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"The Practice that Prevails": Jonathan Edwards, Slavery, and Race

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor of Philosophy aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. J.J.G. Geurts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit Religie en Theologie
op vrijdag 4 november 2022 om 11.45 uur
in een bijeenkomst van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door

John Thomas Lowe

geboren te Legazpi, Filipijnen

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ABBREVIATIONS

WJE	*Works of Jonathan Edwards*
WJEO	*Works of Jonathan Edwards Online*
WSH	*Works of Samuel Hopkins*
WJEJ	*Works of Jonathan Edwards, Jr.*
WJB	*Works of Joseph Bellamy*
JES	*Jonathan Edwards Studies*
BA	*Biblia Americana*

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Figure 4.1 Quick stock, Jonathan Edwards' Last Will and Inventory of His Estate

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

In one of the most recent milestones of Jonathan Edwards studies, Douglas A. Sweeney has commented "that the real, historical Edwards may not be fit for polite, academic company."[1] Hardly anything else could be said truer of Edwards. With the resurgence of interest in the Puritans, early American Evangelicalism, and more specifically, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), their status as slave owners has been difficult to understand.[2] In general, biased perspectives of American Puritan history

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[1] Douglas A. Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8.

[2] For scholarly biographical accounts on Edwards's life, see George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); George M. Marsden, *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008); Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981); Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940); Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Life and Career: Society and Self," in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to American's Theologian*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15-28; David Levin, *Jonathan Edwards: A Profile*, ed. David Levin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969); Philip F. Gura, *Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005); 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 VII, Theology and Religion, vol. 340 (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2014); Joel R. Beeke and Randall, J. Pederson, "Jonathan Edwards," in *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 193-233; Roland A. Delattre, "Jonathan Edwards," in *A Companion to American Thought*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 198-200. For examples of how scholars have attempted to understand Puritanism and slavery, James J. Allergro, "'Increasing and Strengthening the Country': Law, Politics, and the Antislavery Movement in Early-Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts Bay," *The New England Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (March 2002): 5-23; Albert J. Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Massachusetts Bay," *Early American Literature* 29, no.3 (1994): 254-72; John Coffey, "Evangelicals, Slavery & the Slave Trade: From Whitefield to Wilberforce," *ANVIL: An Evangelical Journal for Theology and Mission* 24, no. 2 (2007): 97-119; Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 46-52.

have blurred a correct historical interpretation of their writings, thinking, and influence, and have isolated an image of them as everything wrong with American character.[3] As an heir of Reformed Puritan thought, Jonathan Edwards is arguably the most influential mind in Colonial America—and has even been dubbed the "American Augustine"—but still looms as a dark figure in popular minds and in early American history for his participation in and defense of slavery.[4] These previous historical representations of Edwards have largely distorted his character and legacy by portraying an image of him as a strict killjoy, and, therefore, a fresh study without so much interpretive prejudice is needed.

The Problem of Puritanism, Evangelicalism, and Slavery

The relationship between Puritanism, Evangelicalism, and slavery is not a new subject. In fact, it's been reiterated that the "The system of African American slavery which was firmly in place by the 1690s… encouraged a culture of violence that brutalized black and whites, a division of moral responsibilities that left religion to be looked after by women in the home, and a fixation by white males on

[3] For more information on the misrepresentation of Puritanism and the need for reexamination, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Problem of the History of Religion in America," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 57, Supplement: Centennial Issue (1988), 127-38; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 2-17; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), 35, 71; Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 40; J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishing, 1990), 21; Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States: An Absorbing, Authoritative Account of Religion in the United States from Colonial Days to the Present*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 81; William Warren Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 73; David Hall, "Understanding the Puritans," in *Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays*, eds. John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 1-17; Michael Kaufmann, "Cotton Mather," *A Companion to American Thought*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 436-38; Benjamin Dean and Adriaan C. Neele, eds., *The Genius of George Whitefield: Reflections on His Ministry from 21st Century Africa* (New York: Latimer Trust, 2015).

[4] George Marsden, "Jonathan Edwards, American Augustine." Books & Culture. (November/December 1999), 10-12.

questions of personal honor."[5] Even though this has been a problem that scholarship has been acutely aware of for some time, certain works have chosen to either overlook particular issues or ignore them altogether.

Recently, scholarly work has begun to focus on some of these issues. For the better part of the last century, scholars have delved into the writings, theology, philosophy, and the political context surrounding the heroes of early evangelicalism almost to the point of hagiography. During this time of resurgence, scholarly and lay interest alike in early evangelical figures have also brought to light the tragedies, and periods of great sin, in American church history. Lorenzo Johnston Greene first presented this in his *The Negro in Colonial New England* (1968) a religious and ethical paradox: "The prevailing opinion among English settlers of America in the seventeenth century was that only heathen could be enslaved by Christians, and that once the slaves were Christians, they automatically became free, for it was held that no Christian might hold another in bondage."[6] Such interest in Christian slave holding have been figures of the Reformed, or Calvinist, tradition. For example, at the recent tercentennial anniversary of the itinerant Great Awakener, and Edwards' counterpart, George Whitefield, several studies highlighted Whitefield's proslavery position as well has his explicit negative sentiments toward Africans.[7] Reaching further back to the next generation of American Puritanism, new work on Cotton Mather—although he was already thought to be a peculiar figure in American religious history—has shed light on his troublesome views of slavery and race,

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[5] Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 48.

[6] Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 259.

[7] The tercentennial anniversary of George Whitefield's birth was 2014, and preceding were many studies on his life and thought. For examples of these newer studies highlighting his dealings with slavery and race, see Peter Y. Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2018); Thomas S. Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Jessica M. Parr, *Inventing George Whitefield: Race, Revivalism, and the Making of a Religious Icon* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2015); Boyd Stanley Schlenther, "Whitefield's Personal Life and Character," in *George Whitefield: Life, Context, and Legacy*, eds., Geordan Hammond and David Ceri Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12-28.

especially since the recent upstart publication of his *Biblia Americana*. Mather's seemingly unusual views on slavery, and less than tasteful outlook on American Indians, compounded with his blame for the Salem Witch Trials, has made him a wildly controversial figure. But as wild as his views were, different interpretations of his thoughts on slavery and race have recently emerged.[8]

This undoubtedly leaves the question of Jonathan Edwards and his dealings with slavery and race to be answered. Because slavery has been closely associated with race in American history, it is necessary to delineate the two in Edwards' thought. By doing so, I will show how they were related and how they were manifested in his life and ministry.

But first, it is necessary to define the context of Puritanism and Evangelicalism, and qualify them in relation to Edwards for the purpose of this study. The definition and origins of Puritanism have been widely debated.[9]

[8] For example, see Jan Stievermann, "The Genealogy of Races and the Problem of Slavery in Cotton Mather's 'Biblia Americana,'" in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana: America's First Bible Commentary—Essays in Reappraisal*, eds., Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016). For Xendi, Mather is a harbinger for racist ideas in America and paints him as a violate racist at nearly every corner of his life. Xendi claims that "Mather viewed himself—or presented himself—as the defender of God's law, the crucifier of any non-Puritan, African, Native American, poor person, or woman who defied God's law by not following the rules of submission…" and that he "obsessed over maintaining the social hierarchies by convincing the lowly that god and nature had put them there, whether it applied to women, children, enslaved Africans, or poor people," 62-63. For whatever reason, Xendi does not interact or cite Stievermann in his sections on Mather. Six years prior to Xendi's work, Stievermann argues that this faulty analysis of Mather hinders a truer understanding of him. Texts by Mather, like *The Negro Christianized* and the fact that he owned African slaves, have been, as Stievermann argues, "cited as proof that he considered Africans inferior and natural-born servants and proof, therefore, of his implications in the anti-black racism of his day." However, Stievermann argues that "racism, in the modern sense, is not the interpretative framework that allows us to adequately understand them," 515-516.

[9] For more information on Puritanism, see, John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012); D.M. Lloyd-Jones, "Puritanism and Its Origins," in *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 237-259. William Lamont, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past and Present* 41 (1968): 77-104; Richard Greaves, "The Nature of the Puritan Tradition," in *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall,* ed. R. Buick Knox (London: Epworth Press, 1977), 255-273; Ralph Bronkema, *The Essence of Puritanism* (Goes: Oosterbaan and LeCointre, 1929); Leonard J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," in *Church History* 20 (1950): 37-57; Basil Hall, "Puritanism: The Problem of

However, a sufficient definition for Edwards' context, offered by John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, would be that "Puritanism was a variety of Reformed Protestantism, aligned with the continental Calvinistic churches rather than with the Lutherans," and was a "distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism and its tensions."[10] The word "Puritan" originated as early as the 1560s in England. It was used as a derogatory term to refer to those who were not satisfied with the English Reformation and desired further change in the Church of England. The Puritans separated themselves from the Church of England by distinctly being "dynamic in fellowship with God that shaped their minds, affected their emotions, and penetrated their souls."[11] This was accomplished by a federal theology that emphasized the "covenant of grace" in one's individual salvation and the "national covenant" that concerned the success of one's country and government.

Some scholars have argued that Puritanism began to wane after the Glorious Revolution in 1689. For North American Christians, the "religious and political agenda had so fundamentally changed that it doesn't make sense to call them Puritans any longer."[12] Instead, they were something different. Evangelicalism, which emerged out of the Puritan tradition, rejected federal theology and emphasized personal salvation and true religion. The Protestant movement of Evangelicalism did not emerge within a single denomination nor church, rather it found expression in a trans-denominational and a trans-doctrinal development. As David W. Bebbington has reckoned, the evangelical tradition is "a wine that has been poured into many bottles."[13] For example, if one looks at the influential

Definition," in *Studies in Church History*, ed. G.J. Cumming (London: Nelson, 1965), 2:283-96; J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Godly Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 21-36.

[10] Coffey and Lim, *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, 2.

[11] Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 4.

[12] Thomas S. Kidd, "What Happened to the Puritans?" *Historically Speaking* 7, No.1, Johns Hopkins University Press. (September–October 2005): 32–34.

[13] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1.

evangelical figures of the early eighteenth century, they would not only find the congregationalist, Jonathan Edwards, and Anglican George Whitefield (Calvinists), but also John Wesley (Arminian). As Mark A. Noll, historian of evangelicalism, put it: "Evangelicalism designates a consistent pattern of convictions and attitudes that have been maintained over the centuries since the 1730s."[14] In an effort to trace the expansive roots of evangelicalism, a widely used definition is David Bebbington's Quadrilateral, which is composed of four key components: conversionism (a belief that humans are in need of change in life), biblicism (a view of the Bible as spiritual truth), activism (effort into service God and spread the Gospel), and crucicentrism (beliefs that Christ's death atoned for sins). In a more updated, nuanced definition, W.R. Ward has narrowed the aspects of Evangelicalism into a "hexalaterial" by redefining and adding a few other components—association with mysticism, small group religion, deferred eschatology, experimental approach to conversion, anti-Aristotelianism and hostility to theological system, and the attempt to reinforce religious vitality, all of which could be used to categorize Edwards' thinking.[15]

This begs the questions: Was Jonathan Edwards a Puritan or Evangelical? Where does he fit within these intellectual eras? As with anything dealing with Edwards' mind, it tends to be more complex than simply one or the other. Some scholars contend that Edwards should not be thought of as a Puritan in a "strict historical" sense, while others, such as Harry S. Stout, argue that Edwards was more

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[14] Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 19.

[15] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 1-17. W.R. Ward, *Early Evangelicalism: A Global Intellectual History, 1670-1789* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-5. Noll unpacks Bebbington's definition in his chapter, "What is 'Evangelical'" in *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19-32. Also see Timothy Larsen, "Defining and Locating Evangelicalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, ed. Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-14. More recent is Thomas S. Kidd's introductory historiography of the Evangelical movement, *Who Is An Evangelical? The History of a Movement in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). Kidd's definition is boiled down to three distinct aspects: conversion, Bible, and divine experience. Namely, Evangelicals emphasize "their born again experience and the way that they 'walked' with the Holy Spirit…" compounded with their committed to *Sola Scriptura* of the Protestant Reformation, 4-5.

Puritan than has previously been portrayed.[16] In another sense, Edwards was both Puritan and Evangelical. He was certainly trained in a medieval tradition and schooled in the Protestant Scholastics, but also exercised evangelical ideas that focused on the "New Birth" in personal salvation, evangelism among the unconverted, and an authentic Christian experience. Having received a theological inheritance from the Puritans, and taking on Evangelical ideas, Edwards' thoughts of slavery and race must be considered in both the Puritan and Evangelical context.

Until this point, an exhaustive study devoted to the subject of Jonathan Edwards, slavery, and race does not exist. While there has been some work on the Edwardsean tradition in later New England figures, there is not one that traces his perspectives to earlier Puritans in either the historical and theological traditions. Some studies have mentioned Edwards, and his dealings with slavery, race, and ministry to the Native Americans, but none have given consideration to his ideas of racial equality in his theological writings, nor the events in his life that required him to think about racial issues. Moreover, none of them argue that Edwards was a forerunner for emancipation.[17]

Many of the Puritans have been lauded for their robust theology and deep influence, but when it comes to the topic of slavery, Sweeney has pointed out that "evangelicals are still untangling themselves from this sordid legacy."[18] While these events will undoubtedly be a permanent stain on church history, as well as American history, it is important to note the role evangelicals, such as Jonathan Edwards, played in contributing to the beginnings of anti-slavery attitudes in

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[16] Beeke and Jones argue that Edwards might have been Puritan in his thinking, but should not be considered a Puritan in the historical sense of the word. Beeke and Jones, *A Puritan Theology*, 4. Stout argues that Edwards was just as Puritan as his predecessors. In fact, "Throughout his career as pastor and teacher he adhered exactly to the logic and tenets of the national covenant and reiterated them in exactly the same terms as did his predecessors in the New England pulpit." Harry S. Stout, "The Puritans and Edwards," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 143.

[17] While several works have noted that the New Divinity borrowed from Edwards' theology to form an abolitionist position, none have explored which theologies and the cultural context that surrounded the transmission of Edwards' thought. For example, see Marsden, *A Life*, 250.

[18] Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 108.

American history as well as acknowledging the susceptibleness of conforming to the cultural climate and calling out injustice. Scholars have given much attention to his influence and legacy through British-colonial culture, religious tradition, and the American experience, but have lacked—and perhaps even avoided—any detailed account of his thoughts on slavery and race.[19] The main question that prompts this work is this: was Jonathan Edwards a pro-slave Puritan or an enlightened abolitionist? The answer possibly could be both and neither. He took an interesting position that was somewhat novel, but contradictory to our understanding. As a slave owner himself, Edwards supported the idea of slavery as an institution permissible in a God-ordained, social hierarchy, but denounced the slave trade. Although he used strong language to oppose the slave trade, Edwards never called slavery "sin," nor freed his slaves, and continued to purchase enslaved Africans for the majority of his life and ministry.[20] Even though Edwards' view contradicts his actions, it is still necessary to see whether or not he should be seen as a transitional figure between general colonial acceptance of slavery and the oncoming revolutionary ideas of abolitionism.

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[19] For scholarly works on Edwards influence on American experience, tradition, and culture, see Barbara B. Oberg and Harry S. Stout, *Benjamin Franklin, Jonathan Edwards, and the Representation of American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout, *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Joseph A. Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Gerald R. McDermott, *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to America's Theologian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards, Moral Philosophy, and the Secularization of American Christian Thought," *The Reformed Journal* 33, Issue 2, (February 1983): 22-28; David W. Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Culture Movements, Global Horizons* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); Sang Hyun Lee and Allen C. Guelzo, ed., *Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of American Religion* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999).

[20] For the purpose of this essay, I have chosen to refer to the slaves that came from Africa as "Africans" and not as "Blacks." Additionally, I have chosen to refer to the peoples who originated on the North American continent as "Native Americans" rather than "Indians" unless in quotations where they are named otherwise. The terms chosen are done so accurately to identify the person's ethnic origin.

Edwards Scholarship

It is true that "Scholars today are just beginning to reckon with the *magnitude* of Edwards' thought," and in one sense this study is attempting to do that.[21] It also used to be true and customary that books on Edwards would preface their studies by noting the lack of attention his life and mind have received in the realms of history and theology. This is no longer the case. Today, nearly every intellectual accolade at one point or another has been laid at his feet (whether rightly or wrongly). Phrases such as "America's Theologian" and titles like "The American Augustine" have been given to him since the rebirth of Edwards scholarship.

While recent projects like the current publication of the *Jonathan Edwards Studies Journal* and *Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia* are examples of this fresh historical perspective of Edwards, they also demonstrate there is more to him than just the self-absorbed, judgmental New England Puritan famously depicted by Perry Miller. Oddly enough, Miller's work is credited for the renewal of Edwards studies and the upswing of numerous publications each year despite his biased critique of Edwards and the Puritan tradition as the "uncongenial thicket."[22] Thanks to the scholarly efforts of Harry Stout, Douglas Sweeney, Ken Minkema, and many others, students of Jonathan Edwards have begun supporting what Patricia Tracy and George Marsden were promoting decades ago—a balanced interpretation of Jonathan Edwards' role in American Religious History.

Whether or not scholars agree with him on his interpretation of Jonathan Edwards, the origin, as has been aforementioned, of this renewed interest in Edwards scholarship is undeniably due to Perry Miller and his work *Jonathan Edwards* (1949). Miller, already canonized as a historian of religion from Harvard, evaluated Edwards as a genius; a man "from an insight into science and psychology so much ahead of his time that our own can hardly be said to have caught up to him."[23] However, in all of his admiration, Miller also criticized Edwards' primitive

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[21] Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

[22] Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, xvi.

[23] Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, xxxii.

theology and viewed him as a man whose intellect, influenced by John Locke and David Hume, was stunted by a puritanical theology with too many primitive values. However, Miller's Edwards was well-received, and thus began what is called the "Edwards renaissance."

But before immediately giving all the credit to Miller, a previous work by Ola E. Winslow, is what truly sparked the Edwards renaissance. Her 1941 Pulitzer Prize winning biography, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758*, attempted to realign the image of Edwards from the previous biographies in the 1930's of Henry Bamford Parkes, *The Fiery Puritan* (1930), and Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Jonathan Edwards* (1932).[24] Parkes and McGiffert portrayed Edwards as a closed-minded Puritan with all of the negative caricatures of an America Jeremiad. Winslow, contrasting the ideas of Parkes and McGiffert, in her Epilogue, asked "What is His Greatness?" She answered, "In a word, it is the greatness of one who had a determining art of initiating and directing a popular movement of far-reaching consequence, and who in addition, laid the foundations for a new system of religious thought, also of far-reaching consequence."[25] Indeed, this study is in part to evaluate that greatness.

The most recent biography, and Bancroft Prize winning, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (2003), appears to be the most complete and balanced assessment. Marsden notes how extraordinary Edwards' mind was, but does not shy away from Edwards' shortcomings. In his biography, Marsden wants to "understand him as a real person in his own time. Because he became such a monumental figure, it has often been difficult to find the person behind the monuments."[26] He presents Edwards with his high successes and his low failures, unlike Ian Murray's *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography,* which puts forth an Edwards as something of a flawless Evangelical hero.

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[24] Henry Bamford Parkes, *The Fiery Puritan* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1930); Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932).

[25] Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758*, 297.

[26] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 2.

The true source, that is the fountain, from which the majority of Jonathan Edwards studies have flowed since Miller's call for Edwards' scholarly recognition is the *Works of Jonathan Edwards* offered by Yale University. Currently, the *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online* amount to 73 whopping volumes which could easily feel like an ocean of manuscripts to any archivist or researcher. The sheer amount of primary source material from Edwards alone is enough for several lifetimes of study, and more so, to give rise to much more secondary source examinations. This online effort to produce a transcribed, electronic form of every document Edwards penned, offered freely, is one of the reasons Edwards has become a worldwide endeavor.

While the Edwards biographical studies have offered several interpretative narratives of his life, the offshoots from the *Works of Jonathan Edwards* have been evidently fruitful in the last several decades. Near the end of the twentieth century, M.X. Lesser compiled *Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography, 1979-1993,* which listed close to 700 books, articles, and dissertations on Jonathan Edwards in a twenty-year span.[27] Currently, Lesser's compilation is dwarfed by the number of studies since 1993. In fact, since the setup of a dozen Jonathan Edwards Centers across every habitable continent, "graduate work on Edwards outside of the United States now outweighs work on him done within the United States," and in several different languages other than English such as Korean, Japanese, Polish, Dutch, German, and Portuguese.[28] At one point a few decades ago, it was possible to have

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[27] M.X. Lesser, *Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography, 1979-1993* (Greenwood: Greenwood Press, 1994).

[28] Rhys S. Bezzant ed., *The Global Edwards: Papers from the Jonathan Edwards Congress held in Melbourne, August 2015* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), xiv. Currently, Jonathan Edwards Centers are set up at Yale University in New Haven, Ct., University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, Evangelical Theological Faculty in Leuven, Belgium, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands, Heidelberg Universiteit in Heidelberg, Germany, Károli Gáspár University in Budapest, Hungary, International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan, Ewangelikalna Wyzsza Szkola Teologiczna in Wroclaw, Poland, University of Liverpool in Liverpool England, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Gateway Seminary, in Ontario, California. Each school functions as global affiliates of Yale University to further the collaborative study of Jonathan Edwards. These individual institutions facilitate research through study, education, and publication.

read every secondary source work on Jonathan Edwards. Now it would be virtually impossible.

Aside from the actual study of Edwards' thought and life, scholars have also begun tracing his influences and influencers. As an heir of other Reformed theologians and Calvinist pedigree, historians and theologians alike are proposing how Edwards should be placed in the scope of the larger Reformed tradition. For example, a recent work by Adriaan Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (2019), considers whether or not Edwards should be placed among the Protestant Scholastics. Neele's concern is the "consequences of theological ideas of the past that found a way into Edwards' own theological reflections." Neele argues that "inherited theology must be evaluated on its own terms, historically and theologically, so that meaningful answers for the present can be constructed."[29] And since the impact Edwards had on later generations was so great, studies are also being conducted on his legacy after his death—not just the prelude of Edwardsean theology. Consequently, studies like *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (2012) focus on Edwards' role in the complex narrative of the New England Theological tradition. A long neglected and misinterpreted portion of American Church history has now come to realize that Edwardsean "theologians of the New England school were creative contributors to a living American tradition of theological reflection."[30]

[29] Adriaan C. Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), *x*.

[30] Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 5. Crisp and Sweeney argue that the "Revisionist scholarship in post-Reformation Protestant Theology has shown that successive generations of Reformed and Lutheran scholastic theologians did not contribute to the ossification of the doctrinal deposit handed on to them as was once thought. Nor were its Reformed proponents governed by a monomania about predestination and the divine decrees—the so-called central dogma of post-Reformation Protestantism that dominated later nineteenth-century historiographical work on this period. (A similar mistaken *idée fixe* has been attributed to scholastic Lutheranism and its distinctive *sola fide* doctrine.)." Newer work such as this has "begun to show that the older 'decline and fall' narrative often associated with the movement is, in fact, as mistaken as the central-dogma hermeneutic applied to the era of Protestant Orthodoxy." For an example of studies going further into Edwardsean tradition see Mark Jones and Michael A.G. Haykin, eds., *A New Divinity: Transatlantic Reformed Evangelical Debates during the Long Eighteenth Century* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press, 2018). This new work examines the debates among

Thesis Described

A clouded understanding of Jonathan Edwards' slave owning, interactions with Native Americans, and responsibility for abolitionism has prompted this study. Therefore, to bring clarity to this subject, it has become necessary to give attention to Jonathan Edwards and his dealings with slavery and race. The main question to be answered here is: How did Edwards' thoughts on slavery and race interact with the New Divinity's theology so that they would move from a traditional Calvinist standpoint on slavery to become full supporters of abolitionism? Subsequently, the following chapters will serve to treat this series of questions:

> I. In what historical and theological context did Jonathan Edwards develop his understanding of slavery and race?
> II. How did Edwards' understanding of race function in his life and ministry?
> III. How did Edwards' ideas of slavery develop in his lifetime?
> IV. How did Edwards' theological insights contribute to the New Divinity's abolitionism?

Therefore, *The Practice that Prevails*, the phrase used by Edwards to sum up his position on slavery, will investigate three things. First, in hopes of contributing to on-going Edwards studies—in regard to his character, reputation, and thinking—this dissertation seeks to examine a particular aspect of Edwards' thought, not to refashion a character from prolonged Puritan stereotypes, but to gain a correct historical understanding of him within the various disciplines of American religious history. That is, for the first subsequent question, I shall present an accurate interpretation of the historical and theological context in which Edwards' perspective on slavery and race was formed by examining various documents and letters of Edwards. Examining the context that informed Edwards' thought will help to explain the development of the tradition and society in which he was embedded.

Reformed theologians who succeeded ideas like Edwards in a much broader transatlantic context rather than being restricted to North American ideas.

Second, this study will investigate how Edwards' understanding of race manifested itself in his life and ministry, especially with his time among the Native Americans on the frontier. Edwards was taught negative perceptions of indigenous peoples from a young age, but appears to have changed by the end of his Stockbridge tenure. Here, we will look at how his ethnocentrism effected his preaching and life among the American Indians. That is, Edwards held to a superior view of British culture by evaluating others based on the standards and customs of his own. This created a cultural prejudice against those which he viewed as barbaric such as Native American culture.

Third, presenting a rounded view of his thought will help us determine how and if Edwards' thoughts conflicted with his actions regarding slavery and the slave trade. Paradoxically, he had purchased at least one slave from a slave trading port in Newport, Rhode Island, but later wrote in strong opposition to the slave trade because of its inhumane cruelty and unbiblical justification, but continued to purchase and own slaves even into his Stockbridge tenure. Edwards would later purchase a young "Negro Boy name Titus," but justified it since he argued that those who were children of slaves were legitimately kept in slavery. This would also be true for slaves captured in war or debtors. Additionally, Edwards recognized spiritual equality with Africans through baptism and full membership into churches, but at the same time viewed slaves as bound property and unequal with Anglo-Westerners in a hierarchical society. Recognizing a division between one's spirit and body within the personhood allowed him to call for the salvation of the soul, while still approving the bondage of the body.

Fourth, this study will explore Jonathan Edwards as a progenitor of abolitionist thought in late eighteenth-century colonial America. As odd as it may seem at first glance for a slave owner who never manumitted his slaves, Edwards' theology is what laid the foundation for his disciples to crusade for abolitionism. The doctrines of virtue and benevolence were instilled in New Divinity figures like Samuel Hopkins which also became the main driving force in the abolitionist cause among those in the New England Theological tradition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The grotesque practice of slavery, for Edwards' followers, was a "great national sin," and therefore, needed to be extinguished from

all corners of their new American republic. Calling for enslavers or even certain colonies to emancipate their slaves was not enough. The doctrine of disinterested benevolence that Edwards taught and demonstrated in his ministry both in Northampton and in Stockbridge was an example for Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy, and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. to follow. The ways that his students applied this doctrine can be directly traced to Edwards' theological locus.

Aims of this Study

Before this study begins, it is necessary to understand what it is not attempting to do. This will not be a study strictly given to Edwards' exegesis on the matters of slavery and race—although they will constitute a substantial portion. There have been plenty of studies that have been devoted to Edwards' general exegesis, but this study will not strictly examine particular aspects such as scriptural typology, testament relationships, or analytical theology.[31] On the opposite end of the spectrum, this study will not merely focus on Edwards' metaphysics of being, or ethics—though, again, these topics will certainly figure in the argument. Readers will be disappointed if their expectations for this study is a focus solely on the philosophical aspects of Edwards ideas of virtue or being, or simply the cultural context. It will be a combination of both.

However, there are a few aims of this study, broadly speaking, that it hopes to accomplish. First, this work is both a theological and contextual study that connects the areas of theology and history. By connecting these two areas of study it will pinpoint where theological views intersected with society and culture. On one hand, this dissertation will focus on how Edwards' theological beliefs and reading of the Bible affected his cultural viewpoints on slavery. On the other hand,

[31] For examples of recent studies focusing on Edwards, the Bible, and his exegesis, see Robert E. Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); Stephen R.C. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards's Bible: The Relationship of the Old and New Testaments* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013); Douglas A. Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); David P. Barshinger and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture: Biblical Exegesis in British North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

it will consider how the cultural and social context prodded him to think about a theology that was proslavery and racist.

This work hopes to fill gaps in both the historical and theological narratives of slavery, antislavery, and abolitionism in colonial America. Books written on slavery and its effects in America could—and probably do—fill entire libraries. However, as Harry Stout and Kenneth Minkema have put it, the story of Edwardsean abolitionism "appears more of a comet or a shooting star in freedom's galaxy than a fixed planet in the Quaker or Garrisonian orbits."[32] This niche of undiscovered and undiscussed historical theology will add to the history of slavery in America and how the early evangelical Protestants and denominations in the North American colonies (whether for good or for ill) interacted with other races during this time period. By doing so, we hopefully can achieve a better understanding of American history as well as how the views of slavery and race within American Christianity evolved over time.

This study will also serve as a work to understand better the Reformed tradition and its legacy in North America and more specifically in Puritan New England to the time of the Revolutionary War. In many ways, and rightly so, Puritanism has been closely associated with slavery and the formation of racial ideas in America; however, they are not as closely associated as they might seem. Slavery, as well as antislavery sentiments, and formative ideas of race, were found among Puritans and early Evangelicals. Part of the aim of this study is to argue what Bernard Rosenthal has suggested: that is, "if puritan New England deservedly bears the stigma of having supported slavery, it is only fair to acknowledge that the principal intellectual opposition came from orthodox Puritans" and their theological successors.[33] By doing so, we will properly situate the Reformed tradition's theology and history within early American thought.

