Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 145-46. Danaher sums up the idea of duty, "In sum Edwards sees divine commands as essentially pedagogical and diagnostic. Commands teach the way of virtue, and the saint can use them to discern and test his or her affections, in order to renounce those desires that are sinful and to cleave to the triune love of God." Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 148.



virtue and thus glory. It is a glory that involves beauty and happiness, and breaks the mold of what is often thought of concerning Reformed views of sanctification, which takes seriously both the imperatives of Scripture and the beauty and happiness that are the foundation as well as the result, in what can also be called glory.<sup>59</sup>

Participation becomes important as the implications of being “in Christ” are worked out in one’s life. As William Danaher summarizes, “The life of virtue is one of *actual* participation in the spiritual life of the triune God,”<sup>60</sup> which is a participation that is worked out ultimately in love for God and love for others,<sup>61</sup> and is because of new birth.<sup>62</sup> Amy Plantinga Pauw writes of the relational nature of this union, “The fruit of the Spirit’s work were in Edwards’s view profoundly relational: conversion is more than the bestowal of a private religious experience; sanctification is more than the restoration of personal holiness.”<sup>63</sup> Her conclusion is, “The Spirit’s principle soteriological role was the outpouring of love, consent, and union.”<sup>64</sup> It is because of the Holy Spirit’s work that connects us with God’s love and thus his happiness. As Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott explain,

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<sup>59</sup>This thinking could be said of Tchividjian, who although he gives lip service to obedience collapses sanctification into justification, and in doing so does not tell the reader how to obey. See Tullian Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 95, 117, 172 and 179. See Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 111-12.

<sup>60</sup>Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 41.

<sup>61</sup>Edwards asserts, “And it may be asserted in general that nothing is of true virtue, in which God is not the *first* and *last*; or which, with regard to their exercises in general, have not their first foundation and sources in apprehension of God’s supreme dignity and glory, and in answerable esteem and love of him, and have no respect to God as supreme end.” Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 560.

<sup>62</sup>From this McClymond and McDermott make this point, “Hence the moral life depends on the personal transformation of the new birth or regeneration. Only by this event does God’s love become our love, in the process which Eastern theology has called divine love but also divine knowledge happiness.” McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 533. Ramsey adds, “Thus, the new ‘new creation’ is the name, idea or knowledge of God’s, being in human understanding; the love of God’s, being in human wills, and the joy of God’s, being in human affection.’ All Christian experience, then, is participation in the triune life, and this includes the moral life.” Paul Ramsey, introduction to *Ethical Writings*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 22.

<sup>63</sup>Amy Plantinga Pauw, “*The Supreme Harmony of All*”: *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 160.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

In his *Treatise on Grace*, Edwards called it “divine love” and declared that it is the root of “all graces”—the “soul and essence and summary comprehension of all grace.” It is the root from which springs love to one’s neighbor, but its primary object is God. The “first thing” in this divine love is “a relish of the excellency of the divine nature.” The soul is caused by it to “taste the sweetness of the divine revelation.” It will “incline to God in every way,” which means the soul will be glad when God is happy, will want God to be glorified, and will want his will done in all things.<sup>65</sup>

Union changes things, so much so that Jonathan Edwards would speak of the work of regeneration in the strange and provocative vernacular of infusion. This language was not, as we have observed, in the vein of Roman Catholic way of thinking,<sup>66</sup> for when Edwards talked of infusion, he was speaking not about regeneration and the experience of being united with Christ. This kind of infusion was an infusion of the Holy Spirit that described the radical change in the soul of a person done by the mighty arm of God.<sup>67</sup> So in Edwards, one can see that he had a desire to place the new creation into the experience of the believer as Scripture does, because of their position in Christ. Salvation, then, is simply not just a judicial proclamation, although the judicial is key, it is because of a living and real relationship of one’s position in Christ that is all-encompassing that brings about the judicial. This work of salvation not only changes the believer’s standing before God, but also one’s entire thinking, affections, and behavior.

In Jonathan Edwards one gets the preaching of a Reformed academic in the purest sense, yet also sensitivity in approaching the tensions of Scripture.<sup>68</sup> He speaks of

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<sup>65</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 361-62.

<sup>66</sup>See Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway 1997), 350.

<sup>67</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: Entry Nos. 833-1152, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 328. See Josh Moody, “Edwards and Justification Today,” in *Jonathan Edwards and Justification*, ed. Josh Moody (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 19-24.

<sup>68</sup>This can be seen not only in his career as a writer, but also in his week-to-week preaching as a pastor, which was preaching that was felt at home and abroad as described by Hindmarsh: “Out of his experience of revival and through his theological and narrative writing he produced evidence for a vital evangelical Calvinism which could stand side by side with the vitality of the Wesleyan movement. He produced theological keys which unlocked the closed doors of hyper-Calvinism with absolutely no concessions to Arminianism or antinomianism.” Bruce D. Hindmarsh, “The Reception of Jonathan Edwards by Early Evangelicals in England,” in *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons*, ed. David William King and Douglas A. Sweeney (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Press, 2003), 212.D.

the necessity of the imputation of Christ with religious fervor, showing the bankruptcy of the individual from their corruption derived from Adam, yet he also continually pushes the hearer to work, striving and fighting for obedience to what Christ is demanding in passages like the Sermon on the Mount. It is this issue of compatibility that is amazingly noticed throughout Edwards as noted in his message on Matthew 5:8, where he states that even though God is at work in one sense, in another sense, the believer is also called to work.<sup>69</sup> So there is in Edwards a tension that is seen throughout Scripture that is informative in speaking about sanctification.<sup>70</sup>

On the issue of sanctification, again and again, one can see the genius of Jonathan Edwards as well as the incredible intricacies of the truth of Scripture as he endeavored to stay faithful to its message. He emphasized man's depravity as well as God's sovereign and gracious work in an individual, yet also noting that a person is not passive, stating, "God does all and we do all."<sup>71</sup> Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott explain what Edwards means,

God is the "author and fountain" of our acts, but those acts are still ours. We are the only "proper actors." It is not that God does some and we do the rest, but the reality

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<sup>69</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 85. Compatibilism can simply be defined as another term for God's providence that "indicates that absolute divine sovereignty is compatible with human significance and real human choices." Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1238. Thus freedom is that one still acts according to his own character and desires. See John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God, The Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 132. Edwards defined freedom as the ability of man to do as he wills, not the ability of man to act contrary to his willingness and thus really his or her nature, "the will is always, and every individual act, necessarily determined by the strongest motive." Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 305.

<sup>70</sup>This tension is held together with the truth of the dependence of the believer at all times on Christ and what he has done as can be seen in the notes to Edwards sermon on Matthew 5:20, where he proclaimed, "Our righteousness must exceed in that our acts of righteousness must proceed from a principle of faith in Christ though the Pharisees appear so eminent in religion among the Jews yet nothing that they did proceeded from the principle of faith in Christ, for they rejected and despised him and were his greatest enemies . . . did not depend on him to be holy, but depended on themselves . . . in their own stock . . . herein we must be different if we ever enter, we must live by faith and must look to Christ for strength to enable us to perform duties and enable us to bring forth good fruit and abide in Christ (John 15:4; Hab 2:4) the just shall live by faith." Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 278, Matt. 5:27-28," *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 48, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40Njo5LndqZW8=.J>.

<sup>71</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 251.

of human action must be viewed from different perspectives in order to capture the whole. “We are in different respects wholly passive and wholly active.” On the one hand, “God circumcises the heart,” but on the other hand, “we are commanded to circumcise [our hearts].” Therefore it is not a contradiction to say that the effect of God’s determining our wills (doing his will) is “our act and our duty.”<sup>72</sup>

It is also helpful to see McClymond and McDermott expound on this thinking in Edwards writing, “Edwards disliked the Calvinist use of the word ‘irresistible’ for grace since that gives the impression that human beings are like dumb blocks of wood that do not participate in their own decisions.”<sup>73</sup> They conclude, “Edwards stresses that we are free in our willing: we choose what we *want*. In grace God moves our will, but it is *our* will.”<sup>74</sup>

One finds in Jonathan Edwards a tension regarding sanctification that can be observed in his views concerning compatibilism. It is a necessary tension and in this there is a connection with his writing on virtue in looking at the importance of holiness. The holiness of God points to his “moral excellency” or his “beauty as moral agent,” and will be that which can be reflected as in a mirror in the individual who exercises holiness and is, as Edwards would state, “the image of God’s holiness.”<sup>75</sup> This reality of holiness, too, is where Edwards makes a distinction between true virtue, what he would see as authentic piety or real holiness, and all other supposed virtue that would be found in the unbeliever

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<sup>72</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 362-63. Edwards makes a similar charge in his sermon on Matthew 5:8 concerning holiness, where he reasons, “We must not think to excuse ourselves by saying that it is God’s work, that we cannot purify our own hearts; for though it be God’s work in one sense, yet it is equally our work in another; James 4:8, ‘Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.’ If you do not engage in this work yourselves, and purify your own hearts, they will never be pure. If you do not get a pure heart, the blame of it will be laid to your own backwardness. The unclean soul hates to be purified. It is opposite to its nature; there is a great deal of self-denial in it. But be content to contradict the nature and bent of your own heart, that it may be purified; however grating it may be to you at first, yet consider how blessed the issue will be. Though the road be a little rough in the beginning, yet it will grow pleasanter and pleasanter, till at last it will infallibly lead to that lightsome and glorious country, the inhabitants of which do see and converse with God; Proverbs 4:18, ‘The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’” Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 85.

<sup>73</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 363. This assertion is interesting in these writers who, so deftly articulate an important theological truth in Edwards, yet in the same source take a tack regarding his philosophical leanings as to miss the overall force of the American theologian’s thinking, which was primarily theological.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 255-65.

and is a product of natural, as opposed to spiritual affections. Here there is in Edwards's thinking a set of virtues that are closely tied to holiness of heart which are particular to the Christian and consist of humility, where "the happy life is necessarily a humble life," and thus "the happy life is a holy life."<sup>76</sup> For Edwards "only in the Christian life could people fulfill the purpose for which they were created," which is in "the knowledge and enjoyment of God."<sup>77</sup> This connection makes all the difference in how and why one lives and sheds light on the crucial doctrine of sanctification, where true religion being "the satisfaction of the deepest needs and longings of the human heart."<sup>78</sup>

### **The Coalescence of Beauty, Happiness, and Glory**

The drive, forging and result of the Christian life all coalesce into what becomes the ultimate answer in Jonathan Edwards's theology to why the Christian should obey. These key undercurrents of the process of sanctification in beauty, happiness, and glory are synonymous, all reflecting different aspects of the life of God that are then worked out in the life of the Christian. For when the Christian pursues beauty, he or she is also seeking happiness and glory. The same applies to happiness as the pursuit, or glory, which ultimately are found in God, and are then reflected in the life the Christian in what is a life of remanation.<sup>79</sup> For as Edwards would write in one of his miscellanies,

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<sup>76</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 69. See Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 139-40. Danaher further elucidates on the topic of humility in Edwards, "Of these special virtues, foremost is humility. Edwards distinguishes, we observed earlier, between 'legal' and 'evangelical' humiliation. The former humiliation comes as a response to one's deviation from God's law, but has no spiritual value in itself. The latter is an 'answerable frame of heart, consisting in a disposition' in the saints 'to abase themselves, and exalt God alone' (Y2:312). The former is a response to one's shortcomings regarding the Golden Rule; the latter is a response to one's shortcomings regarding the New Commandment. Evangelical humility, therefore, is the 'great and most essential thing in true religion,' for the 'whole frame of the gospel,' including 'everything appertaining to the New Covenant and all God's dispensations,' are 'calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts' of true saints (Y2:312)." Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 140.

<sup>77</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 69.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 147-233.

“But the holiness of Christians is merely and entirely a reflection of God’s light, or communications of God’s righteousness, and not one jot of it is owing to ourselves. ’Tis wholly a creature of God’s, a new creature; ’tis Christ within us.”<sup>80</sup> It is a holiness that is determinative being conferred in union at salvation, which opens up the possibility of a true pursuit of happiness, and then continues to progress toward the goal of entire sanctification all because of the beauty, happiness, and glory of God. These make up the key undercurrents and reasons for obedience, all of which become a part of the life of the believer, and all of which reflect back to God in his beauty, happiness, and ultimate glory.

Beauty is that which drives one to God, to something, and ultimately someone, that is more than this creation can offer. It is a beauty that although it is reflected in creation by the hand of the Creator is only found in the source of all beauty, which is God. It is beauty that has at its heart a moral aspect to it, which is holiness, yet with this holiness also comes an aesthetic element that draws not only the delight of the believer, but begins in the delight that God has in himself in all his perfection. Wrapped up in this delight is, of course, happiness as well as glory. The bleeding of these together can be seen in the life of the Godhead, as well as in the life the believer who, through union, is ushered into the happiness of the Godhead. This happiness then affects change in the believer, whose key pursuit is now the God of all beauty, holiness, and goodness. God is the Christian’s good, and this beauty becomes the drive not only in a growing relationship but also in what is reflected in the believer of the God who they now know and cherish. For Jonathan Edwards, this effect of the understanding of the beauty of God, in relationship, will then also have an effect on the person in the pilgrimage to glorification and thus final beauty. Thus, the believer is also in the process of being beautified.<sup>81</sup> The Christian is one who pursues that which is most beautiful in reflecting

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<sup>80</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 236.

<sup>81</sup>Edwards maintained, “How excellent are they who are sanctified, and have their souls

back to God in what is practiced in this life, which is also a reflection of the God who calls them his own.

The drive of beauty has inherent in it the delight or happiness that is given when the soul is made alive to and then embraces the beauty of God. This idea in Jonathan Edwards speaks to his adamant arguing that the foundation of everything theologically is the Trinity, and God's own delight in himself. This Trinitarian delight is a happiness or joy that is manifest in God's own apprehension of himself as worked out in the Persons of the Trinity in perfect relationship, which is also a reflection of the beauty of the Godhead in relationship, or "religious affection in pure act."<sup>82</sup> Beauty is, therefore, the drive, which begins to forge happiness in the life of the believer, which is enjoyed through union in relationship, and yet is also worked out in the pursuit of happiness in obedience, a life that is being beautified unto glory. So, the drive is beauty, but what comes out of this vision of the reality of who God is in his Person, is also seen in a drive for beauty in what is good and what is right, in what Edwards called true virtue. The pursuit of beauty is the pursuit of happiness, which can also be stated, the pursuit of God is the pursuit of beauty, or the pursuit of God is the pursuit of happiness, all of which also encompasses glory.

The drive of beauty forges happiness, as depicted in the Godhead and comes in relationship with the Creator, but as has been argued also has as its result glory. The term glory has been explained by Jonathan Edwards as such, "There are three things called by the name of glory in Scripture: excellency, goodness and happiness."<sup>83</sup> For Edwards there

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conformed unto him. 'Tis a wonder that a creature should ever be so highly honored, as to be made conformed to the image of God, as much a wonder as that they should be allowed the enjoyment of him. Sanctification is as great, yea, a greater favor done to the creature, than glorification: the creature is more honored by being made like unto God in holiness, than in happiness; the image and likeness of God upon the creature exalts it and honors it more, than the fruition of him." Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, 430. See Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life*, 36, 43.

<sup>82</sup>Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father," 148.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": 833-1152, 517. Edwards would set up this statement by stipulating, "That glory of God that is spoken of in Scripture as the end of God's works is the egress and reception of God's fullness, the egress of it from God and the reception of it by the creature. The fullness of God is twofold: 'tis his excellency and his happiness, answerable hereto. There is a twofold faculty in the

is a connection between glory, excellency, goodness and happiness, and as we have observed with the term excellency, there is a close relationship with aesthetics and beauty.<sup>84</sup> So there is not only overlap in this coalescence of beauty, happiness, and glory, but there is also a progression coming from what is beautiful, which brings happiness, to bringing glory and that for which humankind was originally created. This purpose for humanity is a life that is being beatified and thus reflects back to God's ultimate glory.<sup>85</sup>

Edwards asserted,

So God glorifies himself towards the creatures also two ways: (1) by appearing to them, being manifested to their understandings; (2) in communicating himself to their hearts, and in their rejoicing and delighting in, and enjoying the manifestations which he makes of himself. They both of them may be called his glory in the more extensive sense of the word, viz. his shining forth, or the going forth of his excellency, beauty and essential glory *ad extra*. By one way it goes forth towards their understandings; by the other it goes forth towards their wills or hearts. God is glorified not only by his glory's being seen, but by its being rejoiced in, when those that see it delight in it: God is more glorified than if they only see it; his glory is then received by the whole soul, both by the understanding and by the heart. God made the world that he might communicate, and the creature receive, his glory, but that it might [be] received both by the mind and heart. He that testifies his having an idea of God's glory don't glorify God so much as he that testifies also his approbation of it and his delight in it. Both these ways of God's glorifying himself come from the same cause, viz. the overflowing of God's internal glory, or an inclination in God to cause his internal glory to flow out *ad extra*. What God has in view in neither of them, neither in his manifesting his glory to the understanding nor communication to the heart, is not that he may receive, but that he [may] go forth: the main end of his shining forth is not that he may have his rays reflected back to himself, but that the rays may go forth.<sup>86</sup>

Humankind finds its purpose in glorifying God. Happiness is thus not only found in a relationship with the Creator but in glorifying him because of that relationship with the God who is one's good, period. The God who is the definition of beauty, happiness, and glory.

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creature that the egress has respect to and which is its recipient subject, viz. a faculty of perceiving and of approving; a twofold manner of egress or going forth, viz. manifestation and communication." Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": 833-1152, 517.

<sup>84</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace Earl Anderson, *WJE*, vol. 6 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 344.

<sup>85</sup>Edwards, *Typological Writings*, 53; Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 473.

<sup>86</sup>Edwards, "*Miscellanies*": A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 495-96.



Jonathan Edwards roots God's purposes in the Trinity, and in doing so makes the Christian life something that is deeply theological.<sup>87</sup> This theological move demonstrates that God is indeed the Christian's good, not only in the fact that what God gives is ultimately himself in a relationship through union but also that to which he calls the Christian in a life that is being beautified because of the effect of this relationship. It is a relationship that is one of beauty, that then involves the affections, fostering happiness, and glory worked out in true virtue on the journey to the consummation of union in glorification. Edwards expands on this coalescence in an entry in his miscellanies:

God communicates himself to the understanding in the manifestation that is made of the divine excellency and the understanding, idea or view which intelligent creatures have of it. He communicates his glory and fullness to the wills of sensible, willing, active beings in their rejoicing in the manifested glory of God, in their admiring it, in their loving God for it, and being in all respects affected and disposed suitably to such glory, and their exercising and expressing those affections and dispositions wherein consists their praising and glorifying God; and in their being themselves holy, and having the image of this glory in their hearts, and as it were reflecting it as a jewel does the light of the sun, and as it were partaking of God's brightness, and in their being happy in God, whereby they partake of God's fullness of happiness.<sup>88</sup>

One can discern from Edwards that the drive for beauty, and thus happiness and glory is why a person pursues what he or she does. It is at the core of who we are as people made in the image of God. It is a drive that is twisted because of the fall, but also one that is reestablished in its proper pursuit of the Creator and thus the creature's good, through redemption. This makes the Christian life, or sanctification, in Edwards's theology the pursuit of happiness through union and obedience, uncovering a needed and missing

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<sup>87</sup>Lucas points out, "By rooting his understanding of God's purposes in his own Trinitarian being, and especially God's passion to glorify himself by communicating his glory in creation and redemption and receiving back his glory in love and praise, Edwards set forth a vision of the Christian life that was deeply *theological*." Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 13.

<sup>88</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 1153-1320*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney, *WJE*, vol. 23 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 213. Edwards continues, "This twofold emanation or communication of the divine fullness *ad extra* is answerable to the twofold emanation or going forth of the Godhead *ad intra*, wherein the internal and essential glory and fullness of the Godhead consists, viz. the proceeding of the eternal Son of God, God's eternal idea and infinite understanding and wisdom and the brightness of his glory, whereby his beauty and excellency appears to him; and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit, or the eternal will, temper, disposition of the Deity, the infinite fullness of God's holiness, joy and delight." *Ibid.*

element in the talk concerning sanctification today. The questions that now needs to be asked is, “How does one pursue this obedience?” Or, “What is the means to happiness in the Christian life?” It is to this subject that this research now turns in looking at the outworking of the ability and motive in sanctification, and thus the Christian life.

## CHAPTER 6

### EDWARDS AND THE MEANS TO HAPPINESS

Jonathan Edwards was remarkable in his pursuit of happiness and in leading his congregation and readers through the proclamation of the gospel of beauty, happiness, and glory. This message was proclaimed in relation to the proper pursuit of happiness in the Christian life, which is God himself. For as the Northampton pastor would vow, “I should think myself in the way of my duty to raise the affections of my hearers as high as possibly I can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with.”<sup>1</sup> The raising of the affections was easy to do in one sense, because of the beauty of the object of one’s faith which, or better who, is Christ. As Edwards would declare of the object of these affections,

There is every kind of thing dispensed in Christ that tends to make us excellent and amiable, and every kind of thing that tends to make us happy. There is that which shall fill every faculty of the soul and in a great variety. What a glorious variety is there for the entertainment of the understanding! How many glorious objects set forth, most worthy to be meditated upon and understood! There are all the glorious attributes of God and the beauties of Jesus Christ, and manifold wonders to be seen in the way of salvation, the glories of heaven and the excellency of Christian graces. And there is a glorious variety for the satisfying the will: there are pleasures, riches and honors; there are all things desirable or lovely. There is various entertainment for the affections, for love, for joy, for desire and hope. The blessings are innumerable.<sup>2</sup>

But this enterprise of raising the affections would also be difficult because of the remaining sinful flesh. So, the means of grace, or what this research looks to as the means

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, ed. Harry S. Stout and C. C. Goen, *WJE*, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 387.

<sup>2</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema, *WJE*, vol. 14 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 285-86.

to happiness, is a part of God's self-giving as a definition of grace. Therefore, the means to happiness, practically speaking, become a significant topic in considering sanctification in Edwards, or what ultimately is the pursuit of happiness found in union and obedience.<sup>3</sup>

The New England divine was a theologian who took the place of the understanding and will seriously, and the work of God needed to transform one's affections and actions. In observing theology and moral issues from a Thomistic viewpoint, Daniel Westberg asserts, "Actions are the result of desire guided by reason. Some desires are felt strongly and urgently, but many are not. The task of practical reasoning is to identify the particular action to be undertaken in order to accomplish the desired goal."<sup>4</sup> A similarity is evident in that statement with what has been observed in Jonathan Edwards, yet with the caveat that the desire should be cultivated by the work of the Spirit through the truth of who God is in his beauty and thus who he is for believers. Edwards places emphasis on the relationship that the understanding has on the will and thus on the action of the believer, yet never without the work of God through the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup> The understanding is what is affected at salvation, in illumination, for one's eyes to be open to the beauty of God in Christ in the gospel, yet there is also the continuing need for one's understanding to be continually influenced in the Christian life. As Ava Chamberlain enumerates in her comments on Edwards's miscellanies,

The polemical context in which Edwards developed his views concerning the morphology of conversion begins to emerge in entries on the means of grace. Rejecting the antinomian claim that reliance upon the means compromises the

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<sup>3</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God: Learning from the Spiritual Practices of Jonathan Edwards* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 73.

<sup>4</sup>Daniel Westberg, *Renewing Moral Theology: Christian Ethics as Action, Character and Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 35.

<sup>5</sup>See Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 78. Strobel comments, "Edwards outlines three ways God uses the means of grace in spiritual transformation. First, the means supply one's mind with correct notions of God and his way. Second, they harness our natural thinking to function in parallel with right notions of God. Third, they move our hearts in parallel with a true knowledge of God." This is important to understand in Edwards for this in answer to the question of how the means of grace "help us to see the beauty and glory of God and respond in affection." Ibid.

freeness of God's grace, Edwards maintains "that God's manner is to bestow his grace on men by outward means," such as preaching and the sacraments (No. 538). But he carefully articulates the role of the means of grace to avoid the Arminian claim that sincere striving for salvation merits regeneration as a reward. Although there is a "greater probability" that those who diligently seek salvation will be converted, the means of grace "have no influence to produce grace, either as causes or instruments" (Nos. 538, 539). Before conversion, the means do no more than supply the mind with the "matter for grace to act upon." By conveying speculative ideas to the mind and engaging the natural affections of the heart, they create the "opportunity for grace to act, when God shall infuse it" (No. 539). Common grace enhances the operation of the means, for it "assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully, which they do by nature," but regeneration occurs only when the Spirit of God infuses a "new and supernatural principle," which "causes the faculties to do that that they do not by nature" (No. 626).<sup>6</sup>

The means of grace are God given and needed as the believer makes the pilgrimage to glory. It is a pilgrimage of pursuing happiness and, ultimately, that for which one was created that is linked and mirrors salvation in being dependent on God's work in the Spirit, all of which is possible because of union. These means become a path to happiness in Jonathan Edwards's work and consist of the Word, ordinances, prayer, but also many more avenues for the Spirit to work. These means include instruction, meditation on Scripture, Sabbath, conferencing, or community, watchfulness, meditation or contemplation, beholding beauty in nature, living ethically/acts of charity, reading spiritual books, family education and order, solemn thanksgiving, fasting, and more.<sup>7</sup> All of these opportunities can be a means of grace and thus worked out in the spiritual formation of the Christian as one comes to these in dependence on the God who works through them.<sup>8</sup> These means are not only of God and from God in his wisdom, but they

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<sup>6</sup>Ava Chamberlain, introduction to *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 501-832* by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 37.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 85, 88; Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimmnach, *WJE*, vol. 25, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 484; Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 097, Exodus 20:24," *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 44, accessed June 4, 2016, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaglsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40MjoiMC53amVv>. See Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 82-83.

<sup>8</sup>Strobel points out, "In this journey of faith, we are pulled in two different directions: we still believe ugliness to be beautiful and fleshiness to be life-giving. The means of grace are avenues for our hearts to proclaim that God's way is the good way. By them we lay open all of the ways our lives reject his goodness. Importantly, we cannot somehow create grace by trying extremely hard to be good. Rather, by recognizing the way of Christ we submit our hearts to God and seek his grace. By faith, in the grace we have in Christ, we come to live the virtuous life—a life of dependence that bears the fruit of the Spirit." Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 79.

need God to make them effectual. As Edwards testifies,

And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet 'tis of God that we have these means of grace, and 'tis God that makes them effectual. 'Tis of God that we have the holy Scriptures; they are the Word of God. 'Tis of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him; 2 Cor. 4:7, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.<sup>9</sup>

The need of God's grace with the compatibilism of man's responsibility can be observed in three biblical illustrations that Jonathan Edwards uses in speaking of the means of grace. These biblical images are the man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-9), Jesus turning the water to wine (John 2:1-11), and in Elijah putting wood around the altar in his challenge to the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18).<sup>10</sup> All of these instances show that God is the One who needs to work in grace, but in this there are certain actions to which the Christian is called that God will then, if he chooses, bestow his grace through these means.<sup>11</sup> The means of grace are meant to orient one toward Christ and the continual work of the Holy Spirit. It then is with this tension of God's self-giving and the Christian's command to obey that Edwards points to the means of grace and thus abiding in the vine (John 15), which also becomes a pursuit of happiness in union and obedience.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Means to Happiness: The Ministry of the Word**

The Word is the primary and necessary channel and indispensable aid in the pilgrimage of happiness in which the Christian walks in this process of sanctification. In

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<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 203.

<sup>10</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Blank Bible": Part 1 & 2*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, 2 vols., *WJE*, vol. 24 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 934; Jonathan Edwards, *Notes on Scripture*, ed. Stephen J. Stein, *WJE*, vol. 15 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 359; Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002) 88.

<sup>11</sup>Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 75-77.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

substituting the term for grace with happiness, the intent is to show that grace and happiness are a part of the same gift that is offered when the Word and Spirit are given at salvation. This move also highlights the missing element in the talk of sanctification today, as well as demonstrates that there is a means to this happiness, which is needed in understanding how one pursues this happiness and grace as God has and continues to work in the Christian life.<sup>13</sup> Charles Hodge defined the means of grace as, “Those institutions which God has ordained to be the ordinary channels of grace, i.e., of the supernatural influences of the Holy Spirit, to the souls of men.”<sup>14</sup> This truth can also be said of happiness, which as Jonathan Edwards would recognize, “A person can’t have spiritual light without the Word,” and “God gave his word for the sake of men, for their happiness.”<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere, in his miscellanies, Edwards would write concerning the means of grace in “How the Word concurrerth with salvation.” On this topic, he would write,

There is a twofold operation upon the soul, physical and moral. The physical operation is the infusion of life; the moral operation is in a way of reason and persuasion: both these ways are necessary, not of any need in God, but mere love to us. God worketh strongly like himself, and sweetly, that he may attemper his work to our nature, and suit the key to the wards of the lock . . . . The soul of man is determined [. . .] by an object without, and a quality within: the object is propounded with all its qualifications, that the understanding may be informed and convinced, and the will and affections persuaded in a potent and high way of reasoning: but this is not enough to determine a man’s heart without an internal quality or grace infused, which is his physical work upon the soul. There is not only a propounding of reasons and arguments, but a powerful inclination of heart. . . . as to the physical [. . .] operation, the Word is not the instrumental cause, but God worketh immediately: for the Word written and preached, voice, letters, syllables, are not subjects capable of receiving spiritual life to convey it to us: I say, there is not any such virtue in the sound of syllables and sentences of the Word, but the Spirit doth this work immediately. But as to the moral operation in a way of

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<sup>13</sup>Edwards writes of these means as methods that God uses to bring sinners to repentance as well as pursuing these means in the process of sanctification, “diligently to use appointed means of grace, and apply themselves to all known duty.” See Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 434, 466; Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn, *WJE*, vol. 16 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 52.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 3:466.

<sup>15</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 713.

argument and persuasion: so the Word is the instrument.<sup>16</sup>

The Word is the instrument that unlocks the beauty of God and a life devoted to him. The Word is that through which the work of Word and Spirit is based. The Word is also the heart of the ministry of the church and is what God ultimately uses to cultivate and find the satisfaction of holy affections, which then overflows into the Christian life.

### **The Instrument that Unlocks Beauty**

The Word is the instrument that opens the soul to the truth of the beauty of object of the Christian's affections, which is the Godhead.<sup>17</sup> It is this truth that dominated the work of Jonathan Edwards, where the Word becomes the primary means of having this truth conveyed. It is a truth that is worked through the understanding to the heart. As Edwards would continually remind the reader, "Such is the nature of man, that nothing can come at the heart but through the door of the understanding."<sup>18</sup> It is an understanding that is illuminated by the Spirit, whose focus is Christ, who is the ultimate object of beauty for the believer and the One who is the key that unlocks Scripture.<sup>19</sup> It is God that is the *summum bonum* of all humankind. The reason that God is the end for which one was created, of which Edwards would remark,

Because God is not only infinitely greater and more excellent than all other being, but he is the head of the universal system of existence; the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty; from whom all is perfectly derived, and on whom all is most absolutely and perfectly dependent; *of whom*, and *through whom*, and *to whom* is all being<sup>9</sup> and all perfection; and whose being and beauty is as it were the sum and comprehension of all existence and excellence: much more than the sun is the fountain and summary comprehension of all the light and brightness of the day.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 1153-1320*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney, *WJE*, vol. 23 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 71-72.

