

JONATHAN EDWARDS

(1703 – 1758)



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THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

A MODEL FOR MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

“That good and sensible man ... that great man”

John Westley

“Mr. Edwards is a solid, excellent Christian ... I think I have not seen his fellow in all New England”

George Whitefield

“The profoundest reasoner, and the greatest divine, in my opinion, that America ever produced.

Samuel Davies

“He was, in the estimation of the writer, one of the most holy, humble and heavenly-minded men that the world has seen, since the apostolic age”

Ashbel Green

“The greatest, wisest, humblest and holiest of uninspired men”

John Collett

“We cannot take leave of Edwards, without testifying the whole extent of the reverence that we bear him. The American divine affords, perhaps, the wondrous example of modern times, of one who stood richly gifted both in natural and spiritual discernment - and we know not what most to admire in him, whether the deep philosophy that issued from his pen, or the humble and child-like piety that issued from his pulpit ... As the philosopher he could discern and discern truly, between the sterling and the counterfeit in Christianity - still it was as the humble and devoted pastor that Christianity was made, or Christianity was multiplied, in his hands”

Thomas Chalmers

“We have in our annals no clearer, more transparent, more impressive illustration of an entire consecration of genius and greatness to the promotion of the Christian faith”

Egbert C Smyth

“Jonathan Edwards changed what I may call the centre of thought in American theological thinking ... More than to any other man, to Edwards is due the importance

which, in American Christianity, is attributed to the conscious experience of the penitent sinner as he passes into the membership of the Invisible Church.

The man we so often call our greatest American Divine ... was indeed inexpressibly great in his intellectual endowment, in his theological achievement, in his continuing influence. He was greatest in his attribute of regnant, permeating, irradiating spirituality. It is at once a present beatitude and an omen of future good, that. In these days of pride in wealth and all that wealth means, of pride in the fashion of this world which passeth away, we still on our heart of hearts reserve the highest honour for the great American who lived and moved and had his being in the Universe which is unseen and eternal”.

John de Witt

“No man is more relevant to the present condition of Christianity than Jonathan Edwards ... He was a mighty theologian and a great evangelist at the same time ... He was preeminently the theologian of revival. If you want to know anything about true revival, Edwards is the man to consult. Revivals have often started as the result of people reading volumes such as these two volumes of Edwards’ “Works”.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

A. HIS EARLY DAYS

1. HIS BIRTH

He was born on the 5th October in 1703 in East Windsor, on the banks of the Connecticut River. It was an obscure colony in the midst of a wilderness.

2. HIS FAMILY

His father was the minister of the Congregational Church in East Windsor for about 60 years. “He was a man of holiness and effectiveness” (Timothy Edwards). His mother was Esther (Stoddard), the daughter of a popular minister of Northampton. She lived to about 90 years of age. He had ten sisters – four older than he, and six younger.

“Jonathan’s earliest memories would have included the many winter’s nights when he sat beside some of his sisters at the great fire-place in the middle of their home – a fire-place which could burn logs up to six feet long and still leave room for seats on either side. When the fire became too hot for the occupants of these seats, the Edwards’ black servant, Tim, would hurry to fetch green wood to dampen it. Then there were the long summer days, with much to watch on the farm and when, lying on his back in the meadows, Jonathan drank in the beauty of nature ...”

Due to his parent's high spiritual character and intellectual attainments, he benefited much spiritually and academically.

"I have good, good reason to hope, that their prayers for me have been, in many things, very powerful and prevalent, that God has, in many things, taken me under his care and guidance, provision and direction, in answer to their prayers for me. I was never made so sensible of it as now"

Jonathan Edwards (Works, p.xxviii)

They prayed much for him, that he would continually be filled with the Spirit, from childhood know the Holy Scriptures and be great in the Lord's sight. But as hard as they prayed, the harder they laboured at being the instruments the Lord would use to bring this about. So they instructed him thoroughly in Scripture, in right living and common sense, and they backed this up with lives that displayed the former. He therefore had a thorough grasp of the important doctrines.

As a result of a revival in his father's church, he spent a number of months under religious influence and even combined with other boys in prayer. But this came to an end, and proved not to be a true conversion experience. His true day of salvation, though not well-documented, came towards the end of his college studies.

3. HIS EDUCATION

Before he was thirteen, he had a good knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and was writing papers on philosophy. He is described as having a brilliant intellect, entering Yale University at the age of 13 in 1716. He concluded his studies in 1720 at the age of 17. He immersed himself in the philosophic and scientific works of his time, particularly the works of Locke and Newton (but mostly Locke's "Essay" in 1717).

4. HIS CONVERSION

Jonathan saw at least two periods of revival in his childhood. Speaking of his personal experience, he writes:

"I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but I had two more remarkable seasons of awakening before I

met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to College, at a time of

remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation ... I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure, and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my schoolmates, joined together and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods where I used to retire by myself, and was from time to time much affected ... I am ready to think many are deceived with such affections, and such kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace"

Murray (p. 19)

My mind was greatly engaged, to spend my time reading and meditating on Christ and the beauty and excellency of His person, and the long way of salvation, by free grace in Him I found from time to time an inward sweetness, that used as it were, to carry me away in my contemplations, in what I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm abstraction of the soul from all the concerns of the world

It was during his time at college that he began to have a new kind of apprehension and new ideas of Christ, and the works of redemption and the glorious way of salvation by Him.

"On January 12 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down; giving up myself and all that I had, to God; to be for the future, in no respect, my own; to act as one that had no right to be himself, in any respect. And solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else, as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and His law for the constant rule of my obedience: engaging to fight against the world, the flesh and the devil, to the end of my life".

Jonathan Edwards (Personal Narrative)

The result was the following:

*"Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat Him, by His grace, to enable me to keep these Resolutions so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ's sake. Examples of these **Resolutions are:***

- 1. Resolved, that I will do whatever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence.*

Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved, so to do, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many so ever, and how great so ever

2. *Resolved, to be continually endeavouring to find out some new contrivance and invention to promote the fore-mentioned things.*
- 3 *Resolved, if ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these Resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when come to myself again”*

Jonathan Edwards (Works, Vol 1, pg xx)

The habits of his religious life, which he formed in his youth, were not less thorough and exact. His observation of the Sabbath was such as to make it, throughout, a day of real religion; so that not only were his conversation and reading conformed to the great design of the day, but he allowed himself in no thoughts or meditations, which were not decidedly of a religious character .

It was his rule, not only to search the Scriptures daily, but to study them so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that he might perceive a regular and obvious growth in his knowledge of them. By prayer and self-application, he took constant care to render them the means of progressive sanctification. He made a secret of his private devotions, observes Dr. Hopkins, and therefore they cannot be particularly known; though there is much evidence that he was punctual, constant and frequent in secret prayer, and often kept days of fasting and prayer in secret, and set apart time for serious, devout meditations on spiritual and eternal things, as part of his religious exercise in secret.