[32] Minkema and Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate," 74.

[33] Bernard Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery," *The New England Quarterly* 46, No. 1 (March 1973): 81.

Methodology

The methodology of this dissertation is first and foremost elucidation. Much confusion and frustration alike have surrounded the issues of Jonathan Edwards, slavery, and racial notions toward Africans and Native Americans. Once several documents had surfaced that Edwards was an unapologetic slave holder, articles began to emerge making his slave-holding even more known to the academic sphere as well as to the public, including what has become a large part of Edwards readership—the church. A quick search on the internet reveals that those few journal articles have multiplied into a plethora of blog posts just over the last decade. However, that search would also reveal a mound of social media interaction, littered with endless disputes filled with incorrect information, and misinterpreted evidence. Unknowingly, many have fastened their views or positions about Edwards' dealings with slavery and race with preconceived modern opinions, or with misinformed facts altogether. But surprisingly, there is rarely any real academic interaction with Jonathan Edwards, slavery, and race as a solution to this problem.

Here, this project will bring clarity to those conversations by providing a thorough analysis of Edwards' writings by not only examining their content, but from evaluating the historical and theological context in which they were written. Then, and only then, can Edwards' views on slavery and race be rightly ascertained.

In step with elucidation is contextualization. Following the goal of illuminating the accurate portrayal of Edwards' thought in regards to slavery and race, is to consider the context—that is for Edwards, the daily living and writing environment that (might have) influenced his mind and the way in which he thought about social topics as it relates to his theology. As earlier mentioned, many who come across Edwards' position on slavery and his notion of race initially are mortified because they are attempting inextricably to assess a mindset, culture, and place from which they are far removed—and, moreover, around three hundred years after Edwards' time. Indeed, Sweeney is right to suggest that a far-removed-Edwards might not be suitable for "polite [and] academic company." To bring us near to that time and place are the remaining manuscripts of Edwards' life and the

ones that surrounded it. The *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online* by Yale University, along with other special collections and archives such as Hartford Seminary, Andover Theological Seminary which are now at the Yale Beinecke Rare Manuscript Library, and the Massachusetts Public Probate Records and State Archives, have offered a treasure trove of Edwards' sermons, personal correspondence, and other formal—and unpublished—documents which give more insight as to why and how Edwards thought about slavery and Native Americans. Probably the earliest published piece of physical evidence proving Edwards' direct ownership was his "Last Will and the Inventory of His Estate," printed in *Bibliotheca Sacra* in 1876, which listed a "Negro Boy Named Titus" along with Edwards' farm animals. Additionally, his disposition towards Native Americans had been fairly known since Ola E. Winslow's biography of Edwards in 1940, and made better known in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* began by Perry Miller in 1953. Since then, there have been a few interactions with Jonathan Edwards' recently discovered manuscripts on slavery, but scholars have not examined all of them. Furthermore, these sources have not been examined in light of the context of Edwards' legacy; namely, his followers.

Summarily, this work will provide a clear position of Edwards' views on slavery and race by carefully bringing together the necessary documents, all the while considering the context in which they were written. Albeit the studies of slavery in early Christianity and their socio-cultural context alongside the Scriptures are abundant, this particular study will not be comparing itself with those studies.[34] Furthermore, this study does not focus on collective, government bodies, responses to institutional change, or how Protestant organizational structures sought to bring idealistic change to proslavery views during the seventeenth,

[34] There are several fine studies about the relationship between slavery and early Christianity. For examples, see Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002; Chris L. de Wet, *The Unbound God: Slavery and the Formation of Early Christian Thought*, Routledge Studies in the Early Christian World (New York: Routledge, 2017); Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.[35] Much like Jared Ross Hardesty's *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds: A History of New England Slavery*, I focus on the lives and experiences of specific individuals and how their actions related to the larger historical narratives at the time. By paying close attention to the theological context surrounding these experiences, this study will also reveal interracial relationship as well as the emergence of racial tensions. More distinctively, this study is similar to the themes of Protestant's straining relationship with slavery and creation of race in British North America in Katharine Gerbner's *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* and Richard A. Bailey's *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England.* Both these works are akin to this study's concern about Protestant's struggling to understand their theological convictions in light of their present social realities—specifically, Jonathan Edwards and his theological heirs.

Summary of Chapters

After this introduction, Chapter 2 will survey the historical and theological roots concerning slavery and race prior to Edwards' lifetime. Several churchmen between the mid-1600's and 1760 within the Reformed tradition had expressed views against the slave trade, but had appropriated views for slavery as an institution. Therefore, Edwards' position, while peculiar and unpopular to modern minds, was not novel. Several Puritans before him—such as Cotton Mather, and even William Perkins in England—held similar views. This background survey will trace the development of Edwards' theology concerning slavery and race and place it within the larger spectrum of American religious history. For example, Native American descriptions by his uncle, John Williams, in the *Redeemed Captive* (1707) would have had a profound impact on his early views of non-whites. This chapter is not restricted to cultural perspective, rather, it provides a sample of how theology and culture

[35] For example, Ben Wright's *Bonds of Salvation: How Christianity Inspired and Limited American Abolitionism* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2020) mainly focuses on abolitionist societies and Protestant denominational efforts to overturn slavery in America. He argues this created a "north and south" mentality that laid grounds for the civil war. He offers little theological material or context.

informed one another prior to Edwards' conception of slavery and race. Moreover, the chapter will attempt to provide a historical explanation as to why Edwards' theological position on race was so common during his time. The purpose of this review is two-fold. First, it will survey significant secondary sources on various positions on slavery and race during the eighteenth century. Many scholarly studies have contributed to similar areas that have led to this study of Edwards, slavery, and race. Therefore, the review will expose the areas where Edwards scholarship has lacked a full treatment of his thoughts on these subjects. Second, it will briefly introduce the topic, discuss methodology, and situate the study among the broader scope of American religious history and the Reformed tradition.

Edwards encountered several different ethnicities and nationalities during his life—French, Spanish, Italians, Jews, and perhaps even Arab Muslims—but none made more of an impact than the Indians of New England. Chapter 3 will explore how Edwards conceptualized race during his time with the Native Americans at Stockbridge and how it manifested itself in his ministry—both in his church practice and missional efforts. Rachel Wheeler has given the most attention to this subject and in her research has admitted that the Stockbridge sources offer little information that reveal any experience that the Native Americans had as members of Edwards' congregation, so there is still much to be done. This chapter will not only survey Edwards' time as a missionary in Stockbridge, but will focus on the social implications thereof, as well as other documents during that time—such as his observations on Native American languages, civil letters on behalf of the Mohican people, new Indian-tailored sermons, and ecclesiastical documents—during his time there. Together these reveal how Edwards was a political and social advocate in favor of his Native American congregants against his White English contemporaries attempting to undermine the Stockbridge mission. This chapter will also take into account the socio-religious context in which Edwards eventually referred to them as "my people," and showed favor to the Native American cause while still holding prejudices, such as refusing to learn their language.

Chapter 4 gives full attention to Edwards' views on slavery during his life and ministry. While he never wrote a full treatise on the matter, as he did on other important subjects like the will, sin, fruits of the Spirit, and the Great Awakening,

Edwards did write a letter addressed to an association of ministers in which he defended slavery as an institution while denouncing the slave trade. This draft letter reveals a very complex position on slavery in general and how far Edwards was willing to bend his ethics in order to protect the pre-established Puritan hierarchy. In addition to this letter, this chapter will examine several texts where he spoke directly about the master-slave relationship. For example, in his commentary of scripture in the *Blank Bible*, Edwards described the relationship between God and humans and how it should be a model for the master and slave's relationship. Moreover, key points in Edwards' sermons reveal how he exercised his views on slavery from the pulpit and in his ministry. We also have receipts for two slaves, Venus and Titus. After primarily exploring his biblical exegesis, this section will discuss Edwards' position and conflict: seeing spiritual equality between White Western Europeans and Africans, but promoting slavery by purchasing slaves from the slave trade, even while denouncing the inhumane practice of transatlantic slave trade. Colonization had prodded the issue of spiritual equality with White westerners; for Edwards, spiritual equality between Africans and Whites consisted in their mutual sharing of original sin and their need for conversion, but did not apply the same equality in terms of race.

Chapter 5 will focus on Edwards' impact on later antislavery movements and his legacy in the abolitionist narrative in New England. Many studies are still being conducted on the topics of slavery, race, their relationship to Christianity, and the events leading up to emancipation in Colonial America, such as Katharine Gerbner's *Christian Slavery*, and Wendy Warren's *New England Bound*, but none have focused on Edwards as a slaver—or argue for that matter—his role in laying the theological foundation for later abolitionists in New England. More specifically, this section with examine how the New Divinity—members like Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Samuel Hopkins, Lemuel Haynes, and Joseph Bellamy—appealed to Edwards in their approach to slavery and reasons for abolitionism. Edwards was not at all an opponent of slavery, but his followers were fully committed to the emancipation of the inhumane practice. The goals of this chapter will be to consider how Edwards' doctrine of disinterested benevolence impacted his followers in such a way that they moved from a traditional Calvinist standpoint on pro-slavery to becoming full-

blown abolitionists. To avoid confusion, Edwards was in favor of slavery his entire life, but was against the slave trade because of the grotesque manner in which it was being conducted. However, his students challenged the pre-established Puritan social hierarchy and took Edwards' doctrines a step further and applied them to all levels of slavery, thus leading to their ideas of social reform. Analyzing Edwards' doctrines of virtue and disinterested benevolence, and how the New Divinity received and manifested these ideas as a unified social ethic of human dignity, will reveal how Edwards was a forerunner for abolitionism in America.

Chapter 6 will briefly review Edwards' pivotal scenarios in his social context, key theological points made in his writings, and his contributions to later movements in New England theology as well as influence in other Reformed traditions. As a contribution to the fields of historical theology and religious historical studies, this section will place the study among the larger context of the Reformed tradition in New England Puritanism and American religious history. It will also offer an evaluation of the project by considering its limitations, and discuss further questions the research presents concerning Edwards, slavery, and race.

Conclusion

While a handful of smaller studies have been devoted to understanding Jonathan Edwards' thoughts on slavery and race, this study will be the first attempt to expand on those ideas by considering the holistic context of Edwards' writing in a progressive background. That is to say, this study will not be assuming any conclusions based upon an isolated text or event. Instead, it will consider the holistic context within—at times—a progressive framework. All things within time are constantly changing. The metaphysics of the intellectual era, culture, language, and religious ideology are not standstill abstracts of a specific period. Therefore, the past must be thought of as the past, and the examination of Jonathan Edwards, slavery, and race is no exception.

It is also true that the actual amount of Edwards' writing devoted to slavery and race is somewhat miniscule when considering his larger corpus. However, both things were major parts of his life, and were sometimes subtle and other times explicit in some of his well-known works such as a *Freedom of the Will*, as well as

his ethics, eschatology, and the roles Africans and Native Americans would play in the coming milieu. As Michael McClymond and Gerald McDermott observe, "If Edwards kept a critical distance from narrow nationalisms, he shared some of his culture's prejudices about African-Americans and slavery." The same could be said for his disposition toward Native Americans.[36] Edwards' harboring of racist ideas toward Africans and Native Americans while simultaneously being concerned for their souls is an example of the tensions being taken up in this study. Because language and culture were inextricably linked in the colonial mind, "Edwards, like most English proponents of mission work, believed that 'civilization' and Christianity were inseparable and that a thorough reformation of Indian culture was necessary in order for Christianity to take root."[37]

A study on how Jonathan Edwards conceptualized the social issues of slavery and race through a theological lens, as well as lived experience, will not only shed light on his life and character, but will also bring clarity to undiscovered parts of the slavery and antislavery narratives in American religious history. Investigating Edwards' Calvinism will reveal how later theologians were shaped by it, and how they used it for the cause of abolitionism in America. Moreover, it will demonstrate the role of the New England theological tradition, and more broadly, the Reformed tradition of Christianity, in antislavery in America.

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[36] McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 526.

[37] Rachel M. Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 203.

CHAPTER 2

"The Broad Seal of Heaven": Edwards, Slavery, and Race in Historical Context and Theological Tradition

Introduction

The participation in slavery and the ethnocentrism it produced—and arguably, is still producing—will perhaps forever be recognized as the greatest tragedy in American history. What is more, the association of Christianity with slavery and its created ideas of racism have left a sordid legacy for theologians and historians alike to untangle. Upon discovering Jonathan Edwards' attitude towards Native Americans, enslaved Africans, and the slave trade, scholars as well as laypeople are often left confused, horrified, heartbroken, or all three. How could the highly intellectual, yet devotedly pious, Reformed cavalier who led the charge in the Great Awakening be the same one who described Native Americans as "the devil's people" and bought and sold African slaves?[1]

Most are tempted to assume Edwards never overcame his racial prejudices and wish quickly to equate slavery with racism. Whether he remained a racist until his death is still left to be contended in this study. However, there seem to be a few pitfalls for readers of Edwards when thinking about his association with these troublesome subjects. When confronted with the reality of his involvement with slavery and his prejudicial views on racial minorities, scholars have usually resorted to two different reactions. One, scholarship in the past has chosen to minimize Edwards' role in slavery and racism. On the presumption he treated his slaves with decency, they have simply excused him for being a person of his time or ignored his participation completely. His negative comments about Native Americans are usually disregarded because of the influence his writing and preaching has had in

[1] Jonathan Edwards, Sermon on Revelation 3:15, WJEO 44.

his legacy. On the other end of the spectrum, the second reaction usually ends with Edwards being discarded entirely. His disposition toward non-Whites causes distrust from his readers and anything that Edwards preached, wrote, or contributed to—including his legacy—is rejected for lack of theological credibility. In the digital age—and more specific, the phenomenon of social media—the circulation of false information being passed around on the internet has distorted fact into mere speculation. The premise of these things being: if Edwards was on the wrong side of slavery and race, he must be wrong about everything else. The problem is that neither of these choices accurately portray Edwards' association with slavery, nor his dealings with Native Americans. Moreover, neither of these extremes consider the historical or theological context in which Edwards developed his ideas.

Before attempting to understand exactly *what* Edwards' thoughts on slavery and race were, it is necessary to understand *how* he arrived at these conclusions. While he would have called "no man father" and "disclaimed a dependence" on anyone's teaching, it is true Edwards would have been more than slightly influenced by the theological and cultural trends of his day.[2] Edwards' disposition toward non-Whites seems bizarre to his readers almost three centuries removed, but would have been recognized among a minority of clergy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Other than the Quakers, some of whom sought complete abolitionism, a small number of people held the same, or at least a similar, view as Edwards.[3] Other Puritans such as William Perkins (1558-1602) in England, Morgan Godwyn (1640-1695) in Virginia, and Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) in New England, did not approve of the manner in which slave were being imported into the American colonies, nor of the maltreatment Africans and Native Americans were suffering at

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[2] Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards* (Boston, 1765). 41.

[3] For examples, see Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657-1761* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, eds., *Quakers and Abolition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Thomas Edward Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Ryan P. Jordan, *Slavery and the Meetinghouse: The Quakers and the Abolitionist Dilemma, 1820-1865* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007); Jean R. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014);

the hands of Whites. These figures, however, were consistent in defending the right of institutionalized servitude, or slavery, within certain parameters. Their struggle to end the slave trade and to convince other Whites to recognize both spiritual and racial equality was motivated by religious conviction. On the other hand, Edwards would eventually reject some theological currents that suggested inherited inferiority of other skin colours. He claimed, "[W]e are made of the same human race" and that God "made 'em alike with the same nature."[4] However, Puritans such as Cotton Mather (1663-1728) had argued that Africans and Natives were unjustly assigned to their stations in life because of their skin colour. Blatant racism had already been popular among Whites to justify their claimed racial superiority, so any biblical theories that placed Africans and Natives beneath them in the social order would have been convenient.

There are perhaps other reasons as to why Whites in Colonial America, as well as in Europe, developed a superiority complex over people of color. However, the two that seem to be the most prominent that informed Edwards' dispositions of race and slavery were ideas of a religious supremacy, and racial supremacy. While both were independent ideas, it is likely there was overlap where one helped advance the other, and, as will be demonstrated, the idea of religious supremacy eventually gave way to racial supremacy. By Edwards' time in the mid-eighteenth century, the two had engendered one another to the point that, at times (as will be demonstrated with the recordings of Morgan Godwyn), they became synonymous. There are of course other factors that may have influenced the blending of skin colour and religion identity, but for the purpose of this study and length, I will strictly be exploring the relationship of religious and racial supremacy.

To provide a proper summary of how Edwards arrived at his conclusions about slavery and race, this chapter will first examine ideas of religious supremacy before Edwards' time in America. This part will look at examples of his Puritan forebears who had come across the ocean to establish New England as a "city upon a hill" and acted as God's chosen ones to mirror Israel for all people by

[4] Edwards, *The Blank Bible*, WJE 24:458.

Christianizing other races, thereby installing a social order.[5] Additionally, being born into a Protestant clerical family meant that Edwards would be exposed to literature that would reinforce these types of religious prejudices over the "heathens." Secondly, this chapter will examine the ideas that informed Edwards' notions of race. He was born into a world in which Puritans had prejudicial ideas about the inferiority of racial "others." White, Native American, and African encounters caused Whites to associate hierarchical stations with skin color. Thirdly, this chapter will examine the Samuel Sewall and John Saffin debate in early eighteenth-century Boston as it represents the culmination of two competing views during Edwards' time and serves as the historical and theological framework in which his mind operated. The pamphlet debates between these two men serve as a dividing line of interpretations and the struggle for individual liberty and racial equality that Edwards would eventually be faced with in his ministry.

As a caveat, it is important to note that most of the primary sources that give reference to "slaves" incorporated Native Americans as well as Africans. Modernists tend to isolate theories of slavery and race to European-African contacts. Often forgotten are the Native Americans that made up the majority of slaves in North America during the seventeenth century and remained as a large fraction into the eighteenth century. In New England, more than 1,200 Native Americans—men, women, and children—were enslaved in the seventeenth century along with many more bound in other forms of indentured servitude.[6] The practice

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[5] John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," In *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 2, 1623-1630 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 283.

[6] Margaret Ellen Newell, "The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery, 1670-1720," in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), 107. A well-known example of this was the capturing of Metacom's nine-year-old boy during the Pequot War who eventually was sold into slavery as recorded by John Cotton. As Richard Bailey has argued, few White colonists even questioned enslaving Native Americans, which was a critical step in creating racial ideology. Enslaving the indigenous tribes of New England instead of killing them was seen as an act of mercy, and also created White perceptions of how and what a slave should look like based on the difference of Native Americans. Bailey says that "As the perception of Native Americans as uncivilized savages and pagans lingered, white New Englanders adapted such ideas and constructed raced identities for them… They then used these identities to shape New England society, allowing their ideology to inform their convictions about status and human difference," *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33.

of Native American slavery began to take shape during the aftermaths of the Pequot War (1637) and King Philip's War (1675-76), in which most of the slaves had been taken as war captives or found themselves in some sort of forced servitude.[7] Ideas of slavery—namely, who to enslave, and what they should look like—were initially created out of White and Native American encounters, and then eventually included Africans as the influx of West Africans arrived in the New World.

Religious Supremacy

Before Edwards was born, the idea of superiority in Christian identity was well established among Whites in North America. More specifically, White Protestants had chosen Christianity as an exclusive identity for themselves, outing African and Native Americans as sub-religious "others," ignorant of divine revelation; a construct that Katharine Gerbner has coined as "Protestant Supremacy."[8] Gerbner notes while Roman Catholics from Spain, France, and Portugal, regularly introduced Catholicism and baptized slaves, it was the Protestants who saw conversion as incompatible with slavery. At the beginning of the importation of Africans to the New World, Protestants believed that Christians could not own another Christian as a slave; conversion meant freedom. Protestants, therefore,

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For recent scholarship that documents the prevalence of Native American and slavery, see Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Gallay (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016); "An Early Abolitionist Crusade" in *Ethnohistory: The Journal of the American Society of Ethnohistory* 64, No. 1, "Native American Slavery in the Seventeenth Century": 19-40; Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures of Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[7] For more information on The Pequot War and King Philip's War see, Ronald Dale Karr, *Indian New England 1524-1674: A Compendium of Eyewitness Accounts of Native American* Life, Heritage of New England Series (Pepperell, MA: Branch Line Press, 1999); Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War*, The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

[8] Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 2.

connected religion with ethnicity and made Christianity exclusive to Whites Europeans.

Part of the task of building a "city on a hill," which Puritans believed to be God-ordained, was to establish social order in what seemed to be an unorganized, "devilish" chaos. Seventeenth-century White Protestants constructed a hierarchy that placed themselves as carriers of true religion at the top, followed by other Judeo-Christian religions, Roman Catholics, then Judaism, and at the very bottom were heathens, Africans and Natives Americans, who were completely unaware of Christianity. The religious supremacy that settler colonialists had brought to the New World had three main components that became evident and flourished in the generations before, during, and after, Jonathan Edwards. Firstly, White Protestants that came to New England wanted to bring order to the societies they would create along with non-Whites by establishing a hierarchy. Secondly, and adjoined to the first, some Puritans thought it was their duty to convert the "heathens" found in the indigenous population and the Africans coming across the Atlantic, while some questioned the very idea. Thirdly, the religious supremacy claimed by White Protestants gave them reason to subdue all Africans and Native Americans while trying to convert them. These three elements, which culminated in religious supremacy, manifested themselves in ideas of ethnocentrism, racism, and the cultural and physical abuse of non-Whites. But before conversion and physical oppression took place, the colonizers first had to establish what they meant by "proper order."

John Winthrop and Establishing Order in *A Model for Christian Charity*

The inaugural, and perhaps the most well-known, piece that would have laid the theological foundation for this new social order was John Winthrop's *A Model for Christian Charity* which he allegedly delivered to his fellow passengers aboard the *Arbella* traveling from England to North America in 1630. In his sermon, Winthrop described a communal ethos buttressed by biblical support, in which Christians would sacrificially love one another as a means to gain favor with God in the new land. To his fellow sojourners he declared, "We must uphold a familiar commerce

together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make other's conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we *keep the unite of the spirit in the bond of peace.*"[9] Alluding to Micah 6:8, Winthrop summed up to his migrating brethren, "There are two rules whereby we are to walk one towards another: Justice and Mercy." Like the Israelites before them, surely if they obeyed God as his chosen ones, they would prosper as Winthrop famously put it, in their new "city upon a hill," in which "all eyes" would be upon them. Their mission and order of business was to "seek out a place of cohabitation and consorteship under a due form of Government both civil and ecclesiastical."[10] Thus, they founded a religiously motivated social order that sought the favor of God as an example for others in the world to follow. And just as important for them was entering into God's "covenant," who then "sealed our Commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it."[11]

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[9] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in *Winthrop Papers,* vol. 2, 1623-1630 (1931; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1968). For more information on Winthrop's and New England Puritan uses of "members of Christ's body" metaphor see, Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 74-100. Kopelson examines how the metaphor of the body of Christ was used as a diagram to bring order and organize community life in New England. While *A Model for Christian Charity* by Winthrop is considered a landmark piece for the time, it might not be considered the first sermon. Robert Cushman's sermon *The Sin and Danger of Self-Love* given at Plymouth in 1621 is also recognized to be among the first. See, Michael Ditmore, "What Do We Know About the New England Puritans, and When Did We Know It?" in *American Literature and the New Puritans Studies*, ed. Bryce Traister (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[10] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in *Winthrop Papers,* vol. 2, 1623-1630 (1931; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), 283. The full verse of Miah 6:8 reads, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" For more information on Winthrop, see Michael Parker, *Founding the City Upon a Hill* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Michael Burgan, *John Winthrop: Colonial Governor of Massachusetts* (Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2006); Francis J. Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); *John Winthrop: Biography as History* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2009).

[11] Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity*, 46.

However, the pious charge given by Winthrop was very exclusive to a certain group that now shared lands with people of multiple languages, races, beliefs, and culture. Wendy Warren, in her recent work, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America*, points out that Winthrop's exclusive use of the words "us" and "we" naturally separates "us" from "them."[12] This implied there were "natural" inferiors and superiors, and the former were expected to defer to the latter. The divide that Winthrop imposed in his sermon created religious elitism between the ones building a city on a hill and those who would be outside the city below the hill—then, Native Americans, and later, Africans. "Without *others*," Warren explains, "people outside the community, who would be left to gaze in awe at this new city on a hill?"

Almost immediately after the Puritans arrived, they placed themselves above "other" people of different religion and racial color in the name of a holy mission. To the Puritans, the idea of being a chosen people in a covenant with God was a terrifying privilege. To be obedient would be to inherit the greatest blessings, but to fail would mean they would receive just punishment and become a joke, or "byword" as Winthrop called it, to the world.[13] As people who were set apart to aide God in his divine work of redeeming the world, the Puritans found it suitable to see themselves as authoritarian figures to rightly orchestrate God's will. But as Whites saw themselves atop the hill, it created hostility as they looked down on those whom they would save. As history has shown, the colliding of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans was anything but a utopia. In fact, as Thomas S. Kidd has noted, two of the major characteristics that defined their encounters had been religion and conflict.[14]

The task and covenant promise to the Puritans aboard the Arbella described by Winthrop was meant exclusively for them and for the English dissenters that

[12] Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2016), 13-14.

[13] Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," 295.

[14] Thomas S. Kidd, *American Colonial History: Clashing Cultures and Faiths* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2016).

would follow during the Great Puritan Migrations of the 1630’s, '40’s and '50’s.[15] Winthrop’s sermon would not only create right order for the waves of oncoming Puritans to New England, but would also create division and hierarchy between themselves and the religious others they would encounter.[16] To become a beacon of holiness to shine onto the world, it required them to set themselves apart from—and in this case *above*—every other religion and race. A created hierarchy was justified in the minds of early Puritans since it was divine that some were meant to be of high positions and some were to be of low. Naturally, they chose to be high. Possessing a direct mission from God and as carriers of true religion caused Puritans to see themselves as religious elites and, moreover, their duty to subdue—not necessarily convert—heathens. After the Puritans were convinced of this task, and after non-Whites were subdued into slavery, that the duty of converting them was put into question. Ideas of how slavery, and constructed concepts of race, were to be compatible with Christianity began to take shape. While it is unclear how strong Winthrop’s vision was for the “city upon a hill,” it appears Warren’s

[15] For more information about the Great Puritan Migration, see Edmund S. Morgan, *The Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963); Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 1-30. Interestingly, Bremer suggests that the Puritans missional views derived from John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*. He states that in “the catalogue of sufferings, Foxe had argued from his reading of the Book of Revelation that there were five distinct periods of church history. The first four had passed": namely, the church enduring persecution from the Roman Empire, the churching being supported by a post-Constantine Roman state, the church being “retarted by the influence of Roman primates,” the reign of the Antichrist of Hildebrand, and the fifth period initiated by the Reformers. It was the Puritan mission “to redeem Christendom, to restore the medieval unity of Europe by bringing all men under the Reformed Protestant banner.” The “city on a hill was part of this task; Malcolm Gaskill, *Between Two Worlds: How the English Became Americans* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Bruce C. Daniels, *New England Nation: The Country the Puritans Built* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2012), 41-52; Robert Charles Anderson, *Puritan Pedigrees: The Deep Roots of the Great Migration to New England* (Boston, MA: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2012); Virginia Dejohn Anderson, *New England’s Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Charles Edward Banks, *The Winthrop Fleet of 1630* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 1930).

[16] On the role of early Puritan sermons like Winthrop’s *A Modell of Christian Charity* and how they created social order for community life see, Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13-31.

interpretation of him is correct. To bring purity to a new land would create division between people on racial and religious lines.

Morgan Godwyn, Advocate for Negros’s and Indians

Decades later, after the theocratic order was ushered into the colonies, the task for the Christians “upon the hill” was to convert the Africans and Natives Americans who were below—and some questioned if their conversion was even necessary. At the end of the seventeenth century, the number of slaves in each of the colonies were only in the hundreds, but in the following decades, the flow of both African and Native American slaves from the slave trade would number in the thousands.[17] The influx of unconverted Africans and Natives under self-proclaimed White authority raised the issue of their conversion. Assuming slaves would become converts, ministers began to question whether or not it was right for a Christian to enslave another Christian.[18] For some, an easy solution would be to leave the heathens in ignorance of the gospel. Capturing natives in war and buying Africans at the ports meant that their “savagery” was going to end; bringing them under the dominion of Christians was thought of as an act of mercy. Even more radical was the idea that darker-skinned peoples lacked any mental capacity to understand Christian principles, lacked a soul, and, therefore, were not *real* people at all. The pursuit of imperial dominance, economic venture, and, more importantly for this study, religious supremacy, caused evangelization among the Africans and Native Americans to be little more than an afterthought.

For the first several decades of the seventeenth century in New England, the identity of “Christian” was reserved for “Whites,” while the darker races were prescribed as “heathens” and ineligible for conversion. But as racial “others” began to be accepted as fellow brethren via the biblical definition of “neighbor,” the supremacy that Protestants had assumed over Africans and Natives became an

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[17] To see the rapid increase of slaves of both African and Native American, See Chapter 3, “The Negro Population,” in Green, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, 72-99.

[18] Emily Blanck, *Tyrannicide: Forging an American Law of Slavery in Revolutionary South Carolina and Massachusetts* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 15; James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 105.

imperative to convert them. Others, like Morgan Godwyn and Cotton Mather, challenged this idea and saw slavery compatible with Christianity. However, they found the assumption abhorrent that "Negroes" and "Indians" were somehow less than human. Ministers began to criticize the way those ideas were being manifested among their fellow Whites.