<sup>17</sup>Edwards stated that beauty is that "wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist." Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 298.

<sup>18</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 88.

<sup>19</sup>Dane Calvin Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God*, *Theologians on the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 108.

<sup>20</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale



It is through the Word that beauty can be understood and experienced or as Jonathan Edwards would articulate, tasted. It is in the Scriptures that divine love is first understood, which then affects not only the heart in the affections but also in the overflow of that effect on the heart in action. Edwards reasoned, “Divine love, as it has God for its object, may be thus described: ’tis the soul’s relish of the supreme excellency of the divine nature, inclining the heart to God as the chief good.”<sup>21</sup> The result of this is described at length as Edwards continues to explain,

The first effect that is produced in the soul, whereby it is carried above what it has or can have by nature, is to cause it to relish or taste the sweetness of the divine relation. That is the first and most fundamental thing in divine love, and that from which everything else that belongs to divine love, naturally and necessarily proceeds. When once the soul is brought to relish the excellency of the divine nature, then it will naturally, and of course, incline to God every way. It will incline to be with him and to enjoy him. It will have benevolence to God; it will be glad that he is happy; it will incline that he should be glorified, and that his will should be done in all things. So that the first effect of the power of God in the heart in regeneration, is to give the heart a divine taste or sense, to cause it to have a relish of the loveliness and sweetness of the supreme excellency of the divine nature; and indeed this is all the immediate effect of the divine power that there is, this is all the Spirit of God needs to do, in order to a production of all good effects in the soul. If God, by an immediate act of his, gives the soul a relish of the excellency of his own nature, other things will follow of themselves without any further act of the divine power than only what is necessary to uphold the nature of the faculties of the soul. He that is once brought to see, or rather to taste, the superlative loveliness of the Divine Being, will need no more to make him long after the enjoyment of God, to make him rejoice in the happiness of God, and to desire that this supremely excellent Being may be pleased and glorified.<sup>22</sup>

The Scripture is the instrument that unlocks beauty to the individual through salvation that then begins the process of sanctification in living out the Christian life. But Scripture is also the means that unlocks happiness in cutting through the blindness of one’s flesh and the surrounding world system through the work of the Holy Spirit. For as Jonathan Edwards would recognize,

It profits us not to have any knowledge of the law of God, unless it be either to fit us

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University Press, 1989), 551.

<sup>21</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 174.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 173-74.

for the glad tidings of the gospel, or to be a means of our sanctification in Christ Jesus, and to influence us to serve God through Christ by an evangelical obedience. And therefore we stand in the greatest necessity of a divine revelation. And it was most fit and proper that, when God did give us a revelation—Christ—that it should not only contain those peculiar truths which purely and in every respect depend on revelation, as the doctrines of Christ’s mediation and justification through him, but that this revelation should contain everything that belongs to divinity, either to be known or practiced. For it all depends on revelation, in the way in which it is necessary for us to know it.<sup>23</sup>

The Word enables the believer to not only participate in the happiness of God, in seeing and enjoying the beauty of God but also to have a blueprint for happiness in the continual pursuit of God in showing one how to live beautifully.<sup>24</sup> This happiness begins and ends in a relationship with the One who is most beautiful, which changes who a person is, and opens the opportunity for happiness and virtue to walk hand in hand. Where the Word becomes not only a connection to learning more about the God of all beauty in a walk with him, but is also used by the Holy Spirit to continue to transform the soul through the work on the understanding, which then bears fruit in vivication and mortification. The Word then also becomes an instruction manual on how to pursue happiness, yet also more, for this is done through a relationship with the God of all happiness and then in the outworking of that relationship in obedience.

The beauty of God is manifested primarily in the Person of Christ. Christ is the mediator of God’s beauty, which makes manifest the kind of beauty to which Jonathan Edwards is pointing, which is glorious. As Edwards points out,

The manifestations of the glory of God in the person of Christ is, as it were, accommodated to our apprehensions. The brightest is suited to our eyes. We can’t look upon the glory of God immediately; our eyes will be dazzled. But Christ being a person who is come to us in our nature has, as it were, softened the light of God’s glory and accommodation to our view.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Jonathan Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 833-1152, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Delattre summarizes concerning the issue of beauty that also broaches the subject of motive, “In sum, for Edwards beauty is the key to the structure and the dynamics of the moral and religious life and more particularly to the manner of the divine governance and its relation to human freedom and responsibility. For it is his view that God governs not by brute force but by the attractive power, that is, the beauty of the apparent good.” Roland André Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards: An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 2.

<sup>25</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Glory and Honor of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of*

Even in this accommodation the excellency and beauty of God are still what Edwards called “ravishing,” in the Person where infinite power and humility are met together in God incarnate.<sup>26</sup> This sense of the beauty of God found in Christ is given at salvation, yet it also needs to be fostered through the work of the Word in the pilgrimage of the Christian life toward heaven, where ravishing beauty culminates with a beauty that is unimagined and eternally enjoyed.<sup>27</sup> It is a vision that is unlocked by the instrumentality of the Word as illuminated by the Spirit.

### **The Instrument Used by the Spirit**

The importance of the Word in Jonathan Edwards’s theology of sanctification was a part of the warp and woof of his ministry, yet this instrument or means, cannot work properly without the Holy Spirit who illumines the Word to affect the understanding and thus the affections. The work of both Word and Spirit is again crucial in this conversation on the means of happiness. For as Conrad Cherry reminds the reader concerning Edwards, who, like John Wesley, “sought to combine the objective and subjective principles of religion by maintaining a harmonious balance of Word and

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*Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2004), 233.

<sup>26</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 833-1152, 494.

<sup>27</sup> Edwards would state of this first sight that continues to work, “From things being thus as has been observed, it comes to pass that whenever the saints behold the beauty and amiable excellency of Christ as appearing in his virtues, and have their souls ravished with it, they may behold it in its brightest effulgence, and by far its most full and glorious manifestation, shining forth in a wonderful act of love to them, exercised in his last sufferings, wherein he died for them. They may have the pleasure to see all his ravishing excellency in that which is the height, and, as it were, the sum of its exhibited and expressed glory, appearing in and by the exercise of dying love to them; which certainly will tend to endear that excellency, and make that greatest effulgence of it the more ravishing in their eyes. They see the transcendent greatness of his love shining forth in the same act that they see the transcendent greatness of his loveliness shining forth, and his loveliness to shine in his love; so that ’tis most lovely love. Their seeing his loveliness tends to make them desire his love, but the sight of his loveliness brings satisfaction to this desire with it, because the appearance of his loveliness as they behold it, mainly consists in the marvelous exercise of his love to them. It being thus, his excellency both endears his love, and his love endears his excellency; and the very beholding his excellency, as thus manifested, is an enjoying of it as their own. And while the saints have the pleasure of these views, they may also have the additional pleasure of considering that this lovely virtue is imputed to them. ’Tis the lovely robe, and robe of love, with which they are covered. Christ gives it to them, and puts it upon them, and by the beauty of this robe recommends ’em to the favor and delight of God the Father, as well as of all heaven besides.” Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 494-95. Concerning heaven see Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies,” Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 328-29; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 62.

Spirit.”<sup>28</sup> Edwards’s emphasis on the Word and thus the objective means is clear, for he argues, “Indeed a person cannot have spiritual light without the Word.”<sup>29</sup> Edwards would also show that this means of grace was more than simply a natural source. The argument can be observed from Turretin and other Reformed scholars, where one can find a focus on the immediate work of God in the Spirit through the Word specifically in salvation, but also as Edwards would be more emphatic about the work of the Word and Spirit in the continued work of sanctification by the Holy Spirit in the individual.<sup>30</sup> Edwards maintained,

When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means, hereby is intended, that ’tis given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force. God makes use of means; but ’tis not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The Word of God is no proper cause of this effect: it don’t operate by any natural force in it.<sup>31</sup>

The Holy Spirit is needed to accompany the Word of God as a means to happiness. The work of redemption in Jonathan Edwards’s theology is always a work of Word and Spirit. This emphasis is observed not only in the objective work of the Word incarnate but also in the Word of God as contained in Scripture. As Conrad Cherry testifies, “God’s Word is really *God’s Word* when it is accompanied by the Spirit dwelling in the human heart; when unaccompanied by the Spirit it is simply another natural, human word.”<sup>32</sup> The objective truth needs to be evident in the ear of the hearer, but the hearer will only truly respond when the Holy Spirit is involved in making that

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<sup>28</sup>Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), 44.

<sup>29</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416.

<sup>30</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 47-48. See Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 2:534.

<sup>31</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416.

<sup>32</sup>Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 48. Cherry continues, “The ‘immediate’ operation of the Spirit is the operation of God’s Word as *God’s Word*: the Spirit’s immediacy is the character of the operation of God’s Word which distinguishes it from simply another human word.” Ibid.

Word come alive to the thinking and heart of the individual, so that he or she has eyes to see.

Jonathan Edwards exhibited a reliance on the work of the Holy Spirit in giving a new spiritual sense, that makes his work concerning ethics different than what is seen in most virtue ethics today. This reliance continues in Edwards's work and shows that although there is "a new foundation in the soul," which affects the understanding and the will, there is the need for the continual work of Word and Spirit in the heart.<sup>33</sup> The continual work of the Word happens primarily as the minister saturates himself with the Word so much throughout the week that when he ascends the pulpit he holds forth its beams of light that would then affect the heart of the hearer, through the work of the Holy Spirit, with a use of this light "to *discover*, to *refresh*, and to *direct*."<sup>34</sup> For as Edwards would state, "Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching, which has the greatest tendency to do this."<sup>35</sup> For hearts to be touched, the Word is needed, and the Spirit is required to work through the faithful proclamation of the Word, which is the vocation of the minister of the gospel.

### **The Instrument and the Minister**

In Jonathan Edwards's second published ordination sermon, he broached a subject that would be a constant theme in his discussion of the preacher's role to be a "burning and shining light," pointing to the importance of the Word as a means of grace, and thus happiness.<sup>36</sup> Here Sean Michael Lucas rightly points out that the theme of

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<sup>33</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 206.

<sup>34</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 89.

<sup>35</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards in Four Volumes with Valuable Additions and a Copious General Index, and a Complete Index of Scripture Texts* (New York: R. Carter, 1864), 4:159.

<sup>36</sup>The full quote from Edwards is, "John being thus eminently a minister of the gospel, and a "burning and shining light" being taken notice of by Christ as his great excellency, we may justly hence observe, that herein consists the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel." Edwards, *Sermons and*

“excellency” becomes an important marker in Edwards’s argument, which is ultimately found in Christ, so that the heart of his messages was that the “task of ministry is to be both divine light and holy heat for the benefit of the souls of humankind.”<sup>37</sup> Edwards’s focus on the Word was without apology in which the ministry of the pastor was first and foremost the ministry of the Word that serves “the precious and immortal souls of men committed to their care and trust by the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>38</sup> Lucas also mentions concerning this focus in Edwards, “It is not surprising that Edwards, as a preacher of God’s Word, believed that the most important means that God has granted to ministers for caring for these souls is the preaching ministry of God’s Word.”<sup>39</sup>

Jonathan Edwards continually pointed to the importance of the ministry of the Word in the life of the believer. Edwards asserted,

Ministers are set to be lights to the souls of men in this respect, as they are to be the means of imparting divine truth to them, and bringing into their view the most glorious and excellent objects, and of leading them to, and assisting them in the contemplation of those things that angels desire to look into; the means of their obtaining that knowledge is infinitely more important and more excellent and useful, than that of the greatest statesmen or philosophers, even that which is spiritual and divine. They are set to be the means of bringing men out of darkness into God’s marvelous light, and of bringing them to the infinite fountain of light, that in his light they may see light. They are set to instruct men, and impart to them that knowledge by which they may know God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.<sup>40</sup>

It was in this vocation that the minister was to use the truth of God’s Word to raise the affections, taking seriously the calling to rightly handle the Word of God.

Jonathan Edwards described this calling as, “impressing divine things on the hearts and affections of men,” which “is evidently one great and main end for which God has

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*Discourses 1743-1758*, 87.

<sup>37</sup>Sean Michael Lucas, *God’s Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 135. See “The Excellency of Jesus Christ,” in Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 63-94.

<sup>38</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 63.

<sup>39</sup>Lucas, *God’s Grand Design*, 136.

<sup>40</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 90.

ordained, that his Word delivered in the Holy Scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in preaching.”<sup>41</sup> It was thus the conviction of Edwards that “ministers are set on purpose to explain the word of God and therefore their people ought to hear them when they offer to explain it to them.”<sup>42</sup> Many metaphors exist that Edwards would use of the minister’s vocation and its importance, from the picture of ministers married to the Bride that is the church, ministers as lights, and also servants.<sup>43</sup> This emphasis points not only to the importance of the proclamation of the Word, but also the effect that the Word has as a means of grace, and thus happiness. For Edwards would entreat, “More particularly should ministers of the gospel follow the example of their great Master, in the manner in which they seek the salvation and happiness of the souls of men.”<sup>44</sup>

### **The Means to Happiness: The Sacraments**

The sacraments for the New England divine were an important aspect of church life as a means of grace for those in the church, and thus a means to happiness. Particularly the ordinances of baptism and communion are highlighted by Jonathan Edwards, in which he would appeal to Scripture announcing that these ordinances, “give such notions to our minds, and so disposed, as to give opportunity for grace to act, when God shall infuse it,” likening this to “Elijah laying fuel on the altar, and laying it in order, gave opportunity for the fire to burn, when God should send it down from heaven.”<sup>45</sup> These ordinances serve as pictures of the gospel that convey “speculative ideas to the

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<sup>41</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 115.

<sup>42</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 454.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 172-73; 263; 335. See Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 137-41.

<sup>44</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, 337.

<sup>45</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 85.

mind and engaging the natural affections of the heart.”<sup>46</sup> As the authors of one source contended of Edwards’s view of the means of grace, “Frequent use of them tends to restrain sin and provide further impetus to use these and other means.”<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, as Edwards would maintain, “That attending and using means of grace is no more than a waiting upon God for his grace, in the way wherein he is wont to bestow [it]; ’tis watching at wisdom’s gates, and waiting at the posts of her doors.”<sup>48</sup> Such are the means, and such is the case with the sacraments of baptism and communion for Edwards that in the process are a means to happiness, underlying the truth of both union and relationship.

### **The Sacrament of Baptism**

Jonathan Edwards held that baptism was based upon covenant, and thus falls into line with much Reformed thinking on this ordinance, considering the sacrament as an initiation into the church, which does not necessarily include regeneration.<sup>49</sup> It was the view of Edwards that this admission into the church was to be done to children of believing parents, who are thus committing to raising these children in the church, and also to those who proclaim Christ as adults.<sup>50</sup> In this rite of admission, there is thus made

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<sup>46</sup>Chamberlain, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, introduction, 37.

<sup>47</sup>Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 483. As Edwards would utter, “Thus we have shown how that means are concerned in the affair of the production of grace. They are also concerned in another way, more remotely: (1) as they restrain from sin, whereby God might be provoked to withhold grace; (2) as means excite to attend and use means. Thus men are persuaded by the Word to hear and read the Word, and to meditate upon it, to keep sabbaths, to attend sacraments, etc.; counsels of parents may persuade to a diligent use of means.” Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 88.

<sup>48</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 88. See McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 483.

<sup>49</sup>For context of this time in regard to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper see Anne S. Brown and David D. Hall, “Family Strategies and Religious Practice: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Early New England,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 41-68; E. Brooks Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<sup>50</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 129-30.



available the means of grace, such as the explanation and preaching of Scripture, fellowship, discipline, and the Lord's table, which the Holy Spirit uses to confront and care for them. As Edwards entreated, "Thus God admits them into his house, or dwelling place, to an enjoyment of the good things and the protection of his house."<sup>51</sup> Edwards would elaborate on his thinking of this initiation rite of the church writing,

When persons regularly enter into God's visible church, God proceeds immediately to treat them as his people. He gives them means of grace, not merely as such and such external things, but as means of grace as they are by his blessing made ordinary means of grace. In themselves, they are no means of grace at all, any more than any other things; but there is a blessing of God with them. There is a connection established by that blessing between these external things and his grace, though not absolute and certain, yet in some manner and degree; and as such these means are given to them that regularly enter the visible church.<sup>52</sup>

So, like the covenant made in circumcision in the Old Testament, Edwards would see the equivalent in baptism for the New Covenant. In this thinking, the door of baptism would then enable the children of believers to have benefits of the covenant, which would include the means of grace and thus the means to happiness. Edwards would also admit that not all who are baptized, would respond or persevere, as was also true of the children circumcised in the old covenant.<sup>53</sup>

### **The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

While both sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were important in Jonathan Edwards's estimation, there was an importance that he attributed to the sacred meal that eclipsed the place of baptism, which had to do with the purpose of the sacraments.<sup>54</sup> For it was in the Lord's Supper that the focus in Edwards's work on both participation and communion yielded to the truth of union. As Edwards preached,

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<sup>51</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 253.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 252-53.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 254, 258-59. See McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 483-87; Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 150-52.

<sup>54</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 487-88.

Feasting together betokens love and friendship. Thus Abimelech and Isaac, when they made covenants (Gen. 26:30). So 'tis from the wonderful love of Jesus Christ that sinners are called to this feast and that he has provided such a feast for them at so dear a rate. This love is without a parallel, and all those that do accept of the invitation that are truly his guests, their hearts are possessed with a spirit of true love to Christ Jesus. They love him above all; he is to them the chief of ten thousands and altogether lovely. There is a great love between Christ and his guests. He and they are one, even as the Father is in him and he in the Father. There is the nearest union and a holy friendship between Christ and believers. They are Christ's dear ones, his jewels; and Christ is their jewel, their pearl of great price.<sup>55</sup>

This relational aspect is because Christ is the One in whom happiness is found, and the meal not only points to him, in what he has done but also underlines the union that is had with him. For as Edwards would elaborate on the One who is most beautiful,

There is every kind of thing dispensed in Christ that tends to make us excellent and amiable, and every kind of thing that tends to make us happy. There is that which shall fill every faculty of the soul and in a great variety. What a glorious variety is there for the entertainment of the understanding! How many glorious objects set forth, most worthy to be meditated upon and understood! There are all the glorious attributes of God and the beauties of Jesus Christ, and manifold wonders to be seen in the way of salvation, the glories of heaven and the excellency of Christian graces. And there is a glorious variety for the satisfying the will: there are pleasures, riches and honors; there are all things desirable or lovely. There is various entertainment for the affections, for love, for joy, for desire and hope. The blessings are innumerable.<sup>56</sup>

In the sacramental meal there would be a work on the affections, and such a serious action in looking to Christ and promising to “own the covenant,” that would thus encourage obedience and discourage one to “go on in the indulgence of their filthy lusts.”<sup>57</sup> It was a meal that also provoked meditation in the Sunday service on the truth of the gospel, “especially that his saints do feed upon him in meditation, hearing his Word, and partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper,” which was another reminder of the truth that would then orient the heart to Christ.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, for Jonathan Edwards it was

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<sup>55</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 286.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 285-86.

<sup>57</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 271.

<sup>58</sup>Edwards, *Notes on Scripture*, 573. See Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 120. Strobel elaborates, “As we faithfully set our minds on the sermon and the supper we are setting before our hearts the truth, grace and beauty of God for the ‘eye of our soul’ to behold.” Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 120.

an important meal, not only pointing to union and the beauty of Christ, but one in which there was more at stake in participating, and one over which he would ultimately lose his Northampton pulpit.

It was in Jonathan Edwards's view of union, and thus participation as depicted in the meal that the seriousness and place of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace take on great significance. For Edwards, even though he would deny the views of both Rome and Luther of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, he did hold to a real presence that went beyond the symbolism view of Zwingli.<sup>59</sup> It is where Christ offers the elements and thus his benefits, as well as appealing to our senses so that one can "touch and taste besides our seeing," so that as William Danaher would conclude in giving this visible Word, "The incorporation of these senses addressed the pedagogic need to change the mediums to suit limited human capacities."<sup>60</sup> For Edwards, the real presence was there spiritually, not corporeally, yet this meal is more than a memorial, although that is a part, for there was a real presence of both Christ's divinity as well as his humanity. It was a meal that had to do with communion. As Danaher explains,

As a means of grace, the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper not only symbolized the "broken body" and "spilt blood" of Christ, but provided the "spiritual nourishment and satisfaction" which made "the soul to grow as food does the body," sating the gracious appetite. In the Lord's Supper, "we have that spiritual meat and drink" which God provided for poor souls," and it was here that partakers "may hope to have our longing souls satisfied in this world by the gracious Communications of the Spirit of God."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Danaher explains that Edwards in "evoking what kind of metaphor he meant was a complex and delicate task, if he was to incorporate successfully the Calvinistic stress on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, though not in the flesh, with the Zwinglian belief that the Eucharist was little more than memorial and symbol of confession." William J. Danaher, "By Sensible Signs Represented: Jonathan Edwards's Sermons on the Lord's Supper," *Pro Ecclesia* 7, no. 3 (1998): 272.

<sup>60</sup>Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 270, 1 Cor. 11:29," *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 48, accessed May 7, 2016, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdw aGlsby9nZXRVYmplY3QucGw/Yy40NjoyLndqZW8=>. See Danaher, "Sensible Signs," 274.

<sup>61</sup>Danaher, "Sensible Signs," 265. Danaher continues, "As a memorial, the Lord's Supper celebrated the good of Christ's forgiveness and justification of the faithful, which allowed them to 'stand in the relation of a son' to God. But the primary good of communion was what this restored relationship offered; it was the means of sanctifying grace that satisfied the spiritual appetite, whose nourishment is the imparting of the 'divine nature.'" Ibid.

It was thus in this ordinance that with Christ's presence the affections would be renewed, and the life of the believer affected.<sup>62</sup> Edwards commented that "Christ was not only with his disciples as the first sacrament but sits with his people in every sacrament."<sup>63</sup> A presence to which the elements would point, and one that was evident through the unifying presence and work of the Holy Spirit in each individual. There is thus a picture indicative of what Edwards described concerning the communion of the Trinity. Edwards said,

We read of fellowship or communion with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ but not of communion with the Holy Ghost, but the communion of the Holy Ghost: for that is the thing wherein they have fellowship or are partakers with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And with one another.<sup>64</sup>

As always the Holy Spirit points to the Son, in the outworking of the Lord's Supper, in what Danaher describes as "a passion play that reached its climax when the main character, Jesus Christ, took center stage."<sup>65</sup>

### **The Means to Happiness: Prayer**

In the themes of the affections, communion, and dependence Jonathan Edwards would continue with the means of grace and thus happiness that comes with prayer. In Edwards's sermon on prayer he concluded, "It will appear that there [is] no

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<sup>62</sup>Danaher, "Sensible Signs," 266. Danaher comments, "The significance of describing the Lord's Supper as a 'representation' was that the reenactment of Christ's spiritual presence, Edwards' final sense of 'representation,' held together the various senses of the Lord's supper in a way that brought them into completion rather than competition. It incorporated the sense of the Lord's Supper as a memorial, for it reenacted something which, though written, was 'not to be read but represented.' It also incorporated the sense of spiritual nourishment, for the 'exhibition' aimed to benefit the communion partakers in the 'Pit' not the general 'Publick.' And it incorporated the sense of the Lord's Supper as a visible word, for the elements, as 'scenes' and 'machines' served the purpose of providing fallen humanity with visible signs of an invisible grace. These different senses of 'representation' as memorial, spiritual feast, and visible word culminated in the occasion where Christ and his benefits were *represented* to the saints in the divine drama of salvation." *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>63</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 288-89.

<sup>64</sup>Jonathan Edwards, "Transcription 103, 1 Cor. 1:9," *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 44, accessed May 8, 2016, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmpIY3QucGw/Yy40Mjo0LndqZW8=>.

<sup>65</sup>Danaher, "Sensible Signs," 280.

happiness that God is unwilling to bestow on [his people] as too good, if it be considered that [he] has thought nothing too much as the means of procuring their happiness.”<sup>66</sup>

Edwards was reasoning that one should look at what God did in Christ in redeeming a humanity for himself, this then also has an impact on what kind of life and what kind of happiness God intends for believers. Edwards reasoned of Christ, “He is as it were their head of enjoyment, so that they enjoy all things in him, and as communicating and partaking with him; as when many streams issue from [a] fountain, they all are united to the fountain, and partake of its fullness, every canal has its mouth inserted and immersed into that full fountain.”<sup>67</sup> This relational emphasis points to the fact that that in Edwards thinking what the believer gets in redemption, the gift of salvation, is Christ, who is not only the mediator himself, but also the One who purchases the Spirit who draws one’s heart to the God of all glory and happiness. For as Edwards would proclaim, “Of the more excellent nature any blessing is that we stand in need of, the more ready God is to bestow it in answer to prayer.”<sup>68</sup> The blessing is not only happiness in answer to prayer, but more importantly, happiness that is found in relationship to God. It is prayer that becomes a binding factor, a connection to the fount of all happiness and what is good, and thus a means to happiness. It is prayer that draws the believer to an ongoing relationship that brings communion, ignites the affections, and provides a way to depend on Christ, which all the while makes sin more detestable.

### **Prayer Indicative of Communion**

Prayer is an integral part of the communion that is at the heart of redemption and the happiness that is emblematic of the relationship that is in the Trinity that the believer can enjoy through union. This reality points to the truth that in redemption

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<sup>66</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 777.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 779.

<sup>68</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, 215.

salvation is not the gift, but it is God himself in the work of Word and Spirit. For in redemption and thus sanctification it is not happiness that is the goal, but the byproduct of a relationship with the God of the universe, and what becomes a seeking of God himself, the good of the believer.<sup>69</sup> Thus the pursuit of happiness is found in union and obedience, both which have to do with relationship, all pointing to the treasure that is God himself in all his beauty. As Peter Beck concisely states, “The happiness they seek . . . does not come *through* or *from* God but is found *in* God.”<sup>70</sup> For Edwards, his understanding of the Christian life and thus sanctification is a picture of pilgrimage, which has as its goal full enjoyment of God as depicted in an excerpt from his sermon “The Terms of Prayer”:

And then the happiness that is promised them is the full enjoyment of God, without restraint, in the boldness and nearness of excess, in the cold draughts they take . . . If the greatest good that God gives them even in himself, what can God give more than himself? He gives himself with all his attributes, power, [glory, dominion, and majesty]. And he gives himself in the highest possible enjoyment [to his people], as much as they can desire, or are capable of. [And he gives himself to] fully satisfy [their happiness]. For giving himself, he gives all things.<sup>71</sup>

This relationship, journey, and happiness begins in communion with the God of all happiness in this life through union. This union, and thus communion, also brings about change, in the life of the believer, with prayer being the connection of relationship, to not only the God who answers prayer, but also to the God who loves the believer and is his or her good.

### **Prayer that Ignites the Affections**

Where there is communion in prayer with the God of universe, there is an opportunity for the affections to be ignited. For one has in a relationship with God an opportunity to respond to beauty and experience relationship with the One for whom a

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<sup>69</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. John E. Smith and Stephen J. Stein, *WJE*, vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 315.

<sup>70</sup>Peter Beck, *The Voice of Faith: Jonathan Edwards's Theology of Prayer* (Guelph, ON: Joshua Press, 2010), 212.

<sup>71</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 780.

person was created. This response comes from the truth of the Word as the Spirit works on the heart, so that the affections are aroused and thus need to respond in prayer that throws fuel on the fire that is communion with God. As Edwards would testify to his own experience of prayer,

I had a view, that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God; as mediator between God and man; and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace, that appeared to me so calm and sweet, appeared great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent, with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception. Which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me, the bigger part of the time, in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt withal, an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, than to be emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him, and to be totally wrapt up in the fullness of Christ; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity. I have several other times, had views very much of the same nature, and that have had the same effects.<sup>72</sup>

Prayer is an experience that was indicative of a relationship through the work of the Holy Spirit, and one that would influence the life of the one involved. Edwards would add,

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations communicating divine light and life to the soul. God in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul: pouring forth itself in sweet communications, like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life.<sup>73</sup>

Prayer is also an experience that was based on the objective truth of the Word concerning the God of all excellency. For Edwards rounds out this experience with these words, “I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word: accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.”<sup>74</sup>

The ignition of the Word brings home the truth of the excellency and beauty of God, who has condescended to humanity in Christ, where prayer then fans the flames of

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<sup>72</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 801.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

this ignition, bringing affectionate response and communion. This response goes back to the end for which the world was created, of which Jonathan Edwards declared, “The motive of God’s creating the world must be his inclination to communicate his own happiness to something else.”<sup>75</sup> Prayer is a part of this delight and happiness, which also fosters love. For, as Edwards concluded,

But if man was made to delight in God’s excellency, he was made to love God; and God being infinitely excellent, he ought to love [Him] incomparably more than any man is capable of loving a fellow creature; and every power, and all that is in man, ought to be exercised as attendants on this love.<sup>76</sup>

Ultimately, the affections are based on understanding, for God “has made us capable of understanding so much of him here as is necessary in order to our acceptable worshipping and praising him,” which flows forth to prayer and igniting the affections even more.<sup>77</sup> Coupled with this aspect of prayer is another purpose that is “to affect our own hearts with the things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the blessings we ask,” because prayer is one of the means that “has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those that attend these matters.”<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere, Jonathan Edwards preached in his sermon “The Most High a Prayer-Hearing God,” “While they are praying, he gives them sweet views of his glorious grace, purity, sufficiency, and sovereignty; and enables them, with great quietness, to rest in him, to leave themselves and their prayers with him, submitting to his will, and trusting in his grace and faithfulness.”<sup>79</sup>

### **Prayer That Is Dependent Trust**

The means of happiness that comes in prayer is that which steps out in faith

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<sup>75</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 146.

<sup>76</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*,” *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 265-66.

<sup>77</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 417.

<sup>78</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 115, 121.

<sup>79</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sereno Edwards Dwight and Edward Hickman, 2 vols. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1974), 2:114. See Lucas, *God’s Grand Design*, 163.



and in dependence on the One in whom redemption and thus happiness is found.

Jonathan Edwards always pointed to this fact of dependence, whether it had to do with salvation or the process of sanctification that proceeds from salvation. As the New England divine would proclaim,

The Messiah came to save men from their sins, and deliver them from their spiritual enemies; that they might serve him in righteousness and holiness before him: he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And therefore his success consists in gaining men's hearts to virtue, in their being made God's willing people in the day of his power. His conquest of his enemies consists in his victory over men's corruptions and vices.<sup>80</sup>

In Christ's victory, there is happiness, not only in the communion that is had in union and prayer, but also in God's grace in saving the believer from the lust of deceit. But there is a need for continued dependence as one deals with the flesh. This dependence goes back to the truth of what Christ has done, giving position, but also in the practice that needs to inevitably come about in the lives of those who have believed. As Edwards reminds the Christian,

Christ is the Procurer of the inherent good that is in a Christian. He has purchased conversion and sanctification for the fallen creature. He has purchased for the elect light in their understanding and divine love in their hearts. All the graces of God's Spirit are things purchased and given in no other way than as being bought by His blood. By his suffering and obedience, Christ has purchased faith for them. He has not only purchased pardon of sin, justification, and eternal life, but He has purchased that they should come to Him and put their trust in Him for those things. He has purchased that they should live holy lives; all their qualification and every holy act is the fruit of His purchase.<sup>81</sup>

Faith that began at conversion also needs to follow the believer in dependent prayer for that in which God has called the Christian to walk.