It appears from his diary, that his stated seasons of secret prayer were, from his youth, **three** times a day – in his journeys, as well as at home. He was, so far as can be known, much on his knees in secret, and in devout reading of God’s word, and meditation upon it. And his constant, solemn converse with God, in these exercises of secret religion, made his face, as it were, to shine before others. His appearance, his countenance, his words, and whole demeanour, were attended with a seriousness, gravity and solemnity, which was the natural, genuine indication and expression of a deep abiding sense of divine things on his mind, and of his living constantly in the fear of God.

His watchfulness over himself – over his external conduct and over his secret thoughts and purposes – was most thorough and exemplary. The fear of God, and a consciousness of his own weakness, made him habitually apprehensive of sin, and led him most carefully to avoid every temptation. His self-examination

was regular, universal and in a sense constant. Every morning he endeavoured to foresee, and to guard against, the dangers of the day. Every night he carefully reviewed the conduct of his mind, during its progress, and inquired, wherein he

had been negligent; what sin he had committed; wherein he had denied himself; and regularly kept an account of every thing which he found to be wrong”.

Jonathan Edwards (Works, Vol. 1, pg c1xxxiii)

B HIS LATER YEARS

1. HIS MINISTRY

“I resolved to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, so that I may find and perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same”

Pure and humble, holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceeding available to me I felt in me a burning desire to be in everything a complete Christian, conforming to the blessed image of Christ, and that I might live in all things according to the pure, sweet and blessed rule of the gospel”.

Jonathan Edwards

In 1727 he became co-pastor with his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, of the Congregational Church in Northampton. Two years later when his grandfather died, he took over as the pastor.

“For Edwards’ first ten months in Northampton, he almost certainly lived in the home of his grandparents, Solomon and Esther Stoddard, beside the church on Round (or ‘Meeting-house’) Hill. He pays tribute to the benefit he received from his grandfather’s public ministry - ‘I have reason to bless God for the advantage I had by it’ – and much help would be gained privately within the household from his friendship and counsel”.

Murray (pg 90)

The following year, on July 28, 1727 **he married** a godly woman, Sarah Pierrepont. This marriage brought strength and sweetness to his side which was to abide through the next thirty years. As Samuel Miller observes, ‘Perhaps no event of Mr Edwards’ life had a more close connection with his subsequent comfort and usefulness than this marriage’. 1728 saw the birth of their first child, a daughter – and in 1730, the birth of their second. This is what was said of him as a family-man:

Therefore if you present all the world before you, with the richest of its treasures, she disrespects it and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain and affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singularly purity in her affections is most just and conscientious in all her conduct and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should affront this Great Being. She is of a wonderful sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind She could sometimes go about from place to place singing sweetly and seems to be always full of joy and

pleasure She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her. (Married at 17)

In his family, he practiced that conscientious exactness, which was conspicuous in all his ways. He maintained a great esteem and regard for his amiable and excellent **consort**. Much of the tender and affectionate was expressed in his conversation with her, and in all his conduct towards her. He was often visited by her in his study, and conversed freely with her on matters of religion; and he used commonly to pray with her in his study, at least once a day, unless something extraordinary prevented it. The season for this commonly, was in the evening, after prayers in the family, just before going to bed. As he rose very early himself, he was wont to have his family up betimes in the morning: after which, before they entered on the business of the day, he attended on family prayers: when a chapter of the Bible was read, commonly by candlelight in the winter: upon which he asked his children questions, according to age and capacity; and took occasion to explain some passages in it, or enforce any duty recommended, as he thought most proper.

He was careful and thorough in the government of his **children**; and, as a consequence of this, they revered, esteemed and loved him. He took the utmost care to begin his government of them when they were very young. When they first discovered any degree of self-will and stubbornness, he would attend to them, until he had thoroughly subdued them, and brought them to submit. Such prudent discipline exercised with the greatest calmness, being repeated once or twice, was generally sufficient for that child; and effectually established his parental authority, and produced a cheerful obedience ever after.

He kept a watchful eye over his **children**, that he might admonish them of the first wrong step, and direct them in the right way. He took opportunities to converse with them singly and closely, about the concerns of their souls, and to give them warnings exhortations and directions, as he saw them severally need. The salvation of his children was his chief and constant desire, and aim, and effort concerning them. In the evening, after tea, he customarily sat in the parlour, with his family, for an hour, unbending from the severity of study, entering freely into the feelings and concerns of his children, and relaxing into cheerful and animated conversation, accompanied frequently with sprightly remarks, and sallies of wit and humour. But, before retiring to his study, he usually gave the conversation, by degrees, a more serious turn, addressing his children with great tenderness and earnestness, on the subject of their salvation; when the thought that they were still strangers to religion would often affect him so powerfully, as to oblige him to withdraw, in order to conceal his emotions.

He took much pains to instruct his children in the principles and duties of religion, in which he made use of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism: not merely by taking care that they learned it by heart, but by leading them into an understanding of the doctrines therein taught, by asking them questions on each answer, and explaining it to them. His usual time to attend to this was on the evening before the Sabbath. And, as he believed that the Sabbath, or holy time, began at sunset, on the evening preceding the first day of the week, he ordered his family to finish all their secular business by that time, or before; when all were called together, a psalm was sung, and prayer offered, as an introduction to the sanctification of the Sabbath

He was utterly opposed to everything like unseasonable hours, on the part of young people, in their visiting and amusement: which he regarded as a dangerous step towards corrupting them, and bringing them to ruin. And he thought the excuse offered by many parents, for tolerating this practice in their children – that it is the custom, and that the children of other people are allowed thus to practice, and therefore it is difficult, and even impossible, to restrain theirs - was insufficient and frivolous, and manifested a great degree of stupidity, on the supposition that the practice was hurtful and pernicious to their souls.

Jonathan Edwards (Works, Vol.1, pg cl xxxvi)

He was quieter than his grandfather, both in the pulpit and elsewhere. If he read his sermons, as he seems to have done at this time, there were not complaints. The people noticed that, unlike many ministers, he did not intend to be a part-time farmer, yet even so he seemed to have no time on his hands. From the outset, it was not his custom to pull up his horse and pass the time of day with his many parishioners – “... he lived somewhat apart and socially he was clearly related to the men who wore white shirts rather than the common chequered ones. The people of Northampton take great content in his ministry”

He soon became known as “an ardent advocate of an earnest spiritual life”. Many of his sermons were considered “overwhelming”.

In order to be effective in the pulpit, hard work is needed in the study. And for this reason he spent up to **13 hours every day** in his study, chiefly for purposes of preparing himself for the Sunday. “His Sundays were his great days, and those among his own people were his best” .
(Henry T. Rose).