One of the earliest assessments of how Africans and Natives were being treated, and the duty to convert them, was Godwyn's *The Negro's and Indian's Advocate* (1680).[19] Godwyn was an Anglican minister who had traveled to the colony of Virginia and to the West Indies from England during the mid-1600s; while there, he witnessed the brutal treatment of African and Natives on the plantations. Equally distressing was the nonexistent effort to Christianize them. It was absurd to Godwyn to think that Africans and Natives were without any humanity because of their dark skin and difference in appearance. He claimed that Africans and Natives did indeed possess humanity and a soul, and therefore, should be baptized and admitted into the church. "Negro's both slaves and others," Godwyn asserted, "have an equal right with other men to Exercise and Privileges of Religion; of which 'tis most unjust in any part to deprive them."[20] The masters were the sinners if they prevented the conversion of their slaves. He even charged the clergy with sin for withholding conversion: "If the Gospel be good Tidings, why should it be concealed, or hid? And since designed so to all People, why should not these

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[19] Morgan Godwyn *The Negro's [and] Indians Advocate: Suing for Their Admission to the Church: Or A Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in Our Plantations. Shewing, that as the Compliance Therewith Can Prejudice No Man's Just Interest; So the Wilful Neglecting and Opposing of It, is No Less Than a Manifest Apostacy from the Christian Faith. To which is Added, a Brief Account of Religion in Virginia* (London, 1680). For more information on Morgan Godwyn, see, Alden T. Vaughn, "Slaveholders' 'Hellish Principles': A Seventeenth-Century Critique," in *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 55-81. Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 1-10; John Michael Fout, "The Explosive Cleric: Morgan Godwyn, Slavery and Colonial Virginia and Barbados, 1665-1685," diss. Virginia Commonwealth University, 2005.

[20] Godwyn, *The Negro's and Indians Advocate*, 4-7.

partake of it as well as others? If we are bound to pray for their Conversion, why are we not also to endeavour it?"[21]

In the following years, *The Advocate* was circulated in the colonies as well as in England. To follow up, Godwyn published *A Supplement to the Negro's and Indians Advocate* (1681) that further criticized the treatment of African and Native slaves on plantations as well as offered reform for the right governing of racial "others."[22] Among his proposal were teaching "*Tawneys* and *Blacks*" English, baptizing them and their children, and ending the inhumane practices of punishment. Godwyn witnessed first-hand "the frequent *Emasculatings, Amputations* of *Leggs,* cropping off of *Ears* (and of *Heads* too), *scant Allowance for Food* and *Cloaths,* and (often) no less *working,* than *starving* them to *Death,* and their *unmerciful Correction* of them."[23]

However, Godywn never encouraged masters to manumit their African and Native American slaves. In fact, he guaranteed them that after conversion, Africans and Natives would continue "in their present State of *Servitude,* notwithstanding their being afterward *baptised.*"[24] *The Advocate* and *The Supplement*, like Winthorp's *Christian Charity*, were ways properly to Christianize the colonies by way of order, which assumed the dominance of White Christians. As well-intentioned as Godwyn might have been, suggesting the compatibility of Christianity with hierarchical slavery could not convince Whites to view their religious supremacy apart from ideas of racial superiority.

Cotton Mather, Order, and Subordination

Unlike most Puritans before him, Cotton Mather has been both lauded for his claim of spiritual equality among all skin colours and accused of hypocrisy for claiming an inherited inferiority of Negros and Native Americans. But like some of his Puritan contemporaries, Mather was alarmed at the neglect of proselytizing

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[21] Godwyn, *The Negro's and Indians Advocate*, 4-7.

[22] Morgan Godwyn, *A Supplement to the Negro's and Indians Advocate* (London, J.D., 1681).

[23] Godwyn, *A Supplement*, 12.

[24] Godwyn, *A Supplement*, 7.

Africans and Natives, and more so, the harsh treatment being dealt to them.[25] Years after Godwyn had published his *Advocate* and *Supplement*, Mather published his *Rules for the Society of Negroes* (1693) which offered nine rules for Negroes and Natives to observe along with a shorter and longer catechism.[26] The diversity of color and religion caused one to set the standard of purity while signaling the others as deviant behavior, disobedience, and sin. So, to bring right order Mather suggested that masters, enslaved, Whites, and those of darker skin "Join together in a SOCIETY, wherein the following RULES are to be observed."

While he suggested their education and Christianization in this set of rules, Mather also instructed slaves not to fall into sin by giving themselves to "Drunkenness, or Swearing, or Cursing, or Lying, or Stealing, or notorious Disobedience or Unfaithfulness unto their Masters." Mather developed these ideas with more detail in *The Negro Christianized* (1706).[27] He justified slavery, as did earlier American Puritans, by suggesting that it was a biblically ordained institution, handed down from God as divine providence for His chosen people—and in this particular case, Whites' right to enslave Africans and Native Americans.[28] Because one's station in the social hierarchy was divinely appointed, such as kings and slaves, it was "God who has caused them to be *Servants*; and that they Serve JESUS CHRIST, while they are at Work for their *Masters*."[29] Since it was the duty for those appointed in authority—White Protestant Masters—to convert their slaves, he was still appalled that New Englanders were doing so little to evangelize the "tawnies"—that is, the ones with darker skin. Mather believed that all darker skinned-peoples, despite their being "dumb," "stupid," "barbarous," and the like,

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[25] Mary Stoughton Locke, *Anti-Slavery in America from the Introduction of African Slaves to the Prohibition of the Slave Trade (1619-1808)* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965), 15.

[26] Cotton Mather, *Rules for the Society of Negroes* (Boston: B. Harris, 1693).

[27] Cotton Mather, *The Negro Christianized, An Essay to Excite and Assist that GOOD WORK, The INSTRUCTION OF Negro-Servants in CHRISTIANITY* (Boston, B., Green, 1706).

[28] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 2. Greene, *The Negro*, 61. Mather claims this in part of his introduction. "It is come to pass by the *Providence* of God, without which there comes nothing to pass, that Poor Negroes are cast under your Government and Protection.

[29] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 20.

were fellow humans in need of salvation. Speaking to their masters, Mather exhorted,

> And such an Opportunity there is in your Hands, O all you that have any *Negroes* in your Houses; an Opportunity to try, Whether you may not be the Happy *Instruments,* of Converting, the *Blackest* Instances of *Blindness* and *Baseness,* into admirable *Candidates* of Eternal Blessedness. Let not this Opportunity be Lost; if you have any concern for *Souls,* your Own or Others; but, make a Trial, Whether by your Means, the most *Bruitish* of Creatures upon Earth may not come to be disposed, in some Degree, like the *Angels* of Heaven; and the *Vassals* of Satan, become the *Children* of God. . . Who can tell but that this Poor Creature may belong to the Election of God![30]

Like Godwyn, Mather claimed the possibility that some Africans and Natives were a part of God's elect, and rejected the Curse of Ham theory and any other myths that demeaned Africans and Natives as something sub-human.[31] The Curse of Ham, or the Noahic Curse, in brief, refers to the story in Genesis 9:20-27 in which Noah condemns his son Canaan into the servitude of his brethren. Christians, especially

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[30] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 2-3.

[31] The Curse of Ham, also known as the Noahic curse, has been well documented. For more information on the Curse of Ham see, Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). A more specific study about the Curse of Ham understanding within the Reformed Tradition is David Whitford, "A Calvinist Heritage to the 'Curse of Ham': Assessing the Accuracy of a Claim about Racial Subordination," in *Church History and Religious Culture* 90, No. 1 (2010): 25-45. Genesis 9:20-27 (KJV) reads, " And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

those in North America during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, used this narrative to justify the capture and exportation of Africans into forced chattel slavery. According to the theory, the descendants of Ham were the inhabitants of Africa and destined to be slaves. Albeit the narrative does not mention race or skin color. Africans and Natives Americans were "men, and not beasts" and even though "their Stupidity is a Discouragement Further," Mather rejected the notion that Africans and Natives were without souls at all and commanded that "Brutish insinuation be never Whispered any more."[32] When the Bible speaks of "neighbour," Mather asserted that "Thy Negro is thy Neighbour" and owed all of the benefits of being treated as a fellow human made in the *imago Dei*.[33] If claiming Africans and Native Americans as neighbours was not enough, Mather went further and claimed that "God hath made of one Blood, all Nations of men, he is thy Brother too."[34] By asserting all people were of the same blood, he simultaneously snubbed the claim that Africans were the descendants of Ham, destined to be in servitude, and placed Africans—as well as Native Americans—on an equal spiritual level with Whites.

However, figures like Godwyn and Mather should not be considered abolitionists. They were not concerned about elevating the social status of Africans or Natives, nor did they entertain the idea of a nationwide emancipation and the dissolution of slavery entirely. Instead, they represented the struggle of reconciling the idea of a "city on a hill" with the desire to convert Africans and Native Americans. Part of that reconciliation involved advocating for the right ethical treatment of African and Native American slaves. The other part for ministers like Godwyn and Mather, was to argue from a biblical vantagepoint that instructed the evangelization for all people regardless of race, and at the same time defend the right for Whites to participate in slavery. Mather was opposed to the slave trade

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[32] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 23.

[33] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 4. The example that he gives in the text is Matt. 22:36, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

[34] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 4.

(man-stealing as he called it) and Jonathan Edwards would eventually come round to the same conclusion.

The religious supremacy expressed by seventeenth-century Puritans, which entailed the duty of converting non-Whites without changing the social statuses of Africans and Natives Americans—whether it be the institution of slavery or assumed inferiority—would be one that Edwards would eventually embody.

Racial Supremacy

As Europeans began encountering Native Americans and eventually Africans, they wanted to organize different peoples into categories of religion, color, language, and so forth. The religious supremacy that had enabled the creation of a hierarchy of Protestant supremacy had in turn fostered a duty of converting the "heathens" and "savages," but also created places within the hierarchy based on skin colour. The overflow of Europeans, both dissenting Protestants and fervent Roman Catholics, pouring into the New World caused the identities of "White" and "Christian" to become synonymous with one another, as well as making "Black" and "Red" synonymous with the unconverted at the bottom of the hierarchy.

As early as the mid-1600s, European colonists were already assigning race with religion and vice versa. During his plantation visits in the colonies, Godwyn observed how "These two words, *Negro* and *Slave*, being by custom grown Homogeneous and Convertible; even as *Negro* and *Christian*, *Englishman* and *Heathen*, are by like corrupt and Partiality made *Opposites*; thereby as it were implying that the one should be *Christians*, nor the other *Infidels*."[35] There were those who believed Africans and Native Americans could be part of the Elect even though these labels were used to organize people in social and religious categories.[36]

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[35] Godwyn, *Negro and Indian's Advocate*, quoted in Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 47. Godwyn is noting that the terms Negro and Slave were being used interchangeably—and not "convertible" in the modern sense. He referred to the same with Englishman and the opposite being true. If one was an Englishman, they were Christian, and if they were heathen, they could not be considered a Christian.

[36] Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies*, 125.

William Perkins, Cotton Mather, and Assigning Race in Hierarchy

The interchangeable nouns of "negro" and "slave" would endure into the late seventeenth, through the eighteenth, and far into the nineteenth century—not only in Barbados, in the Middle Colonies like Virginia, but also in New England. In his work, *A Good Master Well Served* (1696), Cotton Mather often used the terms "slaves" and "servants" synonymously with "Negroes" and "Blacks," which mirrored the practices observed by Godwyn in the colonial South. He assumed that masters were Christians when speaking about their slaves and servants under them, and when speaking directly to slaves Mather refers to them as Negros. Like his contemporaries and forebears, Mather also assumed the need to adhere to the divinely appointed natural order, as he did in *The Negro Christianized*: "'tis come to pass, that in such a *Society* there must be a *Superiority,* and an *Inferiority;* there must be some who are to *Command,* and there must be some who are to *Obey.*"[37]

He names several "societies," such as the "conjugal society" between husband and wife; the "parental society" between parents and their children; and the lowest of all in the social hierarchy, the "herile society" between the master and the slave. Though ranking these stations is not necessarily evidence for Mather's understanding of slavery and race, he attached color to obedience and to disobedience—which in the end confirmed his racial prejudices. And while he rejected the Curse of Ham theory, as previously mentioned, he still held some racist ideas. For instance, he inferred there was something deviant about being "black" and associated holiness and obedient with being "white." Mather warned slaves to "be sure, that you never *Stretch forth your Hands,* unto any Evil; alwayes *Keep your Hand from doing any Evil;* do not by Fornication, by Stealing, by Lying, by Running away make your selves infinitely *Black or* than you are already."[38] However, if they were obedient to their masters they could become, in a sense,

[37] Cotton Mather, *A Good Master Well Served* (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1696), 5. The best treatment of Mather, slavery, and race is Jan Stievermann's essay "The Genealogy of Races and the Problem of Slavery in Cotton Mather's 'Biblia Americana'" in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana: America's First Bible Commentary, Essays in Reappraisal*, ed. Reiner Smolinkski and Jan Stievermann (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 515-576.

[38] Mather, *A Good Master Well Served*, 53.

white. "[T]hough your *Skins* are of the colour of the *Night,*" Mather exhorted, "yet your *Souls* will be washed *White* in the *Blood of the Lamb*."

Recent work on Mather, such as Ibram X. Kendi's *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (2016), has situated him near the origins of racists ideas in America. Kendi asserts that it was William Perkins' *Ordering a Familie* that Mather's grandfathers, John Cotton and Richard Mather, used to generate racism and defend slavery. New England Puritans sought to convert non-Whites because their souls were equal with Whites, but not their bodies due to their skin colour. Although Perkins was the most influential Puritan of his day, Kendi lays the blame at his feet:

> "Cambridge professor William Perkins rested at the cornerstone of British Puritanism in the late sixteenth century. 'Though the servant in regard of faith and the inner man be equal to his master, in regard of the outward man . . . the master is above the servant,' he explained in *Ordering a Familie*, published in 1590. In paraphrasing St. Paul, Perkins became one of the first major English theorists—or assimilationist theologians, to be more precise—to mask the exploitative master/servant or master/slave relationship as a loving family relationship… It was Perkins's family ordering that Puritan leaders like John Cotton and Richard Mather used to sanction slavery in Massachusetts a generation later. And it was Perkins's claim of equal souls and unequal bodies that led Puritan preachers like Cotton and Mather to minister to African souls and not challenge the enslavement of their bodies."[39]

While most of what Kendi claims of "equal souls, unequal bodies," is true, the direct influence on Mather's concept of slavery and race might not be as complete as he lets on. It is true that Mather, like Perkins, viewed slaves as slight extensions of the family, or the *pater familias*, but ignored what Perkins laid out as the right conditions for owning and treating slaves. Even though the servant was a "person

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[39] Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 33. Joseph R. Washington, *Anti-Blackness in the English Religion, 1500-1800* (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1984), 174-182; Everett H. Emerson, *John Cotton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1965), 3, 17, 66, 82-84, 102. Emerson argues that "Cotton follows Perkins" on several key theological occasions and that his "writings show an extensive familiarity… with English theologians such as [William] Perkins."

in the family subject unto his master," Perkins outlined several liberties granted to slaves or servants:

> I. That the master have not over his servant the power of life and death; for this takes away the lawful power of the Magistrate, to whom only the Lord hath committed the sword of justice.
> II. That there be not libertie granted him, to use his servant at his owne will and pleasure in all things; for this was not granted by the law of God to his owne people: Exod. 21. 26. If a man smite his servant or his maid in the eye, and hath perished it, he shall let him go free for his eye: Also if he smite out his servants or his maids tooth, he shall let him go out free for his tooth.
> III. That the power be not enlarged to the commanding of things against piety or justice; for in these cases a man must rather obey God then man, Act. 4. 19.
> IV. That masters do not take libertie to make separation of those their servants that be married, the one from the other, or of those that be parents from their children; considering that God himselfe hath made these societies, and joyned such persons together, and therefore man may not separate them.
> V. That the masters do not take libertie to put over their servants to ungodly and unbelieuing masters, for that is an unkind and cruell libertie, & may be an apparāt occasion to make the servant fall away from religion, and renounce the true God.
> VI. That they do not bind them to perpetuall slavery, & never make them free. Exo. 21. 5. But if the servant say thus, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free.
> VII. That the servitude be not procured and retained by force; for it is a more grievous crime to spoile a man of his libertie, then of his riches.[40]

With rare exceptions, not one of these provisions were observed during American slavery. However, the point being, Mather and the rest of the New England Puritan leaders readily took the concept of the "slave being part of the family" from Perkins, but did not uphold their rights, nor adhered to the conditions to practice slavery as he had proposed. For Perkins, slavery was permissible among Christians, but not because of an assumed hierarchy based on race. He argued that "servitude

[40] William Perkins, "Christian Economy, or the Ordering of a Family According to Scripture Christian Economy: or, A short survey of the right manner of erecting and ordering a familie according to the scriptures" in *The Workes of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Universitie of Cambridge, M.W. Perkins* (London, John Haviland, 1631), 697.

proceedeth not of nature, but hath his originall from the lawes of nations, and is a consequence of the fall. For all men by nature are equally and indifferently free, none more or lesse then others."[41] Moreover, it should not enslave by force, never to be life-long, separate preexisting families, view slaves as property, nor be abusive.

As a final caveat, Perkins recommended that Christians should not introduce the practice of slavery where it is not already known. Slavery—while permissible—leads to temptation and "where this kind of servitude is abolished, it is not to be againe received or intertained amongst Christians."[42] If indeed Mather received his ideas of slavery and race from *Ordering a Familie*, he chose to ignore the intrinsic egalitarianism also described by Perkins. Therefore, the racist notions of New England ministers such as Cotton Mather toward Africans and Native Americans appears to more of a North American idea rather than a continuity of transatlantic Puritan ideology, as Kendi has argued. Namely, Perkins suggests that if slavery is not practiced in a new land, it should not be introduced. Moreover, if there are enslaved people, they should be treated as a member of the family whereas enslaved people in America were treated less than.

John Williams and The Redeemed Captive

Aside from presence of enslaved persons (Ansars and Phyllis) in his parents' home, one of the earliest works that would have informed Edwards' notions of racial others, specifically Native Americans, was his uncle John Williams' *The Redeemed Captive, The Return to Zion* (1707), which recounted first-person horrors of an "Indian Raid," the deaths of his wife and two children, and his suffering a two-year long captivity among the French in Canada.[43] Edwards' early formation of his ideas

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[41] Perkins, *Ordering of the Family*, 697.

[42] Perkins, *Ordering of the Family*, 697.

[43] John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion: Or, The Captivity and Deliverance of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield* (Boston, 1707). Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 17. Marsden suggests that it's almost certain Edwards would have read it since it was in his father's library at home, and because it was a well-known work at that time. For more scholarly information on this event, see

of Native Americans would come from this text. Not only did it become a well-known event in New England, but it was a personal, tragic event for the Edwards family; one that would have been told to him over and over again in his youth. Edwards' father, Timothy, had a copy in his library at their home in East Windsor, and it is certain that Edwards would have read it at a young age.

On 29 February 1704, during Queen Anne's War, French and Mohawks raided Deerfield, Massachusetts killing dozens of villagers and taking more than one-hundred as captives into Canada—including Williams and a few of his children. He was later released back to New England in 1706 and recorded his experience which quickly became a best-seller in colonies. As Rachel Wheeler has suggested, this event meant that "[l]ong before taking up the post of missionary at the frontier settlement of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Edwards' life was intimately linked with Indian affairs."[44] The attack on Deerfield would have been viewed as a terrorist massacre to all New Englanders, especially for the Edwards, Williams, and Mather families. Perhaps from a very young age, Edwards could recall family prayers that interceded for his uncle and cousins held captive in Canada by the "savages and Catholics," along with Edwards' lifelong friend, Stephen Williams of Longmeadow who was also a redeemed captive. Moreover, some of Edwards' earliest memories were the retelling of the attack on Deerfield and reading its account in *The Redeemed Captive*. Thus, some of Edwards' environment involved a clash of people of different religions and races.[45]

In this vivid narrative, Edwards would have read Williams' account of explicit details of his affliction at the hands of the Natives and French. The work describes his uncle witnessing the death of two of his children and how his wife met her fate with a "cruel and blood thirsty Salvage who took her, slew her with his Hatchet, at one stroak."[46] The imagery and descriptions attributed to the Native

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John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Knopf Inc., 1995).

[44] Rachel Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 196.

[45] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 14-17.

[46] Williams, *The Redeemed Captive*, 9.

Americans were never positive. They were always described with negative tones and depicted as ferocious beasts who could only obey their natural instincts and could *"not hearken to reason, but would have their Wills*."[47]

During Williams' captivity, he encountered several Native Americans who had converted to Roman Catholicism and even spoke English very well, but it was not enough for him to rethink racial categories. In one particular instance, two women had come to fetch him to attend Mass at the request of his master. One was a Native American named Ruth, who was a Jesuit convert, spoke English, and had been captured during King Philip's War. The other was a White English woman who had also been a war captive to Natives, dressed in Native American garb, and spoke the "Indian dialect," but could not speak English. When refusing the master's request to attend Mass, Ruth quoted the Bible and suggested, "Mr. *Williams* you know the Scripture, and therefore act against your own light for you know the Scripture saith, *Servants obey your Masters;* he is your Master, and you his Servant."[48] Ruth had connected to Williams through familiar customs, language, and religion. Even though she was Roman Catholic and he a Protestant, their ideas of the Bible and other Judeo-Christian values were generally understood, and yet Williams still considered her a savage based on her skin colour. In this episode of the narrative, two women had switched presumptive characteristics of their skin colour with the opposite, and Williams still chose to refer to the Native American woman as the "savage" despite possessing all of the cultural characteristics of a European White. What speaks more about Williams' racism is his nominal recognition of the English maid accompanied by Ruth. The nameless White woman dressed in Native apparel appeared to know nothing of European culture, and could not speak English; so, by all accounts, she was more "heathen" and "savage" than Ruth, the Native American, other than her White skin. Williams had every reason to think of the White woman as a savage who was ignorant of all he knew to be

[47] Williams, *The Redeemed Captive*, 22.

[48] Williams, *The Redeemed Captive*, 23-25. Ruth could have been quoting several biblical passages. Either Eph, 6:5, Col. 3:22, or 1 Pet. 2:18.

civilized culture, but instead chose to label Ruth as the savage simply because she was a darker skin colour.

This episode in *The Redeemed Captive* between Williams, Ruth, and the English woman, demonstrates that the ethnocentrism engendered by religious supremacy had bloomed into a racial supremacy—racism. Godwyn observed that "negro" and "tawnies" had become so intertwined with "slave" that their ascription as inferior had become irreversible. Cotton Mather was guilty of this by equating racial coloring with inherit sinfulness, warning Africans not to become "blacker" than they already were by committing certain sins, and holding out the chance for them to be more "white-washed" by baptism. Mather's literal interpretations of biblical texts such as Gen. 18:19, Col. 4:1, Acts 10:34, Phil. 11, and literal readings of the Noahic curse, caused him to have eagerness to see darker-skinned people incorporated into Christ's kingdom, but it also allowed him defend slavery as a biblical institution. In doing so, Mather recollected that darker skinned people had lower mental capacities and were inferior in nearly every way. Though "the God who *looks on the Heart*," who "is not moved by the colour of the *Skin*" was the same one whose providence had placed "Poor Negroes" under their "Government and Protection."[49] The inclination to assign race to "Christian" and "heathen" were still evident as seen with the case of Williams in captivity.

Samuel Sewall vs John Saffin

The famed pamphlet war between Samuel Sewall (1652—1730) and John Saffin (1626—1710) has often been recognized as the beginnings of abolitionism in the United States.[50] Most descriptions portray Sewall and Saffin as pitted against one

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[49] Mather, *The Negro Christianized*, 3.

[50] For more information about the Sewall and Saffin debate, see Lawrence W. Towner, "The Sewall-Saffin Dialogue on Slavery" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 21, No. 1 (January 1964): 40-52; Towner is the first one to suggest an "alternative view," as he put it, that Sewall's pamphlet was a Puritan response to the rapid increase of Africans in the New England—specifically Boston—instead of the popular antislavery narrative which was simply for the cause of manumitting slaves in the name of freedom. Such previous views characterized Sewall as a hero for challenging the *status quo* but disregarding his underlying reason for abolition. Julia Woodhouse Harden, for an example, wrongly argues that Sewall's initiative was "based primarily on the assumption that freedom is important to all and that no one should be deprived of it. Freedom or liberty, he believed should be preserved for its own sake, not as a means of self-preservation." Harden, "Judge Sewall

another in something of a "good versus evil" scenario. However, as a closer examination reveals, Sewall and Saffin were perhaps closer in their views than has previously been assumed. They both espoused elements of religious and racial supremacy. This brief case study of Sewall and Saffin sums up how these views manifested themselves at the time of Edwards' birth in New England and—as similar as they may be—it also serves as the dividing line of interpretation between competing views. Ideas of abolition and of how White Protestants should respond to the large numbers of Africans and Native Americans were already being discussed well before Edwards encountered the problems of slavery and race himself.

Sewall is often thought of as the abolitionist-hero fighting against Saffin and the evils of proslavery. But in the case of Sewall, he does not come out unscathed from racial accusations. Although an ardent abolitionist, he retained certain racial prejudices, such as suggesting African intellectual inferiority, inability to assimilate into White society, and anti-miscegenation. As will be shown, Sewall's position demonstrated that New England Puritans could be biblical abolitionists but still remain just as racist as their proslavery opponents. But just as biblical was John

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and Anti-Slavery Sentiment in Colonial New England" *Negro History Bulletin* 6, No. 6 (March 1943): 125, 143; Other scholarship has set the debate within a larger transatlantic context that contained different elements—not merely the rise of the slave population—such the increase of Enlightenment ideas and the decline of Puritan influence. James J. Allegro, "Increasing and Strengthening the Country": Law, Politics, and the Antislavery Movement in Early-Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts Bay" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Mar., 2002): 5-23; Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 204-207; Mark A. Peterson, "The Selling of Joseph: Bostonians, Antislavery, and the Protestant International, 1689-1733" *Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 4, Race & Slavery (2002): 1-22; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 344-346. A more balanced approach, however, is Bernard Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery" *The New England Quarterly* 46, No. 1 (March 1973): 62-81. He argued that Calvinism contained logical conclusions of antislavery that was not brought to the forefront of religious and political thought until the Sewall-Saffin debate. Rosenthal stated, "that the theology of Jonathan Edwards contained inherent assumptions about God and man that, taken to their logical conclusion, would lead to the position Hopkins took in opposing slavery and the powerful slavery interests in Rhode Island… And if puritan New England deservedly bears the stigma of having supported slavery, it is only fair to acknowledge that the principal intellectual opposition came from orthodox Puritans." For more information on John Saffin see Albert J. Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts" in *Early American Literature* 29, No. 3 (1994): 254-272; Abner C. Goodell, "John Saffin and His Slave Adam," *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Publications*, I (Boston, 1895).

Saffin's defense of slavery, which contended that the Bible actually sanctioned the practice of enslaving heathens and upheld the social hierarchy. While Sewall argued in opposition to Saffin for God-given personal liberty for all people, neither man argued for racial egalitarianism, but instead argued for a particular hierarchy based upon their perception of the betterment of New England society. In doing so, both men demonstrated their adherence to both religious and racial supremacy while standing opposite of each other's positions on slavery.

The Selling of Joseph

In 1694, John Saffin had enslaved African named Adam to whom he promised freedom after seven years of faithful service to a Thomas Shepherd. After six years, Saffin claimed that Adam had breached the contract by being unsatisfactory and altogether insubordinate, and so would not be freed. This legal case prompted Sewall to pen *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (1700), but as the material in it reveals, there were more issues at stake concerning the growing number of Africans and Natives in the area.[51] New England was undergoing drastic transformation due to the booming transatlantic commerce, wars with the French and Native Americans, and expansive economic opportunities, all of which caused a slow, but steady rise in racial and religious diversity in the region.[52]

Even though *The Selling of Joseph* was directed at Saffin, it was a response to the growing prevalence of African and Indian slavery in the colonies, the vital economic role it played, and what it would mean for the Whites in New England if it continued. "The Numerousness of Slaves at this day in the Province, and the Uneasiness of them under their Slavery," Sewall wrote, "hath put many upon thinking whether the Foundation of it be firmly and well laid; so as to sustain the Vast Weight that is built upon it." Sewall was not subtle in his call for the release of all slaves of colour. Opposing the Curse of Ham theory, he appealed to Ps. 115

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[51] Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (Boston: Green and Allen, 1700).

[52] Recent work on this topic is Richard J. Boles, *Dividing the Faith: The Rise of Segregated Churches in the Early American North* (New York: New York University Press, 2020) which focuses the dynamic interracial relationships between the rising populations and converts of White, Black, and Indians, in northern American churches.

and Acts 17, claiming that "all Men, as they are the Sons of *Adam*, are Coheirs; and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all other outward Comforts of Life."[53] Furthermore, he rejected the view that slavers were bringing pagans into a land where the gospel was preached, contending that "Evil must not be done, that good may come of it."[54] Additionally, Whites did not possess the right to be like "Executioners of the Vindictive Wrath of God." For Sewall, humans of all races were under the "Broad Seal of Heaven" and should be given their equal right to liberty, instead of being the victims of "man-stealing" during unjust wars.