The dependent trust of the Christian is in One who is completely sovereign. This truth of who God is was the compelling force as Jonathan Edwards continually defended against the heresy of his day, and was an attribute of God that was to him

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<sup>80</sup>Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 246.

<sup>81</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathan in Edwards' Lifetime*, ed. Don Kistler, The Puritan Pulpit the American Puritans (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2004), 197-98.

exceedingly sweet.<sup>82</sup> This focus also came out in his preaching and writing on prayer. It was that focus, instead of discouraging prayer, which encouraged the believer to come to God, who has graciously given all things to those who belong to him. Edwards maintained,

That we, when we desire to receive any mercy from him, should humbly supplicate the Divine Being for the bestowment of that mercy, is but a suitable acknowledgment of our dependence on the power and mercy of God for that which we need, and but a suitable honor paid to the great Author and Fountain of all good.<sup>83</sup>

This dependence too, would become a place where both divine sovereignty and the Christian's responsibility, or better, the believer's beautiful duty, would intersect. For in Edwards we do get a Reformed pastor who also was one who saw the necessity of putting the responsibility of prayer on the believer, precisely because of God's sovereignty.<sup>84</sup> In this light, Edwards would proclaim,

God manifests his acceptance of their prayers, by *doing* for them agreeably to their needs and supplications. He not only inwardly and spiritually discovers his mercy to their souls by his Spirit, but outwardly by dealing mercifully with them in his providence, in consequence of their prayers, and by causing an agreeableness between his providence and their prayers.<sup>85</sup>

As one author declared, "Edwards's confidence in the effectiveness of prayer was based on God's character," which was indicative of not only the God who hears the prayers of his people, but also that he can act.<sup>86</sup> This kind of prayer fosters dependence that is

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<sup>82</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 792.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:116.

<sup>84</sup>Of this Sweeney comments, "Though Edwards defended a Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, he also taught that prayer can change world history. In a sermon preached soon after this revival had subsided (January 8, 1736), he contended that 'the Most High is a God that *hears prayer*.' In fact, Edwards told his parishioners that 'God is, speaking after the manner of men, overcome by humble and fervent prayer.' No one changes God's mind, or even informs him, during prayer. God 'is omniscient, and with respect to his knowledge unchangeable . . . he knows what we want a thousand times more perfectly than we do ourselves, before we ask him.' Still God commands us to pray to him for he wants us to depend on him. He wills from eternity, moreover to answer prayer." Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word: A Model of Faith and Thought* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 113-14. See Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:115.

<sup>85</sup>Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2:114.

<sup>86</sup>Glenn R. Kreider, "Jonathan Edwards's Theology of Prayer," *Bibliotheca sacra* 160, no. 640 (2003): 438.

emblematic of Edwards sermon, “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence,” which is a means to happiness in that it is based on who God is, in the beauty of his sovereignty, and it also fosters faith that produces growth and obedience.<sup>87</sup>

In Jonathan Edwards’s work one can see the importance of the dependence that comes in faith, for not only is faith a closing with Christ, but it is what Edwards called union, of which prayer plays an integral role in his pilgrim theology that is merged with the beatific in sanctification.<sup>88</sup> For faith and the Christian life go hand in hand, as does faith and the life of prayer. As Peter Beck points out, “For Edwards’s theology of prayer, faith, or ‘union’ as he often called it, forms the connective tissue between soteriology and spiritual blessings—past, present and future.”<sup>89</sup> Concerning the active characteristic of faith Edwards asserted,

It is fit that, seeing we depend so entirely and universally, visibly and remarkably on God in our fallen state for happiness, and the special design of God was to bring us into such a great and most evident dependence, that the act of the soul by which it is interested in this benefit, bestowed in this way, should be agreeable, viz. a looking and seeking to and depending on God for it; that the union of heart—that is the proper term—should imply such an application of the soul to God, and seeking the benefit thus only and entirely, and with full sense of dependence on him; that as the condition before was obedience or rendering to God, so now it should be seeking and looking to him, drawing and as it were seeking it from him and with the whole heart, depending on him, his power and free grace, etc.<sup>90</sup>

It is in this union that one can see that dependence becomes an important aspect of faith and thus a need for seeking God in prayer. For as Edwards continues to elaborate on the meaning of faith,

Faith is the proper active UNION of the soul with Christ as our Savior, as revealed to us in the gospel. But the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Savior, as

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<sup>87</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 200-14. An aspect of this is that the believer is dependent on God for his happiness, which causes the Christian to come to the fountain of all happiness for drink, but also for the fact that obedience comes from this relationship of which prayer is a part. Obedience also cultivates happiness, for it is a part of God’s good for the believer in being united to him.

<sup>88</sup>Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 16, 162.

<sup>89</sup>Beck, *The Voice of Faith*, 102.

<sup>90</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 446.

revealed to us in the gospel, is the soul's active agreeing and suiting or adopting itself in its act to the exhibition God gives us of Christ and his redemption, to the nature of the exhibition being pure revelation, and a revelation of things perfectly above our senses and reason; and to Christ himself in his person as revealed, and in the character under which he is revealed to us; and our states with regard to him in that character, and our need of him and concern with him; and his relation to us, [the] benefits to us with which he is exhibited and offered to us in that revelation; and the great design of God in that method and divine contrivance of salvation revealed. But the most proper name for such an active union or union of the soul to Christ, as this, of any language, affords, is *faith*.<sup>91</sup>

Faith is based on revelation, and has at its heart union that is not static, but in Edwards, beatific-pilgrim theology gives the believer the ability and desire to continue to seek. As Edwards concludes on the topic of faith,

The revelation or exhibition that God first made of himself was of his authority, demanding and requiring of us that we should render something to him that nature and reason required. The act of the soul that is suitable to such an exhibition may be expressed by submitting, doing, obeying and rendering to God. The exhibition [which] God makes of himself since our fall in the gospel, is not of his power and authority as demanding of us, but of his sufficiency for us as needy, empty [and] helpless, and his grace and mercy to us as unworthy and miserable. And the exhibition is by pure revelation of things quite above all our senses and reason, or the reach of any created faculties, being of the mere good pleasure of God. The act in us that is proper and suitable to and well according to such an exhibition as this, may be expressed by such names, as believing, seeking, looking, depending, acquiescing, or, in one word, *faith*.<sup>92</sup>

Faith is expressed in prayer; it is a seeking, depending and acquiescing that is a part of a relationship and fellowship with Christ who is the believer's objective happiness.<sup>93</sup> In praying, as a means of happiness, the believer not only deepens his or her relationship with God in the seeking of him, but also pleads with his heart to seek that which will only contribute to the unhindered fellowship and pilgrimage toward heaven in sanctification, where faith becomes sight, and the beauty of the object is seen clearly.

A last aspect of prayer as means of grace and thus happiness is prayer that is united in the reviving of the church and for the coming of the kingdom. Jonathan Edwards supposed in regard to uniting in prayer that, "Union is one of the most amiable

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<sup>91</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 446-47.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 447.

<sup>93</sup>Edwards, *Edwards: Containing 16 Sermons Unpublished*, 200; Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 439.

things, that pertains to human society; yea, 'tis one of the most beautiful and happy things on earth, which indeed makes earth most like heaven.”<sup>94</sup> But it is also more than doing something together, it is union in prayer, because as Edwards suggested, “There is no way that Christians in a private capacity do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer.”<sup>95</sup> For prayer for revival and for the Lord’s work to occur in the world is that which refreshes, as Edwards testified in his own life and what he desired for the people he led. This theme of the advancement of God’s kingdom is reflected in his personal narrative:

I had great longings for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world. My secret prayer used to be in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of anything that happened in any part of the world, that appeared to me, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ’s kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me.<sup>96</sup>

Prayer was something that stirred Edwards’s affections and aligned his delight in God with the things in which God delights. When this kind of prayer is done on both the individual and corporate level, the means of prayer become another avenue that the church is used to push the believer toward growth, being reminded and united in the goal of glorification.<sup>97</sup>

### **The Means to Happiness: Whose Work?**

What responsibility does the believer have when speaking of the means of grace, and thus the means to happiness? Jonathan Edwards is adamant that grace occurs by the work of the Spirit of God, yet he also is known for what George Marsden called “the preoccupation with self that Puritan piety inevitably entailed,” as seen in the

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<sup>94</sup>Edwards, *Apocalyptic Writings*, 364-65.

<sup>95</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, eds. Harry S. Stout and C. C. Goen, *WJE*, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 518.

<sup>96</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 797.

<sup>97</sup>See Lucas, *God's Grand Design*, 167-72.

Resolutions.<sup>98</sup> What is witnessed in Edwards is a compatibilism of the truth that saving, as well as continuing, grace is “no other than the Spirit of God itself dwelling and acting in the heart of the saint,” yet so without the individual becoming an automaton and losing his or her personhood in the ability of voluntary acts.<sup>99</sup> Sang Hyun Lee writes,

This compatibilist view was premised on Jonathan Edwards’s contention that the Holy Spirit works as a new disposition or principle of action internal, not external, to the regenerate person’s own self. Edwards’ interest in seeing grace as a personal reality for the regenerate hung on the concept of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and acting in the regenerate as a new disposition.<sup>100</sup>

The new disposition in the believer is a “vital principle” or habit, so that the Holy Spirit is “so united to the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life.”<sup>101</sup> This reality becomes the “springs of motion” for the action and thus obedience, because of the effect of the work of God in the Holy Spirit in redemption upon the affections. It is this conviction that also separates Jonathan Edwards from most of the theories that are in the recent resurgence of virtue ethics today. Although habit, as “a settled tendency or usual manner of behavior,” becomes an important aspect for Edwards in exposure to that which the Holy Spirit uses for growth, it is only because of the new habit or disposition that is the third person of the Trinity that enables true *eudaimonia*, or wholeness.<sup>102</sup>

### **The Centrality of God in Edwards**

The idea and use of virtue in Jonathan Edwards becomes a fascinating

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<sup>98</sup>George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 52.

<sup>99</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 192.

<sup>100</sup>Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 46.

<sup>101</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 196; Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 200.

<sup>102</sup>The idea of *eudaimonia* is that of happiness or human flourishing, wholeness, or human well-being, that was popularized by Aristotle. See Andreas Graeser, “Greek Philosophy,” *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, eds. Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey Willaim Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999–2003), 466.

occurrence, especially considering the resurgence of the topic of virtue ethics. The question that needs to be asked is how much of Aristotle is in Edwards's thinking, not only as one comes to his perception of virtue, but also as one comprehends what Edwards is doing in many of his works. This question becomes even more intriguing when Edwards's context and thinking are taken into consideration, for he was a man of reason and philosophy, yet always a theologian. Even as one looks at the brilliance of Edwards in the writing of his two dissertations on *True Virtue* and *The End for Which God Created the World*, there is seen a marvelous marriage of both reason and Scripture in the complement of these two works which both point to the centrality of God in Edwards.<sup>103</sup>

**True virtue and Edwards.** Jonathan Edwards becomes an interesting figure here precisely because he took the issue of happiness in conjunction with virtue so seriously, yet always with theology as his guide.<sup>104</sup> This viewpoint can be constructive as one examines the standard of ethics as laid out by the Word incarnate through the pen of Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount as seen through the eyes of the New England divine. In this vein, Stephen Wilson and Jean Porter claim of Edwards,

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<sup>103</sup>Wilson and Porter rightly state that *True Virtue* should not only be taken in isolation from its companion dissertation of *The End for Which God Created the World*, but also affirm that it is one of Edwards's most disseminated works, and then they suggest that it serves "a point of contact between Edwards and work in the contemporary theological ethics and moral philosophy." Stephen A. Wilson and Jean Porter, "Jonathan Edwards," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 185. The problems that have been involved in the history of these two dissertations are lengthy, and are handled best by compilers and contributors at Yale in their works as delineated in the introduction of volume 8 by Ramsey, whose lead is followed by Wilson and Porter. Of those who have argued for the separation of the two works, and thus two different Jonathan Edwards are William A. Clebsch, *American Religious Thought: A History*, Chicago History of American Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Stephen E. Berk, *Calvinism Versus Democracy: Timothy Dwight and the Origins of American Evangelical Orthodoxy* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1974).

<sup>104</sup>This stance of Edwards seems to break the mold of the Reformers as depicted by Charry, who writes, "Protestants were wary of Aristotle and scholasticism—and therefore of Aquinas. Happiness was of little interest to them. While Aquinas thought from creation, Protestants thought from the Fall. Starting with Martin Luther's search for a gracious God, Protestants became preoccupied with finding a solution to the paralyzing fear produced by their belief in God's justifiable wrath about human sinfulness. Although Protestants did not talk much about happiness, it implicitly became relief from anxiety before God. Having rejected the penitential system, Protestants turned to Christology in a search for absolution. The search for peace of mind is a fresh form of Augustine's resting place in God, though they do not use the language of felicity." Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 111-112.

He enters into the philosophical debates of his time precisely as a theologian, and it is his theological perspective which grounds both his critical acuity and his originality. For this reason, if for no other, his writings offer much of interest and value, both to those interested in the general relation of moral beliefs to religious claims, and to those engaged in the task of constructive theological ethics.<sup>105</sup>

Edwards believed “in the harmony of revelation and right reason.” Ethics was no exception, as several authors argue, “When he turned to a *theological* account of the moral life, he turned again to God first and found, as reason taught, that love is the principle divine attribute. Consequently, love is also the principle human virtue.”<sup>106</sup>

The priority of turning to God first dominated Jonathan Edwards’s thinking, no matter what the topic, and was something that bled into everything he did. As the authors of one source claim, “More than one student of Edwards’s ethics has observed that he based his conception of human morality on the character of God.”<sup>107</sup> For Edwards true virtue consists in “benevolence to Being in general,” who is God, which then is worked out or “exercised” in “general goodwill.”<sup>108</sup> This relationship with the Creator is what will enable happiness, for when a person has a relationship with God and love for him, there will be goodwill and obedience as that love works its way out to others. Thus, the key for true virtue to be active is through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>109</sup> It is when God’s work on the heart occurs, that true virtue can then be exercised through love to God. This instance in conversion is where Edwards gets to a moral sense, yet one that

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<sup>105</sup>Wilson and Porter, “Jonathan Edwards,” 189.

<sup>106</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 532.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 528.

<sup>108</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 540.

<sup>109</sup>Danaher’s summary of this point is, “The life of virtue is one of *actual* participation in the spiritual life of the triune God.” William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 41. From this McClymond and McDermott make this important assertion, “Hence the moral life depends on the personal transformation of the new birth or regeneration. Only by this event does God’s love become our love, in the process which Eastern theology has called divine love but also divine knowledge happiness.” McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Edwards*, 533. Ramsey adds, “Thus, the new ‘new creation’ is the name, idea or knowledge of God’s, being in human understanding; the love of God’s, being in human wills, and the joy of God’s, being in human affection.’ All Christian experience, then, is participation in the triune life, and this includes the moral life.” Paul Ramsey, introduction to *Ethical Writings*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 22.



is approached in a robust theological manner when it comes to virtue so that he can say,

And it may be asserted in general that nothing is of true virtue, in which God is not the *first* and *last*; or which, with regard to their exercises in general, have not their first foundation and source in apprehension of God's supreme dignity and glory, and in answerable esteem and love of him, and have not respect to God as supreme end.<sup>110</sup>

**Virtue ethics: Edwards and Aristotle.** It is with Jonathan Edwards's foundation of God's work that he departs from any kind of Aristotelian thought. For Aristotle saw the practical intellect being educated working towards perfection, so that right choices might be made, thus virtue would be cultivated through character, or habit, so that a person might live well.<sup>111</sup> This thinking then points Aristotle to the *telos* or end of human flourishing, which then works its way to the good of the *polis*.<sup>112</sup> But where Aristotle speaks of habit, which "qualifies the faculties of desires," and has as their foundation the ability of rational judgment and reflection to incline one toward the good, Edwards would speak of spontaneous affections that can arise only out of God's work in the heart, by divine grant.<sup>113</sup>

Even with the distinctions discussed above, this does not mean that there are not points of contact between Jonathan Edwards and the thinking of Aristotle. For Edwards does speak both of a disposition of character in the natural man as well as an

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<sup>110</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 560. Wilson elaborates on Edwards' meaning in *Ethical Writings* by stating, "One might have *virtue* if one can make oneself act upon general principles derivable from the benevolence toward Being in general (433). But unless one finds joy in its originally encompassing scope within God's nature (443), one does not have *true virtue*." Stephen A. Wilson, "Jonathan Edwards's Virtue: Diverse Sources, Multiple Meanings, and the Lessons of History for Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 213.

<sup>111</sup>Aristotle writes, "Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (*ἡθικὴ*) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ἔθος* (habit)." Aristotle, "ETHICA NICOMACHEA," in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, trans. W.D. Ross, vol. 9 (Oxford, The Clarendon Press), 1103a.10-19. Aquinas would then take Aristotle's thinking on "habit" which then perfects the nature through teaching the intellect. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oats & Washbourne, n.d.), I-II q.55-67; II-II q.23. See also Sang Hyun Lee, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 17-22.

<sup>112</sup>Lee, *Philosophical Theology of Edwards*, 2-3.

<sup>113</sup>Wilson and Porter, "Jonathan Edwards," 188.

idea of habit, but in the end, Aristotle's accounts fall short in Edwards' moral anthropology.<sup>114</sup> For even though man is capable to exercise virtue because of his natural connection to God, by being made in his image, it is still not the stuff of true virtue, which requires a connection to Christ and his redemptive work, ultimately being connected to a person's affections.<sup>115</sup> For Edwards it always comes down to object, nature, and motive in a person and so unless one has seen the beauty of the object which is Christ, there is no new nature, and if no new nature the motives are all skewed because there is no participation in the life of God.<sup>116</sup> So even though Edwards, as William Danaher writes, "Speaks of virtue as a settled state of 'character' or 'habit' in the soul, Edwards rejects habituation as a means for moral development, in either the 'natural' or 'moral' image of God in human nature."<sup>117</sup> It is participation in God's moral excellency through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit that brings about true virtue. It is the moral transformation through the work of God alone that is at stake in Edwards, as

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<sup>114</sup>Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 143.

<sup>115</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 254, 398.

<sup>116</sup>Here Lewis reminds the reader, "The object of true virtue is Being in general, a phrase which bears considerable weight for Edwards." Paul Lewis, "The Springs of Motion: Jonathan Edwards on Emotions, Character, and Agency," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22, no. 2 (1994): 279. Lewis continues pointing out that the person with this objective, because of the work of God in the heart, will then seek "the good of every individual being unless it be convinced as not consistent with the highest good of Being in general." *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>117</sup>Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 143. Danaher continues, "In Edwards's understanding, a 'habit' is a principle that is internal to an entity, and not, as Aristotle understands it, an acquired state or condition of a given entity. For as we have seen, the affections and dispositions within the soul determine the moral content of a person's character, regardless of the specific choices or actions that a person takes. In both the regenerate and the unregenerate, human nature is defined in terms of the affections. Consequently, the moral orientation of a person is the direct result of that person's greatest love, rather than a state of being acquired through thoughtful practice. Thus, in the *Religious Affections*, Edwards explicitly rejects the role of moral 'education' in producing virtuous action (Y2:295). For 'nature is more a more powerful principle of action than anything that opposes it.' When a 'natural' person 'denies' his or her 'lusts, and lives a strict religious life' it is 'all a force against nature.' Edwards believes it makes as much sense to try to learn virtue through thoughtful cultivation of the practical intellect as it does to throw a stone repeatedly upward in the hope of teaching of it to fly (Y2:296). As a result, though Edwards does not directly address the topic of acquired and infused virtues in the *Religious Affections*, he argues in 'Miscellanies' entries *l* and *p* that 'the notion of acquired habits is wrong' when applied to the Holy Spirit's operation in the soul (Y13:169). To 'say that the Holy Spirit' merely 'assists' the soul 'in acquiring the habit' of grace directly undermines the sense in which the Holy Spirit 'infuses' grace in the soul. For 'grace consists very much in a principle that causes vigorosity and activity in action,' and this is the meaning of the word 'infusion.'" *Ibid.*, 143-44. See also McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Edwards*, 546.

Stephen Wilson proclaims, “Christian ethicists have begun to recognize that theological concepts such as grace and sin are practical differences that strain the formal structure shared with Aristotle.”<sup>118</sup>

The sum and substance for Jonathan Edwards in relation to true virtue was that he “construes true virtue to be grounded in a divine sense of beauty which evokes affections that are embodied in actions and practices which serve God’s glory by promoting the well-being of the whole creation.”<sup>119</sup> Habit is then not something that can be self-generated, but is dependent on the work of God in the heart through the Holy Spirit. Edwards would even preach in the language of habit concerning time in the word and meditation, specifically on Romans chapter 12:

The chapter is well worth our most diligent and frequent reading, and that we should bind the words and rules thereof, that we should bind them upon our hearts; yea, that they should be written in indelible characters there, that it should be the object of continual meditation, lying down and rising up, and that we should frequently examine our lives by it, as by an excellent catalog of those duties and practices, which, if performed, will make us appear Christians indeed, and will mold our hearts and regulate our lives according to Jesus Christ and his image.<sup>120</sup>

When the work of Holy Spirit occurs through the means by grace, believers can participate in communion with the life of God which enables them to act in love, which is best for Being in general and thus for the whole creation. This participation thus involves the beauty of duty to the divine commands, but it is a heart issue that is dependent on the work of God, and not self-help, which ultimately consists of receiving and returning Divine love.<sup>121</sup> The practice springs from the affections in which virtue finds its

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<sup>118</sup>Stephen A. Wilson, “The Possibility of a Habituation Model of Moral Development in Jonathan Edward’s Conception of the Will’s Freedom,” *Journal of Religion* 81, no. 1 (2001): 50. It should also be mentioned that Edwards was also defending a distinctly Christian ethic among the arguments of the moral sense theists of his day, in which Edwards, as he would with Aristotle, would agree with some of what is being said on natural morality with the key being not to confuse this with true virtue. See Lewis, “Springs of Motion,” 279.

<sup>119</sup>Lewis, “Springs of Motion,” 282.

<sup>120</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1723-1729*, 118.

<sup>121</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 325. See also Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 145-46. Interestingly Danaher sums up the idea of duty in writing, “In sum Edwards sees divine commands as essentially pedagogical and diagnostic. Commands teach the way of virtue, and the saint can use them to discern and test his or her affections, in order to renounce those desires that are sinful and to cleave to the

completion in the overflow of obedience and what Edwards called true virtue. This theological outcome of union decries the often proclaimed, and many times justified, claim concerning the practical outworking of Reformed positions in taking seriously the imperatives found in Scripture that speak of evangelical obedience, as depicted in many of today's sanctification debates. But the pursuit of virtue and happiness in the commands found throughout Scripture is something that is very much present in the work of the New England divine, and which comes back to the truth of the pursuit of happiness found in union and obedience.<sup>122</sup>

### **The Means: Centrality and Compatibility**

The central role of God in Jonathan Edwards's theology is a hallmark of his work, as are his views on compatibility as seen in his own life, from much of his preaching, and his works.<sup>123</sup> The fact of these observations by Edwards will help in working through the issues one sees today in the issue of ability for the Christian as it comes to obedience. It is also a practical word to the responsibility that both God has through the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and that for which the Christian is also responsible. As this research has attempted to show there are habits to be established that put the believer in front of truth so that the Holy Spirit will then have the opportunity to produce the continued work of sanctification. Progressive sanctification is

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trine love of God." Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 148. Also see Danaher on an assessment of the works of Lewis, Gilman, and Wilson on Edwards and the Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics as especially seen in MacIntyre where he rightly sticks to his argument that Edwards explicitly rejects Aristotelian habituation as a way of moral development. Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 152-53.

<sup>122</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 244-47.

<sup>123</sup>This sub-section has leaned heavily on the work of Lee in his work on "The Holy Spirit and the Means of Grace." See Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 57-62. Lee's conclusion is worth mentioning, "Edwards' important conviction in his conception of grace is this: although regenerate human beings and the outward means of grace are genuinely involved, grace can neither exist nor operate without the immediate and continuous activity of the Holy Spirit. '[I]f God should take away his Spirit out of the soul,' Edwards observes, 'all habits and acts of grace would of themselves cease as immediately as light in a room when a candle is carried out' (p. 196). Edwards' doctrine of grace belongs firmly to the Reformation. But he was a Reformed theologian who labored with an ecumenical outlook, attempting to maintain in a doctrine of grace both God's absolute primacy and the regenerate person's genuine participation, a concern that goes back to Calvin, Luther, Aquinas, Augustine, and indeed, St. Paul himself." *Ibid.*, 61-62.

a pilgrimage toward beauty and final sanctification, all done in relationship with the God of all happiness as one follows the path set in Scripture with the Christian's eyes set on the object of the affections on the God who is most beautiful.

The function of the means of grace, and thus the means to happiness, is in the words of Sang Hyun Lee, "to give the habit of grace an opportunity to exert itself," a subject which Jonathan Edwards strongly emphasized.<sup>124</sup> God works through truth, and his truth understood, which points to his beauty and excellence. It is this truth upon which the Holy Spirit in the individual acts, for as Edwards explained, "If there could be a principle of grace in the heart without these notions or ideas there, yet it could not act, because it could not be acted upon."<sup>125</sup> Writing on this thought coming out of Edwards's miscellanies Lee adds with the Northampton pastor's own words,

Edwards goes even further, maintaining that "the more fully we are supplied with these notions, the greater opportunity has grace to act." The "eloquence, in instructing" the Word of God and Christian doctrine, "frequent and abundant instructions," "stronger reasons and arguments," "more lively" ideas of God's works in nature—all these will give grace "a better opportunity to act." The means of grace, including human efforts involved in them, do matter and are indispensable.<sup>126</sup>

It is important to note that means of grace do not produce grace, and can only be of use if the grace is infused in the heart, through the infusion of the Holy Spirit.<sup>127</sup>

The intricacies of the centrality of God and the importance of believers to immerse themselves in the Word as a foundational means is necessary. It is with Jonathan Edwards's Reformed theological presuppositions as well as his unique, and yet consistent look at the compatibilist truth of obedience in sanctification that makes him one from whom Christians need to listen. As Edwards indicated in a sermon on illumination,

The Word of God is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction: and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or

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<sup>124</sup>Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 58.

<sup>125</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 85.

<sup>126</sup>Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 58.

<sup>127</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 86.

influence. It conveys to our minds these and those doctrines; it is the cause of the notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of the divine excellency of them in our hearts. Indeed a person . . . can't see the excellency of any doctrine, unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but the seeing the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; though the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the Word . . . . As for instance, 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>128</sup>

This thinking is further elaborated, as Edwards explicated in the same sermon,

'Tis 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 this light into the soul, deals with man according to his 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, 'tis as the subject and not as the cause; and that acting of the faculties in it, is not the cause, but is either implied in the thing itself (in the light that is imparted), or is the consequence of it. 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>129</sup>

It is this truth that enables Edwards to argue, as mentioned in chapter 5, "We are not merely passive in it, nor yet does God do some and we do the rest, but God does all and we do all. God produces all and we act all. For that is what he produces, our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are in different respects wholly passive and wholly active."<sup>130</sup>

In Jonathan Edwards work on redemption what can be observed is humanity living to his fullest potential, with the Holy Spirit residing in the house once again. This assertion does not mean that humanity finds itself in the paradise of Adam once again, for there is in God's wisdom, still the unredeemed flesh, but this is, as argued, humankind fully alive through the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation and his work through the means of grace in a pilgrimage to glory. In Edwards's work, there is in a glimpse of the

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<sup>128</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 416-17.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 416.

<sup>130</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 251. Of this quote, Lee adds, "God is the 'author and fountain,' the one who 'produces all' and 'does all.' Yet by God's grace, we also 'do all' and are 'proper actors.' God allows his actions to be also 'our own acts.'" Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 61.

beauty of God as illuminated by the Spirit that results in a beautifying of the Christian in relationship with the God of all happiness, which is always a life of dependence in union. As Edwards maintained, “as God delights in his own beauty, he must necessarily delight in the creature’s holiness; which is a conformity to, and participation of it, as truly as the brightness of a jewel, held in the sun’s beams, is a participation, or derivation of the sun’s brightness.”<sup>131</sup>

As a new convert, Jonathan Edwards experienced happiness that was indescribable, and this happiness pushed him to discipline his life through the penning of his resolutions. Even in this experience he would later realize his own self-effort, as an older Edwards would confess concerning this rigor which involved, “too great a dependence on my own strength; which afterwards proved a great damage to me.”<sup>132</sup> He would also add, “My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the innumerable and bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit, that there was in my heart.”<sup>133</sup> As Edwards matured in his walk there would be a change of perspective that can be perceived in the language from the quote above, on which he elaborates further,

Though it seems to me, that in some respects I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure: yet of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a mediator, as revealed in the gospel.<sup>134</sup>

This understanding is evidence that even Edwards realized the danger of working out one’s salvation in the flesh, which is not only tempting, but easy to do without understanding the necessity of union and in that union relationship with the God of all holiness, grace, and happiness.

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<sup>131</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 442.

<sup>132</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 795.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 803.

A mature Jonathan Edwards exercised a dependence on the gospel, which underlines the importance of faith and thus the means that the Holy Spirit uses to fuel that faith. This is a faith that is a closing with God, with regeneration being “that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice,” for it is as Edwards continued, “’tis the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought: all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end: ‘For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works’ (Eph. 2:10).”<sup>135</sup> The means point to the necessity of abiding in the vine (John 15). God has given the believer certain paths, or means, to receive his grace, or self-giving and thus happiness. God then can choose to endow these means with grace, so that the believer can be filled with the Spirit in communion with God.<sup>136</sup> The end is the glory of God and the end for which humankind was created. In the process, the Christian experiences the fruit of union and obedience in the happiness of God himself.

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<sup>135</sup>Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 398.

<sup>136</sup>Strobel, *Formed for the Glory of God*, 77.



## CHAPTER 7

### EDWARDS AND SANCTIFICATION: A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The material from Jonathan Edwards about sanctification is indeed vast and compelling, and it will be the task of this chapter to provide a biblical and theological assessment of what has been covered. Edwards's understanding of this aspect of soteriology is a part of the broader whole of redemption, which cannot be overlooked in his theology and the argument of this research. In such a comprehensive look at the doctrine of sanctification, it will be necessary, first, to take one facet of his understanding at a time in looking at his work from a biblical and then theological evaluation, which will be built into this analysis. The second phase of assessment will follow up on issues that arise in this study, and the third segment will provide a summary of findings.

#### **Features of Edwards's Doctrine of Sanctification**

The features of Jonathan Edwards's doctrine of the Christian life build from the logical foundation of God in his Trinitarian excellency, which then flows through redemption in the work of the Triune God of Scripture, with the outcome being happiness. It is happiness that is based on the happiness of God himself, shared in union, and fostered in obedience. Each feature becomes important in the argument and builds toward a logically tight argument from Edwards himself, which provides a missing element in much of the debate and thinking today regarding sanctification. It is thus important to examine these elements in Edwards's argument to see the biblical and theological coherence of what is being explored. As each feature is brought to the fore, it will be evaluated biblically and theologically, with the examination following Edwards Trinitarian focus, holistic redemption, union, sanctification and obedience, the means of

grace, and happiness.