H Hosien

“through these years Jonathan Edwards established himself as a well disciplined **student**, but a loner for the most part who kept himself absorbed in his reading and studies – in truth he walked to the tune of a different drummer

He gave little time however to visiting the people in their homes. Even so, he kept in touch with his congregation and when called would go at once to attend to the needs of the sick and the needy....

He was absorbed in the high issues of **eternity**, always aware of the need to help people understand the brevity of life and the terrible importance of coming to grips with God and His way of salvation.

The work and business of ministers of the Gospel is as it were that of servants, to wash and cleanse the souls of men, for this is done by **preaching the Word which is their main business”**.

“The greatest change of all appeared in the meetinghouse itself:

Our public assemblies were then beautiful: the congregation was alive in God’s service, everyone earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to

time, in tears while the Word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours”
(Murray, pg 116)

Though his earlier sermons seemed disjointed, he put much effort into construction, and so doing ensured, from his part, their great effect. When preaching elsewhere, he would use past sermons, attending them with better-chosen words, idioms and fresh allusions

2. REVIVAL

H.Hosion

“the Great Awakening with its extravagances and tragic mistakes was to be considered one of the most potent and constructive forces in American life during the mid-century”

J. Edwards wrote of Whitfield

It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob. He impresses the ignorant, and not less the educated and refined. It is reported that while the miners of England listened to him, the tears made white furrows down their smutty cheeks. So here our mechanics shut up their shops, and the day-labourers throw down their tools, to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected He speaks from a heart all aglow with love, and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible. Many; very many persons in Northampton date the beginning of new thoughts, new desires, new purposes, and a new life, from the day on which they heard him preach of Christ and this salvation. Perhaps I ought to tell you that Mr. Edwards and some others think him in error on a few practical points; but his influence on the whole is so good we ought to bear with little mistakes.

One of the best definitions of revival is by **Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones** who put it this way. “It is an experience in the life of the Church when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work ... primarily among members of the Church ... Suddenly the power of the Spirit comes upon them and they are brought into a new and more profound awareness of the truths they had previously held intellectually... They are humbled, they are convicted of sin, they are terrified at themselves ... And they come to see the salvation of God in all its glory and to feel its power ... they begin to pray. New power comes into the preaching of the ministers, and the result of this is that large numbers who were previously outside the Church are converted and brought in (”Give Him no Rest, H Hulse, E P p 10)

Dr Lloyd Jones identifies two features which are common to all revivals. The first is the **overwhelming sense of God’s presence** which creates a deep sense of awe, and that includes reverential fear of God’s Holiness and Majesty. The second, and consequent on that awful experience is a **deep convicting sense of sin**, which leads to repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A great revival, called “The Great Awakening “, considered the first since the Reformation, started in December 1734 and continued through much of 1735. It continued during the years 1740-1741 under the preaching of Edwards” and **George Whitfield**

“Many more began to put on immortality, almost, in the look of their faces ... Their looks were all love, adoration, wonder, delight, admiration, humility. In short, it looked to me a resemblance of heaven ... Many old Christians told me they had never seen so much of the glory of the Lord, and the riches of his grace, nor felt so much of the power of the gospel before ... never been so sensible of the love of God to them ... they could not support themselves, many of them under the weight of it, they were so deeply affected with it. Had not Christ put underneath His everlasting arms for their support, I know not but many would have expired under the weight of divine benefits”

(Murray, pg 174)

The church was in a state of spiritual deadness. In December 1734 Edwards preached a series of sermons on justification. These sermons were directed against the tendency toward Arminianism, which was then developing in New England. With great vividness and tall, slender, grave young minister pictured the wrath of God, from which he urged sinners to flee. Soon a great change came over the church and the town of Northampton. In the spring and summer which followed, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. There was scarcely a single person, young or old, who was not concerned about the eternal things. During the first year of the revival, more than three hundred persons professed conversion.

1734 and 1735 then, was the beginning of the revival flame. Church services truly displayed the gathering of changed sinners. There was true praise and change even among the younger generation. The liquor stores were left empty and persons retired to be at their homes. A seriousness in religion attended most persons.

Independent revivals occurred as the years continued. By 1740, in New England, mass conversions were a common sight.

In July 1741, Edwards preached at Enfield, Connecticut, a sermon he had preached to his own congregation, entitled “**Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God**”. Before his sermon was over, the very vocal signs of deep conviction also came over these people and God’s revival also came to Enfield.

George Whitefield accepted Edwards invitation to visit Northampton, and many people were brought under deep conviction, particularly the younger generation.

“I fully suspect that as soon as Mr. Edwards should close his discourse, the Judge would descend and the final separation take place”

Before sermon was done – there was great moaning and crying out through ye whole House – What shall I do to be saved – Oh I am going to Hell – Oh what shall I do for Christ & c. So yet ye minister was obliged to desist – ye shrieks & crys were piercing & Amazing – after some time of waiting the Congregation were still so yet a prayer was made by Mr. W & after that we descended from the pulpit and discoursed with the people – Some in one place and some in another – and Amazing and Astonishing ye power God was seen - & several Souls were hopefully wrought upon yt night & oh ye cheerfulness and pleasantness of their countenances

“It is wonderful to see what a spell he (Whitfield) casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob. He impresses the ignorant, and not less the educated and refined. It is reported that while the miners of England listened to him, the tears made white furrows down their smutty cheeks. So here, our mechanics shut up their shops, and the day –labourers throw down their tools, to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected ... He speaks from a heart aglow with love and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible. Many, very many persons in Northampton date the beginning of new thoughts, new desires, new purposes, and a new life, from the day on which they heard him preach of Christ and this salvation. Perhaps I ought to tell you that Mr. Edwards and some others think him in error on a few practical points; but his influence on the whole is so good we ought to bear with little mistakes”

(Murray, pg 162)

“The revival at Northampton was to continue throughout the year of 1741. At a sermon preached by Edwards in a private house in May ‘one or two person, that were professors, were so greatly affected with a sense of the greatness and glory of divine things’, that it overcame their strength, ‘having a visible effect upon their bodies’. Such scenes were to become common. No meetings were held at night, but sometimes, after services, people were ‘so overcome that they could not go home, but were obliged to stay all night where they were....’ There was an appearance of a glorious progress of the work of God upon the hearts of sinners, in conviction and conversion, this summer and autumn, and great numbers, I think we have reason to hope, were brought to Christ”.

Jonathan Edwards

Nothing was more encouraging to Edwards than the apparent influence of the gospel upon the children and the youth of the town ... “Now we had the most wonderful work among children that ever was in Northampton ... Most, of all ages, partook of it; but yet, in this respect, it was more general on those that were of the younger sort”.

Edwards was ministering not only in Northampton, but in many other churches where revival was also being felt. He therefore became exhausted. It has been recorded that he spent much time away, and in January 1742, while away, renewed revival took place at Northampton under a visiting preacher, Mr. Buell

“There was scarcely a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those who were wont to be vainest, and loosest; and those who had been most disposed to think, and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvelous light, and delivered out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock with a new song of praise to God in their mouths.