However, Sewall's abolitionist assertions were not free from racism. His underlying concern of the increase of Africans into New England was that it would create a diverse society which would in turn digress into unethical and unrighteous turmoil. Just as salient was his claim that it would be better for New England to relinquish the institution of slavery altogether. "The Sons and Daughters of *New England*," Sewall claimed, "would become more like *Jacob*, and *Rachel*, if this Slavery were thrust quite out of doors." But if that were not possible, it would be better for the "Welfare of the Province to have White Servants." White labor would still be better than that from Africans. Even though liberty should be granted for all people, Sewall still insisted Africans should not be part of constructing the "City on the hill," since they could "seldom use their freedom well." Worse still, he could not imagine African or Natives properly assimilating into White society. Even if people of color were handed absolute freedom, there was such a "disparity in their Conditions, Color & Hair, that they can never embody with us, and grow up into orderly Families." Sewall's ultimate fear was the interbreeding between White, Africans, and Natives. In disgust, he feared that "As many Negro men as there are among us, so many empty places there are in our Train Bands, and the places taken

[53] Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph*, 1. The idea that all humans are descendants of the first couple Adam and Eve described in Genesis was assumed for much of modern scholarship. The argument for Sewall, Godwyn, and Mather was that Africans, Native Americans, and all skin colours were just as much descendants from Adam as Whites. Recent scholarship, however, has challenged this biblical notion by suggesting humans had existed before Adam and Eve. For example, David N. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).

[54] Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph*, 3.

up of Men that might make Husbands for our Daughters." This was made evident in the laws passed a fear years later in 1705 that prohibited miscegenation, originally described as the "Act for the Better Preventing of a Spurious and Mixt Issue."

Sewall's call to set Africans and Natives at liberty can appear radical for the time—and it some ways it was—but a full reading of *The Selling of Joseph* reveals two facts. First, Sewall's tract was not just a response to the growing number of Africans and Natives in New England; it represented a way to uphold Winthrop's idea of a "city on a hill." Sewall's suggestion of ridding New England of African and Native American slaves and replacing them with White labor was only a means to keep Whites at the top of the hierarchy in the name of Christian orthodoxy. The rape of female slaves by their masters was a widespread problem, which caused Sewall to fear that interbreeding would eventually become socially acceptable, causing society to be counter-productive to the idea of a city on a hill.

Second, Sewall's intentions behind his tract reveal how antislavery sentiment at the turn of the eighteenth century was and remained to be tainted by racist stigma towards non-Whites. The presumptions that people of color were intellectually inferior to Whites and unable to be "civilized" according to European standards were still alive and well at the time (and after the time) of Edwards—even among so-called abolitionists. As Sewall's position demonstrated, one's abolitionism could be both biblical and ethical, but still be based on racist assumptions.

***A Brief and Candid Answer* (1701)**

John Saffin, a judge, wealthy merchant, slave owner, and Samuel Sewall's nemesis, responded a year afterward to *The Selling of Joseph* with his own pamphlet, *A Brief and Candid Answer* (1701). Saffin answered Sewall's objections with his own biblical defense in hopes of turning away antislavery sentiments and of adding strength to his case against his slave Adam.[55] Although he was writing in favor of

[55] John Saffin, *A Brief and Candid Answer to a Late Printed Sheet, Entitled, the Selling of Joseph: Whereunto is Annexed, a True and Particular Narrative by Way of Vindication of the Author's*

slavery in opposition to Sewall, his defense, like *The Selling of Joseph*, contained commonalities with the Judge's tract—both religious and racial. Saffin argued for two things that were at stake: the placement of Whites at the top of the social hierarchy, and the well-being of society based on the assumption that it would decay if Africans were set free.

Saffin's rejoinder to Sewall, who is named the "worthy gentlemen," was littered with many of the same biblical references to support his proslavery position as Sewall had used for his antislavery position. It is unlikely Saffin regarded religious superiority as the initial reason to subjugate Africans and Natives, but saw it as an "attachment to old ideas of a straitified and priviledge-conferring class system."[56] He agreed that all people were coheirs and descendants of the first Adam, but he asked, "What is all this to the principle, to prove that all men have equal right to liberty?"[57] Common human descent from the same progenitors did not mean that all have an equal right to the same freedoms and comforts of this life. If all people were to be on the same hierarchical level, it would "invert the order that God has set in the world," and therefore would not only be counter-cultural, but the undoing of a biblical precedent.

As Sewall also describes, Saffin points out that there are "different degrees and orders of men, some to be high and honorable, some to be low and despicable; some to be monarchs, kings, princes, and governors, masters and commanders." And just as there are those divinely appointed in high positions, there are "others to be subjects, and to be commanded; servants of sundry sorts and degrees, bound to obey; yea, some to be born slaves, and so to remain during their lives."[58] Invoking the Apostle Paul, Saffin compares society which is comprised of people with different social stations to that of the members of the body described in 1

Dealing with and Prosecution of His Negro Man Servant, for His Vile and Exorbitant Behaviour Towards His Master, and His Tenant Thomas Shepard ; which Hath Been Wrongfully Represented to Their Prejudice and Defamation, in George H. Moore, *Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1866).

[56] Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts": 264.

[57] Saffin, *A Brief and Candid Answer*, 251.

[58] Saffin, *A Brief and Candid Answer*, 252.

Corinthians 12:13-26. There are many different parts that make up the body, each with a respective function; however, each part is "not equal, and of like dignity.” From this analogy, Saffin argues that it was lawful for Christians to own slaves, since it was assumed, they have existed since the New Testament era. Consequently, the story of Joseph was an unfair comparison to the buying and selling of so-called non-White war captives. To that end, many slavers like Saffin agreed, “it is no evil thing to bring them out of their own heathenish country, where they may have the knowledge of the true God, be converted and eternally saved” even though very little, as forementioned, was being done for their conversion. Additionally, Saffin argued that it would be more unlawful if White Christians enslaved other Whites, even if it was for a brief term. Because this exception was practiced in other Christian nations, enslaving other Christians should be “condemn[ed] as Irreligious; which is Diametrically contrary to the Rules and Precepts which God has given the diversity of men to observe in their respective Stations, Callings, and Conditions of Life.”[59] In short, Saffin thought it was a God-given right to own slaves, and it was a God-appointed stations that slaves found themselves in and for Whites to preserve. Part of the superiority Saffin found in favor of slavery was due to the religious exceptionalism of Christianity and the rights granted to them thereof.

The second part of Saffin’s *Brief and Candid Answer* was the glaring racism that claimed African’s inferiority solely based on their appearance. Not at all subtle with his racism as Sewall, he unashamedly agreed that Whites would work better than Africans. Almost jesting, Saffin asked, “[W]hite men, who are in many respects to be preferred before blacks; who doubts that?” Knowing that it would be a far reach to convince New England, and even farther to that of the entire British North America, to replace African labor with White labor, he saw the next viable option to expel all Africans back to Africa, or to at least manumit them, as detrimental. “For then the negroes must all be sent out of the country,” Saffin argued, “or else the remedy would be worse than the disease; and it is to be feared

[59] Saffin, *A Brief and Candid Answer*, 253.

that those negroes that are free, if there be not some strict course taken with them by authority, they will be a plague to this country."

Throughout a *Brief and Candid Answer*, it is evident that Saffin is not so much concerned about evangelism among Africans as he is about the potential threat they pose to White society.[60] The "Curse of Ham" and "man-stealing" seemed almost trivial to him, given the circumstances of his legal case with his enslaved African Adam. Also being a well-known poet, he penned an eight-line stanza at the end of his tract that described the debased African:

> The Negro's Character
>
> Cowardly and cruel are those blacks innate,
> Prone to revenge, imp of inveterate hate.
> He that exasperates them, soon espies
> Mischief and murder in their very eyes.
> Libidinous, deceitful, false and rude,
> The spume issue of ingratitude.
> The premises considered, all may tell,
> How near good Joseph they are parallel.[61]

The goal of the poem was for the reader to conjure the image of an African who is inherently corrupted with beast-like instincts. Therefore, give a threatening impression whereby the reader understood the dangers "Negroes" possessed if freed from their lowly station.

The legal case between Sewall and Saffin over Adam's freedom is historically viewed as two men with opposite views in which one triumphed over the other while anticipating later abolitionist ideas. This is only partly true. As both tracts have been examined, Sewall's and Saffin's fundamental reasoning was guided by religious and racial supremacies. Both men sought to protect the

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[60] Von Frank states that the "structure of Saffin's racism was determined by desire that power should remain powerful and weakness weak." I borrow Von Frank's idea here and suggest this was the main issue for Saffin. For Saffin, there was a bigger risk than simply letting Adam be free; rather, society as a whole was threatened if legal cases followed suit. Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts": 264.

[61] Saffin, *A Brief and Candid Answer*, 256.

preexisting elite stations of Whites in the social hierarchy, by either sending Africans away or by keeping them in slavery. The social hierarchy was divinely appointed, but with a position at the top of the hierarchy came the duty to evangelize the heathens. Sewall and Saffin both reflected Winthrop's idea of a "Model of Charitie" that lifts up Christianity and at the same time dominates religious others in one form or another.

Although Sewall, the attributed abolitionist forerunner, argued for the end of slavery, and Saffin, the proslavery antagonist, both Puritans carried notions of racial supremacy into their tracts. While they agreed that all people were coheirs and "sons of Adam," they also affirmed that Africans (and just as likely Native Americans) were unable to assimilate into their White communities, use their freedom to the betterment of those communities, and would be an endangerment to society at large based on skin colour. Saffin's and Sewall's poignant racism "reminds us that racism is not simply a hostile view of others, but also inseparably a system of self-fashioning." In the end, both of the solutions offered by Sewall and Saffin ended with suppressing non-Whites based on skin color by way of religious supremacy and racial supremacy. It would be easy to lay full blame at Saffin's feet for harboring racism into the eighteenth century, but as Albert J. Von Frank has put it, "In a very real sense, Saffin's *Candid Answer* is the creature of Sewall's provocative *Selling of Joseph*."[62]

Conclusion

The twin components of religious and racial supremacy played majors roles in shaping theological ideas and attitudes toward slavery and race for Edwards as well as other early eighteenth-century American Puritans. This chapter has by no means provided an exhaustive explanation of how the concepts of religion and race developed during the seventeenth century, but it does offer representative figures and debates to show how slavery, Africans, and Natives Americans were perceived

[62] Von Frank, "John Saffin: Slavery and Racism in Colonial Massachusetts": 262.

leading up to Jonathan Edwards' day. Additionally, it offers the historical and theological context to Edwards' own views of slavery and race.

Winthrop's vision to bring order to America offered structured avenues for contemporary and later Puritans to exert their religious supremacy over Africans and Natives American slaves. Their self-proclaimed authority led them to see conversion among their non-White counterparts as a duty to their mission. As argued by Godwyn and Mather, all people regardless of skin color were in need of salvation, and it was the responsibility of masters, as inhabitants of the land of gospel light, to see to the religious education and conversion of their slaves. Unfortunately, Puritan interest in the liberty of Africans and Natives extended only to their souls, and not to their whole persons. If anything, the conversion of slaves would have brought them further from being manumitted. Mather argued that if slaves were converted, it would make them better servants, happier with their station in life, and stifle any longings for freedom. Therefore, evangelization did not mean emancipation. The call for conversion only continued to subdue non-Whites and the uphold the White Christian elite.

In a similar vein, Puritans wanted to categorize people according to their skin color. Therefore, assigning race to different places in a hierarchy would have been integral to this need to categorize. Since Christian Whites had owned it as their duty to carry out what they believed to be God's mission, it was convenient to assign higher places within the hierarchy for themselves as carriers of gospel truth, leaving unconverted Africans and Native Americans toward the bottom. As "Negros" became synonymous with the low station of "slave," so did the association of sin, while right religion was associated with "White." Thus, when John Williams described his captivity, he branded Ruth a savage on the basis of her skin color, no matter how White she was in culture.

Racial supremacy became most evident on both sides of the Sewall-Saffin debate. Sewall's abolitionism was prompted by racist fears for the society that privileged White Christian elites. The prospect of incorporating Native Americans and growing numbers of Africans into New England society threatened the moral infrastructure of the "city on the hill." Even though Sewall was advocating for abolitionism, his racist notions of darker-skin inferiority were mirrored in his

opponent's racist views. Sewall ultimately preferred Africans to be set free and returned to Africa because of the "plague" they would spread if they remained, while Saffin favored slavery because it was divinely appointed that Africans were to be enslaved to White Christians. Saffin's main agenda was to defend White Supremacy and promote non-white inferiority. Both views spoke to differing positions about slavery, but both at the core were racist.

These ideological debates were familiar to Edwards. While he did not wholly adopt either of these two positions, he did not stray far from the traditions he inherited. In some ways, as the next chapter reveals, Edwards' views about how the bible was to be applied to race and slavery were quite novel, and in other ways were not.

CHAPTER 3

"Heaven's Dragnet": Jonathan Edwards, Frontier Missionary To Native Americans

Introduction

Throughout his life, Jonathan Edwards would have encountered people of several different cultures, races, and religions. It should be obvious that he knew of different Spanish, Portuguese, and French Roman Catholic orders, such as the Franciscans and the Jesuits, since he frequently protested their Popish influence as workers of the "Antichrist." He would have had more regular contact with people of Dutch, Scottish, Irish, and German ancestry. During his short time in New York, Edwards even observed—and admired—an orthodox Jew at prayer.[1] Edwards would eventually learn of, and perhaps saw, Arab Muslim traders (or has he referred to them, "Mahometans") who traveled up and down the eastern coast of North America. But none made as striking influence on him as the Native American tribes of New England.[2]

In popular minds, Jonathan Edwards is first thought of as a pastor, theologian, philosopher, trailblazer of the Great Awakening, and the one who delivered the famous American, hellfire and brimstone sermon, "Sinners in the

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[1] In his *Religious Affections*, Edwards remarked that in the short period while he was in New York, he observed the piety of a Jewish neighbor. He recalls, "I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew (the houses adjoining one to another), and had much opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest person that ever I saw in my life; great part of his time being spent in the acts of devotion, at his eastern window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the daytime, but sometimes whole nights." *Religious Affections*, WJE 2:165

[2] Many Native Americans use "Indian" and "Native American" interchangeably, so I do so as well. For more information on Jonathan Edwards and his thoughts on Islam, see Gerald R. McDermott, "Islam: The Left Arm of Antichrist," in *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 166-175; "Islam," in *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*, eds., Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Adriaan C. Neele (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 336-340. See also Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, in WJE 9:463.

Hands of an Angry God."[3] Readers of Edwards both inside and outside of the academy highlight his literary prowess but often forget his time as a missionary to the Native Americans at the frontier settlement of Stockbridge.[4] What's more, this phase of Edwards' life is neglected as a context for understanding how he thought

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[3] Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," in WJE 22: 404-434. For more information on this particular sermon, see WJE 22:400-404; Harry S. Stout, "Edwards as Revivalist," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 138-141; Wilson, H. Kimnach, *Jonathan Edwards's Sinners of an Angry God: A Case Book*, eds. Wilson H. Kimnach, Caleb J.D. Maskell, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1-16; McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 508-509; Edward J. Gallagher, "'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God': Some Unfinished Business," *The New England Quarterly* 73, No. 2 (Jun., 2000): 202-221.

[4] For more information on Edwards' time in Stockbridge see, Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 375-413; Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, 247-269; Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards*, 171-194; Philip F. Gura, *Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical*, 165-185; Ian Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography*, 373-397; Henry Bamford Parkes, *Jonathan Edwards: The Fiery Puritan*, 189-235; Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *Jonathan*, 139-164; Donald S. Whitney, *Finding God in Solitude*, 69-72; Jonathan Gibson, "Jonathan Edwards: A Missionary?," 380–402; Rachel Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); "'Friends to Your Souls': Jonathan Edwards' Indian Pastorate and the Doctrine of Original Sin" *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 72, no. 4 (December 2003): 736-65; "Lessons from Stockbridge: Jonathan Edwards and the Stockbridge Indians," in *Jonathan Edwards at 300: Essays on the Tercentenary of His Birth*, eds. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Caleb J.D. Maskell, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), 131-40; , "Edwards as Missionary," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 196-214; Stephen J. Nichols, "Last of the Mohican Missionaries: Jonathan Edwards at Stockbridge," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, eds. D.G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nicholas (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 47-63; Jon D. Payne, "Jonathan Edwards: Missionary to the Indians," in *Jonathan Edwards for the Church: The Ministry and the Means of Grace*, ed. William M. Schweitzer, (Welwyn Garden City, UK: EP Books, 2015), 115-136. Payne suggests that, if anything, scholars should see Edwards accepting the position at Princeton as more of an accident than going to Stockbridge; Gerald R. McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards and American Indians: The Devil Sucks Their Blood," *New England Quarterly* 72 (December 1999): 539-557, also in *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 549-565. Ronald Edwin Davies, "'Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord': The Missiological Thought and Practice of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)," Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary. For more information on the history of Stockbridge, see Sarah Cabot Sedgwick and Christina Sedgwick Marquand, *Stockbridge 1739-1939: A Chronicle* (Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Courier, 1939); Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*; Patrick Frazier, *The Mohicans of* Stockbridge (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); John H. Lockwood, Ernest Newton Bragg, and Walter Carson, *Western Massachusetts; A History, 1636-1925* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1926), specifically Part III, Berkshire County, 413-585.

about race. Specifically, Edwards' theology of race was shaped by being a missionary among the American Indians. Until recently, scholars have been undecided about whether or not Edwards should be given the title of *missionary* among the many other accolades he seems to be easily granted. Much of the initial scholarship since the latter half of the twentieth century has focused on his metaphysics, Calvinist theology, and biblical interpretation, but has not been sufficiently read through the lens of the historical contexts that shaped those doctrines. Rachel Wheeler's work has suggested this methodology. In doing so, intellectual and social history come together in order to provide a truer perspective, allowing "possible vectors of influence between" Edwards as a missionary and the theology shaped by his notions of race.

How Should Edwards' Time with Indians in Stockbridge be Viewed?

The length of time Edwards spent in his ministry at Northampton far outweighs the time he served at Stockbridge—a total of seven years (1751-58) versus twenty-six years at Northampton. Perhaps because of this imbalance, previous biographical scholarship has reduced his time on the frontier to one of "retirement and leisure."[5] Characterizing the Stockbridge years as an "isolated assignment" that "freed him to write" has been easy for scholars, since Edwards did produce several of his major literary works during this time.[6] Patricia J. Tracy suggested that the move to the frontier "brought Edwards material hardship" even though "it also gave him the luxury of time to think and write without serious pastoral distractions."[7] Other scholarship has summed up this time as an exile, full of hardship for himself and his family with little or no joy. Parkes viewed his move as something of a "last resort," or as the best possible option suggesting that fear of moving his family across the ocean into a land where he might be disliked, and the massive debt he

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[5] Sereno Dwight, 'Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards, A. M.,' in The Works of Jonathan Edwards (ed. Edward Hickman; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1834), cxxvii.

[6] David Levin, ed., Jonathan Edwards: A Profile (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), xx. The four major work Edwards composed during his time at Stockbridge was *Freedom of the Will, Concerning the End for Which God Created the World, The Nature of True Virtue, and Original Sin*.

[7] Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 182.

had accumulated (two thousand pounds at the time the Edwardses moved to Stockbridge), might have prompted him to at least stay in the colonies as a "default" missionary.[8] Still, others have remarked that Edwards' period at Stockbridge was something of accident, and that he merely stumbled into the scenario that led him to the Western Massachusetts frontier. McGiffert asserted that "Edwards' position as a missionary was an incident in a career primarily devoted to other interests," such as his love for writing. Edwards was not a career missionary like David Brainerd who was more "motor-minded; always on horseback." Edwards correctly assessed himself as one that was "fitted for no other business but study."[9] This view of Edwards could also be easily assumed from his own words to his Scottish friend, John Erskine: "I am now, as it were, thrown upon the wide ocean of the world, and know not what will become of me and my numerous and chargeable family; nor have I any particular door in view, that I depend upon to be opened for my future serviceableness."[10] Given the evidence, this "reductionist" view, as it's been called, seems to be an understandable evaluation of the Stockbridge years at first.

But before concluding that the Stockbridge era was a retirement retreat or simply the last resort of a Northampton outcast, there are several important factors to consider that would suggest otherwise. First, Edwards had other key offers that would have been safer for his family than frontier life. After his dismissal from the Northampton pulpit, he received an invitation from his Scottish connections to travel over the Atlantic, forego Congregationalism and accept a Presbyterian

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[8] Parkes, *Jonathan Edwards*, 210-213. Parkes wrongly concludes this view based on speculative evidence describing him as a "martyr." Although he is correct in pointing out that Edwards had 2,000 pounds in debt (estimated around $600,000 in today's U.S. dollar), the young children he had, and the illness befallen his wife, these difficulties did not necessarily play a large role in his decision to go to Stockbridge. Edwards had to provide for a family of ten, but was refused to use the ministry lands as a source of food or income. Three of his daughters were about to married, including taking care of the financial needs of his widowed sister and her family. Edwards' family spent considerable time making lace and painting fans to sell in Boston. See, Parkes, *Jonathan Edwards*, 211-213; J.E. Woodbridge, *The Memorial Volume of the Edwards Family Meeting at Stockbridge* (Congregational Publishing Society: Boston, 1871), 63; Edwards admits this to his father "I suppose, about 2,000 pounds in debt." Edwards, *Letter to the Reverend Timothy Edwards*, WJE 16:420. Also see Gibson, *Jonathan Edwards: A Missionary*, 382-383.

[9] McGiffert, *Jonathan Edwards*, 141. Edwards, *Letter to Joseph Bellamy*, WJE 16:355.

[10] Edwards, *To the Reverend John Erskine*, WJE 16:355.

pastorate at a church in Scotland. In the colonies, various churches throughout New England and even in Virginia would have readily welcomed the famed preacher.[11] In fact, a small group of loyal followers from the Northampton congregation that disagreed with Edwards' dismissal suggested he plant a new church in the same town. He never planned to do such a thing, but nonetheless kept the opportunity open. Edwards claimed that to pastor "over so small a number, under their circumstances, appears to me to be a thing attended with great difficulty and darkness."[12] Second, as disheartened as Edwards and his family were about the tragic dismissal, becoming a missionary might have peaked his interests since he had a previous history of supporting missionary work among the Indians. Under Edwards' ministry at the Northampton Church, the congregation fully supported missionary work at Stockbridge; he himself served as a trustee for the boarding school there from 1743 to 1747.[13] Contrary to this reductionist view, George Claghorn, has rightly suggested that Edwards' letters from Stockbridge "confirm that he considered the Indians and their mission a high priority" well before he knew of his dismissal, and that he "did not view the mission as a retreat where he could hide away and write. Nor did he view the mission as a place of exile."[14] To be fair, the thought of living among Indians was a fierce idea, but as "Edwards trolled for a new pastorate… he had his eye on the Stockbridge post."[15]

No doubt Edwards would imprint his intellectual legacy on American history during this period, but it would be a disservice to view his time among the American Indians simply as a time strictly devoted to writing great theological

[11] George Claghorn, "Introduction," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:17-18.

[12] Edwards, "Letter to the Reverends Joseph Sewall and Thomas Prince," WJE 16:268-69. Marsden also claims that having two married daughters in the town pleading for him to stay in Northampton would have been good reason remain there. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 365.

[13] For example, in 1744, six years before he would be dismissed, Edwards claimed that the Northampton congregation was "heavily committed" to the work at Stockbridge. So much so, they had already collected £3,000 for a boarding school. Edwards, "Letter to the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock," WJE 16: 145-146.

[14] George S. Claghorn, "Introduction," in WJE 16:17.

[15] Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards—A Theological Life," in *Prince Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. San Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 12.

treatises (which he did) at the expense of ministry efforts among the Stockbridge Indians. Such a view ignores the context in which he theologically practiced missions. Therefore, a new reading of Edwards' missionary efforts on the frontier is an untapped resource for understanding his relationship to American Indians, and can offer new ideas about how he conceptualized race. By examining Edwards' time on the frontier, not merely looking at what he *wrote* while there as scholars have previously done, but to assess what he *did* among the Native Americans is essential. He ministered and preached to them, educated them, functioned as their political, social, and financial advocate. In this chapter, I will investigate Edwards' time as a missionary where he was gradually confronted with the Natives' humanity and piety, which forced him to complicate his racist notions. As the evidence suggests, his time among them was "unexpectedly" different and "far better" than what he imagined. Additionally, Edwards eventually identified himself with his Native American congregation as "my people" and stood as their main supporter against the other Whites—his own blood family—who were taking advantage of them.

This chapter first explores the background and historical context of the events leading up to Edwards' time in Stockbridge, including his prior dispositions toward American Indians. This establishes a framework in which Edwards thought about "race," and how that framework evolved during his Stockbridge tenure. Second, will consider Edwards as a political and social advocate for the Stockbridge Indians. As will be shown, he consistently stood in the middle of Native American-English affairs in favor of Indians, who were regularly being taken advantage of in affairs concerning land, labor, money, and education. Third, this chapter compares Edwards' Stockbridge sermons and Northampton sermons. He has been accused of simply repeating sermons from Northampton for his Indian congregation, but a closer look reveals that he composed a new and considerable body of new sermons for his native auditors, and his homiletics took on different nuances of imagery and natural allegory. Fourth, this chapter analyzes how Edwards conceptualized the race of Indians in a theological framework of global missions. Fifth, and finally, I shall offer a few ways in which Edwards left a legacy in missionary work among the Native Americans in New England.

Background and Historical Context

"Long before taking up the post of missionary at the frontier settlement of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Edwards' life was intimately linked with Indian affairs."[16] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the raid of Deerfield in 1704 had left leaving a profound impact on his upbringing. Hearing horror stories about the Indians murdering his relatives, and reading about them in his uncle's famous *The Redeemed Captive,* would have only reinforced those ideas in his mind. However, the major life event that caused Edwards to think seriously about the race of Native Americans and their role in the cosmos was his dismissal from the Northampton church, which led to his living in a community numerically dominated not by English, but by Native inhabitants. Being part of an intentionally founded Native-White community prompted Edwards to reflect on his racial assumptions and how the American Indians fit into the larger redemptive narrative of God's plan for the world.[17]

Previous Interests in Native American Missions

For most of Edwards' young life, Native Americans were associated with acts of violence, such King Philip's War (1675—1678), the Deerfield raid (1704), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), and King George's War (1744—1748). Potential violence remained a part of Edwards' adult life. During his years in Northampton (1726-1750), the town had outposts constructed to watch for French and Indian raiding parties. Despite the fear of these potential attacks, however, Edwards still took a keen interest in evangelizing the Native Americans well before his years at Stockbridge. As a young minister at Northampton, he would have read his

[16] Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 196.

[17] Although the Stockbridge Mission as a "mixed-race" community was still a new idea, it was not the first. Earlier ones, such as the first "Praying Indian" village of Natick in 1651, were established with both White English and Algonquian people. For more information on Natick, see, Oliver N. Bacon*, A History of Natick, From Its First Settlement in 1651 to the Present Time; With Notices of the First White Families* (Boston: Damrell & Moore, Printers, 16 Devonshire Street, 1856); Michael J. Crawford, *Natick: A History of Natick, Massachusetts* (Natick, MA: Natick Historical Commission, 1978); James W. Morley, *From Many Backgrounds: The Heritage of the Eliot Church of South Natick* (South Natick, MA: The Natick Historical Society, 2007).

grandfather Solomon Stoddard's *Question whether God is not angry with the country for doing so little towards the conversion of the Indians?* (1723), which was a critique of the English's long neglect of evangelizing the American Indians.[18] Stoddard had envisioned an American multiracial congregation with Native Americans worshiping side-by-side with Whites. Stoddard observed that,

> The Country has been at very little Cost for the Conversion of the Heathen… and that Many Men have been more careful to make a booty of them, than to gain them to the practice of Religion. The Activity of Papists for the spreading of their Religion, may greatly ashame us. The Spaniards, have done a great deal to bring the Indians in Peru and Mexico to their Religion: And the Portagueze. to bring the Indians in Brazil, and the Indies, to theirs. And the French, are diligent in Canada, and else where, to gospellize them. And do we fit still, without any hearty Endeavours for the Salvation of the Heathen among us?[19]

Solomon Stoddard believed the strife of war, raids, and other hardships, were God's judgement on the English for their continued negligence of proselytizing Natives Americans, which was an original task set forth in the *Massachusetts Bay Charter* (1629). The seal of the charter itself depicts an American Indian with open arms saying, "Come over and help us." Stoddard knew that subsequent generations had abandoned the Charter's professed desire to bring "the Natives of Country, to the Knowledge and Obedience of the only true God and Savior of Mankind, and the Christian Faith."

Even before Edwards' ministry began at Northampton, he had a keen interest in the global affair of missionary work to advance God's kingdom all over the world. At his first pastorate in New York, Edwards recalled having "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

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[18] Solomon Stoddard, *Question whether God is not Angry with the country for doing so little towards the conversion of the Indians?* (Boston: B. Green, 1723).

[19] Stoddard, *Question whether God is not Angry*, 9. For information regarding the attempts of evangelizing Native Americans in New England during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, see Fischer, *The Indian Great Awakening*, 13-64.