### **Trinitarian Focus**

A Trinitarian focus would never be debated as biblical or theologically wanting, yet what needs to be asked is how Jonathan Edwards's Trinitarian dependence in redemption broadly and sanctification particularly helps in understanding sanctification, obedience, and happiness better from a biblical and theological warrant. For in Edwards's work, the Trinity was a part of the very fabric of his theological outlook, it was the beginning point of everything on which he worked doctrinally, and thus colored all his theology. This proclivity was no different for his doctrine of sanctification, for the happiness that is available for the Christian comes from the happiness of God himself in his triunity. In redemption, what one can observe is the outworking of God's happiness, beauty, and glory, which is enjoyed in its emanation and then ultimately received back in remanation as the end of creation.<sup>1</sup>

**Trinitarian focus: A biblical evaluation.** The heart of Jonathan Edwards's theology was the Trinity as it is the bedrock of what is revealed about God *ad intra*, as well as what proceeds from him *ad extra* in creating and then saving a humanity for himself as revealed in Scripture. The truth of God as triune has been a source of debate throughout the centuries, for which many have fought and carefully delineated from the Scriptures for the orthodoxy of the church such as at the Council of Nicea, but it also has become a strategic gatekeeping doctrine in the defense against heresy. It is thus the primary test for what constitutes orthodoxy since the time of the completing of Scripture.

The revelation of God to Israel was that God is One, as declared in the Old Testament with the *Shema* (Deut 6:4), and which is confirmed in the New Testament (1

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<sup>1</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 531. See Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, *T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 12-20.

Cor 8:6). The truth that the one God of Scripture is three in persons is anticipated in the Old Testament and manifested in the New as early as Jesus' baptism in the Gospels (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34), at the beginning of the Gospel of John (John 1:1) as well as the proclamation of Christ himself in the Apocalypse of John (Rev 1:8, 17-18). As Michael Horton points out,

It was the teaching of Jesus himself, through his self-identification with the Father and the Spirit (Mt 22:44; Jn 5:19-47; 6:26-58; 7:28, 37-38; 8:12-38, 48-59; 10:1-18, 25-38; 11:25-26; 14:1-14, 20; 15:1-9, 26; 16:7, 14-15, 25-28; 17:1-26; 18:37; 20:22) that motivated the practice of Trinitarian faith even before the dogma was fully formulated, and this clear testimony of Jesus to his equality with the Father was not lost on the religious leaders (Jn 5:18).<sup>2</sup>

The confession of "one God in three persons" can be traced back to the baptismal formula as well as the liturgical blessing and benedictions found throughout the New Testament (Matt 28:19; John 1:18; 5:23; Rom 5:5-8; 1 Cor 6:11; 8:6, 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:13-14; Eph 4:4-6; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Titus 2:5, 1 Pet 1:2).<sup>3</sup> To claim this understanding of the Godhead is what is biblical and orthodox, believing in God as he is revealed in the Scriptures. The question that needs to be asked is, "How does Jonathan Edwards emphasis on the Trinity as foundational, personal, and thus relational attend to the Scriptures as it relates to sanctification and thus living the Christian life?"

The Trinity, as the foundation and thus the ground of sanctification, is supported by the character of God as revealed in Scripture. The Scripture is clear that God is love (1 John 4:8). It is this truth that caused Jonathan Edwards to surmise, by necessity in his thinking, that God had to be three in persons.<sup>4</sup> Love necessitates that there be more than one person to enjoy that love. It is from this and the psychological

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<sup>2</sup>Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 276. Horton continues, "The christocentric reading of Israel's history is the most original and widely practiced way of interpreting the Old Testament, as when Paul treats the names *Yahweh* and *Jesus* as interchangeable: 'We must not put *Christ* to the test, as some of them [the fathers in the wilderness] did and were destroyed by the serpents' (1 Co 10:9, emphasis added)." Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 113-15.

analogy that Edwards begins to work out his theology proper, going to Scripture, again and again, in delineating his view of the Godhead. He does this by working from the person of the Son to the person of the Holy Spirit, all in relation to the Father. The Son is the perfect representation of the Father (2 Cor 4:4; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3), most immediate representation of the Godhead (John 12:45; 14:7-9; 15:22-24), beloved and the delight of the Father (Prov 8:30; Isa 42:1; Matt 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20), the face of God (Exod 33:14; Isa 63:9), wisdom of God (Matt 23:34; Luke 11:49; 1 Cor 1:24), the logos and true revealer of God to the world (Matt 11:27; John 1:18; 8:12; 12:45-46).<sup>5</sup> The Spirit is the love of the Father and the Son that is depicted in 1 John 4:8. He, being put forth as “spirit” in Scripture, according to Edwards, “when used concerning minds, when it is not put [for] the spiritual substance or mind itself, is put for the disposition, inclination or temper of the mind.”<sup>6</sup> He is the same as God and thus the same with his holiness (John 3:6), he quickens and beautifies all things (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13); he is the one who sanctifies (1 John 4:12-13), the Spirit of Truth (John 14:16-18), and he is the same as God’s love or his lovingkindness, with his presence being synonymous with the water that runs in the river of life (Psa 36:7-9; Ezek 47; John 4:14; 7:38-39; Rev 21:23-24; 22:1, 5).<sup>7</sup>

The Scripture testifies to the character of God as not only love but of holiness, which is another important foundation for sanctification (Exod 15:11; Lev 11:44; 1 Sam 2:2; Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). Holiness is that which points to God’s beauty and thus God’s excellency and moral perfection (Psa 29:2; 96:9; Hab 1:11-13). It is also a moral perfection that distinguishes God from all other beings in his transcendence or otherness so that one can speak of the beauty of God’s holiness (1 Chron 16:29; Psa 27:4).<sup>8</sup> In this

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<sup>5</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 114-21.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 122. This can be seen in Numbers 14:24; Psalm 51:10; Luke 9:55; Ephesians 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; and 1 Peter 3:4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 122-29.

<sup>8</sup>See Jonathan Edwards, “The Holiness of God,” in *Jonathan Edwards’s Sermons*. Ed. Wilson

regard, Edwards would take this attribute and link it with divine love stating, “The holiness of God consist in his love, especially in the perfect and intimate union and love there is between Father and the Son.”<sup>9</sup> It thus follows in Edwards’s thinking, that like love in the Godhead, the holiness of God is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. For the Holy Spirit is “the holiness of God itself in the abstract,” so that “the holiness of the Father and the Son does consist in breathing forth this Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> Edwards would argue that this looks to be signified in John 17:21, in Christ’s high priestly prayer, concluding, “Therefore this Spirit of love is the ‘bond of perfectness’ (Col. 3:14) throughout the whole blessed society or family in heaven and earth, consisting of the Father, the head of the family, and the Son, and all his saints that are the disciples, seed and spouse of the Son.”<sup>11</sup> The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of holiness” (Rom 1:4), and it is he who is given at salvation bringing union and connecting the believer to the fellowship and happiness of the Godhead.<sup>12</sup> This union also is what connects the believer to holiness and thus sanctification both in position (John 17:17-19; 1 Cor 1:1-2, 30; 6:11; 1 Thess 2:13) and practice (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5; Titus 2:11-12; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:14-16).

The key to Jonathan Edwards’s understanding of God and a foundation of his

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H. Kimmach (New Haven, CT: The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 1747).

<sup>9</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 460. Here Caldwell states how one should see the difference between the two attributes, “We may distinguish them as follows: holiness seems to refer to God’s love from the standpoint of the Godhead in general, whereas divine love indicates the holy activity of the inner-trinitarian members *within* the Godhead.” See Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007), 50. But here too, as Peterson would attest, this holy love is manifested to humankind. He states, “Speaking through Hosea, he explains his restoration of them in these terms, ‘for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath’ (Hos 11:9). This means that his love is also ‘holy,’ God loves with an incomprehensible and distinctive love.” David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 17.

<sup>10</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 187. Although speculative Edwards would also appeal to the Scriptural authority that stands behind the Trinity in his Reformed outlook, as seen throughout his *Treatise on Grace* found in *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 188.

theological rubric is the happiness indicative of the Godhead. In Edwards's own words on the biblical defense of this concept of happiness, through the work of the Godhead and giving of the Holy Spirit, he states,

From what has been said, it follows that the Holy Spirit is the sum of all good. 'Tis the fullness of God. The holiness and happiness of the Godhead consists in it; and in the communion or partaking of it consists all the true loveliness and happiness of the creature. All the grace and comfort that persons have here, and all their holiness and happiness hereafter, consists in the love of the Spirit, spoken of, Rom. 15:30; and joy and comfort in the Holy Ghost, spoken of, Rom. 14:17; Acts 9:31, 13:52. And therefore, that in Matt. 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" is in Luke 11:13 expressed thus: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit [to them] that ask him?" Doubtless there is an agreement in what is expressed by each Evangelist, and giving the Holy Spirit to them that ask is the same as giving good things to them that ask: for the Holy Spirit is the sum of all good.<sup>13</sup>

This overflow of the happiness of God is dependent on what Edwards delineates in that God is good, and in that goodness, the holiness and happiness of the Godhead consist in it, which is none other than the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup> This assertion is also coming at this idea backwards. For the good and thus the happiness of which Edwards and the Scripture speak, come from the perfect character of God that is love and holiness, and in who he is *ad intra* in his triunity, thus being happy, which is based on his holiness and love.

Edwards would acknowledge,

God's love is primarily to himself, and his infinite delight is in himself, in the Father and the Son loving and delighting in each other. We often read of the Father loving the Son, and being well-pleased in the Son, and of the Son loving the Father. In the infinite love and delight that is between these two persons consists the infinite happiness of God. Prov. 8:30, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."<sup>15</sup>

There is a delight, or happiness, seen throughout Scripture in speaking of the Godhead.

This truth is observed in God's unwavering love, or delight, in and for his own glory (Isa

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<sup>13</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 188-89.

<sup>14</sup>This assertion is not intimating that there is exclusion of the Father and/or the Son. For in the understanding of the Trinitarian union worked out in Edwards's view of *perichoresis*, there is a needed connection. See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 26-28, 39-69.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

48:11), which is the foundation of all he does. This love is what spills over into redemption where there are glimpses of this intra-trinitarian delight, which is particularly seen in God's delight in his Son, who is a reflection of the Father (Isa 42:1; Matt 3:17; John 17:1-5; 23-26; Eph 1:3-14). The Holy Spirit then, being the love and happiness of God, is attested in Scripture as Edwards himself proclaims:

And therefore seeing the Scripture signifies that the Spirit of God is the love of God, therefore it follows that the Holy Spirit proceeds from, or is breathed forth from, the Father and the Son in some way or other infinitely above all our conceptions, as the divine essence entirely flows out and is breathed forth in infinitely pure love and sweet delight from the Father and the Son; and this is that pure river of water of life that proceeds out of the throne of the Father and the Son, as we read at the beginning of the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation: for Christ himself tells us that by the water of life, or living water, is meant the Holy Ghost (John 7:38-39). This river of water of life in the Revelation is evidently the same with the living waters of the sanctuary in Ezekiel (Ezek. 47:1-6); and this river is doubtless the river of God's pleasure, or of God's own infinite delight, spoken of in Ps. 36:7-9, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life." The river of God's pleasures here spoken of is the same with the fountain of life spoken of in the next words. Here, as was observed before, the water of life by Christ's own interpretation is the Holy Spirit. This river of God's pleasures is also the same with the fatness of God's house, the holy oil of the sanctuary spoken of in the next preceding words; and is the same with God's love, or God's excellent lovingkindness, spoken of in the next preceding verse.<sup>16</sup>

The character of God as revealed in Scripture also points one to the fact that God is a personal and relational God. This truth follows from the fact of God's trinity, as a foundational reality, but also indicates that God is relational, and undergirds the relationship that one can have with the God of all happiness. As Jonathan Edwards affirmed,

Hence our communion with God the Father and God the Son consists in our partaking of the Holy Ghost, which is their Spirit: for to have communion or fellowship with another, is to partake with them of their good in their fullness, in union and society with them. Hence it is that we read of the saints having fellowship or communion with the Father and with the Son, but never of their having fellowship with the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost is that common good or

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<sup>16</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 184-85.

fullness which they partake of, in which their fellowship consists.<sup>17</sup>

It is in union, partaking of the Holy Spirit, that the love of the Godhead is connected to the love, holiness, and the happiness of the individual in humankind being made partakers of the divine communion of God in the Holy Spirit (John 17:3; 22-23; 1 Cor 13:14; Heb 12:10; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 1:3).<sup>18</sup>

The drama of redemption as worked out in history points to the foundation of the Trinity for sanctification. The Trinity as the foundation of all that there is and thus the ground of sanctification is supported not only from the character of the Godhead as described in Scripture but also as that character is acted out in redemptive history, observing out of which the whole sway of the drama of Scripture is being worked. This redemptive-historical observation also reveals and biblically supports the God of Jonathan Edwards who is the source of all sanctification and happiness, as well the personal and relational nature of the God of redemption, pointing to his greatness. The bridge between the text and its application in theology is in the work of biblical theology, which shows, in this context, that the whole of redemptive history points to the truth of the Godhead as the foundation of sanctification.<sup>19</sup> This look at redemption history involves creation, which begins and ends with God, as Edwards proclaimed,

The emanation or communication of the divine fullness, consisting in the knowledge of God, love to God, and joy in God, has relation indeed both to God and the creature: but it has relation to God as its fountain, as it is an emanation from God; and as the communication itself, or thing communicated, is something divine, something of God, something of his internal fullness; as the water in the stream is something of the fountain; and as the beams are of the sun. And again, they have relation to God as they have respect to him as their object: for the knowledge communicated is the knowledge of God; and so God is the object of the knowledge: and the love communicated, is the love of God; so God is the object of that love: and the happiness communicated, is joy in God; and so he is the object of the joy communicated. 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

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<sup>17</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 188.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 129-30.

<sup>19</sup>See Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 78-89.



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>20</sup>

Although this is a theological statement, it is based on Scripture and the drama of salvation as seen throughout the scope of biblical revelation and history. This perfection or divine fullness, being found with God was enjoyed in the garden (Gen 1:26-31) in fellowship and then forfeited in the fall (Gen 3:1-24). Thus God in his grace and according to the end for which he created the world, began the work of redemption as first noted in Genesis 3:15, and prefigured in Genesis 3:21, being effected by the work of the Trinity through the covenant he made with Abraham (Gen 15:1-21), Moses and Israel (Exod 19-24), and David (2 Sam 7:8-16), which was ultimately fulfilled in the new covenant with Christ (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 1:1-2; 8:6-13), who would give his Spirit in union.

**Trinitarian focus: A theological evaluation.** Jonathan Edwards builds his doctrine of sanctification from his theology of the Trinity. As Herman Bavinck would articulate nearly two centuries after Edwards, “In the doctrine of the Trinity beats the heart of the whole revelation of God for the redemption of humanity.”<sup>21</sup> From a theological perspective, this becomes imperative to understand, and gives Edwards the only place to start and thus the only place to stand, which is with God in his triunity. In truth, if one does not understand this fact about Edwards, there will be a misunderstanding of his doctrine of sanctification, and thus the missing element of

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<sup>20</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 531.

<sup>21</sup>The quote in context is, “The doctrine of the Trinity makes God known to us as the truly living God, over against the cold abstractions of Deism and the confusions of pantheism. A doctrine of creation—God related to but not identified with the cosmos—can only be maintained on a trinitarian basis. In fact, the entire Christian belief system stands or falls with the confession of God’s Trinity. It is the core of the Christian faith, the root of all its dogmas, the basic content of the new covenant. The development of trinitarian dogma was never primarily a metaphysical question but a religious one. It is in the doctrine of the Trinity that we feel the heartbeat of God’s entire revelation for the redemption of humanity. We are baptized in the name of the triune God, and in that name we find rest for our soul and peace for our conscience. Our God is above us, before us, and within us.” Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 2, *God and Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 260.

happiness, of which Edwards reasoned is “a true knowledge of God and divine things is a practical knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> It is this knowledge that contributes to living the Christian life, as Edwards would continue,

He who has a right and saving acquaintance with divine things sees the excellency of holiness, and of all the ways of holiness, for he sees the beauty and excellency of God which consist in his holiness. And so he sees the hatefulfulness of the ways of sin. And if a man knows the hatefulfulness of the ways of sin, certainly this tends to his avoiding those ways. And if he sees the loveliness of the ways of holiness, this tends to incline him to walk in them. He who knows God sees him to be worthy to be obeyed.<sup>23</sup>

This sentiment is not only biblical, but helpful and is based on a Trinitarian theology that is not only according to Scripture, but also takes from the work of Augustine in the use of the psychological analogy, as well as classic dogmatic Reformed thinking in understanding the truth of Scripture applied.

The biblical defense of what Jonathan Edwards believed can be seen in the preceding sub-section, much being argued from Edwards own words, yet Edwards’s Trinitarian theology also needs to be assessed theologically in the application of the biblical data. What can be noted is that Edwards approaches the Godhead in an adroit manner that is not only sound but also, as observed, very practical in his doctrine of sanctification. Edwards approach is to put an emphasis on who God is *ad intra*, in the relationship that is had in the Godhead, which then overflows to his work of creation and redemption, in the who God is *ad extra*. This focus on the persons of the Trinity is in keeping with the particular and important language of Nicea, which also points to its biblical foundation. That Edwards was aware of his context is a given, as can be seen in

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<sup>22</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 296.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 296-97. Edwards would also state concerning the doctrine of the Trinity particularly, “Such doctrines as these are glorious inlets into the knowledge and view of the spiritual world, and the contemplation of supreme things; the knowledge of which I have experienced how much it contributes to the betterment of the heart,” and, “Duties are founded on doctrines . . . the revelation we now have of the Trinity, of the love of God, of the love of Christ to sinners . . . make(s) a vast alteration with respect to the reason and obligations to many amiable and exalted duties, so that they are as it were new.” Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 416. See Amy Plantinga Pauw, “*The Supreme Harmony of All*”: *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 28.

this comment, where in answer to biblicists who were so wooden in their understanding of the Word, that Edwards would respond, “There has been much cry of late against saying one word, particularly about the Trinity.”<sup>24</sup> In this vein, Edwards would move forward in his understanding of the Godhead, yet at the same time guard against many of the false and heretical views that would accost the doctrine of the Trinity and thus threaten the church.<sup>25</sup>

It does need to be stated, that based on Jonathan Edwards reasoning many have questioned his approach. This questioning, even though Edwards’s position is based on Scripture, is because the American theologian worked out his Trinitarian thinking in an idiosyncratic way with the use of psychological analogy along with a twist and turn with the glue that is perichoresis, yet also with the use of the philosophical thinking of his day.<sup>26</sup> He begins his treatise on the Trinity in reasoning the necessity of God being three persons in One, which has to do with the happiness of God as both beautiful and relational.<sup>27</sup> But what also needs to be understood is that Edwards was also answering the anti-Trinitarians of his day in the way he argued and articulated the Trinity, all supporting the fact that God is One God in three persons that is clear in his way of argumentation.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500, 256. See Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All*, 19-55.

<sup>25</sup>See Kenneth Minkema, “Preface to the Period: The Trinitarian Controversy,” in *Sermons and Discourses 1723-1729* by Jonathan Edwards (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 42-46; See Sang Hyun Lee, introduction to *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 2-6.

<sup>26</sup>Pauw states, “Edwards gave no hint that he was troubled by the dissonance among these models for the Trinity. That he refused to choose a single model is an indication of the diverse polemical and pastoral situations in which he forged his Trinitarian reflections, as well as his high tolerance for theological tension.” Amy Plantinga Pauw, “The Trinity” in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 48. Augustine, *The Trinity*, ed. Hermigild Dressler, trans. By Stephen McKenna, vol. 45, *The Father’s of the Church* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 277-78; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oats & Washbourne, n.d.), I q.27 a.1; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1995).

<sup>27</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

<sup>28</sup>The aim of Edwards’s Trinitarian argument was set on several avenues of anti-trinitarian thought such as Socinianism, Deism, and Arainism, but as Strobel points out, most of these became secondary targets to the subordinationism of Samuel Clarke. See Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity: In Three Parts* (London: Printed for James Knapton, 1712); Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy*, Studies in the

At the heart of Jonathan Edwards's understanding of the Trinity is a Reformed view of the beatific vision that drove his theology proper, his theology of redemption, and thus his understanding of sanctification. For Edwards, this was the "heavenly vision of God," which not only drives God to do what he does but also then drives the Christian in his pilgrimage to the glory that is sanctification.<sup>29</sup> No one would argue with this notion, yet as Kyle Strobel has claimed, "In many theological circles, particularly Protestant, the beatific vision has fallen out of theological favor."<sup>30</sup> In neglecting this truth, one forfeits much and loses the core of Edwards's theology that begins with the Godhead and is based on Edwards's idiosyncratic, yet Reformed, Trinitarian foundation.<sup>31</sup> This foundation is, in being worked out *ad extra*, a sapiential theology, which becomes a key for sanctification through the outworking of redemption as seen in the full text of Scripture in redemption to the application in systematic theology.<sup>32</sup>

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History of Christian Thought, (New York: Brill, 1997); Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 29.

<sup>29</sup>Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards' Reformed Doctrine of the Beatific Vision," in *Jonathan Edwards and Scotland*, ed. Adriaan C. Neele Kelly van Andel, and Kenneth P. Minkema (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press Ltd., 2011), 163.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. Strobel quotes Bauckham to illustrate this fact showing that the Reformers and Protestant theology "largely neglected the notion [of the beatific vision]; but in doing so they neglected an important element in the eschatological hope of the New Testament and lost some of the valuable insights of medieval theology and spirituality." Richard Bauckham, "Vision of God," in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 711.

<sup>31</sup>Studebaker and Caldwell state, "In sum, Edwards's doctrine of the Trinity and doctrine of God can be broadly categorized as belonging to the Reformed scholastic tradition." Steven M. Studebaker and Robert W. Caldwell, *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 153. Although Studebaker and Caldwell might go too far in categorizing Edwards within one model of the Trinity, that being the Augustinian mutual love model. There is no question that Edwards uses Augustine and this model, but he also is more idiosyncratic in molding his argument against the anti-trinitarians of his day. Crisp writes, "Jonathan Edwards is most certainly a Reformed theologian of the first rank, and the most influential theologian yet to appear on the American continent. Nevertheless, he was not a confessional theologian in the mold of Hodge, who famously boasted that no new doctrine had been taught at Princeton during his tenure. Edwards was not concerned merely to transmit a tradition, or to reiterate certain confessional standards, though he was willing to abide by the doctrinal norms of the New England Congregationalism that formed him and the Westminster Confession towards the end of his life, leading up to his brief tenure as the President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton). He was a constructive theologian whose appeal was to Scripture rather than tradition, and who 'called no man father' — not even John Calvin." Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 3.

<sup>32</sup>Kyle Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards's Trinitarian Aesthetics," in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver and Fred Sanders Crisp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 147. Strobel comments, "In short, Edwards's Trinitarian aesthetics grounds theology as a contemplative discipline, ordered by the God of beauty, for the purpose of beauty. True theology is, as it were, sapiential theology; the task of 'faith seeking beautification' as it is faith captivated by beauty." Ibid.

The theological conclusions that Jonathan Edwards purposes come ultimately from his doctrine of God that can be understood, according to Kyle Strobel, as “religious affection in pure act.”<sup>33</sup> In this vein of thought, Strobel maintains that “Edwards’s God is the God of personal delight, and I argue he exists eternally as the subject, object, and experience of the beatific vision itself.”<sup>34</sup> The religious affections belong to the Godhead first and foremost. This concept concerns the beauty and happiness of God in himself, and in perfection, which is then worked out in the economic Trinity in redemption. The result of this work of redemption is so that God can ultimately be glorified through the religious affection in humankind through emanation and remanation, all pointing to him being glorified, which is the end for which he created the world. This understanding of “religious affection in pure act” does mitigate against Edwards leaning toward a more social Trinitarianism, although the relational aspect of the Northampton theologian’s Trinitarian theology is clearly seen.<sup>35</sup> But what stands out in Edwards’s Reformed, although nuanced view, is a skillfully well-crafted argument against the anti-Trinitarians of his day, where, in the words of Strobel, “By moving from the singular personhood of God, Edwards starts where his polemics almost always do, on common ground with his opponents. Edwards moves from a singular person to trinitarianism through his invocation of simplicity, *actus purus*, and eternity.”<sup>36</sup> Edwards’s view not only prevents

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See also Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 403-536.

<sup>33</sup>Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148. See Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 38-89; Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 36-59; Oliver Crisp, “Jonathan Edwards on the Divine Nature,” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3, no. 2 (2009): 175-201.

<sup>34</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 30.

<sup>35</sup>Crisp points out in unraveling Edwards’s view of the Trinity in its connection to, and yet difference to Augustine, “There is excellency here, because there are intrinsic relations of something akin to ‘parts’ (the divine persons) to a ‘whole’ (the Godhead). The Father plays the foundational role of being the source or origin of the other two divine persons, and the Second and third persons of the Trinity constitute two vital aspects of divine personhood in virtue of their being identified with the divine understanding and will, respectively. Yet, Edwards achieves this without lapsing into something like a social view of the Trinity by appealing to perichoresis in order to shore up the singularity of divine understanding and will.” Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 51.

<sup>36</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 31. It should be noted that the topic of simplicity in Edwards is one that is debated, with some debating that Edwards, although playing lip service to the

him from slipping into the opposite errors of tritheism and modalism, but also puts the focus on the glory of God. A God who is “religious affection in pure act” and is the good, and thus the happiness of the believer, a happiness beginning in the Godhead itself worked out in redemption through union and obedience.<sup>37</sup>

### **Holistic Redemption**

Jonathan Edwards was a theologian who focused not just on sanctification, but when it came to this topic, he would often speak of the Christian life, bringing his theology of holistic redemption to this important and debated doctrine. When one approaches the subject of sanctification currently, it is often divorced from the whole of redemption. Even though the doctrine of the Trinity, atonement, union, as well as many eschatological considerations, are all in the background, but the emphasis is missing or misconstrued, so that the doctrine of sanctification is misunderstood at best, and at worst perverted to be something that it is not. Edwards brings a corrective to this in his understanding not only of the whole person but also in his recognition of the whole of redemption in the Christian life as it involves a God of relationship.

**Holistic redemption: A biblical evaluation:** In Jonathan Edwards, one finds an understanding of the redemption of the whole person, which is also reflected in his holistic view of the history of redemption. Edwards’s argument regarding his ultimate work, concerning redemption, unfortunately, was a project that Edwards never finished,

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doctrine, departs from it. See Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All*, 69; Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197, 199. There are other scholars, with whom this research with whom this research falls in line, that see Edwards as adhering to a traditional understanding of divine simplicity. See Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 39-42; Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 31, 39, 53, 59-64, 88-89.

<sup>37</sup>Strobel concludes, “It is noteworthy that Edwards’s view helps him avoid ‘sliding’ toward the opposite errors of tritheism and modalism the two errors Clarke is so worried about. The greatest emphasis on persons necessitates stronger union and coinherence without diminishing their personhood.” Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 29.

but in looking at his writings, one can garner a guess to his direction.<sup>38</sup> A clearer look also comes in a letter that he wrote to the trustees of the College of New Jersey:

But besides these, I have had on my mind and heart (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication) a great work, which I call *A History of the Work of Redemption*, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of an history, considering the affair of Christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which I suppose is to be the grand design of all God's designs, and the *summum* and *ultimum* of all the divine operations and degrees; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their historical order. The order of their existence, or their being brought forth to view, in the course of divine dispensations, or the wonderful series of successive acts and events; beginning from eternity and descending from thence to the great work and successive dispensations of the infinitely wise God in time, considering the chief events coming to pass in the church of God, and revolutions in the world of mankind, affecting the state of the church and the affair of redemption, which we have an account of in history or prophecy; till at last we come to the general resurrection, last judgment, and consummation of all things; when it shall be said, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" [Rev. 22:13]. Concluding my work, with the consideration of that perfect state of things, which shall be finally settled, to last for eternity.<sup>39</sup>

This letter shows that Edwards was concerned about understanding the bigger picture of redemption that begins with the Godhead. In considering this direction of Edwards for his ultimate theological work, Strobel has offered four keys. He suggests,

First, Edwards's theological principle begins with God, in his eternal life a Trinity, as the ontological principle which grounds his systematic task. Second, Edwards begins 'from eternity' and then 'descends' to address God's work in time, or, in other words, God's economic movement to create and sustain. Third, this work in time is the work of redemption, directing the 'revolutions of the world' and guiding it toward resurrection, judgment and consummation. Fourth and finally, Edwards's theology is a theology of redemptive history, grounded in and formed by the God

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<sup>38</sup>Green writes concerning Edwards's help theologically in thinking about obedience from the prospective of a holistic redemption, "'Like an house or temple that is building': the imagery of course is biblical, as Christians are now the temple of the Holy Spirit. God had promised to build David a temple, and we are now that temple (2 Sam. 7:11; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19). When redemption is understood in the larger and all-encompassing sense outlined by Edwards, making sense of works, obedience and faithfulness becomes much less onerous. God is engaging in a long-term project of forming a temple. The *ultimate* temple is of course his people, with God dwelling in their midst. And it is only fitting that this more ultimate temple, as the dwelling place of the triune creator of the universe, would, over time, become an ever more fitting dwelling place for the God of holy Scripture. And as acting, moral creatures, it is to be expected that such would, over time, be marked by Spirit-induced and grace-driven works, obedience and faithfulness.'" Bradley G. Green, *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 164-65. See Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson and John E. Smith, *WJE*, vol., 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 121.

<sup>39</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn, *WJE*, vol. 16 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 727-28.

who is redeeming, or more specifically, the God who redeems *in, through, and as* Christ.<sup>40</sup>

The stress of this argument is a biblical one that comes from Scripture, showing that God is indeed at the center of his creation, even as Edwards use of Revelation 22:13 depicts. This emphasis also indicates that the connection of both the physical and spiritual in what God has created and what he will ultimately bless and make right for his glory (Rom 8:18-25).

This holistic redemption is also an important element to how sanctification relates to God's ultimate end for the world (Rev 4:11). Jonathan Edwards wrote,

Thus, because he infinitely values his own glory, consisting in the knowledge of himself, love to himself, and complacency and joy in himself; he therefore valued the image, communication or participation of these, in the creature. And 'tis because he values himself, that he delights in the knowledge and love and joy of the creature; as being himself the object of this knowledge, love and complacency . . . God's respect to the creature's good, and his respect to himself, is not a divided respect; but both are united in one, as the happiness of the creature aimed at is happiness in union with himself.<sup>41</sup>

The story of redemption then becomes a glorious one, in which from the beginning God had a plan, with all the components concerning this salvation being worked out of God *ad extra* in the persons of the Godhead (Eph 1:3-14). It is the work of Word and Spirit that unfolds through redemption history to bring those who believe into a relationship with God through union (2 Pet 1:4), which also points to the importance of all of redemption in the Christian life which entails the categories of justification, sanctification, and glorification (1 Peter 1:3-11; 1 Cor 15:28), yet also encompasses the whole of the objective and subjective work of God in salvation that includes mediation, purchase, illumination, and infusion.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 4.

<sup>41</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 532-33.