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: It was never so full of love, nor

joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands".

Jonathan Edwards

Some additional results were:

Thirty '**religious societies**' were formed. Churches were packed. Services were regularly held in homes. It was said that even the very face of Boston seemed to be strangely altered. A similar tale was told as Whitefield continued his triumphal journey

Within the next three years, around **one hundred and fifty churches** were affected by the Awakening, not only in New England but also in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. In the latter colony, revival started in Hanover county under William Robinson. This paved the way for the outstanding preaching of Samuel Davies and the building up of the Presbyterian Church there. Now the Baptists began to expand too – through evangelists such as Daniel Marshall and Shubal Stearns. Soon they began reviving the revival. Devereux Jarrett attempted to arouse the established church, but it proved largely unresponsive.

The Awakening was not forwarded solely through the campaigns of itinerant preachers. One effect of Whitefield's visits was to rouse the ministers. 'The reason why congregations have been so dead' he explained bluntly, '**is because dead men preach to them**'. During the Awakening 'dead men' came alive and were themselves used to revive their people.

Renewed churches began to show an uncustomary concern for evangelism. Missionary enterprise was stimulated. **David Brainerd, a product of the revival, became the apostle to the Red Indians.** As the movement gained support or provoked opposition, parties tended to polarize. Denominational barriers were nevertheless broken down and a new spirit of co-operation prevailed among those sympathetic to the Awakening. Higher education was encouraged; major institutions like Princeton College opened as a result of the revival. Spiritual liberation paved the way for political liberation, and contributed indirectly to the American revolution. Christianity acquired such a hold that it expanded with the American frontier and ensured that the independent nation would rest on a reliable foundation

Edwards hated lukewarm religion, but he also saw and recognized that religious experience is never wholly pure or free from the natural and carnal. Natural passion can get out of control and faintings, tears, groans, agonizing outcries, and body tremors – all observed at gatherings during the Great Awakening – can be disruptive and also lead to spiritual pride, still. Edwards defended revivalism even though he had no delusions about man's immediate tendencies.

But toward the end of this revival, **problems arose.** If true revival, by definition, does not depend upon human support, how was it that by 1742, after such remarkable progress, there came an ebb to the flood? 'Had it continued of this unmixed character', writes Dwight, 'so extensive was its prevalence and so powerful its operation, it would seem that in no great length of time it would have pervaded the western world'. Why did it not continue? A modern writer suggests that 'it declined simply because it had to, because society could not maintain itself in so great a disequilibrium'. This was not Edwards' view. For him the reason was much more profound or, to use his word, 'mysterious'. He came to believe that there was one principal cause of the reversal, namely, the unwatchfulness of the friends of the Awakening who allowed genuine and

pure religion to become so mixed with 'wildfire', and carnal 'enthusiasm', that the Spirit of God was grieved and advantage given to Satan.

The origins of a fanatical element in the revival cannot be traced with any distinctness, but by the latter half of 1741, and very early 1742, its presence was plainly to be seen in many places. In his New Haven sermon of September 1741, Edwards admitted that 'imprudencies, irregularities' and a 'mixture of delusion' were observable amidst the revival, and warned: 'Satan will keep men secure as long as he can; but when he can do that no longer, he often endeavours to drive them to extremes, and so to dishonour God, and wound religion in that way'. In the same month Daniel Wadsworth noted in his diary, "The great awakening &c, seems to be degenerating into strife and faction"

Similarly, Eleazar Wheelock, after attending a service at Voluntown, Connecticut, on October 21, 1741, wrote in his diary: "There is a great work in this town, but more of the footsteps of Satan than in any place I have yet been in: the zeal of some too furious: they tell of visions, revelation, and many strong impressions upon the imagination".

Trouble first appeared in connection with the cases of sudden physical collapse, or outcries, and of swoonings which were witnessed in many congregations from the summer of 1741 onwards. The scene of great distress which occurred when Edwards preached at Enfield in June of that year, was not untypical. In Edwards' view, such evidences of shock were not proof of any saving work of the spirit; people might indeed be overwhelmed and prostrated by sudden alarm when savingly convicted by God, but he also knew that the same outward effects could accompany feelings prompted by truth in the unregenerate, while under the slavish fear of God.

The presence of such phenomena might even be the result of hysteria, yet his own experience in the summer of 1741 led him to believe that in most cases, there was no need for friends of the revival to be alarmed if congregations were disturbed by signs of physical distress. When a certain Deacon Lyman of Goshen, Connecticut, clearly concerned about the unusual phenomena, wrote to him, Edwards replied on August 31, 1741:

"In my prodigious fullness of business, and great infirmity of body, I have time to write but very briefly concerning those things you mention. Concerning the great stir that is in the land, and those extraordinary circumstances and events that it is attended with, such as persons crying out, and being set into great agonies, with a sense of sin and wrath, and having their strength taken away, and their minds extraordinarily transported with light, love and comfort, I have been abundantly amongst such things, and have had great opportunity to observe them, here are elsewhere, in their beginning, progress, issue and consequences: and however there may be some mixture of natural affection, and sometimes of temptation, and some impudences and irregularities, as there always was, and always will be in this imperfect state, yet as to the work in general, and the main of what is to be observed in these extraordinary things, they have all the clear and incontestable evidences of the true divine work. If this be not the work of God, I have all my religion to learn over again, and know not what use to make of the Bible".

But Edwards also believed as he made clear in his New Haven sermon, that physical responses during a service should **not** be encouraged. People 'should endeavour to refrain from such outward manifestations ... to their utmost, at the time of their solemn worship'. It was just here that differences began to enter. Some confident that they could identify the Spirit's work, began to encourage the idea that the greater the outcries and the commotion, the more glorious was the

evidence of God's power, and once this idea was accepted, the door was open to all manner of excess.

No authority on earth could have stopped some of the scenes which occurred under powerful preaching in the Great Awakening, any more than human authority could have pacified the distressed multitude at Pentecost, yet there were occasions when disorder could have been stopped if it had been remembered that excitement. As such, is not necessarily a blessing from heaven. Far from attempting to restrain themselves, people sometimes willfully gave way to sheer emotion.