Figure 3.1, Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Charter Seal

have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly catched at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be earnest to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interest of religion in the world."[20]

Edwards would carry this interest with him to Northampton, and although he disagreed with his grandfather about communion, the interest in missionary work was not lost upon him. Playing a key role in establishing the mission, he, along with a group of other men, Stephen Williams, Samuel Hopkins, Nehemiah Bull, John Sergeant, Timothy Woodbridge, Ephraim Williams, and John Stoddard, purchased land that would become Stockbridge in 1734.[21] In fact, Edwards was "the only clerical member of a committee established to receive and disburse the funds given for the Stockbridge boarding school (the other members of this committee were Oliver Partridge, Eleazar Porter, John Stoddard, Israel Williams, and Samuel Hopkins of Springfield)."[22] Moreover, Edwards had convinced the Northampton church heavily to support the work during the revival period. Edwards echoed the English's neglect of the evangelizing the American Indians:

> The English have not only greatly failed of their duty in so neglecting the instruction of the Indians, but we have been extremely impolitic, and by our negligence in this matter have brought the whole British America into very difficult and dangerous circumstances… Tis true we have traded a great deal, but our trade has been carried on with them in a way that has naturally tended to beget in them a distrust of us, and aversion to us. Most of our Indian traders, being persons of little conscience, the Indians have been abundantly defrauded, and commonly that has given 'em, in exchange for their skins and furs, that [which] has done 'em no good, but been their greatest plague, viz. rum in vast quantities, which, though pleasing to their appetites, they are sensible is their undoing, and serves nothing to gain their affections, but the

[20] Edwards, "Personal Narrative," 797.

[21] Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 48. While this was in the name of Christian charity, Frazier argues that "They themselves had no plans to live on the land to help spread the gospel among the Indians. The land was an investment in their future, not in the Mohicans'. With land-hungry New England farmers and entrepreneurs moving westward, the property would ensure that the ministers, as they grew older, would not have to depend solely on their congregations."

[22] Claghorn, "Introduction," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:18fn9.

> contrary. They themselves give it as a reason why they are under a necessity of deserting us, that we destroy them. Nothing has been more common than for our traders first to make them drunk… And as to instructions in religion, very little has been done among those people by the missionaries of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. [23]

Therefore, we can easily see that Edwards had long been interested in and supported missionary work among the American Indians.

An Account of the Life of Rev. David Brainerd

No doubt Edwards had an interest in evangelizing the Native Americans on the New England frontier and perhaps it was his reading of Stoddard's *Question whether God is not angry* and scripture that formed it. However, nothing impressed upon Edwards the importance of evangelization more than the enthralling activism and piety of his friend and missionary to the Natives, David Brainerd.[24] Despite being expelled by Yale for making rash comments about a tutor and rector of the college, Brainerd earned a preaching license from the New Lights, and it was suggested to him by Jonathan Dickinson, a leading Presbyterian minister at the time, to take up missionary work among the Native Americans. After several years with the Lenape and Susquehannah in the Delaware area and, the Mohicans in Stockbridge, and traveling over 3,000 miles, his labors began to take a deathly toll on his body. In 1748, the young missionary found himself in Edwards' home dying of tuberculosis, which "no doubt provided ample opportunity for Edwards to discuss mission work with Brainerd."[25] Brainerd died on October 9, 1747 at 29 years of age in the Northampton parsonage.[26]

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[23] Edwards, "Letter to Joseph Paice," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:436-438.

[24] For more information on David Brainerd, see John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[25] Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 197.

[26] For more information on Brainerd's death see, Edwards, "Part VIII: After his return from his last journey to Susquehanna until his death," in WJE 7:429-477. Toward the end of his life, Brainerd described his condition: "was in the greatest distress that ever I endured, having an uncommon kind of hiccough; which either strangled me or threw me into a straining to vomit; and at the same time was distressed with griping pains," WJE 7:469. Edwards' seventeen-year-old daughter, Jerusha,

Shortly after Brainerd's death, Edwards was "diverted" from working on *Freedom of the Will* because he wanted to devote all of his energy to publishing *An Account of the Life of Rev. David Brainerd* (1749).[27] Editor of the Yale edition of this work, Norman Pettit, argues that "Edwards looked to him for an example of the good rather than the excessive 'effects' of experimental religion" and that he "was not so much interested in the young man's mission to the Indians as in his commitment to a holy cause" despite Brainerd's lack of converts.[28] Wheeler concurs that "Edwards admired not so much Brainerd's missionary method, but his example as a model of Christian virtue."[29] This might have been true whenever Edwards published *The Life of David Brainerd* while still at Northampton, but as Gibson has correctly pointed out, "Such an analysis… draws too sharp of a dichotomy between Edwards' interest in Brainerd's life and his mission to the Indians."[30] In Pettit's theory, Edwards was more concerned with Being-in-General and orienting all glory and joy through the proclamation of the gospel than he was with demonstrating disinterested benevolence toward Native Americans.

For Edwards, mission work among Native Americans was a microcosm of the metanarrative of God's redemptive work in bringing all nations to Christianity. As will be shown later in this chapter, Edwards was not only stimulated by the global effect local missions would have, but he was also very much concerned about the ministry at hand in the missionary work among Native Americans—namely, longing for revival and seeing conversions among the people to whom he was ministering whether White, Black, or Red. From Brainerd's life, Edwards gathered that "there is much in preceding account to excite and encourage God's people to

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looked after him while he was living with Edwards. The two are buried beside one another in Northampton.

[27] Edwards, "Letter to John Erskine," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:249; "*An Account of the Life of Rev. David Brainerd*," in WJE 7:87-477. Better known in its abbreviated title, *The Life of David Brainerd.*

[28] Norman Pettit, "Editors Introduction," *The Life of David Brainerd*, in WJE 7:1,13. Also see, Walls, "Missions and Historical Memory," 255-257.

[29] Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 198.

[30] Gibson, "Jonathan Edwards: A Missionary," 385.

earnest prayers and endeavors for the advancement and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ in the world… As there is much in Mr. Brainerd's life to encourage Christians to seek the advancement of Christ's kingdom in general; so there is, in particular, to pray for the conversion of the Indians on this continent, and to exert themselves in the use of proper means for its accomplishment."[31]

The life of his friend and hero pushed Edwards to think about the role American Indians would play in the grand scheme of the gospel spreading across the world. Just as important as these considerations, as we will see, was how they made Edwards think about how his life and ministry would aid that cause. Optimistic about the future pf global missions, Edwards claimed, "I think we have reason to hope that the wonderful things which God wrought among them by him are but a forerunner of something yet much more glorious and extensive of that kind; and this may justly be an encouragement to well-disposed charitable persons to "honor the Lord with their substance by contributing, as they are able, to promote the spreading of the Gospel among them."[32]

Political and Social Advocate for Native Americans

Nearly forty miles west of Northampton in the Berkshire Hills was the frontier settlement of Stockbridge. When Jonathan Edwards arrived, there were 250 Mohicans, 60 Mohawks of the Six Nations, a few Brotherton's. There were also about a dozen English families whose members were, to his mind, not concerned for eternal things but for worldly gain—in the form of land.[33] In part, the Stockbridge mission was an experiment of sorts; "a model community, a prototype

[31] Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, WJE 7:531-532.

[32] Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, WJE 7:533.

[33] Edwards, "Letter to Jasper Mauduit," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:449-460. The Brotherton's were a band of American Indians comprised of Montauks of Long Island, Mohegans, and Pequots of Connecticut and Narragansetts of Rhode Island. under the leadership of a Mohegan missionary, Samson Occum. Having no common language between them except English, they were given the name "Brotherton's." Edwards Manning Ruttenber, *History of the Indian Tribes of the Hudson River* (New Albany, NY, 1872), 293. Also see David J. Silverman, *Red Brethren: The Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

for future missions where English and Indians would live side-by-side in peace."[34] An important step towards the goal of Christianizing the indigenous population was "civilizing" them. Also, while the settlement was initially set up as a means of evangelizing, it was also meant to be the first among several military outposts after years of war with the French and their Indian allies.[35] Although this settlement was intended to be a peace effort between the English and Native Americans, Edwards and his family still found themselves in the center of a heated conflict.

Ill-Willed Kin

While some have called Stockbridge a quiet retreat for Edwards, others have insisted it was a "living hell," no thanks to his own kin already living in Stockbridge.[36] The authoritarian leader of the frontier outfit was one of Edwards' relatives, Colonel Ephraim Williams, who was from the same Williams clan that supported his dismissal from Northampton. The Colonel had recently been elected as village moderator.[37] A military man, and a well-to-do land investor, he had moved to Stockbridge in 1737. When it was suggested that Edwards join the mission, Williams had already lived there for over a decade, and protested that he would be unable to fulfill the duties of a missionary.[38] He detailed his objections to Edwards in a letter to Deerfield pastor and cousin, Jonathan Ashley:

> 1. He was not sociable, the consequences of which was he was not apt to teach.

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[34] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 376.

[35] On the background of Stockbridge as a manifestation of the method of civilizing Native Americans to Christianize them, see Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*, 52-64.

[36] Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), 57.

[37] Sedgwick and Sedgwick, *Stockbridge*, 31; Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 46-47; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 376.

[38] For information on Edwards' disputes with the Williamses, see Sedgwick and Marquand, *Stockbridge 1739-1974*, 49-97; Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 90-104; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 395-413; Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 182-185; Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 199-201.

> 2. He was a very great bigot, for he would not admit any person into heaven but those that agreed fully to his sentiments, a doctrine deeply tinged with that of the Romish church.
> 3. That he was an old man, and that it was not possible for him to learn the Indian tongues, therefore it was not likely he could be serviceable to the Indians as a young man that would learn the tongue.[39]

Apart from the accusation that Edwards was a "very great bigot," Williams' criticism was pretty close to the mark, and might have been prompted by issues theological as well as material.[40] Nevertheless, Williams as a relentless land investor, acquiesced to Edwards' appointment, commenting facetiously that Edwards' fame would raise the price of land in the area.[41] Indeed, Edwards himself purchased over 500 acres of land from the Indians. Edwards was to replace the previous missionary and recently deceased, John Sergeant, who had married Williams' daughter, Abigail.

The members of the Edwards family were not the only ones that had differences with the Williamses. Prior to Edwards' arrival, Ephraim Williams was already known for his ill-treatment of the Stockbridge Indians and quarrelsome demeanor in relation to land division.[42] In a letter to the Secretary of Commissioners in Boston, Edwards assessed the situation in Stockbridge: "The Indians here have a very ill opinion of Colonel Williams and the deepest prejudice

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[39] Ephraim Williams, Jr. "Letter to Jonathan Ashley," in Wyllis Eaton Wright, ed., *Colonel Ephraim Williams: A Documentary Life* (Pittsfield. MA: Berkshire County Historical Society, 1970), 61; Also, see Frazier*, The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 92-93.

[40] Both Miller and Tracy have noted that the strife between the Edwardses-Stoddards clans and the Williamses clan was theologically motivated. Christian Williams, wife of William Williams and sister to Edwards' mother, Esther, leaned toward Arminianism. The theological divide at Northampton that caused his dismissal followed him to Stockbridge with the same extended family. See Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 101-105, 125, 126; Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 184.

[41] Wright, *Colonel Ephraim Williams*, 61.

[42] See Lion G. Miles, "The Red Man Dispossessed: The Williams Family and the Alienation of Indian Land in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1736-1818" in *The New England Quarterly* 67, No. 1 (March1994): 46-76. Also, for an example see Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 99-100. Prior to Edwards' arrival, the Mohicans had informed the Settling Committee in Boston that the original 2,400 acres that had been agreed upon had doubled to 4,800 and had been taken by colonials. This eventually pushed eastern tribes further west to what is now Wisconsin. For example, see Indian Petition, 11 November 1749, Massachusetts Archives, 31:654.

against him, he having often molested 'em with respect to their lands and other affairs, and, as they think, done very unjustly to 'em."[43] The Indians also complained of his daughter Abigail, who they claimed, "partakes of no small degree of the same prejudice."[44] "They say that Mr. [John] Sergeant did very well till he married her," Edwards continuation, "but that afterwards there was a great alteration in him and he became quite another man. They speak of her as proud and covetous and not to be trusted; and Mr. Sergeant had much lost his interest in the esteem and affections of the Indians in the latter part of his life."[45]

After Sergeant's death, Abigail's intentions were truly revealed. The mission "was a means to the end of developing the town of Stockbridge, and with it the fortunes of the Williams family."[46] In a letter to Joseph Paice, Edwards described the situation between the Williamses and the Native Americans:

> Instead of our improving the advantages, divine providence has put, and so long left in our hands, to consult our own safety, by using means to secure these nations in our interest, we have on the contrary been constantly taking courses to alienate them. 'Tis true we have traded a great deal, but our trade has been carried on with them in a way that has naturally tended to beget in them a distrust of us, and aversion to us. Most of our Indian traders, being persons of little conscience, the Indians have been abundantly defrauded, and commonly that has given 'em, in exchange for their skins and furs, that [which] has done 'em no good, but been their greatest plague, viz. rum in vast quantities, which, though pleasing to their appetites, they are sensible is their undoing, and serves nothing to gain their affections, but the contrary. They themselves give it as a reason why they are under a necessity of deserting us, that we destroy them.

Edwards continues to heap blame on the White Englishmen. Since the Native Americans were susceptible to alcohol, the British coerced them into making bad deals while they were inebriated. He goes on:

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[43] Edwards, "To Secretary Andrew Oliver," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:423.

[44] Edwards, "To Secretary Andrew Oliver," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:423.

[45] Edwards, "To Secretary Andrew Oliver," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:424.

[46] Sedgwick and Marquand, *Stockbridge 1739-1939*, 31.

> Nothing has been more common than for our traders first to make them drunk, and then to trade with them and defraud 'em of their goods, when they have lost the use of their reason and [are] unable to defend themselves. Though the king annually gives £500 sterling as a present to the Six Nations, yet (I suppose it to be very apparent), there is all reason to think, the money is embezzled, and used for the advance [of] the private gain of those into whose hands it falls; and of that part that is given [to the Indians], 'tis bestowed in that which issues [in] no good end, viz. in rum to make 'em drunk.[47]

Edwards' assumptions were correct. He noticed funds—including generous contributions by Isaac Hollis—were being mishandled for personal gain by Abigail and Ephriam. He lamented, "The longer I continue here, the more insight I get into the management of these affairs in Stockbridge… it is enough to make one sick."[48] Allowing him to take the missionary post after initially being against it, the Williams clan probably felt bamboozled when Edwards only caused conflict. However, Edwards did not let familial strife hinder his ministry to the Stockbridge Indians—even for their children.

Education for Indian Boys and Girls

A common presumption about Edwards' intentions at Stockbridge has previously been that he "had little interest in the Indians except as souls to be saved."[49] Injecting more accuracy, Marsden has noted Edwards' excitement for the potential success of the boarding schools under Captain Kellogg, particularly as a means of

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[47] Edwards, "Letter to Joseph Paice," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:437.

[48] Edwards, "Letter to Secretary Andrew Oliver," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:424-425; Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 99-100. Williams had organized an exchange of land with illegal deed with a relative in Boston. This also included a request for money from the New England Company for £30 per year for his daughter Abigail to be the school mistress in addition to funding ten girls with food, clothes, which she reputedly spent the money as she saw fit.

[49] Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, 252.

attracting the interests of other tribes.[50] A closer look at Edwards' educational aspirations at Stockbridge shed further light on his notions of Native Americans.[51]

In 1751, shortly after Edwards arrived, the English had made an offer to the Mohawk's to have their children attend a boarding school. Edwards portrayed this offer, "done on their own behalf, [but] for all nations of Indians; that by this they opened the door for all nations, that they might come and bring their children hither to be instructed, and as a confirmation that they would do what they could to persuade other nations to send their children hither."[52] At Stockbridge, under the tutelage of Edwards and his qualified schoolmasters, the children would learn "reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, knowledge in the principles of religion, knowledge of church history."[53] While Edwards was excited for the prospect of formal Westernized teaching, the Mohawks thought it would help if their children became well-versed in English in order to prevent the on-going problem of being scammed in land.

As a means to helping Native children understand the gospel, Edwards made extensive efforts in their regular education, for both boys and girls. Like most Westerners, Edwards thought the Indian languages were "barbarous" and

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[50] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 382. For more information on Edwards and education, see Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Education and His Educational Legacy," in *After Jonathan Edwards: Courses of the New England Theology*, eds., Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31-50; Allen J. Russell, "Children as 'White Paper': Jonathan Edwards and Enlightenment Childhood," in *Jonathan Edwards within the Enlightenment: Controversy, Experience, & Thought*, eds. John T. Lowe and Daniel N. Gullotta (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 169-185.

[51] Edwards' education plans were not the initial thrust to teach the Stockbridge Indians' children. He already had a model from John Sergeant, the one who founded the school. In 1743, Sergeant proposed a school to for the purpose to educate both Indian boys and girls for the purpose to "civilize" them from their "barbarous" culture. The school would eventually be used to propagate the gospel to remote tribes in the area. See, John Sergeant, *A Letter from Revd Mr. Sergeant of Stockbridge, to Dr. Colman of Boston* (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743), and

[52] Edwards, "Letter to Speaker Thomas Hubbard," in WJE 16:398. In August of 1751, all of the Mohawk chiefs came to Stockbridge (ninety-two altogether) to discuss sending their children to the boarding school to learn. The chiefs reminded the English that they've failed, nor kept their promises in the past. Nevertheless, they found their offer favorable and "gave a belt of wampum in consideration of it." Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 383.

[53] Edwards, "Letter to Sir William Pepperrell," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:412.

"exceeding barren and very unfit to express moral and divine things," and therefore insisted on teaching the English language.[54]

Aware of the Indians' desire for education, Edwards wrote to Isaac Hollis, "There are some things give a hopeful prospect with regard to these Mohawk Indians, particularly the forward inclination of the children and their aptness to learn." However, teaching Indian children the English language did not come without its challenges. Edwards saw problems in the way the children were learning because they "only learn to make such sounds on the sight of such marks, but know not the meaning of the sounds, and so have neither profit nor pleasure in reading." Sensitive to differences of learning among cultures, Edwards intended to replace the usual pedagogy with an almost catechistic style of education, a Socratic method, involving questions and answers. "The children should never read a lesson," Edwards instructed, "without the master or mistress taking care, that the child be made to attend to, and understand, the meaning of the words and sentences which it reads… the child should be taught to understand *things*, as well as *words*."[55]

Just as notable were Edwards' educational intentions for both boys *and* girls. His high hopes led him to draw plans for building a school specifically for Indian girls, even though it never came to fruition.[56] Edwards also expected the children to be taught music and to sing. He suggested, "Music, especially sacred music, has a powerful efficacy to soften the heart into tenderness, to harmonize the affections."[57] He insisted,

> Another thing, which properly belongs to a Christian education, and which would be unusually popular with them, and which would in several respects

[54] Edwards, "Letter to Isaac Hollis," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:389.

[55] Edwards, "Letter to Sir William Pepperrell," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:408; Letter to Isaac Hollis," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:389.

[56] Edwards, "A Plan for an Indian Girls' School (c. 1752)," in *JES* 9, No.2 (2019): 78-79. In 1752, Edwards drew plans for a school that might have been put on one of the Indian Commissioners, Joseph Dwight's, land in Stockbridge. Once Edwards' friend, Dwight eventually turned hostile toward him and made life difficult. As Minkema concludes about this endeavor, "this drawing remains, along with many letters, as a relic of disappointed hopes and plans for the Indian mission, a victim of colonial English ambivalence towards natives and of their thirst for their lands."

[57] Edwards, "Letter to Sir William Pepperrell," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:411.

> have a powerful influence, in promoting the great end in view, of leading them to renounce the coarseness, and filth and degradation, of savage life, for cleanliness, refinement and good morals, is teaching them to sing. Music, especially sacred music, has a powerful efficacy to soften the heart into tenderness, to harmonize the affections, and to give the mind a relish for objects of a superior character.[58]

Despite his intentions for the betterment of the Stockbridge Indians, Edwards could not free himself of his ethnocentric disposition toward the Indian way of thinking and speaking. He thought the children "being brought to the English language would open their minds, and bring 'em to acquaintance and conversation with the English, and would tend above all things to bring that civility which is to be found among the English."[59] The end goal was not merely for education for its own sake; it's primary purpose, or the "main design" as Edwards called it, was "to promote the salvation of the children." Always the pastor, Edwards instructed, "each child should, from time to time, be dealt with singly, particularly and closely, about the state and concerns of his soul."[60] Education was temporal, but the salvation of the Native Americans was constantly on his mind.

English-Indian Politics

Not only was he a supporter of education for Indian children, but Edwards also was an advocate for their proper legal treatment. For example, he intervened on the behalf of the family of a Schaghticoke Indian named **Waumpaumcorse** who was murdered by two White men. Waumpaumcorse was out harvesting sap with his son when they noticed two White men making off with some horses.[61] Giving pursuit, Waumpaumcorse was fatally shot by the thieves. The two White men were brought to justice in the nearby town of Springfield, but only one of them received a minor punishment, while the other was acquitted. The murder sent the Schaghticoke and

[58] Edwards, "Letter to Sir William Pepperrell," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:411.

[59] Edwards, "Letter to Isaac Hollis," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:389.

[60] Edwards, "Letter to Sir William Pepperrell," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:411-412.

[61] Sedgwick & Marquand, *Stockbridge 1739-1974*, 72-73; Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 105-106.

Stockbridge Indians into a "very great Ruffle," so much so that they held a Native American funeral instead of a Christian burial as a signal of defiance.[62] Identifying the prejudice towards the Native Americans, Edwards intervened on their behalf to the Governor and the courts. Writing to the Secretary of the Province, Josiah Willard, Edwards made him aware of this gross injustice: "It is very manifest that it is a matter of great importance, not only to us in Stockbridge, but to New England, that the Indians be quieted with respect to that matter."[63]

Moreover, Edwards knew the consequences of the matter if it was not resolved: their mistreatment would spread to other tribes and could result in the Indians switching their loyalty to the French. He suggested, "The ill influence of this affair is very extensive. It is evident it reaches other tribes to a great distance; and will be a handle which the French, at this juncture, will make the utmost improvement of; and probably have made much use of it already."[64] Pleading with Willard, Edwards strongly advised that a monetary subsidiary be sent to the Waumpaumcorse family for recompense, but only a small amount was eventually sent. With the tensions between the English and the surrounding Native American tribes heightened, and the fear of war with the French, Edwards saw "The Uneasiness of the Stockbridge Indians also now increased."[65] Soon after, there were more murders occurred in the town involving the Schaghticokes and Mohicans.

The upheaval set the surrounding settlements on high alert and prompted the sending of a "great Multitude [of] arme'd Men" to defend Stockbridge. Edwards' home at the center of town was even turned in to a garrison to house militia. The soldiers stay there for several days to protect both the English and the Indians, but it did not come without a cost. By Edwards' count, he and his family

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[62] Edwards, "Letter to Thomas Prince," in WJEO 32:A193. Frazier, *The Mohicans of Stockbridge*, 105.

[63] Edwards, "To Secretary Josiah Willard," *Letters and Personal Writings,* in WJE 16:644.

[64] Edwards, "To Secretary Josiah Willard," *Letters and Personal Writings,* in WJE 16:644.

[65] Edwards, "Letter to Thomas Prince," in WJEO 32:A193.

had served over 800 meals and a little over seven gallons of "Good West India Rum" all at his own financial expense.[66]

Edwards not only allowed White English militia to stay in his house, but he also frequently housed Mohawk children.[67] As strife over the school continued between Edwards and the Williamses, the parents of the Stockbridge Indian children became "extremely uneasy" with Captain Martin Kellogg, another teacher at the day school. Edwards recounted that the parents, "often loudly complained in my hearing of Captain Kellogg's ill-treatment of their children, in so greatly neglecting them as to their board, clothing and instruction, and taking so little care that their children should be kept clean and orderly. And by this means, the Indians of the town have in general imbibed a great prejudice against Captain Kellogg."[68] Edwards sent letter after letter to the Boston Commissioners, mission benefactors, and other government officials—such as Isaac Hollis, Andrew Oliver, Thomas Hubbard, Joseph Paice, and Thomas Foxcroft—in order to expose the Williamses' financial embezzlement and to protect the interests of his Stockbridge Indian congregation.

After two years of feuding with the Williamses and their allies, Edwards wrote to a friend, "Our difficulties with the Indians I think are all over," as the commissioners and financial supporters in Scotland sided with him making him the schoolmaster.[69] However, he spoke too soon. Before news came to Stockbridge about their decision, the Mohawk chiefs, in disgust over the mismanagement of the schools, decided to withdraw from the mission including their children, leaving no students at the school. Edwards pleaded with the Mohawks to leave behind children

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[66] Edwards, "Petition to Spencer Phips and General Assembly," WJEO 32:A194a. Giving quarter to the large number militia was at his expense, but he did ask court officials to pay back what he had spent to feed, house, and defend Stockbridge—which included the care for 150 horses, and wooden a defense built around the town.

[67] For example, see, Edwards, "Letter to Thomas Prince, May 10, 1754," WJEO 32:A193. He tells Thomas Prince of"one Mohawk Boy ; whom I have taken to my own House." That boy's name was David who had lived with the Edwardses for some time. See Edwards, "Letter to one of his children," in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:666-667.

[68] Edwards, "Letter to the Reverend Isaac Hollis," *Letters and Personal Writings,* in WJE 16:496.

[69] Edwards, "Letter to Col. Timothy Dwight," *Letters and Personal Writings,* in WJE 16:629.

for him to teach, but they had been only met with disappointment so many times they could no longer continue with this effort. All the same, Edwards continued to do what he could, bringing Indian children into his home and hosting Mohawk tribal councils.

The cost in terms of loss of reputation and of the ongoing difficulties with his extended family were not, in Edwards' view, defeats in themselves, but rather a mark of the failure properly to minister to the Mohawks and Mohicans. And, thus he saw it as a failure to bring revival among the Indians there in Stockbridge. Nevertheless, Edwards did not give up hope to see revival among a people who he, despite his ethnocentric tendencies, thought would play a distinctive role in the work of redemption. "The Indians, wild as they are," Edwards suggested, "have some sense of the shamefulness of vice, and of the value of virtue, order and civility. And they have some sense of the worth of knowledge. If anyone among them is able to read and write, it is looked upon as a great attainment, and they esteem it a thing much to be valued to be able to read and understand the Bible."[70]

Stockbridge Sermons

It would seem reasonable to assume Edwards took the easiest route and just reused old sermons from Northampton, as suggested by Winslow, since no one in the congregation would have previously heard any of the material.[71] And, as Wheeler has pointed out, scholars have assumed the Stockbridge sermons simply "to be little more than simple Sunday School lessons, often recycled from the body of Northampton sermons."[72]

Edwards has most notably been recognized as a towering intellectual figure in the roots of American religious history, but when we think about his sermons—that is the regular, oral preaching to the congregation on Sundays—as an expression to convey that intellectualism, and not simply as an exercise, we can appreciate the same missional urgency with which he preached to the Stockbridge Indians as he

[70] Edwards, "Letter to Joseph Paice," *Letters and Personal Writings,* in WJE 16:441.

[71] Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, 223; Tracey, *Jonathan Edwards*, 182-184.

[72] Wheeler, "Friends to Your Souls": 748.

had in Northampton. Edwards did recycle *some* of his Northampton sermons at Stockbridge, but not *all* of them. Wilson H. Kimnach has noted, "the most dramatic modification of Edwards' homiletic practice during the period was occasioned by his becoming a missionary to the Mahican and Mohawk Indian tribes of Stockbridge. Although his pastorate in the English congregation at Stockbridge permitted him to draw upon a trove of Northampton sermons for much of his preaching, Edwards clearly saw the Indian mission as demanding a new kind of preaching."[73] In fact, a closer look at Edwards' sermons from his Stockbridge years indicate, from both a numerical and a material standpoint, that his sermons were not recycled or dumbed-down, but were mostly new and nuanced in order to convey the same Calvinist doctrine to a different style of congregation. Therefore, Edwards believed that American Indians had the same mental capacity to grasp biblical truths as his Northampton congregation.

Sermons by the Numbers

When Edwards took the position at the Stockbridge mission, it was, on paper at least, to serve one congregation comprised of both English and Indians, but the sermons and letter manuscripts of the period suggests he preached to them separately.[74] Of the 1,200 sermons in Edwards' corpus, he preached at least 233 sermons specifically for the Stockbridge Indians and 165 sermons for the English congregation from 1751 to 1758—this, including re-preached material. By Wheeler's count, 190 of the 233 sermons preached to the Indians were original

[73] Wilson H. Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758*, in WJE 25:40.

[74] Kimnach has noted that how the English and Native Americans worshipped in Stockbridge is unclear, however, it is certain that two different services were held—one for the English families, and another for the Native Americans, but both in the English language. During the Indian service, the translator was used. There was an initial meetinghouse built for Indians when Stockbridge was founded, and it is likely the English used it as well. Edwards' sermons at this time were much shorter than ones at Northampton further indicating two sessions were held in the same meetinghouse. Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in WJE 25:40-41 fn. 3. Wheeler has also pointed out that Gideon Hawley, the schoolmaster at Stockbridge, had noted in his journal that Edwards "was pleased with both his [Edwards's] discourses. The first to the Indians was from John 10:27." Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 204.

compositions, while only 29 original sermons were composed for the English there in Stockbridge.[75] Evidence for preached sermons in 1757 is inconclusive; however, 29 sermons were marked as being re-preached that year but whether they were only to the Indians or English, or both, remains unclear. This means that 82 percent of the sermons he preached to the Stockbridge Indians were original compositions, compared to only 18 percent of the sermons to the English.

While the majority of Edwards' sermons for his Stockbridge Indian congregation were "new," in one sense, it is likely he "drew on a vast body of notes and prior sermons in writing them."[76] Additionally, manuscript evidence suggests that the number of new sermons began to decline in 1756—mostly likely due to the "dwindling Indian congregation as a result of malfeasance and infighting among the English mission officers," as well as Edwards' illness and the beginning of the French and Indian War.[77] As the size of the Indian congregation waned, so did the length of the actual sermons. From 1756 and into 1757, sermon outlines became more and more brief, until they were only a few notes on one or two leaves.[78] Even more telling, Edwards favored New Testament texts to the Old Testament by a ratio of five to three for the Stockbridge Indians, compared to the nearly equal ratio for the English congregants.[79] More specifically, Edwards relied on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, giving special attention to the parables. While it should also be apparent that Edwards modified his "homiletic practice" to serve the different needs of two congregations, it should not be taken as devolution of doctrine. As will be

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[75] Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 213n44-48.