<sup>42</sup>Illumination will be broached in the next section, but although infusion can be and is misunderstood in Edwards since it is such a big part of Catholic theological thinking, it is a term that Edwards used to convey the complete change that comes in the life of the new believer that is depictive of an entire change (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20). Thus, in Edwards work, this is not a heretical doctrine that goes against Reformed and biblical thinking, but is an embracing of and emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the making of a new creation, with the Holy Spirit bringing an influence that is total and all consuming.



**Holistic redemption: A theological evaluation.** Holistic redemption is necessary theologically for sanctification to be understood. This statement would not be a place of contention in Reformed circles, but when sanctification is taken from its context of the Christian life or true religion, there is much that is missed, and much that can be misunderstood. The importance of imputation and what Christ has done in the act of the justification of the believer is lost, if not understood as a part of what the Christian life is about, because when one speaks of righteousness in the life of the Christian, it is always in reference to the righteousness of Christ. Included in this discussion is the doctrine of union, which will be covered next in this analysis, but if this is missed, then one cannot understand how imputation works, and what grace and obedience look like in union. The focus in Jonathan Edwards's work also points the believer toward heaven in a pilgrimage to the object of his or her faith. It is with this component in the goal of the believer's life that keeps one, through the work of the Holy Spirit, on the path that will ultimately lead to seeing the object of faith face to face, instead of through a glass dimly (1 Cor 13:12).

The main question regarding a theological evaluation of Jonathan Edwards's holistic redemption is, "What impact does this emphasis have on the doctrine of sanctification?" The main theological advantage that Edwards brings to the doctrine of sanctification is a bigger picture of what the Christian life is, not simply a matter of obedience or the polarities of legalism or antinomianism. What Edwards points out is that the believer is in a process that begins with a position in union, where righteousness is always that of Christ and his work through the indwelling Spirit that has been infused in the believer's life. It is a view that also has the importance of illumination that continues in spiritual knowledge that becomes a sanctified sight, being used by the Holy Spirit to direct and to draw the believer into a greater affection for the One object that is worth more than anything else. This object becomes the goal of the Christian life where the beatific vision drives the believer in joy toward a pilgrimage to a full knowledge of the fountain of all happiness himself, which is God. The focus is and continues to be God

instead of humanity so that one gets a theocentric view of life that also has in view the entire work of salvation.

## **Union**

The topic of union has seen a renewed popularity in the amount of writing that has been coming out on this essential doctrine, and rightfully so, in that it is a key to both a proper biblical and theological understanding of redemption. The doctrine is also one of the keys to Jonathan Edwards's understanding of the Christian life, and thus a fundamental component to the argument of this research. One scholar exclaims, "Union with Christ is a central New Testament description of Christian identity, the life of salvation in Christ. It entails the giving of a new identity such that in Christ, forgiveness and new life are received through the Spirit. Union with Christ involves abiding in Christ the Vine."<sup>43</sup> This truth means everything for sanctification and is often a missing element in the thinking of many Christians today. But with Edwards's dependence on union, one needs to clarify what is meant, which in the process points to the importance in this doctrine for not only Edwards but for one's understanding of sanctification today. Edwards gets to the crux of the matter of the kind of relationship that one has in living the Christian life when he writes,

For union with Christ, or a being in Christ, is the foundation of all communion with him. The union of the members with the head is the foundation of their communicating or partaking with the head; and so the union of the branch with the vine is the foundation of all communion it has with the vine, of all partaking of any degree of its sap or life or influence.<sup>44</sup>

It is thus necessary to look at the importance of this key to Edwards theology observing its biblical and theological foundations, as well as the bridge of biblical theology that is needed in looking at this doctrine to be able to apply what is observed in Edwards's

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<sup>43</sup>J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 1.

<sup>44</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 501-832*, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 247.

thinking to today in a systematic theology.

**Union: A biblical evaluation.** As with much of what has preceded, the doctrine of union is not a doctrine under debate, but it is one that has been missed and even ignored, in speaking on sanctification. Its importance is seen in not only looking at Jonathan Edwards but at the biblical testimony. The key to this aspect of redemption involves relationship, which colors everything from justification to glorification, and the reason that the Christian exists, which is for the glory of God with God himself being his or her good. This assertion only makes sense in that God created both male and female in his image (Gen 1:27), and for relationship with himself. This relationship was enjoyed in the garden before the Fall, and then abruptly broken because of sin (Gen 3:8). It is thus union that is needed to bring back the relationship. For union in Christ is something in the biblical narrative that is even more important because of the imputation of Adam's sin and thus humankind's union in him, which precedes and necessitates the imputation of Christ being the second Adam (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:45-49).<sup>45</sup> There is also more that is included in this doctrine, for the Christian life to be a life of obedience there needs to be an abiding in Christ, the vine (John 15:1-6), which then also involves the killing of sin by the Spirit (Rom 8:13), but this in conjunction with what it means to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18; Col 3:16). This reality shows the importance of the work of the Trinity in salvation, sanctification, and promises glorification. This truth points to what Edwards stresses in speaking of participating in the life of God and his happiness, which is relational (John 17:3). It is a relational union that begins and has benefits now in this life and in the one to come.

The biblical testimony to union is ultimately the outworking of the drama of

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<sup>45</sup>There are also other aspects of importance in being identified with Christ as witnessed in Scripture, and of which Walvoord notes, "Important theological truths are related to the doctrine of identification in Scripture. The believer is identified with Christ in his death (Rom. 6:1-11); his burial (Rom. 6:4); his resurrection (Col. 3:1); his ascension (Eph. 2:6); his reign (2 Tim. 2:12); and his glory (Rom. 8:17)." John F. Walvoord, "Identification with Christ," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology: Second Edition*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 588.

redemption.<sup>46</sup> It is on the topic of union that Jonathan Edwards shines, for from his work on original sin and what was lost in the union that humankind had with God in the garden (Gen 1-3) to the ongoing work of God to establish relationship through covenant (Gen 15:1-21; Exod 19:5-6; 2 Sam 7:1-17). This covenant is summarized in the relational formula “I will be their God and they shall be my people” (Jer 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 32:38; Ezek 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23; Zech 8:8), which all points toward the new covenant (Jer 31:31-37; Heb 9:15-20), where there is an understanding of the outworking of redemption that has to do with relationship and union.<sup>47</sup> It is in the new covenant that union is possible, a union that enables justification, sanctification, and ultimately glorification, changing not only the position of the believer but also the disposition (2 Cor 5:17). As Owen attested concerning union with Christ in exposition of Hebrews 3:12-13, that it “is the cause of all other graces that we are partakers of; they are all communicated unto us by our union with Christ. Hence is our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, our fruitfulness, our perseverance, our resurrection, our glory.”<sup>48</sup> Union is what enables the believer not only to see the beauty of Christ, the object of his faith but also to see the beauty of the story that points to a covenant God who has established union with himself, which opens the door for sharing and knowing his happiness.

**Union: A theological evaluation.** The theological importance of union can be understood by the amount of times that union is broached in Scripture, a number that is overwhelming.<sup>49</sup> The force of the text of Scripture cannot be overstated in observing

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<sup>46</sup>For union in a covenantal category in Edwards see his work on the covenant of redemption and grace in Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 536-37; Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”*: Entry Nos. 833-1152, 475-79.

<sup>47</sup>Gleason L. Archer, “Covenant,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology: Second Edition*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 300.

<sup>48</sup>John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. William H. Goold, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 21 (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), 150.

<sup>49</sup>For an exegetical study in Paul alone see Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

Jonathan Edwards's theological underpinnings in what he wrote and preached. This force can also be seen in a theological evaluation, as it especially concerns the doctrine of sanctification. As Sinclair Ferguson argues, "Christ *is* our sanctification. In him it has first come to its fulfillment and consummation . . . . Because of our fellowship (union) with him we come to share his resources. That is why he can 'become for us' sanctification, just as he is also our wisdom, righteousness and redemption (1 Cor 1:30)."<sup>50</sup> For Edwards union is key, as it is for the believer in working out what God has worked in, and thus living out obedience in the process of sanctification.<sup>51</sup> Edwards maintained,

By virtue of the believer's union with Christ, he doth really possess all things. That we know plainly from Scripture. But it may be asked, how [doth] he possess all things? What is he the better for it? How is a true Christian so much richer than other men? To answer this, I'll tell you what I mean by "possessing all things." I mean that God three in one, all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he does, all that he has made or done . . . by virtue of the union with Christ; because Christ, who certainly doth thus possess all things, is entirely his: so that he possesses it all, more than a wife the share of the best and dearest husband, more than the hand possesses what the head doth; it is all his.<sup>52</sup>

This position of the Christian in union is what is at the heart of Edwards's theology, and it is what is also at the center of what salvation is and thus its essence. If it is indeed the essence of salvation, it not only includes the blessing of being included in Christ's work of imputation and thus justification but also points to the importance of relationship in the Christian life as one lives in obedience.<sup>53</sup> Edwards also pushes the role of the Holy Spirit in this union that shows where the power comes in living out the Christian life in

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<sup>50</sup>Sinclair Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 49-50.

<sup>51</sup>Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 4, *The Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 250.

<sup>52</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies," *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 183-84.

<sup>53</sup>This theological truth can be seen in Edwards's statement, "What is real in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is legal; that is, it is something really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge: and if there is any act, or qualification in believers, that is of that uniting nature, that it is meet on that account that the Judge should look upon 'em, and accept 'em as one." Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, ed. M. X. Lesser, *WJE*, vol. 19 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 158.

relationship that is dependent on the vine.<sup>54</sup> In what could be the words of Edwards, Calvin writes,

For in Christ [God] offers all happiness in place of our misery, all wealth in place of our neediness; in him he opens to us the heavenly treasures that our whole faith may contemplate his beloved Son, our whole expectation depend upon him, and our whole hope cleave to and rest in him. This, indeed, is that secret and hidden philosophy which cannot be wrested from syllogisms. But they whose eyes God has opened surely learn it by heart, that in his light they may see light [Ps 36:9].<sup>55</sup>

The topic of union finds its point of dissidence at the beginning of the narrative of Scripture in the fall, and then finds its resolution in the new covenant and ultimately the new creation.<sup>56</sup> Once God fashioned a creation that was good, sin entered the equation. Concerning the event of the Fall, Jonathan Edwards would proclaim the devastating effect concerning the makeup of humankind: “When man sinned, and broke God's covenant, and fell under his curse, these superior principles left his heart: for indeed God then left him; that communion with God, on which these principles depended, entirely ceased; the Holy Spirit, that divine inhabitant, forsook the house.”<sup>57</sup> The redemptive arch of Scripture brings about a theology of God reaching out in

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<sup>54</sup>This attention in Edwards's theology is where Caldwell's work is invaluable and where Hastings argument is overstated in his assessment of Edwards's overemphasis on pneumatology, which is connected to Christ and his work in union. See Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 59-97, 120-33, 186-89; Ross Hastings, *Jonathan Edwards and the Life of God: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Participation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 334-75.

<sup>55</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 1:850. Calvin also writes, “We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ [Acts 4:12]. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is “of him” [1 Cor. 1:30]. If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity, in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth. For by his birth he was made like us in all respects [Heb. 2:17] that he might learn to feel our pain [cf. Heb. 5:2]. If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission of the curse, in his cross [Gal. 3:13]; if satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if purification, in his blood; if reconciliation, in his descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb; if newness of life, in his resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in his entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in his Kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to him to judge. In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.” *Ibid.*, 1:527-28.

<sup>56</sup>See Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 129-52.

<sup>57</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook, *WJE*, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1970), 382.

relationship through covenant to bring about the resolution of the work of Adam being reversed in the work of the second Adam, a relationship that is greatly emphasized by Edwards.<sup>58</sup> Union in Christ then becomes the connection that makes justification and thus sanctification possible, and it is an element of Edwards that is indispensable for that which he was trying to communicate about the Christian life, showing, as his Reformed predecessors, that sanctification recapitulates justification in the partaking of the Sonship of the Son. Thus, in the new covenant where union is made possible through the purchase of the Holy Spirit for the believer, the Christian then can be a partaker of the life and happiness of God, in the already not yet reality of union in this life.<sup>59</sup> It is happiness that is possible because of union, but one that also enables obedience, which encompasses the ability as well as the motive of obedience in sanctification, where God is the believer's good, full stop.

### **Sanctification and Obedience**

In the work of salvation where the Holy Spirit works on the heart of a person, there are changes that occur that are not only positional but also practical in nature. The positional aspect of sanctification, in justification and thus definitive sanctification, will work itself out in one's life in progressive sanctification, and this is where Jonathan Edwards would argue that the work of salvation is what enables true virtue. Sanctification and obedience thus have close relationship that is based not on earning our position

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<sup>58</sup>To note a few references, see Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 347; Edwards, *Original Sin*, 212, 313, 340; Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John Frederick Wilson, *WJE*, vol. 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 311; Edwards, "Miscellanies": *A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, 198.

<sup>59</sup>Richard B. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 98. Note Lee on Edwards's view of the salvation of Old Testament saints, Lee, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, introduction, 77. Lee states, "In his 'Controversies' notebook, Edwards devotes an entire section to how the saints under the old testament, or old dispensation, found their justification through faith in Christ. The old testament saints' experience of justification in Christ of course presupposes God's atoning work in Christ, and Edwards explains the experience of atonement by 'the church of Israel' within the framework of the doctrine of the Trinity. His approach here can only be trinitarian because, in his view, God's redemptive activity in the world is the carrying out of the covenant of redemption that had been made by the three persons of the Trinity." Ibid. See Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 200-201; Jonathan Edwards, *The Miscellanies: Entry Nos. 1153-1320*, ed. Douglas A. Sweeney, *WJE*, vol. 23 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 229-30.

before God, but in working out that position, or working out what God has worked in at conversion (Phil 2:12-13). What becomes imperative is to understand the work of the Spirit in sanctification and then also the responsibility that each believer has regarding obedience, and then too, what place happiness has in this obedience, which is all possible because of union in the work of Word and Spirit.

**Sanctification and obedience: A biblical evaluation.** The main issue of contention today, when it comes to the sanctification debates, is the place of obedience in sanctification. Obedience in sanctification is expected in the Christian, which is an expectation that is the overflow of the Christian life in Scripture. From the fall and loss of relationship in the garden, the thrust of Scripture was on the One who would come to bring salvation as well as the ultimate covering of sin (Gen 3:15, 21), with a promise of a new covenant that would bring back relationship (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). In the transformation of the new covenant comes a change of not only heart, but then also of behavior, that is not just lip service (Isa 29:13; Matt 15:8; Mark 7:6), because God will indeed have this person's heart (Prov 23:26). This kind of person, who like David (1 Sam 13:14), will struggle, but will also bring forth fruit (Matt 7:15-20; John 15:1-2) and do the will of the Father (Matt 7:21-23). This kind of person is the one who builds his or her house on the rock, hearing the words of the Lord and doing them (Matt 7:24-27).

The God of the Scriptures is a God who not only makes commands and deserves obedience, but he is also a God that is personal, seen in the persons of the Trinity and then in the work of the Godhead worked out economically in salvation (1 Pet 1:3-12). It is in the narrative of redemption in the whole of Scripture and in salvation in the individual that God is a God who is not just out there, a belief system against which Edwards was fighting in his day, but also a God of relationship (John 10:14; 17:3). The God of the Bible is not only a God that is described in anthropomorphic terms pointing to his personhood, in describing him with human-like qualities (Exod 15:13; Gen 3:8; Exod



24:11; Num 12:8; Hos 11:8), but he also is a God that tabernacled with his people Israel in the Old Testament. He even spoke to Moses face to face (Exod 33:7-11), and came to tabernacle with his people again, this time in the flesh, as God incarnate (John 1:14-18). Psalm 18 speaks of an individual who knows this God, and there one can see the mark of relationship, so much so that the text states of this person, “because he delighted in me” (Psa 18:19). Here is a person that is related to God, a God who loves (John 3:16), is compassionate (James 5:11), is caring (Psa 56:8), and who is a personal God (Psa 23:1-6). The ultimate expression of the personal nature of God is in the relationship that the Christian has with his God through union. For the relationship that the Christian has with God is one that is personal, abiding, and needed. For if God was not at work in the believer, he or she would not be able to do anything for God’s glory and praise.<sup>60</sup>

The most apparent passage of Scripture that carries this tension of God’s work and man’s responsibility is Philippians 2:12-13, which also encompasses the truth of the indicative and imperative as seen so often in the Pauline epistles. In this text one finds that Paul presents the solution, that has with it the tension of what is God’s part and man’s part in progressive sanctification or the Christian life, and per Paul, the answer of responsibility lands on both God, firstly, and secondly, also the believer. Now it is God who works in salvation and thus is behind the work of sanctification, but that does not mean the believer is to “let go and let God,” or that this process of sanctification “is thus simply *the art of getting used to justification*.”<sup>61</sup> Here the tension that is found throughout the Scriptures (1 Cor 15:10; Gal 2:20; Col 1:28-29; James 4:7; 2 Pet 1:3-10) is echoed. This tension harkens back to the Old Testament where God’s people were not simply to be passive, but to act by the power which was working on their behalf (Exod 14:13-16; 1

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<sup>60</sup>John MacArthur, *Philippians*, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), 166-67; Dewey M. Beegle, “Anthropomorphism,” in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2001), 67.

<sup>61</sup>Gerhard O. Forde, “The Lutheran View,” in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 13.

Kgs 8:56-61). Jonathan Edwards does an excellent job of keeping the tension that one finds in Scripture, and points the reader back to the truth that is behind it all. This truth is that it is not by human goodness or effort that the believer attains salvation, but by living out the transformation and reality of union that God through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit has graciously given to those who have believed (Rom 3:21-24; Eph 2:8-9). As one commentator has pointed out, “Faith alone has always been the way of salvation,” which is seen throughout the narrative Scripture in the lives of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses (Heb 11:4-5; Gen 6:9; Heb 11:7; Rom 4:3-5; Heb 11:8-10; 23-38) and many more who were “commended through their faith” (Heb 11:39) being granted a righteousness that was not their own, but given on the account of Christ and what he did in his death and resurrection.<sup>62</sup> It is thus because of union and the truth that the Christian lives by the Spirit (Eph 5:18), that he or she can then walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:25) and be obedient, working out their salvation with fear and trembling, and making the argument of James applicable (James 2:17; 4:17), as well as the language of striving that one finds throughout the New Testament (1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 3:12-16; 1 Tim 6:11-12).

**Sanctification and obedience: A theological evaluation.** The application of the biblical data is that the believer is called to work out what God has worked in, or where “the indicative provides the impulse or the incentive toward fulfilling the imperative.”<sup>63</sup> The tension remains, though, because the Scriptures place that tension there, and it thus needs to be kept, and so Jonathan Edwards states, “God does all, and we do all.”<sup>64</sup> The key aspect to understand, as Edwards points out, is that all our

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<sup>62</sup>MacArthur, *Philippians*, 155-56.

<sup>63</sup>Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight*, 72.

<sup>64</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 251. Note Gaffin, “Here is what may be fairly called a synergy, but it is not that of a divine-human partnership, in the sense of a cooperative enterprise with each side making its own contribution. It is not a 50/ 50 undertaking (not even 99.9% God and 0.1% ourselves!). Involved here is, as it could be put, the “mysterious math” of God’s covenant, of the relationship, restored in Christ, between the creator and his image-bearing creature, whereby 100% + 100% = 100%. Sanctification is 100% the work of God and, just for that reason, is to engage the full, 100% activity of the believer.” Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight*, 73-74. Bavinck also states, “Speaking along these lines, they

righteousness is always going to be Christ's righteousness. The importance of union and obedience is observed thus again in this important truth, with even one's good works being something that God has ordained beforehand that the Christian should walk in them (Eph 2:10). It is in union worked out that Edwards's holistic redemption is important, for the Christian life is an entire package that theologians have broken down into the areas of justification, sanctification, and glorification. But as Edwards instructs, there is a need to see the whole work of Word and Spirit to correctly understand how justification, imputation, sanctification (both determinative and progressive), and glorification, although distinctive, work together.<sup>65</sup>

In the Christian life, there is a goal, where the gift is not salvation but is God himself. From justification to glorification that all occurs because of union, there is a pilgrimage not just to heaven, but to the God who is the believer's good, who dwells in heaven.<sup>66</sup> Not to say that this truth of relationship with the God of the universe is not understood among those in sanctification debate, but it is often missing, and conversely,

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undoubtedly had Scripture on their side. For Scripture insists on sanctification, both its passive and active aspects, and proclaims both the one and the other with equal emphasis. It sees no contradiction or conflict between them but rather knits them together as tightly as possible as when it says that, precisely because God works in them both to will and to do, believers must work out their own salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12–13). They are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared for them to walk in (Eph. 2:10). God and humanity, religion and morality, faith and love, the spiritual and the moral life, praying and working—these are not opposites. Dependence, here, coincides with freedom. Those who are born of God increasingly *become* the children of God and bear his image and likeness, because in principle they already *are* his children. The rule of organic life applies to them: Become what you are." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:255.

<sup>65</sup>This point is one of the main issues of the debate today. It is where Lutheran thinking, in trying to work out the difficulty of the tension in sanctification, as well as putting the emphasis that purposely stays away from legalism, has influenced the thinking of many. Thus justification is championed, but the doctrine of sanctification is then left behind, and thus the truth of union and the obedience that follows, so that the biblical tension is ultimately subverted. See Sinclair Ferguson, "A Reformed Response" in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 33–35.

<sup>66</sup>Note Turretin on the eschatological orientation of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12, where with a nod to the East he writes, "God cannot be seen by the creature with an adequate and comprehensive vision, but only with an inadequate and apprehensive because the finite is not capacious of the infinite. In this sense John of Damascus truly said, 'The deity is incomprehensible' (*akatalēpton to theion*). And if anywhere the saints are said to be apprehenders, this is not to be understood in relation to vision as if they could apprehend God, but in relation to the course and the goal. For the race having been finished, they are said to have apprehended (i.e., to have reached the goal, Phil. 3:13, 14)." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 3:610. See Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 698.

what one finds at the core of Jonathan Edwards's theology. Edwards demonstrates that it is the beatific vision and thus happiness that is the drive for the Christian life, which culminates in a relationship with the God of all beauty. The beatific vision is often missed as one looks at the whole of the Christian life, in which salvation through illumination is the opening of the eyes of the believer to see the beauty of the object that is Christ. Christ being the beautiful vision that changes one's view of obedience, and an element that is missing in the motive for obedience, with the ability to obey given because of union.<sup>67</sup>

In the beatific vision, the place of the understanding takes center stage in Jonathan Edwards's outworking of the Christian life.<sup>68</sup> It is the beauty of Christ that not only draws the Christian in salvation, which also shows one's need because of the separation of sin, but also continues the pursuit as the Holy Spirit takes up residence, and in this way, reverses the curse through the second Adam. Here Edwards is not only Reformed, but also helpful in showing what gives a person not only the ability to begin this walk of faith but also to maintain it, which points back to the work of Word and Spirit.<sup>69</sup> This ability is given by the Holy Spirit in opening the eyes of the believer at salvation. But this ability continues as the third Person of the Trinity continues to open the eyes of the believer to the truth of the beauty of Christ, which also opens the opportunity to enjoy the happiness of the Godhead itself through union and obedience,

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<sup>67</sup>Note Calvin on both union and the beatific vision, "The ancient philosophers anxiously discussed the sovereign good, and even contended among themselves over it. Yet none but Plato recognized man's highest good as union with God, and he could not even dimly sense its nature. And no wonder, for he had learned nothing of the sacred bond of that union. Even on this earthly pilgrimage we know the sole and perfect happiness; but this happiness kindles our hearts more and more each day to desire it, until the full fruition of it shall satisfy us. Accordingly, I said that they alone receive the fruit of Christ's benefits who raise their minds to the resurrection." Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:988-89.

<sup>68</sup>Note that the Edwards thinking, although more robust and developed, on the beatific vision comes from Reformed thought as seen in John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, n.d.), 379; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3:610-17.

<sup>69</sup>Here Berkouwer articulates the importance of faith in sanctification: "It was no other than Sola-fide which made clear the true significance of sanctification, and distinguished it from all moralistic effort at self-improvement, in short, from all practices and beliefs which do violence to Sola-fide and, therefore, to Sola-gacia." He also states, "In the bond between faith and sanctification we perceive, no less than in the bond between faith and justification, the pulsebeat of the Gospel. If faith will but lift its blossoms to catch the sunlight of God's grace, the fruit will be a life imbued with holiness." G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 14, 193.

and in the process becomes what it means to be truly human.<sup>70</sup> One has to get down to the ultimate motive of obedience, which is the truth that God is the believer's good, and he is the ultimate gift of salvation, a concept that deals with the affections and with a relationship. It is a relationship and a goal, for now, in which we see through a glass dimly, where the Word becomes the conduit for one to see more clearly, and thus the main means of grace and thus the principle means to happiness.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Means to Happiness**

The means of grace have been a mainstay of Reformed teaching throughout the history of the church. It is in this teaching that one finds the centrality of the Word as the primary means. God works through the authority of his Word, and it is in its dissemination that understanding, growth, and obedience are found that occurs because of union in a salvation that is by Word and Spirit. The written Word in Jonathan Edwards's theology is also a means that one can use not only as a medium through which grace is received, but also a means in which happiness can be enjoyed in relationship with the God of all happiness. This truth being indicative of one who lives a Spirit-filled life, and thus is connected to the vine, resulting in the overflow of obedience.

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<sup>70</sup>N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 25.

<sup>71</sup>Thomas writes, "Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word. The apostle Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in the epistles of Paul (2 Peter 3:16). I am glad he wrote those words because I have felt that often. So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct. You will probably be the last to recognize these. Often you will feel very, very small, because increasingly the God of the Bible will become to you wonderfully great. So go on reading it until you can read no longer, and then you will not need the Bible any more, because when your eyes close for the last time in death, and never again read the Word of God in Scripture you will open them to the Word of God in the flesh, that same Jesus of the Bible whom you have known for so long, standing before you to take you for ever to His eternal home." Geoffrey Thomas, *Reading the Bible* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1980), 22.

**The means to happiness: A biblical evaluation.** At the heart of the means of grace is the continual reminder that truth affects the understanding. It is through the Word that salvation comes (John 20:31; 2 Tim 3:15), which is seen in the preaching of the Word (Luke 24:47; Rom 1:16) that does not end with salvation but is also the means in the continuation of the growth of faith (Rom 10:17). It is here in the ministry of the Word that the understanding is affected and the will thus is changed. As Edwards preached, “A person can’t have spiritual light without the Word” (Psa 119:105, 130).<sup>72</sup> It is also through the Word that the Holy Spirit works, helping fulfill the command of being filled with the third person of the Trinity (Eph 5:18), that enables an ongoing relationship in having the Word of God richly dwelling in the Christian (Col 3:16). The Spirit is not only power for the Christian life (Acts 1:8), but also the seal of a promise of inheritance (Eph 1:13-14). He is the Spirit that brings sanctification (1 Pet 1:2), but also enables the eyes of the heart to see the truth of the beauty of the object that is Christ (1 Pet 1:8-9), that results in a sanctification that comes from the Word (John 17:17).

The Word is indispensable in fighting sin. It is through the Spirit that the believer is also given the power to kill sin (Rom 8:13). It is through the Word that the Spirit works, giving the one offensive weapon in the spiritual warfare that the believer will face in the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). It is ultimately a warfare that finds its battlefield in the mind and in the understanding, which then works through the will (2 Cor 10:3-6). For the truth of Scripture in both the Old and New Testament is that it is “not by will, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord” (Zech 4:6). Jonathan Edwards pointed to the fact that the believer needs the Word (Josh 1:8; 2 Tim 3:16) that then affects the understanding, then works on the affections and the will fostering relationship as well as a heart of obedience that then becomes a lifestyle, and ultimately is an overflow of a relationship with the God of all happiness. In the teaching of the means of

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<sup>72</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, ed. Mark R. Valeri, *WJE*, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 416.

grace, one can see that all that is considered revolves around the Word, and involves the advancing of a relationship of both happiness and obedience. From the ministry of the Word in preaching (John 13:15-16), to prayer, which is a response to the Word, or communion, which is reminder of the truth of the gospel (1 Cor 11:24), these means point to experiencing the truth of Scripture so that the understanding is confronted with, and reminded of, truth. It is through the means of grace that the Spirit works. It is through the means that happiness can be procured through abiding in the vine (John 15:1-11) resulting in the fruit of obedience, furthering the joy and happiness of the believer who then can walk in love as Christ walked (Eph 5:1-2) and is a result of knowing the God of love in relationship (John 17:3).

**The means to happiness: A theological evaluation.** It is with the means of grace that the practical outworking of Edwards's theology is seen in his understanding of salvation by Word and Spirit.<sup>73</sup> One is saved by the work of the Word and Spirit and the process of the Christian life is continued in dependence on the work of the Word and Spirit. This dependence is essential to one understanding Jonathan Edwards's doctrine of the Christian life. Ultimately, sanctification is the work of God through Word and Spirit that brings about not only holiness, but happiness through union. The work of sanctification, as Edwards would so often declare, is incumbent on the work of the truth in the understanding, which then affects the will. This work begins at conversion in the illumination of that truth by the Holy Spirit, but then continues in the life of the believer

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<sup>73</sup>This view of the work of Word and Spirit has always been the view of Reformed theologians: "Lutherans always viewed this mystical union from its anthropological aspect, and in that case it naturally comes into being only after Justification and regeneration in an active faith. But the theological approach of the Reformed led to another view. The mystical union starts already in the pact of redemption (*pactum salutis*). The incarnation and satisfaction presuppose that Christ is the head and mediator of the covenant. The covenant is not established after Christ's coming or after the convicting and regenerative activities of the Holy Spirit, but Christ was himself a member of the covenant, and all the activity of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ occurs within and in terms of the covenant. There is after all no participation in the benefits of Christ apart from communion with his person. The imputation and granting of Christ to his own comes first, and our incorporation into Christ again precedes our acceptance of Christ and his benefits by faith. Heartfelt sorrow over sin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, taking refuge in Christ, and so forth, are acts and activities that presuppose life and, hence, the mystical union and flow from it." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:250.

through the means of grace that continues to unlock the beauty that is found in Christ, and through a relationship with him, unlocking a growing happiness through union and obedience. As Edwards wrestled with the means of grace in what is granted and what is worked out by the individual, he would write in his miscellanies,

Grace is from God as immediately and directly as light is from the sun; and that notwithstanding the means that are improved, such as word, ordinances, etc. For though these are made use of, yet they have no influence to produce grace, either as causes or instruments, or any other way; and yet they are concerned in the affair of the production of grace, and are necessary in order to it.<sup>74</sup>

This tension is seen throughout church history, and yet it also puts a focus where it belongs in the work of God through Word and Spirit.

In the work of Jonathan Edwards, one can see an emphasis on the life and work of the Trinity that is reflected in the salvation of the believer in what God is communicated through the truth of the Word. The focus of Edwards on the Holy Spirit is noted by many, and some even call out the New England Theologian as being too pneumatologically focused.<sup>75</sup> But instead of too much focus, Edwards's focus on the Trinity highlights each Person, with the focus on the Word and Spirit being close in connection, as dictated by the plan of the Father.<sup>76</sup> It is through union that the Spirit not only applies the work of Christ but in that work and the procuring of the Spirit for the believer, the Word incarnate also gives the believer the ability to understand the written Word.<sup>77</sup> It is through the Word that the Christian is not only saved but also how faith is

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<sup>74</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 84.