One example of this occurred in the church of Edwards' cousin, Solomon Williams, at Lebanon the presence of George Whitefield had drawn many people from other districts to the Lebanon meeting house. When Whitefield's sermon from the text, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me', was over, and the service concluded, Whitefield and Williams left the building. Many who had remained, however, reported an eye-witness, 'became so perfectly frantic – jumping, dancing, singing and praying, that the scene seemed to form a sort of Bedlam'. The outcome was as follows:

“Good Deacon Huntingdon – Dr Williams' right hand man – having continued in the church, as a witness to what passed, went straight to his pastor to see if he could not do something to quell the disorder. Dr Williams and Mr. Whitefield both hastened to the church; and, on entering, such was the noise and tumult on every side, that the presence of the two ministers was not immediately observed. They went forward to the Deacon's seat, and Mr. Whitefield, stamping his foot with great violence on the floor, exclaimed with a voice of thunder – 'What means all this tumult and disorder?' Instantly there was silence through the house; but some of them quickly remarked that they were so much delighted to see and hear their spiritual father, and were so filled with the Spirit, that they could not forebear their demonstrations of joy. Whitefield replied to them with great mildness of manner – 'My dear children, you are like little partridges, just hatched from the egg. You run about with egg shells covering your eyes, and you cannot see and know where you are going'.

The effect of his gentle expostulation was that the disorder entirely ceased, and they withdrew quietly to their several homes”.

This event occurred after the Great Awakening was over. When the spirit of fanaticism was at its height, it was often far more difficult to deal with than on this occasion at Lebanon. Edwards himself, by 1742, had considerable difficulties at Northampton: 'A great deal of caution and pains were found necessary to keep the people, many of them, from running wild'.. He dates the beginning of the trouble to the arrival of 'a number of the zealous people from Suffield' at the time of Buell's visit in January-February 1742. Amidst the great blessing attending Buell's preaching, instances of phenomena which were not God-honouring 'soon became very apparent' and members of the Northampton congregation became influenced by the assumption that noise, excitement, and spiritual power were all one. Writing of this in December 1743, he (Edwards) says:

*“With respect to the late revival of religion amongst us for three or four years past, it has been observed that in the **former** part of it, in the years 1740 and 1741 the work seemed to be much more pure, having less of a corrupt mixture than in the former great outpouring of the spirit in 1735 and 1736. Persons seemed to be sensible of their former errors, and had learned more of the tendency and consequences of things. They were now better guarded, and their affections were not only stronger, but attended with*

*greater solemnity, and greater humility and self-distrust, and greater engagement after holy living and perseverance: and there were fewer errors in conduct. But in the **latter** part of it, in the year 1742, it was otherwise: the work continued more pure till we were infected from abroad. Our people hearing of, and some of them seeing, the work in other places, where there was a greater visible commotion than here, and the outward appearances were more extraordinary, were ready to think that the work in those places far excelled what was amongst us, and their eyes were dazzled with the high profession and great show that some made, who came hither from other places.*

That those people went so far beyond them in raptures and violent emotions of the affections, and a vehement zeal, and what they called boldness for Christ our people were ready to think was owing to far greater attainments in grace, and intimacy with heaven: they looked little in their own eyes in comparison with them, and were ready to submit themselves to them, and yield themselves up to their conduct, taking it for granted that every thing was right conduct, taking it for granted that every thing was right that they said and did. These things had a strange influence on the people, and gave many of them a deep and unhappy tincture from which it was hard and long labour to deliver them, and from which some of them are not fully delivered to this day”

In some places ministers found themselves almost wholly unable to restrain unruly emotionalism. David Hall, Edwards’ close friend, having seen ninety-eight added to his church, later lost many of his people when he tried to restrain the wild-fire . The case of Joseph fish, another friend of the revival, who ministered at North Stonington, was even worse. Seeing a number in his quickened congregation laying emphasis upon ‘violent agitations and outcries, ecstasies, visions, trances and inward impressions, he greatly feared that many would be deceived as to the nature of true religion and in consequence perish’. But when he began to speak on the subject, so strong was the false zeal, that the majority of the congregation left him and he ‘with grief and anxiety saw his church gradually dwindling away’.

So, in the words of Dwight, the revival’s ‘worst enemies were found among its most zealous friends’

The effects of fanaticism did not stop, however with the divisions caused between men who had originally stood together. The same fanaticism gave occasion for those to speak who hitherto had been doubters, silent onlookers, or secret opponents. In 1740 -1741, although rumours were heard that the Awakening was all ‘the effect of a heated imagination, or mere enthusiasm and disorder’, no spokesman for such opinions was to be found in the land. An awe came upon men and stilled every tongue. The general consciousness that the work was of God was so strong that, as we have seen, when criticism at length began to be heard, it needed the cover of anonymity.

All this was changed by the emergence of an undeniable fanaticism. Was it not possible, men could now ask, that the ‘enthusiastical impressions’ which had seized Davenport, were in fact and cause for all that had been attributed to divine operation? Was the Awakening, in reality, just a form of natural excitement similar to such other excitements as may agitate communities from time to time? ‘Some persons of very good sense were once inclined to think God was doing wonders in this place’. wrote the author of The State of Religion in New England in 1742, ‘but that was at a time when the superstitious panic ran very high, and bore down everybody that was not well fixed and established, either by a natural steadiness of temper, or the strong reason and reflection’. Only ‘as the passions of the people subsided’ could better judgments be reached by a large number.

This argument was not without a degree of plausibility at a time when many had good reason to recoil from the excesses of Davenport. Fanaticism thus gave rise to a greater danger - the danger that opportunity was being given not merely to condemn excess, but to undermine faith in the Holy Spirit and in the nature of true religion. Orthodoxy, instead of being established in the land by the Awakening, might accordingly be discredited. For Edwards this was the most serious challenge of the 1740's.

“There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, does not hinder this work of God’s power and grace from being very glorious ... How unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done because the devil, and we in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief! ...

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil to upset a revival of religion; when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then he drives them to excesses and extravagancies. He holds them back as long as he can; but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and, if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by this means chiefly that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings. Yea, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to upset the grand religious revival of the world in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner to overthrow the Christian Church through the earth, and to make way for the great Anti-Christian apostasy, that masterpiece of all the devil’s works, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes of enthusiasm, superstition and severity towards opposers; which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that, in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it; and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts to mislead them ...”
(Murray, pg 235)

“One erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God’s manner in these days to guide His saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation ...

This error will defend and support errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct ...

And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure Word of God, which we have in such abundance and clearness, now since the canon of Scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have any thing added to them by impulses from above? Why should we not rest in that standing rule that God has given to His Church, which, the apostles teaches us, is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the Scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire a higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus.