[76] Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 204. This is also suggested by Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:40.

[77] Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:41.

[78] Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:41. Edwards' regular practice of writing out a sermon was typically formatted in a single column on octavo pages which was stitched together. As the sermons became shorter in length, Edwards apparently did not bother stitching them together which made them subject to loss or being mixed up with other leaflets. For more information on Edwards and writing the sermon, Kimnach, "Edwards as Preacher," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, 103-124; The Brazen Trumpet: Jonathan Edwards' Conception of the Sermon," in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards,* ed. William J. Scheick (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1980), 277-286.

[79] Wheeler, "Friends to Your Souls," 750.

discussed in the next section, Edwards never shied away from biblical truths, but used a different avenue of conveying those truths than he did with his English congregation and at Northampton—namely, current events and the heightened use of natural imagery.

Edwards did indeed draw material from his Northampton pastorate, but by these factors, it is a far cry to suggest his entire preaching ministry on the frontier was comprised of recycled sermon material, or lacked substantive doctrine, as opposed to the idea that they were merely "dumbed-down Sunday school lessons," for either Indian or English audiences.

Stockbridge Sermons by Method

Ephraim Williams was not wrong in his warning that Jonathan Edwards would be ill suitable as the missionary-pastor because he was too old to learn any of the Native American languages. He was a fluid orator with great command of the English language, but for him the Mohican language was an impassible hurdle. The Stockbridge Indians were unaccustomed to theological terminology, and what would add to Edwards' difficulty was the use of an interpreter. Edwards "perceived from the outset—perhaps as a result of Brainerd's warning—that the Indians would require abbreviated statements of theology."[80] However, "abbreviated" in this case does not mean "simplistic." A reading of his sermons to the Indians indicate they were "remarkably balanced in covering the nuances of Calvinistic theology" and "are more likely to provide a comprehensive theological context for the doctrine than are sermons to the English congregation. The reason Edwards was able to provide scope, balance, and brevity simultaneously is that he substituted theological synthesis for theological analysis in the Indian sermons."[81] He did not alter his theology, rather he chose comprehensive statements to replace analytical mediations. The simple diction and sentence structure in the Indian sermons would lead readers facilely to assume a simple message. However, sermons like *God is*

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[80] Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:41.

[81] Kimnach, "Preface to the Period," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:42.

Infinitely Strong (1753), on Job 9:4, reveal a highly sophisticated conception of God, including Edwards' occasionalist concept of continuous creation and some of the latest scientific thought on the universe.[82]

The typical Edwards sermon prior to Stockbridge was theologically substantive and assumed a learned Christian vocabulary while it analyzed scripture to give depth to the sermons. That is not to say that, once he moved to Stockbridge, his sermons were any less passionate or carried less doctrinal weight. On the contrary, Edwards' Stockbridge sermons were full of the Calvinistic theology he adhered to, but he needed to discover a "new kind of preaching" that conveyed those same doctrines to a difference audience. The method Edwards chose—which would be the most striking difference between those and his Northampton sermons—was using frequent natural imagery, metaphors, and analogies with occasional story telling (this will be developed in the next section).

Edwards nearly had to re-plan his method and delivery in his Stockbridge Indian sermons. First, the length was much shorter than his sermons to the English congregation due to the audience's attention span and the allotted time given for interpretation by Edwards' Native American disciple, John Wauwaumpequunaunt (for the Mahicans), and Rebecca Ashley (for the Mohawks).[83] Moreover, he modified the written form by removing numbered heads and division titles while preserving the form's esthetic and logical structure.[84] Therefore, the overall ways Edwards prepared his sermons had changed entirely.

Second, Edwards veered from his usual initial analytical method in the sermon to, at times, rehearsing the text as a story. In his first sermon to the Stockbridge Indians, *The Things That Belong to True Religion* (1751), Edwards presents the text, but instead of analyzing it for its theological substance, he

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[82] Kimnach, "Edwards as Preacher," 121. Job 9:4 (KJV) reads, "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength." For the sermon *God is Infinitely Strong*, see, WJE 25:643-646.

[83] Frazier, *The Mohicans*, 94. One of the main reasons Edwards chose not to learn the Mohican language was because he had an interpreter. Some scholars suggest, had there been no interpreter, Edwards would have had to at least learned some to preach. Of course, that is conjecture.

[84] Wilson H. Kimnach, "Edwards as Preacher," 120. Kimnach notes that Edwards' early Indian sermons are well written out in single columns in large booklets. The careful penmanship and organization suggest that Edwards saw himself beginning a new preaching career.

explains the narrative and the background. In this particular text on Acts 11:12-13, the story of Peter converting Cornelius, the first non-Jewish convert to Christianity, Edwards described how Christianity had come to be up until that point.[85] Edwards narrates how Peter, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, was commanded to go preach the gospel to the whole world, to convert all the heathen nations. As a Centurion, and in authority over Jews, Cornelius was a solider, but Edwards described him as open to being "brought into the "light."[86] And because of the receptivity of people like Cornelius down through the ages, the gospel eventually spread to the English, who once were also heathens but had now made their way to the Native Americans in the New World. Edwards saw his preaching to the Stockbridge Indians as part of a continuing gospel narrative, but also favored narration over exegesis as if a well-told story or vivid picture would be more memorable and persuasive to the Indians than the most powerful logical analysis.[87]

Stockbridge Sermons by the Content

Not only did Edwards modify the way he prepared and delivered his sermons, but he also had to devise new ways of connecting with his audience. One of the relevant ways he did this was by addressing current events, such as the violence that surrounded Stockbridge and influenced Native American-English relations--namely, the French and Indian wars.[88]

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[85] Edwards, *The Things That Belong to True Religion*, in WJE 25:566-575. Acts 11:12-13 (KJV) reads, "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter.

[86] Edwards, *The Things That Belong to True Religion*, in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:571.

[87] Kimnach, "Edwards as Preacher," 120.

[88] For more information on Jonathan Edwards and war, see James P. Byrd, "Jonathan Edwards, War, and the Bible," in *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture: Biblical Exegesis in British North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 192-211; Byrd rightly points out that Edwards was surrounded by war his entire life and that "war was one of the most important contexts that guided ministers in their use of the Bible. To understand Edwards' interpretation of Scripture, therefore, we should account for how he found biblical meaning in the wars that shaped his times," 192-193. Christian Cuthbert, "'More Swiftly Propagating the Gospel': Jonathan Edwards, Col. John

Sermons during War Time

"Jonathan Edwards on the warpath is not a frequently entertained image," but preaching on the topic of war was not something new for him. He had preached many martial sermons, such as *The Duties of Christians in a Time of War* (1745) while he was in Northampton. But treating the theme of war became more of a concern for him in Stockbridge, as the sermons were to be preached to both English and Native Americans.[89] Examples of this are *In the Name of the Lord of Hosts* (1755) and *God's People Tried by a Battle Lost* (1755).[90] Edwards observed that "the affair of war is one of the most important of all the affairs of the universe: the state of the world of mankind principally depends upon it."

As some members of Edwards' Stockbridge congregations, both English and Native American, set out on the expedition against the French fort at Crown Pointe, he preached from 1 Samuel 17:45-47.[91] He exhorted both races with the story of David and Goliath—not that they were somehow small like David and the French were like Goliath—but to trust in the Lord to deliver them from their enemies. Edwards urged them "not trust in men: cursed is he that trusts in men, like the dry tree. Happy is he that trusts in the Lord, [for he is] like a tree that grows by a river. We have great encouragement to trust in God in this war we are now engaged in with our enemies."[92] As a pastor, Edwards' utmost concern was for the souls of the Native Americans as well as the English. He understood that physical

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Stoddard, and the Invasion of Canada" in *Jonathan Edwards within the Enlightenment: Controversy, Experience, and Thought*, eds., John T. Lowe and Daniel N. Gullotta (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020).

[89] Kimnach, *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:680.

[90] For these sermons, see Edwards, "The Duties of Christians in a Time of War," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:127-142; "In the Name of the Lord of Hosts," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:680-684; "God's People Tried by a Battle Lost," *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:685-697. Also see Christian Cuthbert, *The Wartime Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Collection*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022.

[91] For a summary of the Crown Pointe expedition during the French and Indian war see, Howard H. Peckham, *The Colonial Wars: 1689–1762* (Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964), 148–51.

[92] Edwards, "In the Name of the Lord of Hosts," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:683.

war with the French had spiritual meaning because this was warfare against the Papists. Reminding the Indians and the English that they needed one another in their fight against their "arrogant and proud" enemies, he lamented, "How miserable we should be if we shall be overcome by the French."[93]

Months later, the inhabitants of the British North American colonies were traumatized when they learned about the failed attempt to capture the French Fort Duquesne. "Braddock's Defeat," as it is commonly called, and named after slain Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock, meant that the northern territories under English control, including Stockbridge, were vulnerable to French and allied Indian attacks.[94] Sharing the general distress of such news, Edwards preached *God's People Tried by a Battle Lost* from Psalms 60:9–12, suggesting to his hearers that they should be humbled before God in order to place confidence in Him. He pressed the Indians and English: "'Tis an awful rebuke of the Most High for our pride and vain confidence, most loudly and awfully calling on the whole nation to deep humiliation and repentance... We han't reason at all to despair. At the same time that God has thus awfully rebuked us in this defeat, on the one hand, he is on the other hand inviting us to look to him for help by his appearing ready to help in so remarkably succeeding our forces in the eastern parts." The news of the French Catholic victory over the English Protestants would have been disheartening news—indeed, some scholars have likened the British defeat to that of Pearl Harbor—but Edwards encouraged the Indians and English to have hope because God "both corrects with his rod and draws us with bonds of love."[95] However, Edwards tried to keep a balanced view of God. Comfort and confidence in God's

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[93] Edwards, "In the Name of the Lord of Hosts," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:682-3.

[94] Edward Braddock was the commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America. The French Fort Duquesne was located in the middle colonies. For more information on Braddock's Defeat see, David L. Preston, *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Howard H. H. Peckham, "Colonial Wars, 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964), 139-147.

[95] Edwards, "God's People Tried by a Battle Lost," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:696. Kimnach states that "It was a military debacle which left much of the middle frontier virtually unguarded: a kind of Pearl Harbor, except that the English had been the would-be attackers." WJE 25:685.

providence were some things he often reminded his Indian congregation, but he did not stray from the hardened doctrines of Calvinism. He warned them: "you had better know your duty more than others and God has done more for you than others and therefore if you don't do your duty you will have a better place in Hell than the Heathen that never heard of Jesus Christ."[96]

Use of Natural Imagery

Other than reflecting on the current political and social events of his day in his sermons, the most innovative way Edwards implored his Indian audience was the prolific use of natural imagery. Using the tools of imagery and metaphor was not something new to Edwards' style of preaching. In his early years of ministry during the 1720's, Edwards readily used nature to convey some of the biblical truths and necessary doctrinal concepts for his New York and Northampton congregations. For example, in *Christ, the Light of the World*, Edwards states, "our souls are naturally like a dark, hideous dungeon where the sun, moon, nor stars never found an entrance for their beams." And during the Great Awakening, Edwards' *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* menaced, that a person's natural "righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock."[97]

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[96] Edwards, "Lecture on the Problem of Drink," 11/1155 Jonathan Edwards Center, Beinecke Library, Yale University. Quoted in Wheeler, "Edwards as Missionary," 206.

[97] Edwards, "Christ, the Light of the World," in *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723,* WJE 10:545; "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," in WJE 22:410. For more on the general use of imagery in Edwards' sermons, see Kimnach, "Editor's Introduction," in WJE 10:210-227. Kimnach notes, that "of all the materials Edwards borrowed from the Bible or from life, he seems to have done more with imagery in composing his discourses than with any other device. Possessed of an intensely concrete and particularistic imagination, Edwards' abstract logic and his metaphors are alike vivified by simple but poignant (usually visual) images. The vividly delineated image appealed to Edwards from his earliest days, according to the evidence of works such as "Of Insects" which is remarkable for the vividness and particularity of its visual images; but Edwards consciously espoused the use of imagery in his sermons and more mature writings in accordance with his theory of language." For more information on Edwards' use of imagery see Michael Keller, "Experiencing God in Words: Rhetoric, Logic, Imaginative Language, and Emotion in Jonathan Edwards' Sermons: A Computational Analysis," Ph.D. dissertation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2018.

However, the perennial use of imagery in sermons for the Indians became more pronounced than in any other period of Edwards' preaching ministry. In one of earliest Stockbridge sermons on Matthew 13:47–50, *Heaven's Dragnet*, Edwards chose to use the biblical image of fishing with a net—which would have been a relatable metaphor for a hunter-gather Indian culture.[98] Introducing the text, Edwards explains, "Tis said that this kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea. The sea is the whole world of mankind. As a net that is cast into the sea don't take all the fish in the sea, but only goes 'round and fences in a few, so the kingdom of Christ don't take all the world, but only a part." And instead of diving into exegesis, Edwards continues with narrative story-telling, an unusual move for him in explicating a doctrine. There, Edwards explained the historical context of fishermen and Jesus' fishers of men motif:

> Christ's disciples, several of them, really were fishermen: that was their trade that they got their living by, and when Christ called them to follow him and to be his disciples and ministers, he told them that they should no longer catch fish but he would make 'em fishers of men, to catch men. When a fisherman casts a net into the sea, what he aims at is only good fish that are good for food. He don't desire to catch any but good fish, but yet the net will gather every sort, good and bad.[99]

After clarifying the biblical meaning with its historical significance, Edwards goes back into story-telling. He moves to and fro between the point of hermeneutic and narrative story-telling. Immediately following he says,

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[98] Edwards, "Heaven's Dragnet," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:575-582. I borrow the suggestion by Kimnach that "the master image of the net was biblical and had been used in the Northampton sermon series on conversion, Edwards' selection of it for use in one of his first Indian sermons may have been an attempt to engage the hunter-gatherer culture of the Indians. Other parts of the sermon directly address their cultural environment," WJE 25:575. Matt 13:47-50 (KJV) states, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

[99] Edwards, "Heaven's Dragnet," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:578.

> So none ought to come into the Christian church but good men: but because ministers can't know men's hearts, every sort will come in, good and bad. As there will be some bad fish in the net, so there will be some bad men in the kingdom of Christ. The fishermen, when their net was full, drew the fish out of the sea. The fish, after they were in the net, were but a short time in the sea: they were soon drawn to the shore. So the professors of religion will be but a short time in this world: they will soon be taken away out of this world into the other world. While the fish were in the net in the sea, it could not be seen what the fish were, whether good or bad; but when they were drawn to shore, then it could be seen plainly what they were and the bad could easily be distinguished from the good.[100]

Here, Edwards felt like he needed to carry the imagery of catching fish along with his hermeneutic in order to get the point across to his listeners. A sentence of exegesis is followed directly after a sentence of narrative story-telling. This homiletic method would be another that set his Stockbridge sermons apart from his previous ministries.

In another early Stockbridge sermon, *Christ Is to the Heart Like a River to a Tree Planted By It* (1751), Edwards used one of his favorite images. In nearly every line, the emblem of a healthy tree near a flowing river is found. This sermon alone demonstrates that this "imagistic tour de force may be seen as another instance of Edwards' ability to find biblical metaphors that seem to speak directly to the Indian mentality."[101] Preaching a chief doctrine "Christ is to the heart of a true saint like a river to the roots of a tree that is planted by it," on Ps. 1:3, Edwards declared:

> As the waters of a river run easily and freely, so the love of Christ. [He] freely came into the world. [He] laid down his life and endured those dreadful sufferings. His blood was freely shed: blood flowed as freely from his wounds as water from a spring. All the good things that Christ bestows on his saints come to 'em as freely as water runs down in a river… These all come freely from Christ, like the waters of a river… Christ is like a river in the great plenty and abundance of his love and grace. The good things that are the fruits of his love are infinitely great. The happiness that he gives [is] worth

[100] Edwards, "Heaven's Dragnet," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:578.

[101] Kimnach's "Introduction" in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:600.

> more than all the silver and gold in the world. The tree that spreads out its roots by a river has water enough: no need of rain or any other water. So the true saint finds enough in Christ: great plenty of water—enough to supply a great multitude of persons with drink to satisfy all their thirst. [There is enough] to supply the roots of a multitude of trees; so, for all saints. Waters of a river don't fail; [it] flows constantly, day and night. Waters that run upon the ground from showers of rain or melting of the snows soon dry up, but [waters from rivers do not]. Little brooks dry up in a very dry time, but the waters of a great river continue running, continually and from one age to another, and are never dry…

Knowing there was a focus on death and the after-life in Native American culture, Edwards still used imagery when portraying the soul in relation to Christ. He continued to described Christ as an everlasting tree to nourish the soul with water:

> When the end of the world comes, yet their comforts shall still be like a river that shall not be dried up. A tree planted [by a river] is never [dry]: so Christ is never [exhausted]… As the water enters into the roots [of the tree], so Christ enters the heart and soul of a godly man and dwells there. The Spirit of Christ comes into the very heart of a saint as water to the roots of a tree. [Water] refreshes; so [Christ] refreshes and satisfies [the heart], and makes it rejoice. Water gives life and keeps it alive; so [Christ enlivens the heart and] makes it grow: makes it grow beautiful [and] fruitful. A tree planted [by a river] is green in time of great drought, when other trees wither. So the soul of a true saint [is sustained by Christ] in time of affliction, at death [and even] at the end of the world.[102]

Therefore, while Edwards deployed new methods of delivering his sermons with the use of interpreters, he also manipulated the English language through an array of imagery to convey gospel truths without having to sacrifice Calvinist doctrine. Already a great orator in English, Edwards thought his time was best spent writing, and preparing sermons, rather than attempting to learn Mohican. But because the Stockbridge sermons were focused on imagery, metaphor, and story-telling, it freed them from his first-person commentary which, at times, appeared in his Northampton sermons.

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[102] Edwards, "Christ Is ao The Heart Like a River to a Tree Planted By It," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:600-605.

For example, in a sermon he preached at Northampton on Matt. 13:7, Edwards began, "when it is said in the text that some of the seed fell among thorns it is as much as to say that some fell on uncultivated unplowed land… from this text I would speak to these two Propositions."[103] On the very same text to the Indian congregation, Edwards did not insert himself into the explanation of the scripture, and narrated, "some that have the word preached… are like ground that was never planted/all run over with thorns."[104] Edwards realized his own take on the passage would not carry as much weight with the Indians as would the power of imagery and story-telling. Edwards' portrayal of Jesus' silent suffering under torture would have been a strong image, appealing to the Native warrior ethic. As pragmatic as Edwards was, he knew the use of imagery in sermon-story-telling was the avenue he needed to take in order effectively to communicate the gospel through his sermons to Native Americans.

Missions and Race as a Theological Framework

The previous segments have served as a background for this next section, which seeks to elucidate Edwards' theology of missions as it relates to race. As has been previously mentioned, Edwards' theology of missions predated his Stockbridge years. As McClymond and McDermott have dually noted, Edwards' term for mission was "the propagation of the gospel" and he saw evangelizing as "the principle moving force in the history of redemption… Therefore mission, for Edwards, was the principal means used by God to secure these purposes in history."[105] Often, Edwards' treatises are read in isolation for their deep theological

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[103] WJEO 56:579.

[104] Edwards on Matthew 13:7, Mach 1752, Box 6, Folder 470, JEC.

[105] McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 549-550. McClymond and McDermott have offered a summary of Edwards' reason as to why God created the world and why missions exist. "Edwards believed God's purpose in creating the world was to glorify himself by communicating the inner-Trinitarian knowledge, joy, and love among the divine persons to his human creatures. By seeing the beauty of god, understanding his ways, and delighting in his love, they were to be made anew through union with Christ and his Father by the Spirit. The primary way that people would see this beauty and be caught up into the Trinitarian reality would be by hearing and receiving the gospel. For this purpose, God appointed a gospel ministry to the apostles and their

and philosophical material; as important as these close examinations are, they can hinder a much more comprehensive understanding of Edwards' thought. Some of the most brilliant works of Edwards were written during his time at Stockbridge, and together they can be read productively, from the perspective of a missionary trying to connect to a different race with a different culture, language, and preconceived notions of religion. Most notable is *A History of the Work of Redemption*.

History of the Work of Redemption

When Edwards was recommended to become next president of the College of New Jersey he was reluctant to take the position was because it would require time away from a project he had been working on for decades. He wrote,

> 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.[106]

For Edwards, the purpose of history was redemption, the salvation of souls whereby God calls His elect in a display of glory to both Himself and to the world. Conversion was a necessary action for the process of redemption to take place. Edwards declared that "the work of God in the conversion of one soul, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe."[107] The act

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successors—to preach, teach, and baptize all nations," McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 550.

[106] Edwards, "To the Trustees of the College of New Jersey," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:727-728. For more information on *A History of the Work of Redemption*, see, William J. Scheick, "The Grand Design: Jonathan Edwards' History of the Work of Redemption," in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Spring, 1975, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Spring, 1975): 300-314.

[107] Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival*, *The Great Awakening*, in WJE 4:345.

of evangelizing, or to use Edwards' phrase, "propagating the gospel," to the American Indians fit into the larger biblical narrative of God glorifying Himself through the redemption of humankind. Mission, therefore, "which stimulates revival, is the hidden dynamic driving history, and the fruit of missions produces more human happiness."[108]

A *History of the Work of Redemption* (1773) was based on a sermon series on Isaiah 51:8 during his Northampton days sometime between March and August in 1739.[109] The "design" of history, as Edwards called it, was divided into three main sections: firstly, the "fall of man to Christ's incarnation"; secondly, from the incarnation to his resurrection; and thirdly, from the resurrection to the end of the world.[110] Namely, the cause or purpose for the incarnation, Christ's incarnation itself, and the salvation, or the "Work of Redemption," was saving of all peoples through evangelizing until the Day of Judgment. The "Work of Redemption" being those progressive works of God by which the redemption is brought about and accomplished."[111] This "Work of Redemption" was first defined in his work, *The End for Which God Created the World* (1765) where he argued that the chief end of all creation is to glorify God by delighting in him forever. "The glory of God," Edwards suggests, "is the ultimate end of the work of redemption— which is the chief work of providence towards the moral world."[112] This preeminent work of God is the work, or actions, of redemption. This would be made manifest by conversion, defined as the "work by which good men are, as it were, created, or brought into being, as good men, or as restored to holiness and happiness. The work of redemption is a new creation, according to Scripture representation, whereby

[108] McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 551. *History of the Work of Redemption* was published posthumously by John Eskrine from a transcript by Jonathan Edwards, Jr.

[109] John F. Wilson, "Editor's Introduction," in *History of the Work of Redemption,* WJE 9:5.

[110] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:127.

[111] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:116. Here, Edwards also explicitly states that "the work of salvation and the Work of Redemption are the same thing. What is sometimes in Scripture called God's saving his people is in others called his redeeming them."

[112] Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*, in WJE 8:488. This was also published posthumously.

men are brought into a new existence, or are made new creatures."[113] This conversion, or work of redemption by Christ, was necessary for all people in the world, because of the fall and of the original sin that came with it.

Here, in his work, *Original Sin* (1758), Edwards explained the underlying need for missions among all races. Throughout this treatise, also written during his Stockbridge pastorate, he described the inability of all people heirs of Adam and Eve, and therefore sinners. Pointedly, Edwards stated, "In God's sight no man living can be justified; but all are sinners, and exposed to condemnation. This is true of persons of all constitutions, capacities, conditions, manners, opinions and educations; in all countries, climates, nations and ages; and through all the mighty changes and revolutions, which have come to pass in the habitable world."[114] Edwards' time in Northampton among the White English who cared little of piety and more for immorality, and with the Native American tribes of New England who were unaware of Christianity, would have affirmed his doctrine. Judging by the entirety of humans in Europe, the Americans, Africa, and Asia, no person had the ability to profess true religion, or choose holiness, apart from the work of redemption found in Christ. As colonizers from Europe poured out onto the rest of the world and "civilized" other nations, civility would not be a saving grace for humans. Edwards declared,

> [A]mong both Jews and gentiles, under the Old Testament; and since that, among Christians, Jews, Mahometans; among Papists and Protestants; in those nations where civility, politeness, arts and learning most prevail, and among the Negroes and Hottentots in Africa, the Tartars in Asia, and Indians in America, towards both the poles, and on every side of the globe; in greatest cities, and obscurest villages; in palaces, and in huts, wigwams and cells under ground? Is it enough, to reply, it happens so, that men everywhere, and at all times choose thus to determine their own wills, and so to make themselves sinful, as soon as ever they are capable of it, and to sin constantly

[113] Edwards, *The End for Which God Created the World*, in WJE 8:489.

[114] Edwards, *Original Sin*, in WJE 3:124.

> as long as they live, and universally to choose never to come up half way to their duty?[115]

It would come as no surprise to Edwards' European readers that the Indians would only exist in "the grossest ignorance, delusions, and most stupid paganism."[116] But it was because of this depravity of humankind that Edwards was so eager to offer it to the Stockbridge Indians as the revelatory light, "the [divine] light of life… animating, quickening light."[117]

Wheeler has rightly argued that Edwards' *Original Sin* applied to the idea of missionary efforts among unchristianized peoples. "It is important to remember," she notes, "that it was a related doctrine of universal applicability that underwrote New World colonization and mission efforts. If humans are naturally sinful, then all need Christ as savior, and it is therefore incumbent upon those in possession of the written revelation to bring it to those without."[118] While Edwards never explicitly stated this connection, it was assumed in his pronouncements to the Indians. In one of his very first sermons at Stockbridge, Edwards preached, that the English "are no better than you in no respect, only as God has made us to differ and has been pleased to give us more light. And now we are willing to give it to you."[119] The chief end of humankind and the necessity of salvation from depravity would drive Edwards' missional and revival dream of Christ's redemptive history.

Edwards' missiological vision for the coming of Christ's kingdom was not limited to the dissolution of the Roman Catholic hold over the Italians, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, but was intended for all human races. This millennial foretaste would turn "multitudes from heresy, and from popery, and from other false religions, and also for turning many from their vice and profaneness, and for

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[115] Edwards, *Original Sin*, in WJE 3:194.

[116] Edwards, *Original Sin*, in WJE 3:151.

[117] Edwards, *Of Those Who Walk In The Light Of God's Countenance*, *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758, in* WJE 25:708.

[118] Wheeler, "Lessons from Stockbridge," 135.

[119] Edwards, "To the Mohawks at the Treaty, August 16, 1751," In *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, ed. Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Douglas Sweeney (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 107-108.

bringing vast multitudes savingly home."[120] He described how this "glorious work" was to be accomplished according to Zechariah. 4:6-7, which taught the "Spirit shall be gloriously poured out for the wonderful revival and propagation of religion." Preaching among the Indians would go in a "wonderful manner, and spread more and more; more shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord and shall come, as it were, in flocks, one flock and multitude after another, continually flowing in, as in *Isaiah 60:4–5*."[121] Interpreting Revelation 14:6–8, Edwards looked forward to this time of worldwide revival in which the gospel will be powerfully preached and propagated in the world: "the gospel shall be preached to every tongue and kindred and [nation and people] so we may suppose that it will soon be gloriously successful to bring in multitudes, and from many nations. And it shall proceed more and more with wonderful swiftness, and vast numbers shall suddenly be brought in."[122] As should be clear by now, Edwards' passion for bringing about Native American conversions was only a part of much larger visionary effort to usher in Christ's kingdom. Moreover, his interest in seeing revivals among the Indians, fueled by his personal admiration of David Brainerd, flowed from a desire to see the Scripture fulfilled—the conversion of all nations and the vanquishing of the "two might kingdoms of the Antichrist and Mohammed."[123]

When these works of Jonathan Edwards are read in the context of when they were written, it is possible to see that his overall passion was to view the whole series of past events in the universe as part of God's progressing metanarrative to glorify Himself through Christ saving people from "every tongue, kindred, nation,

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[120] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, in WJE 9:461.

[121] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, in WJE 9:461.

[122] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:461-2. Rev. 14:6–8 reads, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

[123] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, in WJE 9:463.

and people"—including those of the Native American tribes. At this juncture, there are two "overarching" missiological features to Edwards' thought. First, all of humankind, regardless of race, is totally depraved, unable to profess any true religion, let alone save themselves. Second, the work of redemption offered through Christ is commanded to be preached to all people without provision or priority of race, culture, language, or otherwise. Edwards saw identical deficiencies-imputed and committed sin—among Whites, Africans, Asians, and Indians worldwide. But at the same time, he viewed all of those races as equal subjects for salvation. Edwards preached that "All mankind of all nations, white and black, young and old, are going in one or the other of these paths, either in the way of that leads to life or the way that leads to destruction."[124]

Legacy of Jonathan Edwards and Americans Indians

The reception of Jonathan Edwards' theology and its impact on nineteenth-century modern missions has been noted among scholars such as Chris Chun in his work, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*. More specifically, viewing him as a missionary has been a relatively new concept, but recently, scholars have also begun attributing him as the "Grandfather of Modern Missions."[125] Among them, Obbie Tyler Todd has succinctly argued this. Various works of Edwards reached British Calvinist pastor, Andrew Fuller, which led to the formation of the *Baptist Missionary Society* in 1792, signaling the beginning of the modern missionary movement.[126] Moreover, Edwards himself might not have

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[124] Jonathan Edwards, "All Mankind of All Nations, White and Black, Young and Old, Is Going in One or the Other of These Paths, Ether in the Way That Leads to Life or the Way That Leads to Destruction," in *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers 2003), 226.