<sup>75</sup>This argument can be seen most strongly in Hastings, *Edwards and the Life of God*, 323-75.

<sup>76</sup>See Cherry's chapter "Word and Spirit." Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), 44-55. Caldwell brings the focus of the Spirit to bear, especially as it involves union in his section "Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union of the Immanent Trinity." See Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 41-55.

<sup>77</sup>In speaking of the power of the Word of God Horton writes, "Across the entire field of God's external works we have seen that the Father accomplishes all things by his Word and in the power of the Spirit. Not only are all things created and upheld through the mediation of his hypostatic Word, Jesus Christ; they are brought forth through the energetic Word that God speaks into creation (Ps 33:6). Even when God speaks through human representatives, human words do not simply coincide at certain points with God's Word, but are in fact God's "breath" (2 Ti 3:16). Although the divine essence does not emanate, God's words do in fact "go forth" and are "sent" on their missions. The Word is that living and active energy that creates and recreates. It may harden hearts or melt them, but it is never inert, since it is the



continually fostered and grown in not only fighting sin, but developing relationship.<sup>78</sup> In this work of the Word, growth happens through the means of grace that are used to bring to bear the truth with which one is to fight the counterfeit pleasures of sin, to know God more, and to ultimately know the happiness of God himself.<sup>79</sup> This happiness results in a life that is captivated, not by duty, which never works as the engine of change and fosters legalism, but is ultimately by the beauty of Christ. It is with beauty that the affections are brought to bear on the will, and where happiness is found in a growing relationship with the One who is most beautiful.<sup>80</sup>

## Happiness

The heart of the argument of this research revolves around Jonathan Edwards understanding of happiness as the missing element in today's discussions concerning sanctification, which in Edwards's work is dependent on God who is the source of this happiness. This missing element of happiness in today's debates has to do with the beauty and excellence of God and ultimately with Edwards's conviction of progressive sanctification that, "True weanedness from the world don't consist in being beat off from the world by the affection of it, but a being drawn off by the sight of something better."<sup>81</sup>

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Word of the Father, spoken in the Son, made effectual by the Spirit. God's speech never returns to him empty-handed (Isa 55:11)." Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 752-53.

<sup>78</sup>Note Turretin, "For although the opening of the heart is objectively ascribed to the word also in its own manner (inasmuch as it can be done by a moral cause because it usually takes place not without the word, but at its presence) and is ascribed to the ministers of the word instrumentally because they are the instruments employed by God in this work, still it cannot be brought about simply by the word or by the word presented by men of God, unless the word approaches with the internal power of the Spirit distinct from the word (by whose intervention the word presented from without to the mind may be received by it with faith)," Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:534. See Cherry, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 47-49.

<sup>79</sup>This can be seen in the work of Owen, who most famously wrote on the issues of mortification and vivification in volume six of his works on temptation and sin. See Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, 6:5-86.

<sup>80</sup>Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics I: Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 120. Aidan Nichols, *A Key to Balthasar: Hans Urs Von Balthasar on Beauty, Goodness, and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 17-18.

<sup>81</sup>Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 352.

This understanding points to the center of the argument of this research, yet how biblical is this focus of happiness in considering the motive behind obedience as a major component of sanctification? In this biblical analysis, the beatific vision will also need to be broached and then followed by a theological examination.

**Happiness: A biblical evaluation.** The Bible is full of the language of happiness. From the fact that God is happy in himself, as Jonathan Edwards continually reminds the reader, to the fact of the subject's presence throughout Scripture observed in the synonyms used for happiness such as joy, gladness, pleasure, and delight, as well as the two terms found in the Hebrew and Greek that are most often translated as "happy." One cannot miss the fact that the Bible is filled with the idea that God is concerned with not only his own happiness but also with the happiness of those who belong to him. The thrust of Scripture is clear, and thus one needs to see the direction and the connection that Edwards gives the believer on this important subject.

To begin, where Jonathan Edwards does, one can see that God is a God of happiness in himself. For as Edwards wrote,

Those doctrines which relate to the essence, attributes, and subsistencies of God, concern all; as it is of infinite importance to common people, as well as to ministers, to know what kind of being God is. For he is the Being who hath made us all, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being"; who is the Lord of all; the Being to whom we are all accountable; is the last end of our being, and the only fountain of our happiness.<sup>82</sup>

The happiness of God is understood most apparently in intra-Trinitarian relationship, which was what pushed Edwards to posit what he did about God's Trinitarian being coming from what makes the most sense.<sup>83</sup> Although more of a theological move coming from what is surmised about the truth of the Trinity and the attributes that God has in his essence, there is evidence of this Scripturally that points the way, as noted in the previous

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<sup>82</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 92.

<sup>83</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 113.

section on the Trinity. These pointers to the happiness that is found in the Godhead are seen in the truth that God’s delight in own glory (Isa 48:11), that God is love (1 John 4:8), in the Son being the beloved and delight of the Father (Prov 8:30; Isa 42:1; Matt 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20; 17:1-5, Eph 1:3-14), and in the Holy Spirit being the seen as the delight and bond of love in the Godhead, with his presence being synonymous with the river of life (Psa 36:7-9; Ezek 47; John 4:14; 7:38-39; Rev 21:23-24; 22:1, 5). God’s happiness can in general be observed in his delight and pleasure being manifest in different contexts (Num 6:25-26; Deut 30:9; 1 Chron 28:4; 29:17; Psa 35:27; 44:3; 51:18-19; 147:11; Prov 15:8; Isa 42:1; 62:4-5; Jer 9:24; 31:20; Mic 7:18 ; Zeph 3:17-18a; Hag 1:8).<sup>84</sup> God’s happiness can also be seen in his creative work (Gen 1:31; Job 38:4-7; Psa 104:26, 31, 34; Prov 8:30-31; Isa 65:17-19; Jer 32:41). One can observe in the happiness of God a happiness that is the creational gift that the God of the universe gives to humankind (Gen 2:18-23; Isa 65:18). This gift, in one instance, being realized in the creation of woman and thus putting happiness together with relationship of which Fretheim notes, “It would seem, then, that happiness is an innate quality of life (perhaps like personality itself) that is drawn out in relationship to other and ‘matures’ over time as one relates to self and others.”<sup>85</sup> This creational endowed happiness can even be seen

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<sup>84</sup>Fretheim continues with this thought, “The following may be offered as an initial response to these texts: God is joyful in taking actions that issue in positive developments for God’s people (1 Chr 28:4; Mic 7:18). Joy is God’s reason for acting in a positive way on behalf of his people (Ps 44:3; Jer 9:24). The unalloyed joy at the relationship between God and his people is likened (by God!) to the joy between a bride and a bridegroom (Isa 62:4-5) and between a parent and a child (Jer 31:20). Divine happiness is evident when the relationship between God and the people is thriving (Ps 147:11), including when prayers are offered (Prov 15:8), when faithfulness (Prov 12:22) and uprightness (1 Chr 29:17) are exhibited, and when justice is practiced (Prov 11:1). What people do can bring pleasure to the divine life (Hag 1:8). Generally, God is happy over the good and constructive things that happen to people (Psa 35:27), in their life rather than in their death (Ezek 18:23, 32). And this joy extends across the generations (Deut 30:9). These texts also suggest that, while happiness is an ongoing characteristic of the divine life (not least in view of internal divine relationships), things can happen in relationship with human beings that bring more intense pleasure to God—and intense displeasure.” Terence E. Fretheim, “God, Creation, and the Pursuit of Happiness,” in *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness*, ed. Brent A. Strawn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 36.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 46. Fretheim adds, “This creational dimension of happiness is evident in that the experience of happiness often does not have explicit religious connections. A remarkable variety of God’s good gifts in the creation have the capacity to generate happiness, including the birth of children (Ps 113:9), a birthday (Job 3:7), one’s continuing years of life—from youth to old age (Eccl 11:8-9), good wine and oil (Judg 9:13; Ps 104:15), a good word (Prov 12:25; 15:23), sexual love (Song 1:4), married life (Prov 5:18), a good harvest (Isa 9:3), and, more generally, the capacity to eat, drink, and enjoy one’s work (Eccl 3:13;

expressed in nonhuman creatures (Job 38:7; Psa 19:5; 65:8, 12-13; 69:34; 89:5, 12; 96:11-12; 98:8-9a; 100:1; Isa 32:14; 35:1-2; 44:23; 49:23; 55:12; Jer 51:48; Joel 2:21), which all points to the happiness and praiseworthiness of God.<sup>86</sup>

The text of Scripture is also full of synonyms of happiness. These terms that hold a close bond to happiness are concepts such as joy, rejoicing, delight, gladness, pleasure, jubilation, laughter, festal and other related words. Of these types of words in the English Standard Version one can find their appearance over 1,700 times in the text, this is not to mention the uniqueness of the terms that are used in original Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New Testament.<sup>87</sup> As one adds the times that the terms that are often translated “blessed” or “happy,” the total number times the subject of happiness in some form or other shows up in the Bible are over 2,000 times.<sup>88</sup>

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5:18-20; 8:15. Many, if not all, of these gifts are a part of human life because they are *creational* gifts. Moreover, most such gifts entail relationships with other people either directly or implicitly. Happiness, that is, is often generated by the daily rhythms in our interrelationships with others.” Freheim, “God, Creation, and the Pursuit of Happiness,” 47.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 50-51. On the pleasure or happiness of God, see also “Pleasure” in Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 654.

<sup>87</sup>For a more in-depth work on what is behind these terms in identifying *asherism* in the Bible see the second part of Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 155-277. Note Randy C. Alcorn, *Happiness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2015), 178-79. Alcorn points out that there are “eighteen different Hebrew root words in the Old Testament related to joy, happiness, and gladness, making Hebrew one of the most happiness-rich languages in the world,” with the New Testament also manifesting much in this regard, as Alcorn continues, “William Morrice writes that the many Greek synonyms for joy appear a total of 326 times in the New Testament. Robert J. Dean says, ‘A number of Greek and Hebrew words are used to convey the ideas of joy and rejoicing. We have the same situation in English with such nearly synonymous words as joy, happiness, pleasure, delight, gladness, merriment, felicity, and enjoyment.’” Ibid. See G. Vanoni, “חֵפְז,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. Helmer Ringgren G. Johannes Botterweck, and Heinz-Josef Fabry. Translated by Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 146-47; William G. Morrice, *Joy in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 15; Robert J. Dean, “Joy,” in *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Charles Draper Chad Brand, Archie England, Steve Bond, E. Ray Clendenen, and Trent C. Butler (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible 2003), 956.

<sup>88</sup>See Alcorn, *Happiness*, Ibid., 179; Marianne Meye Thompson, “Reflections on Joy in the Bible” in *Joy and Human Flourishing: Essays on Theology, Culture, and the Good Life*, eds. Miroslav Volf and Justin E. Crisp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 17-38. The strength of this argument is also multiplied when one considers the promises given to the believer along these lines of happiness, to which Piper points: “Then I turned to the Psalms for myself and found the language of Hedonism everywhere. The quest for pleasure was not even optional, but commanded: ‘Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart’ (Psalm 37:4). The psalmists sought to do just this: ‘As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God’ (Psalm 42:1-2). ‘My soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water’ (Psalm 63:1). The motif of thirsting has its satisfying counterpart when the psalmist says that men ‘drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights’ (Psalm 36:8, NASB). I found that the goodness of God, the very foundation of worship, is not a thing you pay your respects to out of some kind of disinterested reverence. No, it is something to be enjoyed: ‘Oh,

The two terms used in the Scripture that can often be translated as “happiness” are אֲשֵׁרֶה (*’ashrê*) and μακάριος (*markarios*). Specifically, these terms and thus the theme of happiness come up often, but one of the more saturated occurrences come in Jesus’ first sermon found in the Gospel of Matthew. It is the topic of happiness that predominates the first twelve verses of the Sermon on the Mount in the Beatitudes. These sayings are “markarisms” taken from μακάριος and thus usually begin with a blessing that comprises some kind of pronouncement of good fortune for an individual or group of individuals.<sup>89</sup> The Greek background is what gives this term so much intrigue, for behind the term as it was used in the Greek is the idea of good fortune, or to Christianize it, “blessing.”<sup>90</sup> The term is most well-known to Christians as that which is found in the first section of the Sermon on the Mount, from the Latin *beatus* which is used in the Vulgate to render μακάριος (*markarios*) coming from the Hebrew idea of אֲשֵׁרֶה (*’ashrê*) meaning “blessed” or “happy.”<sup>91</sup>

The background to the term coming from the Hebrew is an interesting and important factor in understanding what words mean and how language evolves. In looking at this issue regarding the term אֲשֵׁרֶה (*’ashrê*) Brown testifies,

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taste and see that the LORD is good!’ (Psalm 34:8). ‘How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!’ (Psalm 119:103). As C. S. Lewis says, God in the Psalms is the ‘all-satisfying Object.’ His people adore Him unashamedly for the exceeding joy’ they find in Him (Psalm 43:4). He is the source of complete and unending pleasure: ‘In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore’ (Psalm 16:11).” John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 2003), 23.

<sup>89</sup>Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Beatitudes,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, eds. Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1:212.

<sup>90</sup>Friedrich Hauck explains, “From mere statements there obviously developed in Gk. a specific genre of beatitude to extol the fortune accruing to someone and to exalt this person on the basis or condition of the good fortune.” Friedrich Hauck, “μακάριος,” in *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:363.

<sup>91</sup>Vernon C. Ground, “Beatitudes, the,” in *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, eds. Moisés Silva and Merrill Chapin Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 1:530. Regarding its use in the Old Testament Brown writes that it “is an abstract nom., occurring always as a construct, intensive pl., often with an exclamatory sense. While a literal rendering would be, ‘Oh, the blessednesses of,’ the meaning is: ‘how happy, blessed is . . .’ or, ‘truly happy, blessed is . . .’ As is sometimes expressed, what the world calls ‘lucky’ or ‘fortunate’ the Scriptures call אֲשֵׁרֶה, with a decided emphasis on a life in right relationship with God.” Michael L. Brown, “אֲשֵׁרֶה,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:570.

Nonetheless, because some modern readers tend to associate the word happy with a superficial, circumstance-based joy, while others think of blessed in exclusively spiritual terms, the most accurate rendering of אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂרָאֵל is probably “truly happy,” although for translation purposes, how happy, or simply happy, may often be preferred. Note then, that in the following citations from the NIV, the one who is “blessed” is *truly* happy.<sup>92</sup>

This understanding makes sense in looking at Edwards’ work on the Sermon on the Mount in general and the Beatitudes in particular, for in his sermons from the Beatitudes he uses both “happy” and “blessed,” and often interchangeably.<sup>93</sup> In these sermons the Northampton pastor is observed using the term “blessed” or “blessedness” seventy times and the term “happy” or “happiness” forty-one times, with the two terms being used together, usually connected with an “and,” a total of eleven times.<sup>94</sup>

One of the more interesting instances of Edwards’ use of the term “blessed” comes in his sermon notes on Matthew 5:6, where he is clearly seen using the term “happiness” and then crossing it out and using “blessedness” instead. This occurrence is curious, whether it was a strategic move from taking the term too colloquially, or just a matter of what sounded the best in context, there can only be conjecture.<sup>95</sup> This move is

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<sup>92</sup>Brown, “אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂרָאֵל,” 1:571.

<sup>93</sup>Smith in testimony to Edwards’ as a preacher and interpreter of Scripture affirms “he had what might be called a ‘realistic’ sense of meaning; Scripture contains the divine Word and its meaning is there to be understood but only through exact scholarship. Edwards had command of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as all his notebooks show and his entries in the ‘Blank Bible.’ In quoting from Calvin’s *Institutes*, for example, he usually made his own translations from the Latin text and his exegesis of biblical passages shows his knowledge of Greek, including the Septuagint, and he was well equipped to deal with the subtleties of Hebrew syntax.” John E. Smith, *Jonathan Edwards: Puritan, Preacher, Philosopher* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 143.

<sup>94</sup>The breakdown is thus: blessed/blessedness appears 22 times in Matt 5:3; 8 times in Matt 5:4; 11 times in Matt 5:6; and 29 times in Matt 5:8. Happy/happiness appears 10 times in Matt 5:3; 10 times in Matt 5:4; 14 times in Matt 5:6; and 7 times in Matt 5:8 with the combination of both terms being seen 7 times in Matt 5:3; 2 times in Matt 4; none in Matt 5:6; and 2 times in Matt 5:8. The four sermons that are available are Matt 5:3 found in Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 495-505; his sermon on Matt 5:8 found in Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 57-86; his sermon on Matt 5:4 found in Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons Series II, WJEO*, Vol. 47, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy40NTozLndqZW8=>; and his sermon on Matt 5:6 found in Jonathan Edwards, *Sermon Series II, WJEO*, vol. 52, accessed August 19, 2015, <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwGlsby9nZXRvYmplY3QucGw/Yy41MDoyLndqZW8=>.

<sup>95</sup>Note Simpson and Weiner on “blessed” and “happy” in J. A. Simpson, E. S. C. Weiner, and Oxford University Press, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 2:282; 6:1097-98.

peculiar especially because of the overabundance of his use in a full-orbed way of “happy” in these sermons and even the force of these sermons that are very much in the directions of finding blessedness, satisfaction, and happiness in one’s relationship with God. But this move is in no way unusual and an accurate representation of what is found in the text of Scripture, using either term.

There is much debate as to how the term μακάριος (*markarios*) should be translated in the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere, even as one can also see the same argument for its corollary in the Old Testament in אֲשֶׁרִי (*’ashrē*).<sup>96</sup> One could say, in using another term that is often glossed as “blessed,” which is connected to the idea of relationship or covenant, that only a person who is בָּרַךְ (*brk*) can truly be אֲשֶׁרִי (*’ashrē*).<sup>97</sup> The definition of בָּרַךְ (*brk*) or blessing means “‘to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.’ It is frequently contrasted with *qālal* ‘to ‘esteem lightly, curse,’” and often has to do with covenantal blessing, and “in general, the blessing is transmitted from greater to lesser.”<sup>98</sup> This can be seen in what Morris mentions about the happiness with term μακάριος (*markarios*) found in Matthew 11:6: “Jesus rounds off his words to John with a benediction on anyone who trusts him. For *blessed* see the note on 5:3; it points to happiness, but not happiness in a general, secular way. It means the joy that comes from the presence and approval of God. And that joy will come on the person who sees Jesus for what he is and not as “a stumbling-block” (*NEB*).”<sup>99</sup> This understanding is what Jonathan Edwards would argue in work on true virtue as well as

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<sup>96</sup>Note Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness*, 155-277. See also Alcorn, *Happiness*, 197-208.

<sup>97</sup> See Kent Harold Richards, “Bless/Blessing” in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman, David F. Graf, John David Pleins, and Astrid B. Beck (New York: Double Day, 1992), 753.

<sup>98</sup>John N. Oswalt, “בָּרַךְ,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. Gleason L. Archer Jr. R. Laird Harris, and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 132. This idea is taken from a conversation with Jonathan Pennington and worked out in a forthcoming book, Jonathan T. Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

<sup>99</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 277.

what he has to say about happiness. Although the term happiness does carry baggage, it is an often-missed element in the life of the Christian and in the debates that are happening today concerning sanctification, especially as it comes to a proper understanding of the use of אֲשֶׁרֵי ('*ashrē*) and μακάριος (*markarios*) in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>100</sup>

**Happiness: A theological evaluation.** The theological foundation of Jonathan Edwards's pervasive subject of happiness comes from relationship with God through union with the God who created him and called him to a life of happiness through that relationship that overflows into obedience. The term happiness in Edwards is used 4,137 times in the bound Yale works and 5,390 times on the Yale Online database,<sup>101</sup> yet this focus of Edwards can be witnessed most acutely in this quote on the Christian life mentioned earlier in this research:

That God in seeking his glory, therein seeks the good of his creatures: because the emanation of his glory (which he seeks and delights in, as he delights in himself and his own eternal glory) implies the communicated excellency and happiness of his creature. And that in communicating his fullness for them, he does it for himself: because their good, which he seeks, is so much in union and communion with

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<sup>100</sup>See Jürgen Moltmann, "Christianity: A Religion of Joy," in *Joy and Human Flourishing: Essays on Theology, Culture, and the Good Life*, eds. Miroslav Volf and Justin E. Crisp (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 1-15; Thompson, "Reflections on Joy in the Bible," 17-38. Otte comments, "The NT macarism is regulated by the Christ-event and is more comprehensive than in the OT, though statistically rare (D. Ritschl). In expansion of the Jewish tradition happiness is eschatological and spiritual, and in contrast to what we find in → Greek philosophy, it is fundamentally Christological. Not the whim of fate but the new reality disclosed in Christ's cross and → resurrection is the source of good fortune for believers (→ Christology). Macarisms thus do not apply to the gods, as in Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1178b25), but paradoxically to living people (Matt. 5:1-12). The blessing is → salvation (→ Assurance of Salvation), participation in the → kingdom of God (Matt. 13:16-17), belonging to the Lord in life and death (Rev. 19:9; 22:14), or being in Christ (Rom. 4:7-8). The new creation lives by the blessing of illumination (2 Cor. 4:5-6); enjoys total blessing in spirit, → soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23); clings to it eschatologically, even in misfortune (2 Cor. 4:7-10); and experiences it dialectically (1 Cor. 4:7)." Klaus Otte, "Happiness," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999-2003), 2:499. Strawn adds, "The true, original language of happiness is, according to several the essays in this volume, God's mother tongue. God is happy, Fretheim says, and necessarily so, Charry adds. Divine happiness, moreover, is directly related to the happiness—the flourishing—of the human and nonhuman worlds. The biblical authors knew this, even without the insights of positive psychology, though we can be very happy that the insights of the latter are helping us, with fresh eyes and a new hermeneutical lens, to begin to recapture the full language of happiness found in those ancient writings, 'O, for that blessed happiness of the ancients' indeed!" Brent A. Strawn, "The Triumph of Life: Towards a Biblical Theology of Happiness" in *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness*, ed. Brent A. Strawn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 286.

<sup>101</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *WJE*, 26 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957-2008); Jonathan Edwards, *WJEO*, The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, <http://edwards.yale.edu/research/browse>.



himself. God is their good. Their excellency and happiness is nothing but the emanation and expression of God's glory: God in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks himself: and in seeking himself, i.e. himself diffused and expressed (which he delights in, as he delights in his own beauty and fullness), he seeks their glory and happiness.<sup>102</sup>

This happiness encompasses the excellency, or beauty, of God had through union and then obedience. This happiness also has to do with the reason that humankind was created, thus giving one the goal of life as echoed in the first question and answer in the Westminster Confession: “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, (Rom. 11:36, Cor. 10:31) and fully to enjoy him forever (Ps. 73:24–28, John 17:21–23).”<sup>103</sup> Even though this kind of thinking has been strongly emphasized in Puritan thinking, and with those who have thought about the chief end of man in the idea of human flourishing, it is a theme that has all too often been absent, or wanting in most Reformed Christian circles concerning sanctification.

The absence of a healthy doctrine of happiness in many evangelical and Reformed circles does not negate the veracity of it, nor does it mitigate against the power of happiness, that is not only evident in the testimony of Scripture but also helpful in its application to the Christian life in speaking of the process of sanctification. It has been seen particularly in the theology of such theological giants as Augustine and Aquinas, yet with a focus on the afterlife of the eschaton, but also, as this research has attempted to show, in the theology of Jonathan Edwards. But Edwards would not just speak of the happiness of heaven, but also the happiness to found in relationship here on earth, as connected to union and obedience.<sup>104</sup> The thinking of Edwards pushes the believer to see

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<sup>102</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 459.

<sup>103</sup>*WLC: With Scriptural Proofs* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), Question 1.

<sup>104</sup>Augustine, “The City of God,” in *St. Augustin’s City of God and Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 121, 189, 397; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oats & Washbourne, n.d.), I-II q.2 a.8. There is also a resurgence of this thinking today in many popular as well as academic works, pointing to the many waking up to the reality of this doctrine for the Christian life. See Alcorn, *Happiness*; Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness*; Miroslav and Justin E. Crisp Volf, *Joy and Human Flourishing: Essays on Theology, Culture, and the Good Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015).

God in all his beauty, or excellency, for who God is, which should be the ultimate driver for any kind of obedience in the Christian life. As one gets down to the crux of Edwards's thinking on this matter, the conclusion is that God is the believer's good, period. This good is also something that is "in union and communion with himself."<sup>105</sup> Even though the truth of God being one's good is something that would not be contended from both sides of the debate, it is often missed if not completely bypassed in the conversation about progressive sanctification. That God is one's good points to the importance of the truth of the work of the Word and Spirit through the new covenant so that blessing is had in relationship, which then opens the door to the blessing of happiness to be known through union and then gives the motive for obedience.<sup>106</sup>

It is on the topic of happiness, and with that an understanding of the beatific vision, that Jonathan Edwards brings a missing element to the sanctification discussion. It is because of union, which is still strongly tethered to the important doctrines that were foundational in the Reformation, that this thinking also forms the foundation for happiness in salvation, and thus sanctification. Happiness as a part of theology has not been absent throughout the ages, but it also has not been front and center, especially in Reformed theology.<sup>107</sup> For many, like Luther and Calvin, the battle lines were set in the

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<sup>105</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 459.

<sup>106</sup>This kind of understanding is seen in the theology of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Turretin, and Owen to name a few Reformed theologians, but also in many of the popular systematic theologies of today. See Augustine, *Trilogy on Faith and Happiness*, The Augustine Series, vol. 6, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland J. Teske, Michael J. Campbell, and Ray Kearney (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2010); Martin Luther, *The Catholic Epistles*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, and Helmut T. Lehman, Luther's Works, vol. 30 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 155; Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:988-89; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3:610-17; Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, 6:472.

<sup>107</sup>See Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness*, 111-12. This judgment of Charry may be true if taking the movement as a whole, with its focus on the forensic aspect of justification, yet it is also one that at times misses what Reformed theology has brought to the debate on happiness. For happiness was emphasized by the Puritans, of which Edwards comes in the end of its long line of argument concerning piety-driven happiness. See S. Bryn Roberts, *Puritanism and the Pursuit of Happiness: The Ministry and Theology of Ralph Venning, 1621-1674* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015); Robert Bolton, *A Discourse About the State of True Happiness: Delivered in Certain Sermons in Oxford, and at Paul's Cross* (London: 1611). There is also in this debate the focus that many brought regarding the heart of Edwards contribution to this aspect of sanctification in the *beatitudo Dei* in Reformed theology. See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, *The Divine Essence and Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics,

doctrine of justification, and with this focus the issues of happiness, although not absent, were often pushed to the consummation of all things in eschatology. That is where Edwards shines in his reliance on union, where the undergirding for happiness is there in the doctrines of imputation, propitiation, and thus justification, doctrines that are so important to understanding the gospel. Edwards, in taking justification seriously in understanding union, not only keeps true to his Reformed and orthodox roots but also enables talk about happiness to be based on relationship in the new covenant and enjoyed in the here and now, with full consummation in the future. This covenant is dependent on God's work through the mediation of the Word, but also is enacted in the gift of the Spirit to the believer that enables forgiveness, transformation, fellowship, and obedience. These factors and truths then contribute to the believer's happiness, which ultimately is based on the happiness of God.

The major factor in looking at Jonathan Edwards's theology of happiness is to understand his view of God's happiness. This happiness is not only a part of who God is in his intra-Trinitarian relationship, but also what he offers humankind through a relationship in union with himself in salvation where he ultimately seeks his own glory. There are issues of impassibility through which one needs to work, yet many have understood that God's impassibility, and thus his immutability does not mean that God is without emotions. These emotions are seen throughout Scripture, and yet without changing who God is in his essence, as depicted in Numbers 23:19 and James 1:17. It is important to know that God is not like man, but it is also important in this that in God there is more happiness than one would normally realize, because he is God, and in that is perfectly holy and perfectly happy in relationship to himself. J. I. Packer by defining the often-difficult doctrine of impassibility states,

This means, not that God is impassive and unfeeling (a frequent misunderstanding), but that no created beings can inflict pain, suffering and distress on him at their own

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2003), 381-84.

will. In so far as God enters into suffering and grief (which Scripture's many anthropopathisms, plus the fact of the cross, show that he does), it is by his own deliberate decision; he is never his creatures' hapless victim. The Christian mainstream has construed impassibility as meaning not that God is a stranger to joy and delight, but rather that his joy is permanent, clouded by no involuntary pain.<sup>108</sup>

In looking at this issue, Ellen Charry adds to this a helpful warning, "If the doctrine of God cannot countenance God's emotional life, there is something wrong with the *doctrine*—it cannot be fully responsive to the fullness of the biblical witness."<sup>109</sup>

God is completely satisfied and sufficient in his own happiness. For on a similar note regarding God's impassibility there can be the question of whether Jonathan Edwards is painting a picture of a God who is need of creation. But in Edwards, there is a testimony of a God who is not only at work in his creation for his glory, but also a God who is transcendent and in need of nothing. This God is truly the God of Reformed theology, a God who is perfection in and of himself. This truth points to the undergirding of all that is found in Edwards's work concerning the Christian life, in that God in his wisdom and glory created, and is the foundation of all that is good, which includes the opportunity for the pursuit of happiness. Edwards argues,

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.

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<sup>108</sup>J. I. Packer, "God," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair Ferguson and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 277.

<sup>109</sup>Ellen T. Charry, "The Necessity of Divine Happiness: A Response from Systematic Theology," in *The Bible and the Pursuit of Happiness*, ed. Brent A. Strawn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 239. See Alcorn, *Happiness*, 112-13. Alcorn also quotes from Spurgeon: "We have been educated into the idea that the Lord is above emotions, either of sorrow or pleasure. That he cannot suffer, for instance, is always laid down as a self-evident postulate. Is that quite so clear? Cannot he do or bear anything he chooses to do? What means the Scripture which says that man's sin before the flood made the Lord repent that he had made man on the earth, 'and it grieved him at his heart?' Is there no meaning in the Lord's own language, 'Forty years long was I grieved with this generation?' Are we not forbidden to grieve the Holy Spirit? Is he not described as having been vexed by ungodly men! Surely, then, he can be grieved: it cannot be an altogether meaningless expression. For my part, I rejoice to worship the living God, who, because he is living, does grieve and rejoice. It makes one feel more love to him than if he dwelt on some serene Olympus, careless of all our woes, because incapable of any concern about us, or interest in us, one way or the other. To look upon him as utterly impassive and incapable of anything like emotion does not, to my mind, exalt the Lord, but rather brings him down to be comparable to the gods of stone or wood, which cannot sympathies with their worshippers." C. H. Spurgeon, "The Reception of Sinners," in *Spurgeon's Sermons* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998).