(Murray, pg 243)

3. HIS EMPHASIS AND TREATISE ON “RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS”

Edwards recorded his emphasis in his famous treatise entitled “Religious Affections”, which was divided into 3 sections:

A. THE NATURE OF THE AFFECTIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN RELIGION

- (i) That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference. God, in His Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good earnest, fervent in spirit and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion. (Works, p. 237)
- (ii) The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercise of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. (Works. p. 238)
- (iii) He that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion. (Works. p.238)
- (iv) Results of love for God – From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love to God, will necessary arise other religious affections: hence will arise an intense hatred and a fear of sin; a dread of God’s displeasure; gratitude to God for His goodness; complacence and joy in God when He is graciously and sensibly present; grief when He is absent; a joyful hope when a future enjoyment of God is expected; and fervent zeal for the divine glory. (Works, p.240)
- (v) No light in the understanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart; no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises ... If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. (Works, p.243)
- (vi) Affection for the world and God – In matters which concern worldly interest, their outward delights, their honour and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! how dull are their affections! And heavy and hard their hearts in these matters; here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. (Works, p 24)
- (vii) But is there any thing in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of our admiration and love, our earnest and longing desires, hope, rejoicing, and fervent zeal, as those things which are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ . (Works, p. 244)

**B SHOWING WHAT ARE NO CERTAIN SIGNS THAT RELIGIONS
AFFECTIONS ARE TRULY GLORIOUS OR THAT THEY ARE NOT
(12 SIGNS)**

- (i) It is no sign, one way or other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high. ... In a word, it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections raised to a very high degree, and yet nothing of true religion. (p. 246) (Not all affections are true)

- (ii) It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body. ... All affections whatsoever have in some respect or degree, an effect on the body ... and if all affections have some effect on the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections, and the more vigorous their exercises are, (other circumstances being equal), the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very great and strong exercises of the affections should have great effects on the body. And therefore, seeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritually; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both these kind of affections. And consequently these effects are no signs, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidence that affections are spiritual; for we see them often times arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about things purely natural may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determined, that high affections about religious things which arise in like manner from nature, cannot have the like effect ...

Before I leave this head, I would further observe that it is plain the Scripture often makes use of bodily effects to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as trembling, groaning, being sick, crying out, panting and fainting. Now if it be supposed that these are only figurative expressions to represent the degree of affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are suitable figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections; which I see not how they would be, if those spiritual affections are the proper effects and sad tokens of false affections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful figures to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections, (p.246/247) (Affections affect the body)

- (iii) It is no sign that affections are truly gracious, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant in talking of religious things ... On the other hand, there are many who, if they see this effect in any, are very ignorantly and impudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, under the saving influences of His spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature. Such a one's mouth, say they, is now opened: he used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: he is free now to open his heart, and tell his experience, and declare the praises of God; it comes from him, as free as water from a fountain; and the like. And especially are they

captivated into a confident persuasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their talk...

That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affections last, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to show that earnestness in their talk and behaviour; as the greater part of the Jews, in all Judah and Galilee did for a while, about John the Baptist's preaching and baptism, when they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light: a mighty stir was made all over the land, and among all sorts of persons, about this great prophet and his ministry. And so the multitude in like manner, often manifested a great earnestness, a mighty engagement of spirit, in every thing that was external, about Christ, his preaching and miracles, being astonished at his doctrine, anon with joy receiving the Word. They followed him sometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink, and sleep to hear him; once they followed him in to the wilderness, fasting three days going to hear him; sometimes extolling him to the clouds, saying 'never man spake like this man'! being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over full of talk of his own experiences; falling upon it everywhere, and in all companies; and when so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. A tree that is overfull of leaves, seldom bears much fruit.

(p. 247) (Mere talk, not of affections)

- (iv) It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not excite them by their own endeavours - When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a strange thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not contrary to truth?

(P.248) (Affections excited by own endeavours)

- (v) It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come to the mind in a remarkable manner with texts of Scripture - All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the Word of God, With respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are agreeable to the Word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise: and not that those affections must be right, which arise on occasion of the Word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of Scripture to the mind, and misapply them, to deceive persons? (p.249)

Another foundation error of those who do not acknowledge the divinity of this work is, not taking the Holy Scriptures as whole, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge such things by ...

If we take the Scriptures for our rule, then the greater and higher our exercises of love to God, delight and complacency in Him, desires and longings after Him, delight in His children, love to mankind, brokenness of heart abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for it; the more we have of the peace of God which passeth

all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost, unseparable, and full of glory: the higher our admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorifying in Him; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which He and His apostles taught, raised in the soul. (p. 367)

- (vi) It is no evidence that religious affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them. ... It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit and the life, essence and sum of all true religion; and that by which we are most conformed to heaven, and most contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent anything is, the more will be the counterfeits of it ... But with respect to love, it is plain by the Scripture that persons may have a kind of religious love and yet have no saving grace. (p.250) (Love)
- (vii) Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or not (p.250)
- (viii) Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections, that comforts and joys seem to follow in a certain order - And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to lead them into a wilderness, before He speaks comfortably to them, and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness, and absolute dependence on His power and grace, before He appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the Scripture. (p.252)
- (ix) It is no certain sign that affections have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship - This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external exercises of religion, and to spend much time in them, is no sure evidence of grace; because such a disposition is found in many who have no grace ... False religion may cause persons to be loud and earnest in prayer ... Experience shows, that persons from false religion may be abundant in the external exercises of religion. (p. 255)
- (x) Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections, that they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God. (p.255)
- (xi) It is no sign that affections are right, or that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make persons exceedingly confident. (p.256)
- (xii) Counterfeit - Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that the relations persons give of them, are very affecting - They may have a kind of love to the brethren, great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, sorrow for sin, reverence, submission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for the interest of religion and the good of souls. These affections may come after great awakenings and

convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation.

Counterfeit love and joy, and other affections, may seem to follow one another, just in the same order that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, may cause abundance of tears, yea may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, fervent and fluent in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it ... _

How great therefore, may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and appearances, between hypocrite and true saint! (p. 260/261)

C. **DISTINGUISHING SIGNS OF TRULY GRACIOUS AND HOLY AFFECTIONS**

- (i) Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural and divine – Thus Christians are called spiritual persons, because they are born of the Spirit And because of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them ... The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action ...

The Spirit of God produces there (in the soul) those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own proper nature ... so that not only the persons are called spiritual, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those qualifications, affections, and experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also spiritual. (p. 264-265)

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have on their imagination - their imaginary ideas of God or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion - have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they are not any part of gracious experience (p.267)

When God sets His seal on a man's heart by His Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed, and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax ... And this mark enstamped by the Spirit of God's children, is His own image. (p. 273) (From divine influence)

- (ii) The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendentally excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest. (p.274)

And hence it comes to pass, that in their rejoicings and revelations, hypocrites are wont to keep their eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual discoveries, their minds are taken up about their own experiences; and not the glory of God, or the beauty of Christ. They keep thinking with themselves, what a good experience is this! What a discovery is this! What

wonderful things have I met with! And so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, His beauty and fullness. Instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences. Instead of feeding and feasting their souls in viewing the innate, sweet, refreshing and amiableness of the things exhibited in the gospel, they view them only as it were side-ways.