[125] McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards,* 564. Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Also see, Obbie Tyler Todd, "Did Jonathan Edwards Help Inspire the Modern Missionary Movement," in *A Collection of Essays on Jonathan Edwards* (Forth Worth, TX: JE Society Press, 2016), 33-47.

[126] Todd argues that Edwards "evangelized with the same sincere theology crafted by [Andrew] Fuller years later, suggesting a strong correlation between Edwards and his early eighteenth-century counterpart. Edwardsean theology handed Fuller the necessary tools for The Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen," Todd, *Did Edwards Help Inspire the Modern Missionary Movement*, 47. For more information on Andrew Fuller, see, Peter Morden, *The*

thought his legacy would include his missionary efforts, especially in light of the disappointing results of the Stockbridge Mission. Even so, his lasting influence among the Mohicans is rarely given the attention it deserves through the lens interracial ministry.

In terms of Edwards' legacy among the Stockbridge Indians, some might consider his efforts in vain, or his impact minimal at best. However, one of Edwards' long-lasting impressions on the Native Americans in New England would be through his student Gideon Hawley. Hawley was Edwards' chosen as the replacement of Martin Kellogg as schoolmaster in Stockbridge and also held a position there as an agent of the *Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians*, beginning in 1752. During the long hardships with Williamses, Hawley's boarding school—including all of the school's books and materials—went up in flames in February 1753.[127] Unfortunately, the act of arson—suspicion was aimed at the Williamses—would be the writing on the wall for Hawley. He chose to leave behind the feuding English families in Stockbridge and to go directly to where the Native Americans were already living. Hawley had developed good relationships with some of the Oneida from the village of Onohquaga near what is now Windsor, New York about 200 miles away. The Oneida there had heard of Hawley's boarding school and developed an interest in their children being educated by him. Excited to see another David Brainerd-like missionary, Edwards sanctioned Hawley's plan to go to the Iroquois along with a key interpreter, Rebecca Kellogg Ashley, her husband Benjamin, and, interestingly, a few "Africans" since there seemed "to be no room for a missionary in the country of the Proper Mohawks."[128] There Hawley

Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2015); Keith S. Grant, *Andrew Fuller and the Evangelical Renewal of Pastoral Theology* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2013); George M. Ella, *Law and Gospel in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Durham, England: Go Publications, 1996).

[127] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 403.

[128] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 404; Edwards, *Letter to Secretary Andrew Oliver*, *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:580-586. Edwards wrote to Oliver and the Commissioners encouraging them to support Hawley's endeavor. By that time most of the Indians had left and Edwards thought that Stockbridge would at least be able to serve as something of a base for missionaries to go out to other Indian settlements. Edwards stated, "Indians young and old went away from Stockbridge and are never like to return again. They have long manifested a great uneasiness at the management of

would teach and minister to the Iroquois of the Six Nations and eventually become an interpreter himself until the French and Indian War forced him to leave. Hawley continued to do mission work among Native Americans in Massachusetts until his death in 1807—though his time along the Mashpee was highly conflicted.

As the Indians were being stripped of their lands in Stockbridge, they decided to resettle in New Stockbridge, New York, during the mid-1780's. In this transition they were led by a Mohican Chief named Hendrick Aupaumut who was probably baptized by Edwards in Stockbridge in 1758. Years later, and after relocating, Aupaumut wrote to Edwards' son Timothy in Stockbridge to request copies of Edwards' books—specifically, *Freedom of the Will* and *Religious Affections*. It is possible Aupaumut wanted to translate these since he had translated the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* into Mohican in 1795. is possible he wanted to translate Edwards' works as well.[129]

The legacy of Edwards and Native Americans was also manifest through his son Jonathan Edwards, Jr. The elder Edwards had chosen to build his house

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affairs here and the conduct of those persons their affairs have almost wholly fallen [to], and have shown themselves very much grieved that others, that used to be concerned in their instruction, have been excluded."

[129] Nichols, "Last of the Mohican Missionaries," 63. Aupaumut was a Native American born in Stockbridge in May 1757. Nichols and Wheeler both agree that it is very likely that he was baptized by Edwards. Aupaumut later would serve in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 making it to the rank of Captain. For more information on Hendrick Aupaumut see, Rachel Wheeler, "Hendrick Aupaumut: Christian Mahican Prophet," *Journal of the Early Republic* 25 (July 2005): 187-220; *To Live Upon Hope*, 239-241; Christopher Geherin, "New Guinea: Racial Identity and Inclusion in the Stockbridge and Brothertown Indian Communities of New York," in *New York History* 90, No. 3 (Summer 2009):141-166; Alan Taylor, "Captain Hendrick Aupaumut: The Dilemmas of an Intercultural Broker," *Ethnohistory* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 431-457; Aupaumut identified as a Mohican and as a Christian. Wheeler argues that Aupaumut's "account of Muhheakunnuk history carefully establishes that his people abided by Christian precepts long before Europeans arrived in the New World. Further, it suggests that the move westward to the Oneida lands in New York in 1780, far from being a departure, was in fact a *return toward* the ancient homeland, toward ancient values. Aupaumut was thus able to acknowledge the current strains on Mohican culture and present the introduction of Christianity as a means of reviving rather than supplanting ancient Mohican way," Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*, 240. Hendrick Aupaumut, "Hendrick A." to "Hon'ble Timothy Edwards, Esq. Stockbridge or Wunnuqhqtoqhoke," 1775, Stockbridge Library, Stockbridge, Mass. In this letter, Aupaumut wrote to Timothy, "I should be thankful if you would lend me a Book. The Author is your Father—Concerning Affections or if you han't such—wish to have the other mention[ed]—[Freedom of] the Will."

among the Indians as true side-by-side neighbors, instead of living a mile or so away as John Sergeant did before him. This meant his family had daily interaction with Native Americans, especially his children. Edwards the Younger recalled in his *Observations on the Language of the Muhhehaneew Indians* (1788) that he rarely spoke English outside of his home. He remembered, "The Indians being the nearest neighbors, I constantly associated with them; their boys were my daily school mates and play fellows. Out of my father's house, I seldom heard any language spoken beside the Indian. I knew the names of some things in Indian which I did not know in English, even all my thoughts ran in Indian."[130] When Edwards, Jr. was ten years old, his father sent him with Hawley to live among the Six Nations in order to learn the language, in hopes that he would become a multilingual missionary.[131] Edwards Jr.'s primer for the Muhhehaneew language traced grammar, syntax, and numbers, and offered common vocabulary for future missionaries to build upon, apparently with the assumption that more and more missionaries were to be sent to the tribes of New England.[132] He came the same conclusion as his father and like other contemporaries, that the syntax of prefixes and suffixes of the Native American languages would "go towards proving, that the North American Indians are of Hebrew, or at least Asiatic extraction." Edwards Jr. suggested that "perhaps by such communications, and by comparison of the languages of the North American Indians with the languages of Asia, it may appear, not only from what quarter of the world, but from what particular nations, these

[130] Jonathan Edwards, Jr., *Observations on the Language of the Muhhehaneew Indians* (New Haven, CT: Josiah Meigs, 1788), preface. Since then, published with the *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Jr. with a Memoir of His Life and Character Volume 1* (Boston, Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1850),469-480. Henceforth, WJEJ.

[131] Edwards, Jr., *Observations on the Language of the Muhhehaneew Indians*, WJEJ 1:470.

[132] Edwards, Jr. makes several lists of commonly used works and compares them in English, Mohegan, Shawanee, and Chippewau. Assuming these would be for Christian purposes, and by example, he offers the Lord's Prayer, or as he refers to it "The Pater Noster," in Mohegan and in the Six Nations languages. Edwards, Jr., *Observations on the Language of the Muhhehaneew Indians*, WJEJ 1:473-474.

Indians derived."[133] This mirror's Edwards, Sr.'s thoughts, similar to the Ten Lost Tribes theory, in *A History of the Work of Redemption*:

> [T]he occasion of the first peopling America was this: that the devil being alarmed and surprised by the wonderful success of the gospel that was the first three hundred years after Christ, and [by] the downfall of the heathen empire in Constantine's time, and seeing the gospel spread so fast, and fearing that his heathenish kingdom would be wholly overthrown through the world, led away a people from the other continent into America, that they might be quite out of the reach of the gospel that here he might quietly possess them and reign over them as their god.[134]

Ecclesiastically speaking, Edwards' missiology was innovative compared to others of his day in two different aspects. First, while predecessors like Richard Baxter, Cotton Mather, and Samuel Willard called for missionaries to be sent among the Native Americans, Edwards "added new depth and sophistication" by claiming that the church—all Christians—should be in the mission of propagating the gospel.[135]

The fact that Edwards and the whole of the White English congregation at Stockbridge were living on mission among the "heathens" meant that the entire church were to some degree missionaries or at least doing missionary work. Edwards abandoned the idea that missionary work was strictly for missionaries and vice versa. The call for Christian laity in Matt. 28:18 as foreign missionary workers was just as strong as it was for professional ministers. This idea was made earlier in his *Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement*

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[133] Edwards, Jr., *Observations on the Language of the Muhhehaneew Indians*, WJEJ 1:479.

[134] Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:434. The Ten Lost Tribes theory suggests that the 10 of the original 12 tribes of Israel (Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun), which under Joshua, as described in the first five books of the Old Testament, conquered Canaan, but were lost when they were carried off into exile after the Assyrian conquest of 721 BC. The remaining tribes, Judah and Benjamin, had formed the Kingdom of Judah in the southern part of Israel. For more information on the Ten Lost Tribes theory, see, Elizabeth Fenton, *Old Canaan in a New World: Native Americans and the Lost Tribes of Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003).

[135] McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 551.

of Christi's Kingdom (1747) where he "gave first place to the church's intercession and only marginal place to preaching as the stimulus that prompts outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon the earth."[136] The "very great awakening and reformation of many of the Indians, in the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania" he noted in his *Humble Attempt* in the 1740's was simply a nugget the church would reap if they *all* would obey Christ's commission. The reprinting of the *Humble Attempt* would stir enthusiasm for foreign missions among other nineteenth-century Protestants.[137]

Secondly, at Stockbridge Edwards implemented the polices regarding qualifications for church communion, as drawn up in *An Humble Inquiry*, which had earned him dismissal from Northampton. While still at Northampton, he drew up two sample statements of faith, later allowing two Stockbridge Indians to use them.[138] More than likely, Edwards wanted to avoid another disaster, like what happened in Northampton, and used these documents to guard against another controversy over qualifications for communion and membership at Stockbridge. At first reading, it would seem these public professions of faith were meant for Edwards' English congregants, but in fact, there are for two Mahicans mentioned at the end of first and longest drafts—Cornelius and Mary Munnewaumummuh whom he married at one point during his pastorate. The presence of these names appended to the profession demonstrates that Edwards held both Whites and Indians to the same scriptural, pietistic, and behavioral, standards. Unsurprisingly, the faith statements contain strong Calvinist connotations along with affirmations of Trinitarian orthodoxy. For example, Edwards drafted,

> I do now appear before God and his People solemnly & publickly to profess, so far as I know my own Heart, the following Things: namely that I do believe that there is one only living & true God, who is the Father the Son and the

[136] Edwards, *Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christi's Kingdom*, WJE 3:308-437; McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 551.

[137] Edwards, *Humble Attempt*, *Apocalyptic Writings,* in WJE 5:365; McClymond and McDermott, *Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 551.

[138] Edwards, *Drafts of Profession of Faith*, WJEO 39. MS held at the Beinecke Library, Yale University. There is no date on the manuscripts themselves, but Kenneth P. Minkema dates them somewhere between n1751 and 1752 during Edwards' early time at Stockbridge.

> Holy Ghost, who is the great Creatour and supream Lord of Heaven & Earth… But our first Parents fell by eating the forbidden Fruit, exposing Themselves & their Posterity to the wrath of God & Eternal death; But God in mercy sent his son in our Nature to redeem & save us… in a sense and full Conviction of my own utter sinfulness misery & Impotence, & Just desert of Gods Eternal Rejection & wrath without mercy, and the utter Insufficiency of my own Righteousness, I do with all my Heart believe the Truth of the Gospel of Christ… I have consented to that which my parents did in giving me up to God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in my baptism, making this my own act, by giving myself up to God, choosing God for my Father and portion, and Christ as my Lord and Savior, and the sanctification of the Spirit as my happiness.[139]

And not only was the profession of faith restricted to a theological understanding, but also required a practiced of duty to the local church:

> And as I now desire publicly to join myself to the people of Christ, I profess to be united in heart unto them as brethren of Christ, resolving to serve and follow Christ our common Lord, in union and fellowship with them to the end of my life, and to perform all those duties that belong to them as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ. And as I desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, that feast of love, I profess an universal forgiveness, love and good will towards mankind; and promise to be subject to the government of this church during my abode here.[140]

As his previous works defended the Great Awakenings in New England, such as *A Divine and Supernatural Light* (1734), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival in New England* (1742), and *Religious Affections* (1746), Edwards also wanted his congregants—both White and Indian at Stockbridge—to take their faith with seriousness, or to use his phrase: profess true religion. He wanted to instruct them in the things close to him and for the Native Americans to have a heart of "willingness to Comply with all the Commands which require me to give up my self & to serve him with my Body & my spirit & do accordingly now promise to

[139] Edwards, *Drafts of Profession of Faith*, WJEO 39.

[140] Edwards, *Drafts of Profession of Faith*, WJEO 39

walk in a way of Obedience to all the Commands of God."[141] The seriousness he had for these commitments were a reflection of what he wanted to accomplish at Northampton before the dismissal. Edwards sought to communicate to the Indians the same biblical truths of one finding God as the "sweetest and highest good," and in many ways received his instruction better than his previous White congregants.[142]

Similar, if briefer, public testimonials were published in the preface to his *Farewell Sermon*, in which Edwards set a precedent for spirituality that he applied equally to White and Indians. On 8 January 1758, Edwards preached his last sermon to them before he left to become the president of the College of New Jersey entitled, *God's People Should Remember Them That Have Been Their Ministers*. With a sadness upon leaving the post, he expounded Hebrews 13:7–8 and reminded them of the ministers they have had come and to adhere to their instruction in the gospel. Edwards counsels the Natives that, "if they are faithful, [they] will come to an happy end at last, so will they also that follow their instruction… Remember how it has been with you: how much has been done for you. Remember the things I have told you… You that have made it your care to live agreeable to the gospel."[143] The last line to his Indian congregants summarized his fullest intentions while he was with them; he wanted them to make it a habit to obey the Scriptures.

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[141] Edwards, *Drafts of Profession of Faith*, WJEO 39.

[142] Edwards, *Drafts of Profession of Faith*, WJEO 39. Also see, Nichols, "Last of the Mohican Missionaries," 59-62. Nichols is helpful here to point out that other than "an intense commitment, Edwards mainly was insisting on a desire to live a godly life, not a standard of perfection in order for one to partake of the Lord's Supper, as some of his opponents accused him. Neither does he reflect even a hint of antinomianism." This is contrary to the conclusions made by Sarah Rivett in her work, *The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England* (Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 323-4. Rivett suggests that because there are different drafts here, the "testimonies alongside the other anonymous (presumably Anglo) testimonies shows uneven displays of spiritual evidence." To me, this is too much speculation that there are uneven levels of spirituality simply because there are differences in the drafts.

[143] Edwards, *God's People Should Remember Them That Have Been Their Ministers*, *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:713. Hebrews 13:7-8 reads, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

Conclusion

Edwards' decision to become a missionary to Native Americans was a natural choice for him. Unlike the majority of his predecessors who neglected evangelism among the Native Americans, but sharing the concern of his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, for proselytizing them, Edwards made crossing racial boundaries for the sake of the gospel a priority, despite the negative racial stereotypes pressed upon him at a young age. As we have seen, Edwards had a high missiological vocation among the Indians before he arrived at Stockbridge due to his eschatological readings of Scripture and to witnessing the first-hand experiences of his friend, David Brainerd.

Encountering Native Americans in a predominantly White environment, such as the cities and towns of New York, Windsor, Boston, and Northampton, was a completely different experience than living among them as neighbors in Stockbridge. Earlier in his life, Edwards voiced the general opinions of the English, and other Anglo-Westerners, that Native Americans were inferior.[144] Likewise, at Northampton, Edwards never had to place himself directly in the middle of political affair between Whites and Native Americans even though he had some involvement as a trustee for the Indian boarding school. But in Stockbridge, he was in constant conflict with his own extended family because he chose to advocate in social and political affairs on behalf of the Indians. Whatever preconceived negative notions he held before living on the frontier, they had dissolved to some extent as a result of his immersion in a Native community. Writing to his parents Edwards assured them that his family found Stockbridge to be "far better than they expected. Here, at present, we live in peace; which as of long time been an unusual thing for us. The Indians seem much pleased with my family, especially my wife."[145] Over time,

[144] For examples, see Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 504; Edwards, *Life of David Brainerd*, in WJE 7:26.

[145] Edwards, "Letter to Timothy Edwards," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:420.

Edwards began to identify with the Stockbridge Indians and referred to them as "my people" when defending them against their would-be enemies.[146]

Additionally, Edwards' sermons changed by content and method, though not in doctrine once he began living among the American Indians. Our brief examination of the Stockbridge sermons discredits the claim that they were "dumbed-down," or were simple "Sunday school lessons." Edwards believed that the American Indians were completely capable of understanding deep Calvinist theology, but only changed how he communicated that theology by the use of relevant events and natural imagery. He had at his disposal a treasure trove of scriptural notes and previous sermon materials, but the majority of his sermons to the Indians were new compositions tailored to their practices of audible learning and the use of an interpreter. Therefore, and again, unlike some of his predecessors, Edwards thought the intellectual capacity of the Native American mind was more than apt to absorb theology and western culture. These things, taken together, show us the wrong-headedness of suggesting of Edwards, as one historian has, that "In the wilderness of Stockbridge he could preach old sermons to a handful of Indians and a smaller handful of whites, close the door of his four-by-eight-foot study, and make up his mind about the freedom of the will."[147]

By reading Edwards' works through the lens of Stockbridge, we can see how race—and in particular Native Americans—fit in to the larger plan of God's work of redemption. Edwards would never have thought salvation was limited to White Anglo-Europeans, but by living among and ministering to the Native Americans in his daily life forced him to think more than he had previously about their role in the fulfilling scripture as one of the races included in "every tongue, tribe, and kindred." Therefore, he saw missionary work to the Indians as a driving force to complete God's task of saving the world.

Edwards' impact on the Stockbridge did not halt once he left Stockbridge for New Jersey. The disciples he tutored there, like his sons, and as well as Hendrick

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[146] For an example, see Edwards, "Letter to the Reverend Thomas Prince," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:633.

[147] Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, 223.

Aupaumut, Gideon Hawley, and even Samuel Hopkins, were spurred by Edwards' ministry to the Indians to go on in "propagating the gospel" to other New England tribes. They would have seen Edwards' benevolence demonstrated in his ministry toward the Indians and carried it with them into their own multi-racial ministries among other tribes and, as in Hopkins' case, Africans. McDermott has rightly pointed out that Edwards "held a more positive view of their humanity than most of his fellow colonials. Few of them desired anything but the extermination of Indians, and certainly not their salvation."[148]

But before we come to any false conclusions about Edwards as a flawless hero (as some have), we must consider his negative qualities.[149] For all that the Stockbridge experience changed him, Edwards never relinquished his poor opinions about particular aspects of Native American culture. In his Stockbridge sermon, *Warring with the Devil* (1754), Edwards alludes to the old seventeenth-century notion that the Indian peoples were the last citadel of Satan, and, therefore, justified colonization as a missionary effort to win souls.[150] We can also see the persistence of strong ethnocentrisms Edwards could not shake, such as his conviction about the superiority of the English language over the Indian tongue, and how Native culture was somehow more susceptible to devil-worship.

And of course, Edwards speculated that Native Americans were part of the ten lost tribes of Israel, which we saw was also assumed by his son, Jonathan Edwards, Jr. in *Observations on the Language of the Muhhekaneew Indians*.[151] He accepted the assumption that the remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes had migrated

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[148] McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods*, 201.

[149] For example, see Nichols, "Last of the Mohican Missionaries," 54.

[150] Edwards, "Warring with the Devil," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1743-1758,* WJE 25:675-76. In this sermon, Edwards scolds the Indians for being servants of the devil. "They are the devil's servants, [and they] do it for the devil. You see the Indians die faster than others. It may be you will say, "The English are as bad." It may be you will say, "What shall I do?" Now, consider: are you not miserable slaves [to the] worst of masters? Consider what must become of you if you thus continue under the power of the devil. You must have your part with him, [for you] shall be given up to his power. [There will be] no other pay for your service: none to deliver [you], none to pity [you]. [You] can't run away [from hell, and you] can't die. These things are certain."

[151] Norman Pettit, "Editor's Introduction," in *The Life of David Brainerd*, WJE 7:11-12. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods*, 194-195.

through the Middle East, across Asia over the land bridge connecting to North America. Edwards, Jr. later affirmed this by observing similarities between the Mohican and Hebrew language. Since the American continent had been unknown to Christian Europe until the last two centuries, Satan had a strong hold onto these people which he saw as a "devil worship." Edwards suggests that because Satan was surprised at the success of Christianity in the first three centuries during the Roman Empire under Constantine, he had led these people across Asia into America so that he might reign over them as their God. Satan had "quietly enjoyed his dominion over the poor nations of the Indians for many ages," but now, as he saw himself, and others like David Brainerd, Christians had come to relieve them from the "grossest heathenish darkness."[152]

[152] Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption,* in WJE 9:433-434. "The occasion of the first peopling America was this: that the devil being alarmed and surprised by the wonderful success of the gospel that was the first three hundred years after Christ, and [by] the downfall of the heathen empire in Constantine's time, and seeing the gospel spread so fast, and fearing that his heathenish kingdom would be wholly overthrown through the world, led away a people from the other continent into America, that they might be quite out of the reach of the gospel that here he might quietly possess them and reign over them as their god... Tis what many writers give an account of, that some of the nations of Indians when the Europeans first came into America had a tradition among them that their god first led 'em into this continent and went before 'em in an ark." Here, Edwards speculates that it's possible that the peoples who settled the Americas were part of the lost tribes of Israel.

CHAPTER 4

“The Practice that Prevails”: Jonathan Edwards and Slavery

Introduction

Like his New England predecessors, Jonathan Edwards’ full involvement in slavery stemmed from an inability to reconcile his inherited Calvinist, Puritanical belief system with the oncoming ethical demands in New England society. In other words, Edwards’ worldview of God-ordained hierarchy prevented him from demonstrating the certain charity, or love, toward Africans that was necessary to see them as full equals as opposed to only seeing them as spiritual equals. This was also the case with Cotton Mather and Morgan Godwyn noted in the previous chapters. At least in this particular vein of ministers, the difficulty of reconciling a wholistic equality (of both spiritual and civil) appears to singular to their theological tradition. Edwards preached a gospel that called all people to repent of their sins, making them equally right before God and in church membership, but did not relieve Africans from their civil bondage. Freedom of sin did not mean freedom of personal liberty. Therefore, Africans were able to obtain spiritual equality with Whites, but were unable to experience the benefits of corporeal equality.

Edwards’ conflict in praxis that arose from impinging ethical imperatives challenged existing assumptions and practices of his day and formed what I call a civil-spiritual dichotomy. He had difficulty expressing this view because of the developing anti-slavery culture that viewed a person’s body and soul as one unified equally valued component regardless of hierarchy or race. In that developing slavery-culture in the eighteenth century, a person’s worth did not depend on their monetary value, but on their eternal soul. Therefore, antislavery advocates addressed racial and social equality through conversion for slaves, a strategy they gave primary importance over the traditional white supremacist hierarchy. Most White pro-slavers only saw the value of Africans for their financial potential, and some amongst them denied their spiritual worth. But for Edwards, his problem was

the opposite. Edwards always approached things teleologically and saw the intrinsic value of Africans, whether free or enslaved. He believed the gospel needed go to the "ends of the earth" and that all people were required to hear and obey—even Africans. Unfortunately, Edwards did not see their conversion as a reason to undo their station in civil bondage.

In this chapter, I examine Jonathan Edwards' ideological and theological views of slavery, and will focus on two things. First, Edwards' views on slavery were produced by an inner conflict of theological beliefs and experience in a changing antislavery culture—which produced this conflict between belief and praxis. His ideas of slavery clashed with personal experiences of African converts and social reform. The following chapter extends this discussion, examining his theology of virtue, being, and charity, were in direct conflict with his support of slavery, thus, revealing a struggle between belief and praxis. Second, Edwards represents a transitional—and yet pivotal—moment in the narrative of New England antislavery in way he denounced the trade while a slaver himself. While not living long enough to see it, Edwards' theological contributions were foundational for his disciples—the New Divinity—to support abolitionism far into the nineteenth century.

To accomplish these two goals, I begin by examining the civil-spiritual dualism Edwards maintained throughout his life and ministry. Slaves could achieve spiritual equality through conversion, as represented by church membership and access to the sacraments, but were still bound to the bottom of the social hierarchy because of their status as property. Edwards simultaneously held and practiced both ideas. Second, this chapter considers Edwards' defense of slavery. As an institution, he saw nothing inherently sinful with slavery apart from the harsh abuse by their masters, and he defended slavery even when it benefited a minister of Arminian leanings. Moreover, for Edwards, the Scriptures did not explicitly prohibit slaveholding. Next, this chapter will look at Edwards' denouncement of the slave trade later in his life. While he was a proponent of slavery, and initially purchased two slaves who were victims of the slave trade, he came to find the slave trade problematic—not just at a moral level involving the maltreatment of Africans, but also its belief it had a right to enslave Africans built on false biblical precepts.

"Man-stealing," as it was commonly called, was unbiblical and counter-productive to the gospel. Fourth, and finally, I will offer some conclusions and observations.

Civil-Spirit Dualism

Slaves as Property

Before proceeding to discuss Jonathan Edwards' position on slavery and the slave trade, one fact must be clear: Jonathan Edwards was a slave owner. In fact, he and his wife Sarah owned a number of slaves—at the very least, those recorded were Venus (possibly renamed Leah), Joseph, Sue, Lee, Rose, Joab, and Titus. Fortunately, two of the more detailed accounts of his participation in slave owning have survived in original receipts.

By Edwards' time, Newport, Rhode Island had become a large trading center for buying and selling African slaves, as well as being a major hub for the entire transatlantic enterprise. On 7 June 1731, Edwards traveled to Newport where he acquired a fourteen year old "Negro Girle" named Venus for eighty pounds.[1] He purchased this girl from a man named Richard Perkins along with two witnesses, John Cranston, and James Martin, who were privateers and slave traders in the larger British imperial system.[2] While this bill of sale is a formal description of Edwards' dealings in slavery, it is inconclusive whether or not this was a prearranged transaction, or if he had won her placing bids at an auction. In either scenario, it is evident Edwards was comfortable with buying slaves, and, thus, supporting the slave trade. A few years later in 1736, Venus might have been replaced by another slave girl named Leah; alternatively, Edwards may have changed her name to that of a biblical figure, as would be fitting for a devout Christian household.

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[1] John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 296-297.

[2] Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery." *Massachusetts Historical Review*, vol. 4, Race & Slavery (2002): 26; John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, 296-297.

The peculiarity of slaves as property was not lost upon other members of the Edwards household. His daughter, Esther, having grown up in a slave-owning household also took slaves as a part of her house when she married Aaron Burr. Her and her father either traded or sold slaves back and forth.[3] But despite seeing a center of slave trading at Newport, experiencing the buying and selling of slaves himself, and regardless of how Edwards felt about the slave trade at that time, it still did not prevent him from owning slaves.

More light on Jonathan Edwards as a slave owner comes from another formal document—his *Last Will and the Inventory of His Estate*.[4] By the time Edwards composed the Will part of this document on 14 March 1753, he had already been dismissed from the church in Northampton over the communion controversy, and was settled on the frontier in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.[5] Edwards was not deathly ill until he contracted smallpox through a vaccine in 1758,

[3] In a letter to Esther dated 20 November 1757 from Stockbridge, Edwards instructed her not to sell their slave, Harry, without letting her mom know about it. *The Journal of Esther Edwards Burr, 1754-1757* ed. Carol F. Karlsen and Laurie Crumpacker (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 289. Esther Edwards Burr hired several males and females to handle labor for the Burr household. However, Karslen and Crumpacker suggest that "slave ownership distinguished the Burr family from their contemporaries. Unfortunately, in part because of her own racism, it is hard to known from Esther's writing either how many of the people she mentioned were slaves or the extent to which they performed traditional female labor. Harry is the only person Esther talked about who was clearly a household slave," Karslen and Crumpacker, *The Journal of Esther Edwards Burr*, 27.

[4] "Jonathan Edwards's Will and Inventory of His Estate," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 33 (1876): 438-46. Part of the introduction of the will and inventory notes, "The documents are copied *verbatim et literatim* from the Records in the Probate Office at Northampton. The orthography and punctuation are, of course, not those of President Edwards, but of the clerk who penned or transcribed the documents." Additionally, an editor or author of the document is unidentified.