And as this is in itself excellent, so a disposition to this in the Divine Being must be looked upon as a perfection or an excellent disposition; such an emanation of good is, in some sense, a multiplication of it; so far as the communication or external stream may be looked upon as anything besides the fountain, so far it may be looked on as an increase of good. And if the fullness of good that is in the fountain is in itself excellent and worthy to exist, then the emanation, or that which is as it were an increase, repetition or multiplication of it, is excellent and worthy to exist. Thus it is fit, since there is an infinite fountain of light and knowledge, that this light should shine forth in beams of communicated knowledge and understanding: and as there is an infinite fountain of holiness, moral excellence and beauty, so it should flow out in communicated holiness. And that as there is an infinite fullness of joy and happiness, so these should have an emanation, and become a fountain flowing out in abundant streams, as beams from the sun.<sup>110</sup>

The overall argument that one might have with Edwards, concerning God's independence, especially in reading the first dissertation of *Concerning the End for which God Created the World* in his *Ethical Works*, is answered by Edwards. He counters this objection writing,

Some may object against what has been said, as inconsistent with God's absolute independence and immutability: particularly the representation that has been made, as though God were inclined to a communication of his fullness and emanations of his own glory, as being his own most glorious and complete state. It may be thought that this don't well consist with God's being self-existent from all eternity; absolutely perfect in himself, in the possession of infinite and independent good. And that in general to suppose that God makes himself his end, in the creation of the world, seems to suppose that he aims at some interest or happiness of his own, not easily reconcilable with his being happy, perfectly and infinitely happy in himself. If it could be supposed that God needed anything; or that the goodness of his creatures could extend to him; or that they could be profitable to him; it might be fit that God should make himself, and his own interest, his highest and last end in creating the world: and there would be some reason and ground for the preceding discourse. But seeing that God is above all need and all capacity of being added to and advanced, made better or happier in any respect; to what purpose should God make himself his end, or seek to advance himself in any respect by any of his works? How absurd is it to suppose that God should do such great things with a view to obtain what he is already most perfectly possessed of, and was so from all eternity; and therefore can't now possibly need, nor with any color of reason be supposed to seek?<sup>111</sup>

This point is where the language of emanation and remanation becomes important, for in this argument it is the reflection of God himself in the creature. So, as Edwards argues,

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<sup>110</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 432-33.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 445. Edwards continues, "This delight which God has in his creature's happiness can't properly be said to be what God receives from the creature. For 'tis only the effect of his own work in, and communications to the creature; in making it, and admitting it to a participation of his fullness. As the sun receives nothing from the jewel that receives its light, and shines only by a participation of its brightness." Ibid., 446.

“This is the necessary consequence of his delighting in the glory of his nature, that he delights in the emanation and effulgence of it.”<sup>112</sup> Ultimately Edwards argues, “Now if God himself be his last end, then in his dependence on his end he depends on nothing but himself.”<sup>113</sup>

It is from the foundation of God himself that Jonathan Edwards’s understanding of happiness in union and obedience is coherent and biblical. This foundation points to where the two dissertations of *Concerning the End for which God Created the World* and *The Nature of True Virtue* are so intertwined. One is dependent on the other, and this is needed to see Edwards argument for the reason of humanity’s existence. In speaking of these things Paul Ramsey states, “We are approaching, with increasing celerity, the very center of Christian theology,” after which he broaches the question that is at the heart of this research. Ramsey asks, “On the relation to God and his creatures, first let us ask Edwards, in the simplest terms, ‘Whence come any knowledge of God and any love of God?’”<sup>114</sup> It comes from the work of the Trinity through Word and Spirit. We can see vestiges of God in his creation, but a person’s understanding and thus will is so affected by the fall that his affections are dictated by what is most beautiful to him, which is selfishness and sin. A person can attempt to do good, but it is not the stuff of true virtue. To understand true happiness, one needs the work of the Word and

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<sup>112</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 447. Edwards adds, “Nor do any of these things argue any dependence in God on the creature for happiness. Though he has real pleasure in the creature’s holiness and happiness; yet this is not properly any pleasure which he receives from the creature. For these things are what he gives the creature. They are wholly and entirely from him. Therefore they are nothing that they give to God by which they add to him. His rejoicing therein is rather a rejoicing in his own acts, and his own glory expressed in those acts, than a joy derived from the creature. God’s joy is dependent on nothing besides his own act, which he exerts with an absolute and independent power. And yet, in some sense it can be truly said that God has the more delight and pleasure for the holiness and happiness of his creatures: because God would be less happy, if he was less good, or if he had not that perfection of nature which consists in a propensity of nature to diffuse of his own fullness. And he would be less happy, if it were possible for him to be hindered in the exercise of his goodness and his other perfections in their proper effects. But he has complete happiness, because he has these perfections, and can’t be hindered in exercising and displaying them in their proper effects. And this surely is not thus, because he is dependent; but because he is independent on any other that should hinder him.” Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 450.

<sup>114</sup>Paul Ramsey, introduction to *Ethical Writings*, by Jonathan Edwards, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 19.

Spirit in union through what Christ did in procuring the Spirit for the believer so that he or she can then truly understand the true beauty of the God of the universe and thus his excellency and love.<sup>115</sup> This love then overflows as the Christian walks in relationship with God through the work of the Spirit on the heart and because of the Word, so that he or she can continue to know the love and happiness of God not only in what will come in the eschaton but also in the day to day living of a life of true virtue in relationship with the One for whom they were created (Psa 27:13).

### **Considerations in Edwards's Doctrine of Sanctification**

In delving into the help that one can receive from Jonathan Edwards's focus on happiness in sanctification through union and obedience, there are a few issues, concerns, or what this research is intimating as considerations. These considerations involve the relationship of the believer to the fountain of his or her good, and thus the foundation to one's happiness in God himself. This is a topic with which Edwards assists, but with a few questions, because of the acute focus on the relationship of God to humankind, regarding both unbelievers and believers. These considerations do not represent all the concerns that can come up in a look at Edwards, but specifically those particular to this study and its argument. The three considerations will start with God's relationship with the world in a look, first, at the accusation of panentheism in Edwards, secondly, at the relationship of God to believers in Edwards's doctrine of union and use of *theosis*, and thirdly, the consideration of Edwards's overemphasis on participation in dealing with the sinful condition of man.

### **The Consideration of Panentheism**

The issue that brings most concern because of what it connotes is the appearance of what some would call panentheism in Jonathan Edwards's theology.

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<sup>115</sup>William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 137-51.

Panentheism is defined as “The belief that the Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists in Him, but (as against \*pantheism, q.v.) that His Being is more than, and is not exhausted by, the universe.”<sup>116</sup> This accusation is one that has been the characterization of several scholars, and has been explained by Oliver Crisp as Edwards “‘grasping for a third alternative’ between classical theism and pantheism that ‘would do justice on the one hand to God’s all comprehensiveness, and on the other, to His creative presence in the world.’”<sup>117</sup> Edwards own work testifies of the Scripture to which he is appealing, in speaking not only of God’s first cause of all things, as well as the supreme and last end (Isa 44:6; 48:12; Rev 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13), but also “that as he is the first efficient cause and fountain from whence all things originate, so he is the last final cause for which they are made; the final term to which they all tend in their ultimate issue.”<sup>118</sup> Edwards continues to argue,

This seems to be the most natural import of these expressions; and is confirmed by other parallel passages, as Rom. 11:36, “For of him and through him and to him are all things.” Col. 1:16, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him, and for him.” Heb. 2:10, “For it became him, by whom are all things, and for whom are all things.” In Prov. 16:4 ’tis said expressly, “The Lord hath made all things for himself.”<sup>119</sup>

There is no question as to Jonathan Edwards’s large view of God, and in this, as it regards the accusation of panentheism, although odd and concerning, it is important to note that Edwards does maintain a strong Creator/creature distinction. Edwards does demonstrate that God and his creation are not identical, which is more than apparent in

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<sup>116</sup>F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1221.

<sup>117</sup>Crisp, *Edwards in God and Creation*, 139. Crisp is quoting Douglas J. Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 21. As Crisp reminds the reader, this argument demonstrates that Edwards theology can be puzzling at time and quite complex, in some of the ideas that he pursued, and we will have to agree with Crisp at this juncture and say, “But these are deep waters that cannot be plumbed here. Instead readers might begin by consulting Edwards, *End of Creation*, ch. 1, § 4, objection 4, in YE8:458-463.” Crisp, *Retrieving Doctrine*, 195.

<sup>118</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 467.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.



his writing and necessary according to Scripture (Gen 1:1-2:3; Exod 15:11).<sup>120</sup> God is indeed omnipresent (Psa 139:7-8), yet there is always a Creator/creature distinction. As one can see in Edwards's work as in Scripture, God also is One who knows omnisciently, knowing that which is actual or even possible (Psa 139:1-6; Rom 11:33-35), so he is not in process in any way, even though he does interact with his creation. This fact is seen throughout the Bible's testimony of who God is, as seen in one point of contrast in his incomprehensibility (Job 38-41; Isa 40:13-31) to man in his identification as clay (Jer 18:3-6; Rom 9:21). It is this point in Edwards's work that makes his thinking different than the pantheism of Process theologians like Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne.<sup>121</sup> It is on issues such as this that Edwards would testify,

I confess there is a degree of indistinctness and obscurity in the close consideration of such subjects, and a great imperfection in the expressions we use concerning them; arising unavoidably from the infinite sublimity of the subject, and the incomprehensibility of those things that are divine. Hence revelation is the surest guide in these matters, and what that teaches shall in the next place be considered.<sup>122</sup>

When it comes to the issue of pantheism it should be argued that for Jonathan Edwards the strains of his theology that might implicate a form of this thinking, should be understood in the way that he did classic Trinitarianism, with his added Reformed idiosyncrasies. In Edwards, one does find a theologian who did see God closely involved and in some ways aligned with his creation, and even as Crisp postulates, "Pantheism is not so much a particular view as it is a family of views about

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<sup>120</sup>Elwood writes of Edwards, "the Creator-creature distinction is as basic to Edwards's thought as to Augustine." Elwood, *Philosophical Theology*, 99. Strobel shows this distinction in Edwards in highlighting the Reformed backdrop of archetypal and ectypal knowledge. See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 155-56.

<sup>121</sup>See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Realities: Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927-28*, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Shurburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978); Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984); John B. Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1976). According to Gerstner Edwards "reads at times like Hartshorne." John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Powhatan, VA: Berea Publications, 1992), 2:15.

<sup>122</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 262-63.

the relationship between God and creation.”<sup>123</sup> It is in this relationship, as seen most apparently in Edwards work in his dissertation *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*<sup>124</sup> and Edwards idealism as viewed in his thinking on constant creation, that pushes many to call Edwards a panentheist.<sup>125</sup> Yet, while there are some of Edwards’s thinking that is hard to reconcile, such as a Neoplatonism that is “baptized into the Reformed faith,” there is also enough of the truth of a Creator/creature distinction and Reformed thought to show that it is not a full blown pantheism and thus what is often thought of today concerning this kind of theology. Edwards is thus still in the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy.<sup>126</sup>

One needs to take into consideration, concerning the accusation of pantheism, the fact that Jonathan Edwards was not only working off Newtonian physics, but that he was also defending the truth of Scripture against the effects of Deism in the dangerous mix of the growth of the Enlightenment. So, in a mechanistic universe, Edwards makes a bold move and points out that God not only moves the gears of the universe, but that he is the gears themselves, and in the process reworks freedom and embraces full determinism, so that he can say God does all, and yet we still do all.<sup>127</sup> This

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<sup>123</sup>Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 172. See also Jensen who states concerning Edwards calling space God: “With this brazenly speculative position, Edwards reaches a position that will remain through his entire development: that God *contains*, envelopes, all other reality.” Robert W. Jensen, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 21. See Jonathan Edwards, *Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Wallace Earl Anderson, *WJE*, vol. 6 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 203.

<sup>124</sup>Edwards writes, “This propensity in God to disuse himself may be considered as a propensity to himself diffused, or this his own glory existing in its emanation,” and “God looks on the communication of himself, and the emanation of the infinite glory and good that are in himself to belong to the fullness and completeness of himself, as though he were not his most complete and glorious state without it.” Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 439. One can see Edwards trying to stay in the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy, yet at the same time also trying to grasp and communicate the wonder of what is happening in the end that God did create the world.

<sup>125</sup>This occasionalism can be seen most strongly in Miscellany 1263 “God’s Immediate and Arbitrary Operation,” in Edwards, *Miscellanies: 1153-1320*, 201-12. See Crisp, *Edwards in God and Creation*, 26-31.

<sup>126</sup>Crisp, *Edwards among the Theologians*, 174. This also goes against Hodge’s accusation against Edwards of pantheism, although one can understand the concern that comes with the language of Edwards at times in his work. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 2:220.

<sup>127</sup>There has been much help from Strobel on this aspect of Edwards’s thinking as pulled from

background gives a glimpse into some of the thinking behind Edwards's positions, where he was all the while trying to explain how God's immanence and transcendence work as found in Scripture in conjunction with the end of why one is created. This thinking also does not need to be fully embraced to understand the motive for obedience in the process of sanctification, but is something that needs to be broached as one looks to Edwards on this topic.<sup>128</sup>

### **The Consideration of *Theosis***

In Jonathan Edwards, the doctrine of union also comes with a connection to a Reformed doctrine of *theosis*. Theologically, there is much here that undergirds the thinking of Jonathan Edwards and something with which this research has already broached, but with this idea comes a good amount of baggage with which *theosis* is often loaded down, mostly with Eastern Orthodox leanings and ideas of divinization. But when one comes to Edwards's view, at the heart of his doctrine of Reformed *theosis* is the text of Scripture which states,

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire (2 Pet 1:3-4 ESV).

There are other pointers to this thinking involving the important, but tricky, idea of participation. There is in Edwards an unyielding Creator/creature distinction, yet also a very strong understanding of a robust union. This union is depicted in Scripture to as being one in spirit (1 Cor 6:17),<sup>129</sup> as well as the biblical idea of fullness, which one can

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an interview with him. Kyle Strobel, interviewed by Kevin Hall, July 9, 2015. See also Strobel's contribution in Tony Reinke, "Do We Live in the Matrix? Three Concise Interviews on Continuous Creation," *Desiring God*, August 15, 2014, accessed August 13, 2016, <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/do-we-live-in-the-matrix-four-concise-interviews-on-continuous-creation>.

<sup>128</sup>Note Caldwell on this issue as well as union, in Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 118-19.

<sup>129</sup>Strobel writes, "Just as the Spirit unites the two natures of Christ in the love of the Father (the Father loving Christ as Son), so too the Spirit (given over by the Son), unites believers to God. The elect are united to God in Christ as a bride is united to her groom in marriage—they are truly one flesh

observe in a quote brought to bear earlier in this paper in Edwards own words:

There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God does so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the saints being made “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4), and having God dwelling in them, and they in God (1 John 4:12, 15–16, and ch. 3:21), and having Christ in them (John 17:21; Rom. 8:10), being the temples of the living God (2 Cor. 6:16), living by Christ’s life (Gal. 2:20), being made partakers of God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10), having Christ’s love dwelling in them (John 17:26), having his joy fulfilled in them (John 17:13), seeing light in God’s light, and being made to drink of the river of God’s pleasures (Ps. 36:8–9), having fellowship with God, or communicating and partaking with him (as the word signifies) (1 John 1:3). 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; but, to use the Scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God’s fullness (Eph. 3:17–19; John 1:16), that is, of God’s spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word “fullness” signifies in Scripture language. Grace in the hearts of the saints, being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner, above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate himself, and make the creature partaker of the divine nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper nature). This is what I mean by those influences that are divine, when I say that truly gracious affections do arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine.<sup>130</sup>

Theologically, to communicate the importance of union Jonathan Edwards employed a form of Reformed *theosis*, to not only show the depth of union, which the biblical testimony emphasizes, but also to demonstrate the truth of what the believer has in union for living the Christian life and knowing the happiness of God. Kyle Strobel approaches this subject stating,

Amid a scholarly rediscovery of Protestant forms of *theosis*, these questions of whether Jonathan Edwards developed a theotic account of redemption have received increased attention. Ironically, however, interest in Edwards’s doctrine of *theosis* has emphasized the philosophical rather than the theological bases in ways that seem to set him outside the boundaries of Reformed orthodoxy. Yet if we shift our attention away from the neo-Platonic explanations of Edwardsian *theosis* and place it instead where Edwards himself focused—on the communicable nature of the triune God within the economy—we see that his notions of *theosis* rest on firmly

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(even one spirit, 1 Cor 6:17).” Kyle Strobel, “Jonathan Edward's Reformed Doctrine of *Theosis*,” *Harvard Theological Review* 109, no. 3 (2016): 386.

<sup>130</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 203.

Protestant foundations and result in recognizably Reformed conclusions.<sup>131</sup>

In looking at Edwards as a theologian, one can observe someone who followed Calvin in looking to the biblical language of 2 Peter 1:4 at face value, which points to the divine nature being communicable to believers, but only, as Strobel notes, as it is distinguished from the divine essence.<sup>132</sup> Edwards's position was in contrast to what Eastern Orthodox theologians were doing in "employing the essence-energies distinction," and ideas of what is often identified as deification, which in reality is a synonym of and thus associated *theosis*.<sup>133</sup> It should be noted that Edwards was also dealing with a strong emphasis on Deism in his day, so in his language one can see a polemic that points to what he was fighting against.<sup>134</sup>

Union is the theological key to happiness in the Christian, which involves participation and a partaking of God's happiness, and thus is an important foundation to this research in understanding Edwards properly. God is not only good, but also the believer's good. Union is then the connection to the believer's good, with the Holy Spirit being indwelling happiness. So, it is this concept of Reformed *theosis* that Edwards, and Calvin before him, point to grace as God's self-giving, which is more than forgiveness

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<sup>131</sup>Strobel, "Edwards Reformed Doctrine of Theosis," 399.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 397.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid. See Stephen Finland and Vladimir Kharlamov, introduction in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, ed. Stephen Finland and Vladimir Kharlamov (Wipf & Stock, 2006), 1-12. Note that Carl Mosser has proposed that for the sake of being clear it would be good to reserve the term "theosis" for the "Byzantine development of the patristic deification tradition and its contemporary exposition by Eastern Orthodox theologians." Carl Mosser, "The Earliest Patristic Interpretations of Psalm 82, Jewish Antecedents, and the Origin of Christian Deification," *Journal of Theological Studies* 56, no. 1 (April 2005), 31. Strobel elsewhere states, "In short, *theosis* is creaturely participation in the divine life," adding within a footnote, "I agree with J. Todd Billings and Gannon Murphy that a distinctively *Reformed* account of *theosis* is possible without wholesale agreement with patristic anthropology, an essence/energies distinction, or ascetic life." Kyle Strobel, "Jonathan Edwards and the Polemics of Theosis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 262. See J. Todd Billings, "John Calvin: United to God through Christ," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, eds. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 200-18; Gannon Murphy, "Reformed Theosis?," *Theology Today* 65, no. 2 (2008): 191-212. Also note Mosser on speaking of the work of Calvin and the term deification in Carl Mosser, "An Exotic Flower: Calvin and the Patristic Doctrine of Deification," in *Reformation Faith: Exegesis and Theology in the Protestant Reformation*, Studies in Christian History and Thought, ed. Michael Parsons (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 38-56.

<sup>134</sup>See "The Rationalists and the Deists" in Wallace A. Anderson, introduction to *Typological Writings*, ed. Wallace A. Anderson, Mason I. Lowance, and David H. Watters, *WJE*, vol. 11 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 11-20.

and thus an actual “partaking of the divine nature,” which demonstrates a robust understanding not only of biblical union, but also the ability as well as the overarching motivation in the believer’s obedience.<sup>135</sup> Ultimately, the Christian life is partaking of both Christ’s life and Christ’s way. Christ and the Holy Spirit are the treasure as Christ both has the heart of the Christian and is thus the center, all the while this also grounds both justification and sanctification in Christ. Sanctification, or what Edwards called true virtue or the Christian life, is thus acting in God’s own life where a believer continually consents to the God that his good, all because of union.<sup>136</sup>

### **The Consideration of Overemphasis**

In Jonathan Edwards’s theology, concerning the aspects of union and obedience, there can be observed an undeveloped tension regarding the overemphasis of participation. It is on the truth of union where Edwards both shines and yet also where he can be heavy-handed on the side of participation. In this heavy-handedness there is not the protection that is needed for the tension in the already/not yet aspect of the Christian life that is found in Scripture, which then, too, plays into both remaining sin and the emotions. The question that always remains is, “Why do Christians still struggle so greatly with sin?” If the Holy Spirit is given in such a way as Edwards argues, why is the struggle in the believer with sin still there as much as it is until heaven? The answer that one would glean from Edwards’s theology, in working toward a logical conclusion, is because God does not give us more of the Holy Spirit. The problem in Edwards’s work is primarily two-fold for humankind, with the first issues being a redemptive-historical issue, in that Adam and Eve lost the Holy Spirit in the Fall with redemption being planned before creation in the *pactum salutis*, and secondly that Christians do not give

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<sup>135</sup>Calvin, *Institutes*, 1:737-38; 1:1004-1005.

<sup>136</sup>Much of these conclusions were worked out in discussion with Kyle Strobel. Strobel, interview.

themselves to the means of grace as they should to know obedience and thus happiness as they should.<sup>137</sup>

The doctrinal tensions emphasized in the work of Jonathan Edwards help in working through the questions one finds today in debate concerning sanctification, but it is with an underdeveloped tension coming out of Edwards's emphasis on union that a consideration needs to be made. The questions needing an answer in today's theological milieu involve the tension between faith and human responsibility, the place of human agency considering the work of grace in position with the continued place of grace in the process of sanctification, as well as dealing with the eschatological tension of the already and not yet which are all seen in the work of Jonathan Edwards. For the New England theologian, did understand the depravity of humankind because of original sin, and the struggle of the flesh in the individual whose life belongs to God. This understanding can be seen most acutely in his work on original sin and the freedom of the will. In his "Personal Narrative," he acknowledged,

I have often since I lived in this town, had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently so as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together: so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my heart, since my conversion, than ever I had before. It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time: and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell.<sup>138</sup>

Edwards would even admit, "It is affecting to me to think, how ignorant I was, when I

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<sup>137</sup>See Edwards, *Original Sin*, 382; Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 833-1152*, 167, 430, 323, 445, 475.

<sup>138</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 801-02. He continues with concluding on grace, "My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and infinitely swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or infinite mountains over my head. I know not how to express better, what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. I go about very often, for this many years, with these expressions in my mind, and in my mouth, "Infinite upon infinite. Infinite upon infinite!" When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fullness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth, in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty; I should appear sunk down in my sins infinitely below hell itself, far beyond sight of everything, but the piercing eye of God's grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth, and to the bottom of such an abyss." Ibid. See also Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 328-29.

was a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart.”<sup>139</sup> This admission is also what drove Edwards to the importance of self-examination, knowing that his heart and the hearts of his congregation were sinful, and still harbored deceitful wickedness (Jer 17:9). One can also observe this in his sermons, where he points to the dependence on God that is needed in the Christian life and the necessity for the means of grace. For instance, Edwards would state,

And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men’s souls, yet ’tis of God that we have these means of grace, and ’tis God that makes them effectual. ’Tis of God that we have the holy Scriptures; they are the Word of God. ’Tis of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him; 2 Cor. 4:7, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.<sup>140</sup>

Yet, there is also at times in Edwards an unrealistic expectation of what participation can bring, even though there is a palpable understanding of not only his own sin, but also of the remaining flesh, which the Christian has to fight, because at regeneration the believer is given “a divine taste or sense.”<sup>141</sup> Here one does note the dependence on grace that this intermediate state (life in this flesh) demands, and with this what is Edwards’s strength theologically in an understanding of the Spirit’s work through union, yet also this very reliance can also show an underdeveloped tension of sin in the believer with the focus being so heavy on participation.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup>Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 803.

<sup>140</sup>Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733*, 203.

<sup>141</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 174. This fighting of sin can be seen most apparently in Edwards sermon “Youth and the Pleasures of Piety” and “The Beauty of Piety in Youth” where he pleaded with the youth of his congregation to pursue the pleasures of God, and not the pleasures of sin. See Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 81-90; Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses 1743-1758*, ed. Wilson H. Kimmnach, *WJE*, vol. 25, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 105-110. This is seen most powerfully throughout his work that point the reader consistently to the beauty of God, a beauty that is to grab the affections, and one that also affects the understanding, the will, and the actions of the Christian. See Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, 291 ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957); Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 156-66, 283; Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, ed. Norman Pettit, *WJE*, vol. 7 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Edwards, *Ethical Writings*.

<sup>142</sup>This under-developed tension can be observed in the unfolding of Edwards argument throughout his corpus, but can be seen explicitly in his work in *End of Creation*, see Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 436, 443, 533-34; Edwards, “*Miscellanies*”: 501-832, 237-39; Edwards, *The “Miscellanies,”*: A-



The tension of God's work and the believer's work in sanctification found in Jonathan Edwards's theology is one of the reasons that he is such a helpful resource in speaking on the issue of sanctification and obedience. Seeing that Edwards also struggles with this question, testifies to the fact that one will never have enough of the Spirit in this life. God does give the Spirit, which he did without measure in the incarnate Christ, and he does so in such a manner, in the Christian, that there is given what is needed to fight the temptations that come from the remaining sinful flesh, the world and the devil. But with this understanding, there is also a progressive nature that is indicative of this aspect of sanctification that ultimately finds its fruition in glory in the consummation of the union that is begun at salvation. The means of grace thus become an important piece of the Christian life, where beauty and a sense of the heart is the way through for Edwards, for it through these means that the Holy Spirit works, and it is ultimately the truth of the Word that richly dwells in the believer that correlates with being Spirit-filled and living the Christian life by abiding in the vine.<sup>143</sup> As Robert Caldwell recognizes,

To summarize our observation on the nature of union and the role of the Spirit plays in it in Edwards's theology, we may reiterate the point that the fundamental concept

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Z, *Aa-Zz*, 1-500, 176-77; Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 208. The only place that Edwards deals with the problem of why one sins, thus the over emphasis on participation is with his work on the parable of the foolish virgins, where his explanation is that grace can fall asleep. See Jonathan Edwards, *True and False Christians: On The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins*, eds. Kenneth P. Minkema, Adriaan C. Neele, and Brian McCarthy, *Sermons by Jonathan Edwards on the Matthean Parables*, vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books; The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 2012), 88, 90, 96, 100; Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1734-1738*, 411-17. This is problematic, and in looking at Edwards's work as a whole does not seem congruous to who he was theologically, and even consistent with his two ideals of spirituality in David Brainard and Sarah (Pierpont) Edwards, who were two individuals who tended toward melancholy and were chronic depressives, often akin to highs and lows, as Edwards was even himself. But even with these models, you do not see much darkness regarding the flesh in the Christian in Edwards's work, which is intriguing, and possibly very different from what one might observe if one could go back and see him in the work of ministry.

<sup>143</sup>For Edwards, the Son is beauty and the Holy Spirit reveals that truth, which is the reason that faith becomes a big part of the equation as truth is introduced and re-introduced to the believer through the means of grace so that the faith that Edwards refers to is that which involves contemplation and a faith that is then seeing. Obedience to the imperatives always are colored in this way in Edwards's work, which puts Edwards more in line with the Spiritual Brethren, who dealt with the beatific. Edwards, "Miscellanies": 501-832, 84-88; Jonathan Edwards, "The Pursuit of Happiness," in *Jonathan Edwards Sermons*, ed. Wilson H. Kinnach (New Haven, CT: The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 1746), Isa 55:2. See Edwards, *Jonathan Edwards and Scotland*, 169-75; Belden C. Lane, *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170-210. For the key of beauty in the Christian life as an awakening to the beauty of God in Christ, see Edwards letter to Lady Pepperell. Edwards, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 414-19.

of spiritual union consists in a sharing of divine knowledge and divine affection. The common denominator of the inner-trinitarian union, the *hypostatic* union, and the saints' union with Christ appears to be the shared possessions of divine knowledge *within* the affection or life that is the divine will.<sup>144</sup>

It is this union that is still a mystery to Edwards, as it is to all, in how it works. One knows from the truth of Scripture that it does work but it is still a mystery. What is known is the importance of union that shares the divine knowledge and because of that, in the work of the Spirit, the divine affections. This union is what brings both holiness and happiness as observed in this thought written by Edwards, "The sum of that eternal life which Christ purchased is holiness; it is a holy happiness. And there is in faith a liking of the happiness that Christ has procured and offers."<sup>145</sup>

### **A Summary Evaluation**

In the assessment of Jonathan Edwards's theology of sanctification, the data points to his fidelity to Scripture as well as to his orthodoxy, with some interesting twists and turns and with a few remaining questions. Overall all, Edwards provides not only the biblical backing for his theology of the Christian life, but he also structures it all on his doctrine of the Trinity and applies the life and work of the Trinity into the work of salvation that is holistic in nature. The connection of it all is through the important doctrine of union, which Edwards champions, which is both his strength and weakness, in that it is here that the question remains of why the Christian does struggle with sin so vehemently. The only answer, per the flow of Edwards's logic, is that God does not give more of the Holy Spirit. However, even in this, Edwards shows a dependence and a glimpse into many of the questions that remain concerning the doctrine of union in sanctification, a dependence that points the believer ever more to the importance and need of God's work through Word and Spirit, which points to happiness, and often is the missing component in the sanctification debates of today.

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<sup>144</sup>Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 198.

<sup>145</sup>Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 436.

CHAPTER 8  
CONCLUSION

**Jonathan Edwards and Sanctification: Summary**

The topic of this research has been the concept of happiness as seen in the work of Jonathan Edwards and applied to the current sanctification debates in Reformed circles. The question behind this research is, “How should the Christian understand obedience?” More specifically the question becomes, “What should be the overarching motivation in the believer’s obedience and how does this fit into the doctrine of sanctification?” The nature of the overall argument, and thus the goal of this work, is to demonstrate that Edwards’s concept of happiness in the Christian life enables contemporary Reformed theology to address many of the questions surrounding obedience, dealing specifically with the issues of motive and ability. The contribution that this research hopes to bring to the discussion of sanctification in Reformed circles is to remind readers of the importance of the all too often missing element of happiness in union and obedience today. This missing element begins with the God of creation who provides relationship and sanctification in a work on the affections in knowing a God who himself is “religious affection in pure act.”<sup>1</sup> These are topics that dominated the theology of Edwards. This missing element of happiness centers on the One through whom sanctification happens, all the while also giving a motivation for obedience. More radically, this research points to the truth that this happiness is something that can be had

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<sup>1</sup>See Kyle Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father: Retrieving Jonathan Edwards’s Trinitarian Aesthetics,” in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology: A Reinterpretation*, ed. John Webster, Ian A. McFarland, and Ivor Davidson, T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

not only in the next life, but can be enjoyed in a relationship with the God of happiness here in this life. It is happiness that is found in union and obedience, all the while connecting sanctification to its “wider dogmatic connections” of who God is that make that a reality.<sup>2</sup>

### **Jonathan Edwards and Sanctification: Connections and Conclusions**

Jonathan Edwards demonstrates that happiness is crucial for the doctrine of sanctification because he points to the One in whom true happiness is found, underlining the importance of union as well as evangelical obedience which helps maintain the necessary tension of God’s work and the Christian’s responsibility. His is a needed voice whose theology provides a missing element amid the questions that are raised concerning this important doctrine today. Edwards shows that happiness does matter. This happiness comes through union, which not only connects the believer to the source of happiness, who is God but also enables one to pursue it in relationship. Obedience, then, is the fruit of this union, but also contributes to one’s happiness because of the work of the gospel. It

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<sup>2</sup>Kent Eilers, and Kyle Strobel eds., *Sanctified by Grace: A Theology of the Christian Life* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 4. Eilers and Strobel speak of these “wider dogmatic connections” in the context of having a robust connection to the Godhead. They write, “The upshots of developing a theology of the Christian life ‘in dogmatic key’ are several. First, it trains us to keep the doctrine of God (theology proper) always in view when talking about the Christian life. It ensures that the doctrine of the Christian life does not float free from the doctrine of God, a drift which quickly depletes emphasis upon the origin of the Christian life in God’s gracious initiative and its dependence upon God for its final fulfillment. The theology of the Christian life found here thus seeks to show that God’s grace is found not merely at the foundation of the Christian life or at its end, but that every facet of the Christian life is suffused with God’s gracious self-giving. Second, because this doctrine is so closely related to moral theology and ethics, it is a temptation to make the practices or activities of the Christian life the primary or sole focus. This approach portrays a truncated image (and, as we suggest below, it risks detaching practices from the gospel). It merely attends to the outward signs of redeemed life and not the character and purposes of the One who established and perfects it—not a brute causal force, but the God of grace! Third, the same holds for the category of ‘spirituality’. Developing a theology of the Christian life primarily on its terms alone risks isolating it from the distinctly Christian resources made available from a more explicitly doctrinal approach. Finally, delineating the Christian life principally in terms of one closely related doctrine—such as justification, common among Protestant accounts—*may* portray the Christian life without the depth and richness available from the vantage point of its relationship to the dogmatic whole. To say this another way, addressing the Christian life puts us in the vicinity of the doctrines of justification and sanctification, but without attending well to its wider dogmatic connections the Christian life risks being overdetermined by those doctrines which lie ‘closest’ to it. For example, though the doctrine of justification witnesses to the forensic realities of Christian existence, on its own it fails to relate the Christian life to the full spectrum of God’s revealed nature and actions, nor does it necessarily indicate the outward practices fitting to justified existence.” Ibid.

is because of a heart transformation that changes one's perspective and enables a believer to see things for what they are, resulting in a heart of love for God in communion which overflows in love toward others. Many of the truths approached in this research would be accepted on both sides of the sanctification debate today, but most do not give the implications of union or happiness its due consideration.<sup>3</sup>

## Connections

Jonathan Edwards would argue, "True weanedness from the world don't consist in being beat off from the world by the affection of it, but a being drawn off by the sight of something better."<sup>4</sup> The method of this research has been to follow this line of thinking in one of America's most prominent theologians. This phrase holds the key to all that is contained in this work, showing that true happiness and true virtue comes from God alone, which only can be had in union and thus relationship. Happiness is something for which the Christian should strive, and something that can only be had through the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation.