(p.278) (Object is excellency of divine things)

- (iii) Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the moral excellency of divine things. Or, a love of divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the spring of all holy affections.
(p.278)
- (iv) Gracious affections arise from the mind being enlightened rightly and Spiritually to apprehend divine things - Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart, enlarges the affections, and opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven (Luke 11:52). Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding; which is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high ... That all gracious affections arise from some instruction, or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such an impression on the imagination are not gracious.
(p.281/282)

When the mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the Scripture It is enabled to see that which before was not seen, by reason of blindness.
(p.285)

Satan follows blessing - When the Spirit of God is poured out to being a glorious work, then the old serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time soon brought all things into confusion.
(p. 287)

- (v) Truly gracious affections are attended with a conviction of the reality and certainty of divine things (p. 288) - It doth not so, as the prejudices of the heart against the truth of divine things are hereby removed, so that the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reasons which are offered. (p. 293)
- (vi) Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation - Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has his own utter insufficiency, despicableness and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart. (p. 294)

Boast of humility - Some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to heaven with a high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility.
(p. 296)

Fruits of humility - A poor man is not disposed to quick and high resentment when he is among the rich. He is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are

above him; nor is he still and self-willed. He is patient with hard fare, expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently. He does not take it heinously that he is overlooked, and but little regarded; but is prepared to be in a low place; readily honours his superiors, and takes reproofs quietly. He easily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his understanding and judgement; he is not over-nice or humoursome, and has his spirit subdued to hard things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. (p. 301)

- (vii) Another thing, wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is that They are attended with a change of nature - Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons, who think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they may have been affected. Conversion (if we may give any credit to Scripture) is a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin to God. A man may be restrained from sin, before he is converted; turned from it unto holiness: so that thenceforward he becomes a holy person, and an enemy to sin. (p. 302)
- (viii) Truly gracious affections differ from those that are false and delusive, in that they Naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ (p. 303) - There is no one virtue or disposition of mind, so often and so expressly insisted on, as marks laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a sign peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and positive evidence, Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminence, His Commandment (John 13:34) ... Nothing can be a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful, true Christian. (p.306/7)
- (ix) Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended with a Christian tenderness of Spirit. (p. 307)
- (x) Another thing wherein those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is beautiful symmetry and proportion (p/ 309)
And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards different persons, so there is in their seeming exercises of love towards the same persons. Some men show a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly substance and often give to the poor; but have no love to or concern for the souls of men.

Others pretend a great love to men's souls, but are not compassionate and charitable towards their bodies. To make a great show of love, pity and distress for souls, costs them nothing; but in order to show mercy to men's bodies, they must part with money. But a true Christian love to our brethren, extends both to their souls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ He showed mercy to man's souls, by laboriously preaching the gospel to them, and to their bodies, in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. (p.310)

All action, no devotion - ... so that if persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected

when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion. (p. 312)

- (xi) Another great and very distinguishing difference is, that the higher gracious affections are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased; on the contrary, false affections rest satisfied in themselves. (p. 312)
- (xii) Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice (p.314)
- (xiii) Christian practice or holy life, is a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbours and brethren (p. 321)
- (xiv) Christian practice in a distinguishing and sure evidence of grace to persons' own conscience. (p. 324)

4. DISMISSAL

A pastor and churchman, Edwards was a champion of higher standards for church members, believing that only the saints – the true elect - should be members of full communion. When he acted on the basis of this position, no longer abiding by the laxer view, he was dismissed from his pulpit in 1750, despite a careful treatise on the subject which had appeared the year before.

(The controversy was) whether there was any need of making a credible profession of godliness in order to persons being admitted to full communion; whether they must profess having faith, or whether a profession of common faith were not sufficient; whether persons must be esteemed truly godly, and must be taken in under that notion, or whether if they appeared morally sincere, there were not sufficient?... There was no suggestion that the dispute was only about the degree of evidence, but what was the thing to be made evident, whether real godliness or moral sincerity

Jonathan Edwards

His grandfather, John Stoddard, died in June 1784, and with that, the birth of the controversy. until then, Edwards would have his grandfather's counsel concerning the admissibility of the applicants. But the very first two solely treated by him, were manipulated into declining his entreaties. His grandfather had considered the Lord's Supper to be a converting ordinance, and Edwards, that it was an ordinance solely for true believers. But while the former was still alive he conformed.

While the debate was still unresolved, he suggested that three local ministers preside over one of the services in order to determine whether the applicants were indeed truly saved. But the members strongly objected. It was then referred to the Precinct (the town meeting). It was here that they impressed the need for him to resign if he continued to hold his views. A Council had to be convened for this (incidentally, of questionable composition). They denied him his wise suggestion concerning the choice of certain new council seats. They mainly refused him opportunity to deliver various addresses to his congregation, explaining his view (his lengthy and

detailed book concerning his views on communion involvement did not go down well, particularly due to its detail)

And so, after various lectures addressed in the town itself, largely attended, (only a very, very small percentage comprising his own congregation), he finally decided to commit a Sunday sermon to the subject. No success resulted from this. The New Council then convened (19 June, 1750, terminating three days later), and decided he should leave.

How often have we met together in the house of God in this relation? How often have I spoke to you, instructed, counselled, warned, directed, and fed you, and administered ordinances among you, as the people which were committed to my care, and of whose precious souls I had the charge? But in all probability, this never will be again ...

It was three and twenty years, the 15th day of last February. Since I have laboured in the work of the ministry, in the relation of a pastor to this church and congregation....

I have spent the prime of my life and strength in labours for your eternal welfare. You are my witnesses that what strength I have had, I have not neglected in idleness, nor laid out in prosecuting worldly schemes, and managing temporal affairs, for the advancement of my outward estate and aggrandizing myself and my family; but have given myself to the work of the ministry labouring in it night and day, rising early and applying myself to this great business to which Christ has appointed me

How exceeding beautiful, and how conducive to the adorning happiness of the town, if the young people could be persuaded, when they meet together, to converse as Christians and as the children of God. This is what I have longed for; and it has been exceedingly grievous to me when I have heard of vice, vanity and disorder among our youth. And so far as I know my heart, it was from hence that I formerly led this church to some measures, for the suppressing of vice among our young people, which gave to great offence and by which I became so obnoxious.....

I have found the work of the ministry among you to be a great work indeed, a work of exceeding care, labour, and difficulty ...

But now I have reason to think my work is finished which I had to do as your minister. you have publicly rejected me and my opportunities cease....

A contentious people will be miserable people. The contentions which have been among you since I first became your pastor, have been one of the greatest burdens I have laboured under in the course of my ministry - not only the contentions you have had with me, but those which you have had one with another, about your lands and other concerns – because I knew that contention, heat of spirit, evil speaking, and things of the like nature, were directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity and did, in a peculiar manner, tend to drive away God's Spirit from a people....

Let the late contention about the terms of Christian communion, as it has been the greatest, be the last. I would, now I am preaching my farewell sermon, say to you, as the apostle to the Corinthians, "Finally brethren farewell. Be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you"....

May God bless you with a faithful pastor, one that is well acquainted with his mind and will thoroughly warning sinners, wisely and skillfully searching professors and conducting you in the way to eternal blessedness....

I desire that I may never forget this people, who have been so long my special charge and that I may never cease to pray fervently for your prosperity. ...

And let me be remembered in the prayers of all God's people that are of a calm spirit and are peaceable and faithful in Israel, of whatever opinion they may be with respect to terms of church communion. And let us all remember and never forget our future solemn meeting on the great day of the Lord; the day of infallible decision, and of the everlasting and unalterable sentence. Amen

Quote from Jonathan Edwards sermon

Edwards preached his farewell sermon on July 1, 1750, and his true godliness, calm and patience radiated. On conclusion of his delivery many seemed moved, even those who had voted against him. Strangely he would remain another two years until a new pastor could be found.

During these two years he would struggle in the support of his family, due to the termination of his salary. Numerous other posts were widely open to him (but only in Scotland – the prospect of moving his family across the sea and not enabling his future congregation to fully test his aptitude, finally called him to refuse this opportunity). The largeness of his family, his sole interest in study, and his advanced age (46 years) caused him to be not very “attractive” prospect.

5. MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS

Word came of the need for a pastor at a settlement known as **Stockbridge**. It was a work his grandfather was involved in, in reaching out to the Mohawks. The idea would be for him to pastor the new settlers arriving (who heard of the increased land possibilities). But the opportunities soon would open up for his involvement among the Mohawks.

But great difficulties met him on his arrival on the 8th August 1751. Mismanagement of funds, and plundering of the Indian people was taking place. Also, certain persons resented his presence and made things very unpleasant for him. Over and above all this, he experienced great financial difficulties. By 1754, much of these problems had been dealt with and Edwards was on the top of things, but then the war broke out between the French and the English. Also that year, he experienced a very serious and prolonged bout of fever that brought him near death.

Though there was much hope, the aforementioned dampened it. But prior to the Mohawk's dispersion (due to the war), there were seasons when much conviction of soul came upon them. Edwards would provide four services each Sunday – one for the Indians, two for the whites and another for the Housatonics (the River Indians – among whom there had been hope!)

If he had been accused of being too distant to his congregation at Northampton, at Stockbridge he was seen as being very intimate with the Indians, angered at injustices brought upon them. During the war, when the school had been abandoned and his own efforts were terminated, he sent some of the Indian boys elsewhere for study. He had a particularly soft heart for the youth and put some emphasis in this area of his work

His removal from Northampton was to prove of ultimate good for the Church. He now had time to write books, not so much review sermons, for he would be there 8 years in all.

NB. French and Indian war 1754 - Stockbridge easy prey

6. PRESIDENT AT PRINCETON

Edwards had since Northampton days revealed a keen interest in the College of Princeton, keeping in contact with them by post. 1757 came to be the year in which he would receive a unanimous vote as president of Princeton. But he felt that he was too old, much settled in the quiet frontier town of Stockbridge (certain that the Lord had called him there!), and that a major move would harm his financial matters (i.e. fearing the prospect of again slumping into debt). Even more so, though, he objected to the election because of ailments and a disagreeable affinity for conversation, and because of his keen desire to attend to his various writings.

But Princeton's needs and the overwhelming support of councils and friends were greater than his objections, and 1758 saw his arrival there. - on Feb 16th arrived, met by Esther and grandchildren

7. DEATH

After only a few weeks work at Princeton came his death, having submitted to inoculation during a **smallpox** epidemic, and contracting the disease. He died 22nd March 1758, when he was 54 years old

When he was told that there was no hope of recovery, Jonathan was "a little perplexed for awhile", but his questionings were brief and he characteristically accepted the verdict as the will of God. After enduring a month of painful illness he called his daughter Lucy to him and she proceeded to soothe his fevered brow, bending over him to hear his words. His throat was swollen he could'nt even drink sufficiently to stem the fever, yet be able to speak. But he was able to put pen to paper:

Dear Lucy, it seems to be the will of god that I must shortly leave you; therefore give my kindest love to my dear wife, and tell her, that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature, as I trust is spiritual, and therefore will continue forever. And I hope she will be supported under so great a trial and submit cheerfully to the will of God.

And as to my children, you are now like to be left fatherless, which I hope will be an inducement to you all, to seek a Father who will never fail you.

And as to my funeral, I would have it to be like Mr. Burr's and any additional sum of money, that might be expected to be laid out that way, I would have it disposed of to charitable uses.

8. HIS WORKS

Much, if not most, of his works came from his pen while at Stockbridge. As already mentioned, the time available and the relaxed atmosphere greatly aided his chief interest of writing.

8. HIS THINKING

He was a firm Calvinist. The “new way of ideas” prompted by John Locke only found utterances in his anthropology, particularly in his work “Freedom of the Will”.

He was committed to salvation by sovereign grace, and therefore was not at all sympathetic towards the ever-present Arminianism and Socinianism, and for a time the revivalistic extremes. The “Freedom of the Will” and “Religious Affections” sprouted from the former and latter concerns.

In Edwards, and in Augustine, there is a union of a highly intellectual and speculative spirit and an often ecstatic devotion to God-in-Christ. The same mind deployed the relentless logic of the “freedom of the Will” and resolved to “cast and venture my whole soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in Him, and consecrate myself wholly to Him”. Edwards was a complete stranger to that separation of “heart” and “head” that has often plagued evangelical religion.

Edwards’ influence has been widespread. Some of his successors in America, such as Emmons, Hopkins and Nathaniel Taylor, while appealing to Edwards, developed the “New England Theory” in directions that he would surely have disapproved of. He had a wide circle of correspondents, compensating somewhat for his cultural isolation. His writings greatly influence Thomas Chalmers, Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, among others.

CONCLUSION

It has been justly observed, “The number of those men who have produced great and permanent changes in the character of mankind, and stamped their own image on the minds of succeeding generations, is comparatively small; and, even of this small number, the great body have been indebted for their superior efficiency, at least in part, to extraneous circumstance while very few can ascribe it to the simple strength of their own intellect. Yet here and there an individual can be found, who, by his mere mental energy, has changed the course of human thought and feeling, and led mankind onward in that new and better path which he had opened to their view. Such an individual was Jonathan Edwards ...

Turnbull has summarized magnificently what the life of Jonathan Edwards was all about:

An example of one who lived by the highest standards of the ministry; a disciplined and dedicated pastor; an intelligent and passionate preacher of the Gospel; a pastor who believed profoundly that the sermon was an agency of God in the conversion of souls; an evangelical mystic, a man who knew experimentally the work of God’s Spirit in the soul; and a man who proclaimed the whole counsel of God, not shunning the difficult and unpopular themes of revelation