The research has endeavored to place the emphasis of happiness into the context of what is being debated today. This attempt has been made throughout this work by bringing the reader back to the God of all happiness, and thus the argument of Jonathan Edwards's work, showing how the contexts of today and Edwards's own day can be bridged. Here happiness was defined, not as something that is fleeting, but by a robust definition in conjunction with the concepts of beauty, glory, felicity, true joy, and pleasure that can be found in a relationship with the God of the universe. It is happiness that is given by God in his grace, but also something that needs to be fostered in

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<sup>3</sup>See Tullian Tchividjian, *Jesus + Nothing = Everything*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 26-28, 92-93, 152-53, 188-89. This underdeveloped emphasis on happiness applies even to the more classic Reformed view as found in Sinclair Ferguson, "The Reformed View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988), 47-76.

<sup>4</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 501-832*, ed. Ava Chamberlain, *WJE*, vol. 18 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 352.

relationship. It is the emphasis of happiness, and thus holiness that the research then focused on in the work of Edwards that was all based on the foundation of the Godhead and the holistic redemption that the Trinity provides. Happiness is thus worked out from the Trinity *ad intra* to creation *ad extra* in redemption, that then draws a person to the One who is most beautiful in a life that is in the process of being progressively beautified through the continued work of the Holy Spirit in union that overflows in obedience or true virtue. It is a process that comprises emanation and remanation that is for our good and God's glory, which is the reason why he created the world.

The foundation of holiness, happiness, and grace becomes the most important link in what the believer is called to in obedience, and thus what happens in both the determinative as well as the progressive elements of sanctification. Jonathan Edwards Trinitarian dependence, as elucidated in the recent work of many Edwards scholars, has benefited this scholarship and becomes the basis for all that needs to be understood in Edwards's doctrine of sanctification. Specifically, the heuristic key to Edwards's theology proposed by Kyle Strobel is borrowed, which is God's own "personal beatific-delight" within the Trinity or what he has renamed "religious affection in pure act," in which the believer can participate in union through redemption to the glory of God.<sup>5</sup> Union then becomes the link with the holiness and happiness of God that occurs through the grace of God as his goodness overflows from his relationship within the Godhead to reach out to fallen humankind in salvation through the work of the Trinity, a work of Word and Spirit coming from the fount of all happiness in the Father.

A look at Edwards holistic salvation emanates from his Trinitarian foundation, for this is the connection to the holiness and thus the happiness of God that can be had in the Christian life, as God seizes hold of the affections of a person by the beauty of who he is through the gospel. God must be the foundation of sanctification in the life of the

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<sup>5</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 26; Strobel, "Theology in the Gaze of the Father," 148.

believer. This foundation also guards against the all too easy slide toward legalism, keeping the focus not only on the foundation of one's holiness but also happiness, all because of grace. The aspect that is informative in Jonathan Edwards's theology is how he keeps sanctification within the whole of redemption as connected to the Godhead. Edwards gives the reader a glimpse of the whole of redemption as it affects the Christian life in what is a pilgrimage to glory and unhindered happiness in glorification, where seeing through a glass dimly is exchanged for a clear view face to face with the object of the believer's affections. This move by Edwards also enables him to keep the necessary connection to the work of Christ, without losing important distinctions in justification and sanctification. The work of transformation in redemption is that which was begun in the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in illumination, which is based on the objective work of the Word, and that grows through the work of the Spirit in the means of grace, to a full view in glorification. It is a pilgrimage to beauty that is the motive and the drive of the believer in pursuing God because of union unto obedience. This drive of the believer displays the truth that any work that is done in redemption is the work of Word and Spirit in the coalescence of beauty, happiness, and glory in a person's life. Redemption is the work of Word and Spirit that enables the Christian to see the beauty of Christ, which is at the heart of the pursuit of happiness in obedience through a relationship with the God of all holiness and happiness.

The foundation of who God is *ad intra* works out to what God does *ad extra* in redemption that then affects the Christian. The affections are the key, not only in salvation, but also in sanctification, which is where the three undercurrents of the Christian life merge in the drive of beauty, the forging of happiness, and the result of glory. These key undercurrents are necessary to see clearly the motivation of obedience in the Christian life, which are connected in such a way as to amplify the motive of beauty, happiness, and glory. For in pursuing true beauty, one also pursues happiness, and in that happiness, there is found the pursuit of glory, all which remanates back to the One in

whom all these are found and from where they emanated, all for his glory. For as the Christian is beautified in enjoying a relationship with the One who is most glorious, God himself receives the glory. These motives all are encouraged by the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of his truth as seen in means of grace that in this research have been referred to as the means to happiness. For the truth of who God is needs to be continually put in front of the heart of the believer because of the remaining sin of the flesh as well as the world system that is controlled by the evil one. It is the truth of who God is that the Holy Spirit uses to kill sin in the life of the Christian and what he uses to convict of the need to live in the wisdom that will bring about the continued fellowship of a relationship through obedience. For union, will have consequence that will ultimately work out into what Jonathan Edwards called true virtue. This reminder of the missing element in today's conversations of sanctification in Edwards's work comes from a Reformed theologian who uses Scripture as his guide in trying to make sense of what a relationship with the Creator of the universe looks like both in theology and practice.

## **Conclusions**

In observing the arguments that are often evident in the debates concerning sanctification, such as the ones that are happening today, one can see the dangers of legalism on one side, and then antinomianism on the other. The roots of sanctification always must have their foundation in God, a focus to which more scholars are pointing, which the work of Jonathan Edwards only encourages.<sup>6</sup> It is this foundation that helps in battling against the temptation of legalism but also, with a focus on the happiness of God, and thus his holiness, which helps mitigate against leanings towards antinomianism.

**The temptation of legalism.** It is often the birthright of conservative Christianity, in taking seriously the holiness of God as well as the law, that it leans in the

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<sup>6</sup>See Eilers, and Strobel, *Sanctified by Grace*.



direction of legalism. This tendency towards legalism has been the accusation of some in this latest debate, which unfortunately is a reality in many churches today. It is for this reason that this research looks to Jonathan Edwards's dogmatic focus on the Person of God, in all his beauty and happiness, which in union can be known by the creature. It is happiness that cuts through the veneer of any works righteousness and places one's attention on the One who can be known in a relationship through union. The drive of obedience thus becomes the beauty of the object that is God, which has its forging in happiness and points to one's ultimate end in glorifying God.<sup>7</sup> This foundation and anchor also buoys one to the grace of God, which points to the need for his work in giving the ability to obey in the first place, giving the opportunity to exercise what Edwards called true virtue. The ability then given at salvation in opening one's eyes to the beauty of the object that is God, will then also provide the ultimate motivation in a life that is caught up in serving the One who is most beautiful. This work of God in the heart of the believer that produces a goal who is God himself, then begins to also beautify the believer, all for the reason humanity was created, which is God's glory.<sup>8</sup>

In obedience, there is responsibility. One still makes decisions, and those decisions have consequences. But as Jonathan Edwards would remind us, there is a change of perspective, and a change of position that has great implications for practice that is all based on the foundation of holiness, happiness, and the grace of God. There is still a struggle remaining because of the sinful flesh, yet there is also a transformation that has taken place that makes all the difference enabling one to see God for who he is, and

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<sup>7</sup>This emphasis on the motive for obedience connects with overall focus of Strobel's work in which the key to understanding Edwards is God as "religious affection in pure act" where religious affection in the believer comes out of the emanation of God concluding in religious affection as remanation unto glory. See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 209-33.

<sup>8</sup>Edwards stated, "Holiness is the very beauty and loveliness of Jehovah himself. 'Tis the excellency of his excellencies, the beauty of his beauties, the perfection of his infinite perfections, and the glory of his attributes. What an honor, then, must it be to a creature who is infinitely below God, and less than he, to be beautified and adorned with this beauty, with that beauty which is the highest beauty of God himself, even holiness." Jonathan Edwards, *Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723*, ed. Wilson H. Kinnach *WJE*, vol. 10 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 430.

sin for what it is. This change allows happiness in a relationship with the One for whom we were created that can be enjoyed here and now. So, one has the opportunity, through God's grace and in dependence on his continued work, to choose happiness in communion with God that yields obedience, because God is one's good. This obedience is not something that one does to earn salvation by going to church or through the spiritual disciplines, but these are the means by which God works and sanctifies us through the continued work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, these are things for which one should strive, and yes, work, because God has called us to these very things, not trying to earn anything but in dependence, seeking that which is most beautiful, and which consists in true happiness.

**The temptation of antinomianism.** On the other side of the pendulum swing is the threat of antinomianism. Here the same foundation of the God of all holiness, happiness, and grace becomes just as important as it is with the problem of legalism in the Christian life. For it is with this foundation that one also understands how the proper motive and ability also cuts through this heretical and dangerous viewpoint. Whereas legalism can often be the birthright of conservative Christianity, antinomianism is often more of a temptation in Reformed circles, where the sovereignty of God in salvation reigns supreme, and thus grace can be abused. This state of affairs has been exacerbated by the influence of another vein of evangelicalism in these debates that has its roots in the Reformation in the teaching of Lutheranism.<sup>9</sup> The mantra that is often heard in defense of this argument is that the Christian life is all about grace, and learning what this grace is in sanctification. But God's grace as worked through the Word and Spirit is the truth that God transforms the soul unto good works that is a part of the pilgrimage towards glory

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<sup>9</sup>This reality can be seen in the argument of Tullian Tchividjian who has been influenced by the teaching found in both Anglican and Lutheran teachings such in the work of Paul Zahl, Robert Kolb, and Oswald Bayer. See Paul Zahl, *Grace in Practice: A Theology of Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

and the beautification process of the believer whose goal is the God of all beauty and his glory. The ability is given by God, in the work of redemption through the Word and Spirit, which is ultimately a journey to the full enjoyment of the object of all beauty and of our faith, which is God. In understanding the beauty of God, one also comprehends the ugliness of all that would clamor for our affection in the things of the flesh and this world, what Paul called “deceitful lusts.”

God has given Christians not only the ability by giving his Spirit and the truth of his Word that the Spirit uses to grow the believer in holiness, but he also has given the proper motive in obedience, which is the enjoyment of God’s happiness. This happiness not only should become the forging of the Christian life, but it finds its satisfaction in the beauty of who God is, while sin is a drive in the direction of secondary or pseudo beauties. Sin also is that which hinders one’s relationship with the God of all beauty, and thus becomes a deterrent to true happiness, the purpose for which one was created. As one author describes it, in Edwards’s thinking “sanctification is soul-work.”<sup>10</sup> It is in this soul work that God continues to show grace in giving a means for the Christian to grow and become more beautified in the process of sanctification. The result is happiness, and thus what one is called to pursue as one overflows with love for God and others in the outworking of God’s happiness had through union in obedience.

The captivating issue with Jonathan Edwards comes from his dogmatic Reformed doctrine that he links with the truth of the experience that one can have with God in the language of felicity. In Edwards’s work, the reader observes a robust doctrine

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<sup>10</sup>Dane Ortlund, “Increasingly Beautified: Jonathan Edwards’ Theology of Sanctification,” n.d., accessed December 1, 2015, <https://www.uniontheology.org/resources/doctrine/increasingly-beautified-jonathan-edwards-theology-of-sanctification>. Ortlund continues, “Edwards preached to his people repeatedly that it is therefore strange for Christians to spend the bulk of their time and efforts pursuing what does not profit the soul and just a fraction of their time and efforts pursuing what does (e.g., WJE 22:216–17). His words land with just as much (or more) force on us today. He speaks of ‘the absurdity of such a negligence’ in that we cry out to God when suffering material lack but yawn our way through our prayers when suffering spiritual lack (WJE 22:218). This is absurd because of the immortality of the soul. Stretching our mental powers to their fullest to comprehend as great a length of time as we possibly can, whatever we are able to comprehend is a speck compared to eternity. Yes, ‘bodily training is of some value’ (1 Tim. 4:8). But training of the soul ‘holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come’ (1 Tim. 4:8; cf. Matt. 10:28). Sanctification is soul-training, and the Holy Spirit is the trainer.” Ibid.

of the depravity of man coupled with a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God in redemption. Edwards could highlight these truths without losing a dogged determination, in dependence, to show the necessity of obedience that comes out of God's work on the heart.<sup>11</sup> Edwards was able to have this emphasis with a biblical realism that was not perfectionistic but did not mean lethargy of action. For Edwards reminds the reader that there is a growing of grace in which believers would have a "greater sense" of the "infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being" in a "never-ending process of seeking God."<sup>12</sup> Edwards always pointed to Christ and the beauty of the Godhead as reflected in the message of the gospel. In doing so, he centered on what others missed. As several authors attest, "no one else in Western Christian thought seems to have made God's beauty so integral to Christian theology and to Christian ethics,"<sup>13</sup> so much so that they conclude that this "notion of ethical participation in aesthetic vision may be the most distinctive contribution that Edwards made to Christian ethics."<sup>14</sup> It is a vision that is theological in nature and thus based on the centrality and excellence of God who alone can bring happiness in relationship to him and forms a springboard to obedience that is commanded and for which one should strive and fight.

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<sup>11</sup>Green helps point to Edwards holistic view of redemption by stating, "To cut to the chase: when we, taking a cue from Edwards, begin to understand redemption in this larger and broader sense (from the creation of the world forward), we will see human transformation (including works, obedience and faithfulness) as a constitutive part of God's redemptive plan, and not a peripheral or optional 'addition' to his plan. God, as Edwards sees it, is building a temple, forming a people. It is certainly appropriate also to speak of redemption in the more particular sense of the forgiveness of sins brought about by Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. But the work of redemption must be seen in relation to God's revealed plan and will—which includes the transformation of sinners (including real, though imperfect, works, obedience and faithfulness)." Bradley G. Green, *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 164.

<sup>12</sup>Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 546-47. See also Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 8 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 181.

<sup>13</sup>It should be noted as Ortlund states, "Two other thinkers in the church's history who come closest to Edwards at this point are Augustine and Hans Urs von Balthasar." Dane Calvin Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God*, Theologians on the Christian Life (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 24.

<sup>14</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Edwards*, 548.

**Questions regarding sanctification.** This research has endeavored to demonstrate that in highlighting the missing element of happiness in today's sanctification debates, Jonathan Edwards also provides needed help in answering many of the questions regarding the doctrine of sanctification. These questions have to do with the relationship between faith and human responsibility, the place of that relationship in sustaining and persevering, in God's grace, the role of human effort, and living in the eschatological tension of the already and not yet.<sup>15</sup> The beauty of what Jonathan Edwards has to offer concerning the Christian life is his ability to keep the tensions of Scripture intact, all the while elucidating an answer that helps in the pursuit of happiness found in union and obedience.

The work of God in the heart of a person is needed for true virtue and to fulfill the reason for which humanity was created. Sanctification and thus obedience thus become an integral factor of God's work in making this goal a reality. Jonathan Edwards would speak of the benefit of placing oneself in front of the truth of who God is and what he has done that will then influence the Christian. The response of the Christian must be because of God's graciousness on the heart of a person in regeneration. So, as Edwards would proclaim of the believer, "He that is once brought to see, or rather to taste, the superlative loveliness of the Divine Being, will need no more to make him long after the enjoyment of God, to make him rejoice in the happiness of God, and to desire that this supremely excellent Being may be pleased and glorified."<sup>16</sup> Edwards contribution has been most beneficial in defining freedom as the ability of man to do as he wills, not the ability of man to act contrary to his willingness and thus really his nature, which is depraved. Edwards writes, "He will is always, and every individual act, necessarily

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<sup>15</sup>Kelly M. Kopic, *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 10.

<sup>16</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee, *WJE*, vol. 21 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 174.

determined by the strongest motive.”<sup>17</sup> This statement is not only true in salvation, and what God enables the heart to see, but also in the ongoing work of his grace through union in the process of sanctification in the Christian life.

It is with the centrality of the place of God in theology and thus motive that Jonathan Edwards can bring instruction and a better comprehension of what informs the answers to these critical questions concerning sanctification. It is here where the drive of beauty, and thus happiness as it is forged in a growing relationship with the God of beauty and happiness, cuts through much of the tension, while keeping it intact, which is necessary. For the relationship between faith and human responsibility needs to lie in the ability that comes from God through the work of Word and Spirit, appropriated in union, with the motive that involves the object of one’s faith. For as this research has tried to demonstrate, when there is a proper comprehension of who God is and what he has done by his grace through redemption, the motive then dissolves many of the questions surrounding sanctification. For in the pursuit of happiness in God, people are fulfilling the purpose for which they were created, in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, with true religion being “the satisfaction of the deepest needs and longings of the human heart.”<sup>18</sup> It is thus with a proper theology of God’s work in redemption where God works on the understanding and thus the will that Edwards can then say, God does all, and we do all. God is thus the “ground as well as the goal” in true faith as well as true virtue.<sup>19</sup> This awareness also becomes crucial to understanding God’s sustaining and persevering grace, which is all his work, yet also pointing to the necessity of the affections being involved which will produce not only “lively actings,” but also a striving that is commensurate with the value of the goal, who is infinite.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will*, ed. Paul Ramsey, *WJE*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 305.

<sup>18</sup>McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 69.

<sup>19</sup>John Piper, *Future Grace* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1995), 395.

<sup>20</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John H. Smith and Harry S. Stout, *WJE*, vol. 2,

The place of faith in sanctification in Jonathan Edwards theology is also an important factor in understanding how to approach the questions that persist today concerning this significant doctrine. Faith in Edwards's work was something that he termed a closing with Christ and had to do with God's work through the Holy Spirit where the believer sees the beauty of Christ, which then works on the affections.<sup>21</sup> It is in this sense that "the saint's eternal life is built upon faith," a faith that is based upon God's work on the believer's understanding in salvation, yet continued through the work of the Word in the heart of the believer that then produces the action of the will in obedience. Faith is thus a closing with Christ, as well as a continuing with Christ that has a compatibility to it, based on God's work, but also for believing the truth of God's Word concerning who God is and what he has done. It is concerning this truth that the work of John Piper clarifies the place of faith in future grace, specifically where he is dependent on the work of Jonathan Edwards.<sup>22</sup> Piper quotes Edwards, "The sum of that eternal life which Christ purchased is holiness; it is a holy happiness. And there is in faith *a liking of the happiness that Christ has procured and offers,*" demonstrating from where he comes on this issue of future grace.<sup>23</sup> He adds, "'This liking of the happiness Christ offers' is what I mean by 'being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus.' I have stressed the future orientation of faith, because the future is where God promises to satisfy the hearts of those who wait for him."<sup>24</sup> This focus points to the aspect of pilgrimage, which begins to answer questions about the role of faith that should only propel the believer to obedience and not hinder it. But this is the point where this research tries to further

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(New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 98-99.

<sup>21</sup>See Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. A-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*, ed. Thomas A. Schafer, *WJE*, vol. 13 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 389, 500; Edwards, *"Miscellanies": 501-832*, 149, 201, 223, 229, 346, 531; Jonathan Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": Entry Nos. 833-1152*, ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *WJE*, vol. 20 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 82, 324.

<sup>22</sup>Piper, *Future Grace*, 385-99.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 285. The quote comes from Edwards, *Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, 436.

<sup>24</sup>Piper, *Future Grace*, 385.

academically what Piper has done on a more popular level, yet all the while giving a specific doctrine of sanctification with a robust background that is in keeping with the work of Edwards. Future grace is important and is a part of the place of faith based on who God is and has always been. It is salvation that is based not only on what God will be for the saint, which points to the goal of the believer's life, which is God himself but also who God is in relation to the believer's happiness in the here and now. This truth keeps the underlying tension found in Scripture, as well as underscores the beauty of the truth of both the already and not yet in the Christian life.

In the doctrine of the Christian life Jonathan Edwards pushes one past the many things that often confound the believer. For in Edwards, the gift is not salvation alone, but the Person of God himself as mediated through Christ and worked out by the Holy Spirit. This move makes all the difference, for in answering the questions like that of the already and not yet, one can see that beauty, glory, and thus happiness is the drive, formation, and result of the Christian life. Union is necessary because of our fallen nature, in which dependence on the Holy Spirit's work is needed throughout the process. It is a process where one is called and commanded to respond to the promises of relationship found in God's Word. This relationship is with the God of creation that can be enjoyed now, but also will be enjoyed forever in the consummation of glory for the believer in heaven, all for God's glory, which is a fundamental component to one's happiness.

### **Jonathan Edwards and Sanctification: Outcome**

The work of Jonathan Edwards points the reader to the Person of God, and in the process, he reorients the reader to who God is, which is the needed first step to enjoying any significant happiness that is found in the source of all beauty and happiness in union and obedience. This understanding is what is missing in today's debates, and to which Edwards points in his theology because the Christian was created and recreated to



know and enjoy God, to be affected by God's beauty, which beautifies believers themselves and produces what Edwards called true virtue. It is a beauty, and thus a happiness, that can only be understood and enjoyed in union, where the affections are drawn and redrawn to the beauty of the object that is Christ. Ultimately this missing piece of happiness in sanctification points to Edwards's assertion concerning the believer that "God is their good," because God is the One in whom true happiness is found.<sup>25</sup> This focus in Edwards's theology then also becomes a sapiential theology, which drives the believer continually to the source of all happiness. It is a theology that proves to be a drive to an obedience that is based on the wisdom found in what God has revealed about himself in his Word. It is also the truth that God illumines through the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of not only holiness but also happiness. This truth underlines the importance of God's sovereign work in providing the benefits of union with Christ, as well as the involvement of the believer's responsibility and dependent response through relationship in true virtue, all of which drives the Christian to the heart of why humanity was created.

This research has endeavored to bring to the forefront of the reader's attention the missing element of happiness in the work of Jonathan Edwards. This missing element is not only absent in the sanctification debates of today but also is often deficient in the thinking of the average Christian. The truth that is often discarded is the fact that God is the believer's good, and that he is the treasure to be had in salvation. Edwards brings the reader back to this reality. The heart of the work begins and ends with God. Those in the sanctification debate, the church, and Christians individually need to understand what one author recently articulated as recovering "a sense of who God is,"<sup>26</sup> who is "religious

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<sup>25</sup>Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, 459.

<sup>26</sup>Ross Hastings, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity: Its Rich but Controversial Facets," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59, no. 3 (September 2016): 285. Although some of the conclusions may be different, Ross articulates the need well in looking back to the Godhead by stating, "A pastoral concern undergirds this theology, namely that the enculturated church might recover the pursuit of affectional, relational, ethical, and vocational holiness which seems today to be in short supply. In that regard, it most needs to recover a sense of who God is. Going to Jonathan Edwards for this may be a good

affection in pure act,”<sup>27</sup> and this vision is needed to work on the understanding through the work of Word and Spirit to see the truth of who he is in all his beauty. This beauty is not only to be realized and enjoyed in salvation, or just in the future consummation in the final work of grace but is something that can be enjoyed now, where God’s happiness is experienced through union and obedience. For as Roland Delattre has stated, “Edwards was convinced that beauty is the reality in terms of which the Divine Being and the moral and religious life of human beings as well as the order of the universal system of being, both moral and natural, can best be understood.”<sup>28</sup>

More research is needed to bring home the weight of this argument in the work of Jonathan Edwards. Kyle Strobel has done a great service for those trying to understand Edwards as a theologian, and he has proposed more work that could be done with his interpretive key in “specific areas of soteriological loci,” that would only help in digging out the depth of this theological understanding specifically in the area of the Christian life.<sup>29</sup> More work can also be done in looking at Edwards’s concept of faith and its place in the tension that is highlighted in this latest sanctification debate, which would tease out the place of God’s work on the intellect and also highlight both God’s work in salvation as well the believer’s responsibility. Another area of work that could be approached is a more in-depth study of the correlations between the work in virtue ethics and Edwards’s theology. Specifically in the understanding of human flourishing or *eudaimonia*, which has to do with character formation and happiness had here and now in a life well lived,

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place to start.” Hastings, “Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity,” 285.

<sup>27</sup>Strobel, “Theology in the Gaze of the Father,” 148.

<sup>28</sup>Roland André 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.

<sup>29</sup>Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*, 233. Strobel adds, “Aspects of Edwards’s thought such as his aesthetics, doctrine of revelation, eschatology, etc. could be read through this model and provide deeper insight into the coherence and interrelation of Edwards’s theology. As I and others pick up this task, I suggest that this account will prove both coherent and elegant and, more importantly, will adequately place Edwards within his self-contained theological allegiances.” Ibid.

which is also connected to the truth of the beauty of God.<sup>30</sup> William Danaher has done a helpful job on fleshing out this idea as he delves into Edwards's Trinitarian ethics,<sup>31</sup> but in working in this area, although there are areas of divergence, there are connections that would help in thinking through more of what a theologian like Edwards brought in living the happy life of sanctification.

The bigger picture of who God is in sanctification is what is missing today in discussion of sanctification. It is here that Jonathan Edwards provides a corrective and a needed reminder. This focus points to the missing element that this research puts forth concerning the doctrine of sanctification, where the bottom line is in the goal of one's life in a relationship with the God of the universe. A God who has tabernacled with us, becoming man and in salvation enables one to pursue the happiness of the Godhead found in union and obedience through the work of the Holy Spirit. This missing element points to true human flourishing in this life and then the ultimate glory of happiness in heaven, coming from God in emanation and flowing back for his glory in remanation. It is a happiness and goal that is given by God and based on who he is, and one that as he works through the Holy Spirit should result in the objective of a growing relationship. A relationship for which one should endeavor to strive and fight for such happiness in obedience all because of union, resulting in the beatification of the individual all for the glory of God, as one is continually weaned from the world by the sight of something better.

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<sup>30</sup>There is a Lutheran writer who has done a good job of pointing to the problems today in the church, as well as providing a confessional conclusion that brings both Reformation truths together with the work of virtue ethics today. See Joel D. Biermann, *A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014). Biermann is also being pushed significantly by the work of Hauerwas. See Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer for Christian Ethics* (Norte Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

<sup>31</sup>See William J. Danaher, *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

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## ABSTRACT

### JONATHAN EDWARDS AND SANCTIFICATION: THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS FOUND IN UNION AND OBEDIENCE

Kevin David Hall, Ph.D.  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017  
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

This research endeavors to answer the question of why the believer should obey, specifically considering the issues of motive and ability. The thesis of this study is that Jonathan Edwards provides the critical missing element of happiness in the sanctification debates of today, an element that is crucial for the doctrine of sanctification because it points to the One in whom true happiness is found and who is the believer's good. This argument puts the focus on relationship and underlines the importance of union, all the while keeping the necessary tension of God's work and man's responsibility in obedience where Scripture places it. Edwards is a needed voice amid the questions that are raised concerning this essential doctrine today. Edwards shows that the affections and happiness do matter. This happiness comes through union, which not only connects the believer to the source of happiness, which is the Triune God but also enables a Christian to pursue it.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic of study, setting the framework of what this research intends to do. Chapter 2 establishes the context of the sanctification debates today and the need in also showing how this context is bridged with Edwards own time. Chapter 3 provides the foundation of Edwards's theology of sanctification with the Trinity, observing the ground of holiness, happiness, and grace. Chapter 4 gives the context of sanctification and how it fits into Edwards's theology of the Christian life in a holistic redemption, showing both the objective and subjective work of Word and Spirit.

Chapter 5 picks up the heart of the argument in looking at three major undercurrents in the Christian life as observed by Edwards, with the chapter answering the question of why the believer should obey. Chapter 6 explores the means to happiness, by examining the principle means of grace developed by Edwards all of which revolve around the truth of God's Word as used by the Holy Spirit. Chapter 7 the research provides a biblical and theological evaluation of Edwards's arguments as discussed in this dissertation, giving a defense of happiness as an answer to obedience. Chapter 8, the conclusion, presents the application of this research to the debates today as well as providing the theological legacy of Jonathan Edwards on the doctrine of sanctification.

## VITA

Kevin David Hall

### EDUCATION

B.A., The Master's College, 1992  
M.Div., The Master's Seminary, 1996  
Th.M., The Master's Seminary, 2008

### ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society

### ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Faculty, Grace Brethren High School, Simi Valley, California, 1996-2003;  
2006-2008  
Adjunct Faculty, Eternity Bible College, Simi Valley, California, 2006  
Garrett Fellow, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky,  
2012  
Research Expert, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville,  
Kentucky, 2013-2015  
Assistant to the Director of Research Doctoral Programs, Southern Baptist  
Theological Seminary, 2016  
Adjunct Faculty, Indiana Wesleyan University, 2016-

### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastoral Intern, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California, 1992-1996  
Pastor of College-Aged Ministry, Grace Brethren Church, Simi Valley,  
California, 2000-2002  
Pastor of Student Ministry, Grace Brethren Church, Simi Valley, California,  
2002-2004  
Campus Chaplain, Grace Brethren High School, Simi Valley, California, 2003-  
2005  
High School Pastor, Riverpark Bible Church, Fresno, California, 2008-2012  
Student Ministry Pastor, Crossing Church, Louisville, Kentucky, 2015-  
Director of Youth and Family Ministries and Director of Programming,  
Crossings Ministries, Louisville, Kentucky, 2016-