[5] For more information on Edwards's dismissal from Northampton and the communion controversy, see Edwards, *Narrative of Communion Controversy*, in WJE 12: 507-11; Mark Dever, "How Jonathan Edwards Got Fired, and Why it's Important for Us Today," in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things* (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2004), 129-144Douglas L. Winiarski, "New Perspectives on the Northampton Communion Controversy," *Jonathan Edwards Studies Journal* 3, no. 2, (2013): 282-94; Douglas L. Winiarski, "New Perspectives on the Northampton Communion Controversy: Relations, Professions, & Experiences, 1748-1760," *Jonathan Edwards Studies Journal* 4, no. 1, (2014): 110-45; Douglas L. Winiarski, "New Perspectives on the Northampton Communion Controversy III," *Jonathan Edwards Studies Journal* 4, no. 3, (2014): 353-82; Douglas L. Winiarski, "New Perspectives on the Northampton Communion Controversy IV: Experience Mayhew's Dissertation on Edwards's Humble Inquiry," *Jonathan Edwards Studies Journal* 6, No. 1, (2016): 31-80.

but unknowingly five years away from his death, it is likely Edwards drafted a will because of the dangers of frontier life and the potential Native American raiding parties—which would have been on Edwards' mind from losing his aunt and two cousins in a Kahnawake attacked on Deerfield, Massachusetts in 1704.[6]

With these things considered, Edwards would have meticulously put together his will so that his property and everything he owned would be accounted for in the event of his death. A few months after his death, on 13 May 1758, his executors placed under the heading "Quick Stock" a "A Negro Boy named Titus" with an estimated worth of thirty pounds.[7] At the time, Titus would have been around five or six years old, since Edwards purchased him around three years old in 1756. The word "Quick" is an archaic term referring to something that is living or alive. Later modernity would refer to farm animals as livestock as opposed to Edwards' "Quick stock." At first glance, this might only reveal a slave and his monetary value, but a few more revealing perspectives can be gleaned.

First, Edwards viewed slaves as property. Even though Edwards would eventually see spiritual equality with Africans and Native Americans, he did not transfer that perspective to a temporal view between himself and his slaves. Titus's worth was measured in money and his person was counted as property. What is more, Titus was lumped together in the list of his other farm animals such as a horse, yoke of oxen, steers, cows, heifers, a calf, six hogs, and others. While Edwards did not list these himself, he certainly would have had no problem with it since categorizing slaves, and thinking that way was "style of living which

[6] Thomas S. Kidd, *American Colonial History: Clashing of Cultures and Faiths* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 219.

[7] "Jonathan Edwards's Will and Inventory of His Estate," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 33 (1876): 446. A recently discovery of Edwards' slave receipt for Titus has been found and held in the Shepard Family Collection, Yale University Divinity School Library. It has been thought Titus was the son of two other slaves Edwards' owned, Joab and Rose, bit the receipt states that Griswold had been his master for some time. Transcription of the receipt by Ken Minkema can be found, "A New Edwards Document: A Receipt for a Slave," in *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 9, No.2 (2019): 98-99. Titus was eventually freed by Edwards' oldest son, Timothy. Additionally, Titus served in the Revolutionary War in 1780 and purchased land in Massachusetts where he died between the age of sixty-five and seventy.

Figure 4.1 Quick stock, Jonathan Edwards' Last Will and Inventory of His Estate

prevailed in that age, particularly among the clergymen."[8] Edwards' executors could have easily given Titus his own section or heading to set him apart from the other farm animals, but instead, put him on par with the other creatures under "Quick Stock."

Secondly, this inventory reveals that Edwards owned slaves for the majority of his life, if not all of it. His wife Sarah seems to have played an intermediary role in slave owning as well as selecting those who would serve in their house. While at Stockbridge in 1754, Jonathan mentioned in a letter to Joseph Bellamy that Sarah wished to purchase a "Negro woman."[9] A year prior to Edwards' death in 1757, he wrote to his daughter Esther Edwards Burr regarding her slave, Harry: "If you think of selling Harry, your mother desires you not to sell him, without letting her know it."[10] It is likely Edwards would have had at least one slave at all times to help with domestic labor after he married Sarah Pierpont in 1727; however, he likely purchased his first slave in 1731 and probably his last slave, Titus, in 1756, two year before his death in 1758. There is no record or indication of either of them ever freeing their slaves. This means that for the majority of Edwards' ministry, both at Northampton and at Stockbridge, he owned slaves, supported the institution, and participated in the slave trade.

Slaves as Spiritual Equals

Having considered the previous observations, Edwards distinguished between the civil station and their spiritual status of slaves. Despite his very negative outlook on them as human chattel, his perception of slaves was elevated when it came to matters of church membership. The effect of the awakenings was not only geographically vast—stretching from the Atlantic coast to the colonial frontier, and Northampton, Massachusetts to Savannah, Georgia—it also crossed racial boundaries. Several of Edwards' Great Awakening contemporaries, including

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[8] "Jonathan Edwards's Will and Inventory of His Estate," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 33 (1876): 438.

[9] Edwards, "Letter to Joseph Bellamy," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:621-22.

[10] Edwards, "Letter to Esther Edwards Burr," in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:731. Harry was owned by Esther's husband, Aaron Burr.

George Whitefield, also saw dramatic responses from Africans, both slave and free during the revivals of the 1740s. Drawing on his own experience, Edwards observed that in addition to whites being converted, "many of the poor Negroes" had also been "wrought upon and changed" by revival preaching.[11] This left many, if not all, converted Africans without a church membership, which further pushed the issue of spiritual equality between Whites and people of other colour.

According to Edwards, all people equally needed salvation, and not one skin color had an advantage over the other. Spiritual equality through conversion also meant every race was just as equally dead in spirit—all were slaves to sin. In a sermon on Matt. 7:13-14, preached while he was in Stockbridge among the Native Americas with the doctrine, *All Mankind of All Nations, White and Black, Young and Old, Is Going in One or the Other of These Paths, Either in the Way That Leads to Life or the Way That Leads to Destruction*. Here, Edwards explained that "there are many nations in the world with different languages and a great many different customs, but all are alike in this respect: all are inclined to sin."[12] From the pulpit, at least at this point in his life, Edwards made no distinction between master or slave, White or Black. Even in the part of the title, "All Nations, White or Black," Edwards wanted to make it clear to his congregation that his intention was to preach the same saving gospel to all skin colors, and that all people had the same impending doom if not saved by grace.

African slaves had been permitted into many of the churches across New England during the awakenings of the 1730s and 1740s, and the increased numbers of African conversions had prodded the issue of spiritual equality with Whites.[13]

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[11] Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, WJE 4:330.

[12] Jonathan Edwards, "All Mankind of All Nations, White and Black, Young and Old, Is Going in One or the Other of These Paths, Ether in the Way That Leads to Life or the Way That Leads to Destruction," in *The Blessing of God: Previously Unpublished Sermons of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Michael D. McMullen (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers 2003), 228. Also, see *Work of Jonathan Edwards Online* 25:739.

[13] Lorenzo Johnson Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776* (New York: Heritage Books, 2010), 268; Perry Miller, "Jonathan Edwards' Sociology of the Great Awakening," *The New England Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (March 1948): 72-77; Gerald R. McDermott, *One Happy and Holy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1992), 163-64.

Despite his patriarchal disposition toward Africans, Edwards did not see a category for second-class Christians in scripture, and was the first minister at Northampton to both baptize Africans and admit them in full church membership alongside Anglo-Westerners—including one of his own slaves, Leah, in 1736.[14] Most churches in New England received Blacks into “full communion,” which presumably gave them all of the rights and privileges as Whites. Blacks enjoyed congregational singing, participated in prayers, took communion with their White brethren, and, as members under “church watch,” were even subject to church discipline, including excommunication. However, “full communion” was not entirely true. “Negroes” were still not allowed to vote on matters of church discipline, nor were they permitted to sit beside Whites during church services. Most congregations were segregated; Black were required to sit in the rear or in the balcony of the church along with members of the lowest economic and social classes.[15] A recognition of spiritual equality did not extend to civil equality.

While Edwards would have seen his terrestrial (and spiritual) world as coexisting, he appears to have been conflicted when it came to the issue of slavery. For Edwards, spiritual equality between Africans and Whites could be achieved through conversion, setting them both equally right before God, but that did not apply to them in terms of race and hierarchy.

Defense of Slavery

Prior to the discovery of Edwards’ draft letter or address on the subject, very little was known about his formal theological views about slavery and the slave trade other than the fact that he was indeed a slave owner. To date, it is the only surviving

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[14] William D. Piersen, *Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 69-75. Records of baptized Africans during Edwards’s ministry is found in MS Northampton Church Records, Book I, First Church Northampton.

[15] Green, *The Negro*, 281. For more information and recent study on interracial participation within Churches in the American north, see Richard J. Boles, *Dividing the Faith: The Rise of Segregated Churches in the Early American North* (New York: New York University Press, 2020). Boles argues that churches in the American north were multiracial for longer periods of time that have previously been thought. He describes prejudices between Blacks, Whites, and Indians, that caused the rise of segregated churches.

work devoted to the issue—simply a fragment buried amongst the rest of his literary corpus.[16] Within the draft, Edwards condemned the transatlantic slave trade, but also offered his defense for slavery as an institution. In typical Edwards-like fashion, he wrote in a roundabout style, explaining his rationale and giving biblical support for his position.[17] It's important to note Edwards' odd writing technique because, as its discoverer, Kenneth Minkema, has noted, "Often his full meaning is obscured by this method of composition."[18] Without a careful reading, or considering authorial intent, a correct interpretation of Edwards' perspective could be skewed, and, at worst, lost.

Owning slaves throughout Edwards' life would have been normal for him, his family, and his community. His own experience as a slave owner and as a pastor would shape his views into a single, but peculiar, position. Being such a sensitive issue, and what appears to have become a taboo subject in his time, Edwards resorted to his customary method of using rationale and scripture in his defense of slavery, satisfying both the areas of faith and reason to explain his defense of the institution of slavery.

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[16] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery*, WJE 16:71-76. For a more detailed examination of Edwards's draft letter, see Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4, (October 1997), 823-34.

[17] Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," 823. Minkema states, "The draft is typical of Edwards's habits of letter writing. In preparing many of his letters, particularly those of an important nature, Edwards first sketched out major points and transitions in an elliptical, stream-of-consciousness manner on scrap paper and then wrote the letter in full on good foolscap. Often his full meaning is obscured by this method of composition." This letter was well-known in some scholar circles. Moses Stuart (1780—1852), Yale graduate, minister, and Professor of Sacred Literature at Andover Theological Seminary, mentions Edwards' "Essay on the Slave-Trade" in a work published in1850. See, Moses Stuart, *Conscience and the Constitution: with remarks on the recent speech of the Hon. Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United States on the subject of slavery* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1850), 33. Stuart comments "[W]ho does not know that the immortal Edwards – immortal as much for his great piety as for his intellectual powers – left behind him in manuscript an Essay on the Slave-trade (probably still extant), in which he defended the trade with all his ability, on the same ground that Moses required the fugitive heathen slave to be detained, viz/. on the ground that it would bring perishing heathen within the reach of Christian influence."

[18] Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," 823.

Edwards’ *Draft on Slavery*

Edwards wrote the letter somewhere between 1738 and 1742. In order to make the most of the resources available, Edwards composed the draft on the back of two letters sent to him by his father, Timothy Edwards, while he was still in Northampton. The letter lacks an addressee, date, and any external event within the text, so to pinpoint a specific time it was written would be difficult. However, on the original front of the letter (the back on which the draft was written) his father refers to the controversy he had with his own congregation in East Windsor, Connecticut, making 1738 the earliest.[19] According to Thomas Shafer’s methodology to date Edwards’ undated manuscripts, the dark gray ink of the draft was that used by Edwards as late as 1742.[20]

While this letter is only one side of a conversation, the attitude toward slavery Edwards expresses in the letter still reveals the questions and concerns he was attempting to answer. Although he reveals himself here as adamantly against the slave trade, Edwards was in favor of slavery as an institution, and found himself defending a fellow minister—Benjamin Doolittle, who owned an African slave named Abjiah Prince.[21] Among the many accusations the church in Northfield, Massachusetts had brought against Doolittle, such as salary demands and an exuberant lifestyle, the issue the Northampton Association asked Edwards to address was: clergy and slave ownership.[22] The congregation at Northfield hoped the issue of ministers owning slaves would be yet another reason to dismiss Doolittle from the church office. Additionally, they had hoped Edwards as an unwavering pro-revivalist, would willing to help remove a minister rumored to

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[19] Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 168.

[20] For more information on this dating methodology see Thomas Schafer explanation in *The Miscellanies": (Entry Nos. a-z, aa-zz, 1-500),* WJE 13:59-75. George Marsden has argued for either the summer or fall of 1741. See Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 256.

[21] Richard A. Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 119.

[22] For other narratives on this incident see Bailey, *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England*, 118-20; Sherard Burns, “Trusting the Theology of a Slave Owner,” in *A God Entranced Vision of All Things*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 147-8; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 256.

have Old Light and Arminian leanings.[23] If that ever was their intention, it backfired. Marsden explains that "Edwards viewed the accusation regarding slaveholding as insincere and saw his primary job as defending the authority of a fellow minister."[24] The surprising defense of Doolittle in the draft brings several more things to light about Edwards' views on slavery.

First, it seems unusual for Edwards to make protecting the social hierarchy a priority. Not only had slave owning become popular because of its obvious labor benefits, but also as symbol of social status.[25] Many, if not all, of the colonial elite—including a significant number of ministers—owned African slaves to perform labor duties they were unable or did not wish to do. As a minister coming from this elite class in New England, and as a slave owner himself, Edwards thought it best to uphold the current social system rather than challenge it, and, thus, risking the dismantling of a cultural practice and structure. The defense of the social hierarchy may appear very odd to the twenty-first-century, however, Marsden has also suggested that in order to understand Edwards' role in society, we must "Think of him as a creature of the world of British hierarchical relationships.[26] Edwards was aware of current events and news from the other colonies as well as the broader transatlantic world, and would have heard about the attempt of a New York slave revolt during the summer of 1741.[27] As the Doolittle controversy confirms, currents of antislavery sentiments were stirring among the people of New England; it further

[23] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 256.

[24] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 256.

[25] Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Life and Career: Society and Self" in *Understanding Jonathan Edwards: An Introduction to American's Theologian*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21.

[26] George Marsden, "On His Own Terms: Edwards Has Much to Say to Us Today, If We Can Get Past His Peculiar Accent," in *Christian History—Jonathan Edwards: The Warm-Hearted Genius Behind the Great Awakening* 22, no.1, 44.

[27] For more information on the slavery in New York and the slave revolt, see Serena R. Zabin, *New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741: Daniel Horsmanden's Journal of the Proceedings with Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 1-18; Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005); Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2003).

"demonstrates the seeds of a movement that would become much larger in the nineteenth century."[28] It's likely the revolt played a role in Edwards' thought process, and not siding with antislavery views was a way for him to keep the peace—in his mind—and to keep the balance of the social structure in which he was so entrenched.

Second, Edwards set aside his theological convictions for an issue he deemed more important by defending a minister of Arminian persuasion and contradicted all of his efforts to sweep Arminianism out of New England.[29] In addition to the charge of slave owning, the church's "discontent arose from suspicions that Doolittle had Arminian leanings and that he was cool towards awakenings."[30] It would seem odd for a staunch Calvinist, such as Edwards, to defend a devoted anti-Calvinist Arminian such as Doolittle, who in any other context would have been his opponent. It would have been logical for Edwards to have the same disposition towards Doolittle as he did his other Arminian contemporaries like John Wesley. But by defending Doolittle, Edwards suspended the aggressive work—at least in this instance—he had done to sweep Arminianism out of New England in order to support a man who was ardently opposed to Calvinism and the Great Awakening. Furthermore, it is evidence "how socially ingrained and acceptable the oppression of Africans in America had become."[31] To one extent or another, Edwards was willing to lay down his theological convictions hoping it would not disturb the social order he believed had been ordained by God.[32]

Third, it is evident that Edwards was somewhat uncomfortable publicly to address the issue of slavery for political and religious reasons in his eighteenth-century New England upper-class context. While Edwards never saw politics and

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[28] Wayne A. Detzler, "Jonathan Edwards, Slavery, and Africa Missions," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 39 (July 2015): 235.

[29] For an example of this, see Michael McClenahan, *Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith* (Famham, UK: Ashgate, 2012). McClenahan argues that the reason Edwards focused on *sola fide* so intensely was to rout the oncoming Arminian theology in New England.

[30] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 256.

[31] Burns, "Trusting the Theology of a Slave Owner," 147.

[32] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:73.

religion as separate realms, he addressed the issue of slavery with both in mind—and with caution. It was uneasy for Edwards to defend a man who he disagreed with theologically, but to defend Doolittle and slavery was politically correct. Many of Edwards' family, political allies, church members, and other prominent ministers in the transatlantic evangelical network—such as Whitefield—owned slaves.[33] If Edwards had chosen to ridicule Doolittle for slave owning, he would have risked severing ties with important political relationships as well as separating himself from other evangelical leaders—the very relationships that held society and the evangelical network together. Whether Edwards realized it or not, defending Doolittle and slavery was perceived as a political move as well as a spiritual one.

Edwards' theology of slavery will be handled in greater detail in the next section, but it is important briefly to note what was lacking in his draft letter on slavery and the slave trade. While this is simply a draft, and not published, nor a writing intended to be circulated, it is noticeable that Edwards did not employ any highly systematized theology, or any labyrinthine philosophy as his work usually did. Unlike a sermon prepared for a lay congregation, this outline was meant to address other well-educated people, and he could have easily used an array of scriptural and theological fine points—but he did not. Now, after examining the occasion of the draft and its historical significance, Edwards' theology and defense of slavery is now in order.

Use of Scripture

Like any Puritan writing on such a topic, including his predecessors, whether defending or opposing it, Edwards looked to the Bible to support his defense of slavery and denouncement of the slave trade.[34] While Edwards was well-read

[33] See Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 217; Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery," *Massachusetts Historical Review* 4, Race & Slavery (2002): 24; Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade": 826. Minkema names Edwards's father, Timothy, Maj. Ebenezer Pomeroy, Col. Timothy Dwight, and Edwards's closest political ally, Col. John Stoddard owning slaves.

[34] An example of a predecessor using the Bible to oppose slavery is Samuel Sewall's *The Selling of Joseph* which was discussed in the previous chapter. In it, Sewall uses several different passages

among other eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, both in American and Europe, he found himself contrary to their approach and "viewed the Bible itself as a convincing argument," and saw it as the rule for examining the Christian experience.[35] Within the aforementioned letter, Edwards used passages from both Old and New Testament to support his position.

While the majority of Jonathan Edwards' thought on slavery come from his draft letter, other texts in the Edwards canon shed light on his views, specifically his *Blank Bible*—his main repository of scriptural commentary.[36] Jotting down some thoughts as he read Job 31:13-15, Edwards became vulnerable and revealed some uneasiness he had about being a slave owner. He quoted the beginning of verse 13, but interjected his own thoughts:

> [31:13-14] If I despise the cause of my man or maidservant when they pleased with me, and when they stand before me to be judged by me, what then shall I do when I come to stand before God to be judged by him? God may justly do by me as I do by my servant. If I despise my servants' cause, how much more may God despise my cause? I am God's servant as they are mine, and much more inferior to God than my servant is to me. [31:15] This is a good reason why servants should not be trampled on for their mean condition,

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from both Old and New Testament opposing slavery. See Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (Boston: Bartholomew Green and John Allen, 1700), 1-3.

[35] McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 170. For more information and examples of Edwards being exposed to transatlantic Enlightenment ideas see Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought and Its British Context*, Jonathan Edwards Classic Studies (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 15-26; Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment: Knowing the Presence of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); Leon Chati, *Jonathan Edwards and the Limits of Enlightenment Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); John Opie, *Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment,* Problems in American Civilization (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1969); David Levin, *The Puritan in the Enlightenment: Franklin and Edwards*, ed. Charles Sellers. The Berkley Series in American History (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1963); Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History: The Reenchantment of the World in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[36] See Jonathan Edwards, *The Blank Bible*, Vol. 24, in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. by Stephen J. Stein (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). Edwards's *Blank Bible* is composed of many interleaved manuscripts next to a printed edition of the King James Bible in a single leather-bound volume which was written over a course of three decades contacting over 5,500 entries relating to scripture.

> because the difference of condition between master and servant is not own to themselves, but to God. ’Tis he that makes ’em to differ in their birth and circumstances of life.[37]

Even though Edwards apparently shared similar attitudes toward slave owning with other colonial leaders, such as George Whitefield, and Cotton Mather, his thoughts on this passage show three noteworthy things. First, Edwards wrote these notes in first-person. Upon reading this portion of scripture, it became personal to him, and he saw a mirrored reflection of himself as a slave owner and his slaves to the master and slave described in the text. It will never be clear what exactly Edwards was intending when he was writing, but by copying verse 13 verbatim, and then proceeding in his notes for the next two verses periphrastically in first-person reveals how intimate he was with the text.

Secondly, these notes show Edwards believed in a biblical and moral code for the master-slave relationship. While Edwards did not explicitly condemn the abuse, some slaves experienced at the hand of their masters, he was well aware of its injustice, and strove to define how a Christian masters should treat their slaves. Juxtaposing the master and the slave to God and his “servants,” Edwards constructed a general rule for the treatment of those inferior.

Third, Edwards’ notes show he believed that the positions in which persons found themselves among the social hierarchy, had been ordained by God, which was an inducement to treat slaves fairly. He saw one’s station within the social class as a direct appointment from God, and, therefore, a master should not lord themselves over the slave indecently. Instead, the master should contemplate his inferiority to God and compare that to the slave’s inferiority to them—the intention of this notion is that the superior should cause greater consideration to the inferior. This “difference of condition,” as Edwards put it, is a “good reason why servants should not be trampled on” and should push masters to share the gospel with their

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[37] Edwards, *The Blank Bible*, in WJE 24:457; Job 31:13-15 KJV reads, “If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?”

slaves in a godly relationship.[38] This type of thinking was also in accord with Massachusetts law that required Christian masters to treat their slaves with decency and to "Christianize" them.

In addition to the "moral code" he prescribed in the *Blank Bible*, Jonathan Edwards went further into his defense of slavery and defined what he considered to be legitimate circumstances of purchasing a slave in the aforementioned draft letter. Edwards asserted that "to buy a thing is to come by [it] in a way of valuable consideration, in a way of commutative justice, and supposes that person possessed."[39] As Minkema has pointed out, this type of language is based on Leviticus 25:44-46, which describes the Israelites' right to purchase slaves from other nations, but not to steal them or their children away from their own lands.[40] For Edwards, the moral code and "commutative justice" set parameters around the "right" way of purchasing and owning slaves. Those who could be slaves were limited to war captives, debtors, and the children of enslaved. Edwards therefore viewed slave procreation in accordance with Massachusetts law, which defined the offspring of a slave as inheriting that status. However, the law also required that slaves be treated humanely which included their Christianization.[41] If Westerners were permitted to steal, or to use Edwards' word again, "disfranchise," people, it would put them in a "state of war with all nations" and create bitterness toward Christianity.[42] Therefore, Edwards thought his definition of what constituted correct slave-ownership was in accord with both the Bible and mandated colonial law.

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[38] Edwards, *The Blank Bible*, WJE 24:457.

[39] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:76.

[40] Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade": 829; Leviticus 25:44-45 ESV reads, "As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations that are around you. You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their clans that are with you, who have been born in your land, and they may be your property. You may bequeath them to your sons after you to inherit as a possession forever. You may make slaves of them, but over your brothers the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another ruthlessly."

[41] Greene, *The Negro, 1620-1776*, 263; Larry E. Wise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 19-20.

[42] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJE 16:76.

Other insight into Edwards’ notions of slavery come from two sermons during his time in New York City in which he used the biblical master-slave motif, *Christian Liberty* and *Wicked Men’s Slavery to Sin*, both in 1720.[43] In the opening lines of his sermon, *Christian Liberty*, Edwards exhorted from Jam. 1:25 that the Messiah had come to “proclaim a universal liberty to all servants, captives, vassals, [and] imprisoned [or] condemned persons.” Unknowingly to his audience, Edwards had deleted the word “slaves” in his draft. He did not remove the word because he was against it, as he used it in several other places within the same sermons as well as later ones; rather, he did not want to describe Christ as some type of Messianic abolitionist. It was obvious that Edwards’ words were meant in a spiritual sense of Christ coming to free those in spiritual slavery, but the oratory words of Christ offering “a most glorious freedom from the worst of servitudes and bondages” would have been heard with concern from a New York congregation. Just a few years prior in 1712, New York had experienced a slave revolt that ended with multiple deaths of Whites, and even more African slaves after trial and execution. It was clear that Edwards wanted to avoid being portrayed as a catalyst for social reform or convey that Christ himself would eventually overturn the social order.

In keeping with his civil-spirit dualism, Edwards restricted his sermon and definition of Christian liberty to a freedom from only spiritual slavery but continued to use the motif, making spiritual liberty appear synonymous with earthly slavery using slave imagery such as “shackles and chains,” “cruel bondage,” “forced labor,” and “restraints.” “Without doubt,” Edwards noted, “when once persons are become the sons of God they are no longer slaves: slaves, prisoners and captives are not consistent with the such a relation to God. Another reason why they cannot be in bondage is because they are the friends of Jesus Christ.”[44] Continuing, Edwards would exclaim that the end of the law “is to redeem us from servitude and bondage, and to instate us to a perfect law of liberty.”[45] However, later in the sermon he would

[43] For examples of biblical motifs of master and slaves see, Rom. 6:15-21, Gal. 5:1, John 8:34, Tit. 3:3. Edwards, *Wicked Men’s Slavery to Sin*, *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:327-350; *Christian Liberty*, 10:621-622.

[44] Edwards, *Christian Liberty, Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:622.

[45] Edwards, *Christian Liberty, Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:622.

qualify this, saying that the law only promises spiritual freedom. Additionally, Edwards contended that being a slave to sin is much more terrible state to be in than a debased earthly master. Those who are "enslaved by sin [are] in a far worse bondage than that of the miserablest caitiffs."[46] The truest liberty, once freed from spiritual bondage, is to choose one's own advantage, pleasure, and satisfaction in life. By limiting his definition of liberty and happiness in the servitude of God, Edwards dodged having to link the freedoms of sin moral ability in spiritual liberty to potential advantages found in one's personal liberty.

Similarly, in *Wicked Men's Slavery to Sin*, Edwards continues to use the motif likening African slavery to the slavery of sin. In his exposition of John 8:4, he explains that those who sin are slaves to it, and that "so devoted are wicked men to their lord and master, sin, that they will rather burn in hell forever than disobey him and rebel against him… The sinner serves this master with his whole heart and soul, and all that is within him."[47] All are born into this type of spiritual slavery, unable to free themselves from its servitude; therefore, Christians should pity them. Later in the sermon, Edwards finally—and explicitly—makes the comparison of spiritual slavery to African slavery:

> What heart is so hard, and who is so inhuman, as not to pity and compassionate the poor sinner who is in such dreadful bondage to sin, who won't allow him to have his eyes open, but causes him to labor blindfold, least if he should see, he should find out a way to escape from his captivity? Who won't allow [him] to take care of his own welfare, but makes him do his work upon the very edge of a dreadful precipice… What heart cannot pity those that are under such a tyranny? Alas, the servitude of their negroes is better than theirs, a thousand times better than theirs.[48]

By making the comparison, Edwards asserts that slavery under sin is far worse than African slavery. As shown in *Christian Liberty*, Edwards did not see the earthly institution of slavery as sin and did not see a reason to make the connection between

[46] Edwards, *Christian Liberty, Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:623.

[47] Edwards, *Wicked Men's Slavery to Sin*, *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:342-43.

[48] Edwards, *Wicked Men's Slavery to Sin*, *Sermons and Discourses 1720-1723*, in WJE 10:345-46.

it and the spiritual kind in his metaphor. What's more, Edwards saw emancipating those in spiritual slavery as a more urgent matter, and only called for a particular type of Christian liberty. Attempting not to advocate social reform, he left his call for obedience, liberty, and freedom strictly a spiritual one.

Interestingly enough, Edwards did not comment on slave-master relationship in the book of Philemon, Ephesians 6:5-8, 1 Peter 2:18, Colossians 3:22-24, 1 Timothy 6:1-2, Titus 2:9-10, nor did he expound to any significance Galatians 3:28, in the *Blank Bible.*[49] Likewise, he did not comment on any of these hallmark master-slave passages in his *Notes on Scripture*.

The spiritual reality was more important and real—in one sense—for Edwards than a physical reality, which seems to be a common approach in his theology.[50] That is not to say that Edwards believed the spiritual and corporeal creations of God were opposites; the spiritual being holy, and the physical being evil. For example, when comparing the two, Edwards says "Seeing the beauty of the corporeal world consists chiefly in its imaging forth spiritual beauties," and when God "created the world, showed his own perfections and beauties far the most charmingly and clearly in the spiritual part of the world."[51]

Use of Reason

Making a case through an appeal to reason was not something unusual for the New England divine. But it's interesting that Edwards would have employed logic in his defense of slavery when addressing other ministers. The necessity of both faith and

[49] There is but two lines on Philemon in the *Blank Bible* that refer to Doddridge's translation. On Gal. 3:28 (KJV) that reads "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Edwards' only comment on the verse is that it is "probably [a] reference to the distinction that was made between bond and free in Abraham's family, where the son of the bondwoman might not be heir with the son of the free woman."

[50] An example of this is Edwards' difficult of understanding of the physical reality of the new heaven and the new earth. Willem van Vlastuin discusses how Edwards stressed the *nova creatio* instead of the *recreation* in his "'One of the Most Difficult Points in the Bible'. An Analysis of the Development of Jonathan Edwards' Understanding of the New Heaven and New Earth," in C*hurch History and Religious Culture* 98 (2018): 225-243.

[51] Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": (Entry Nos. a-z, aa-zz, 1-500)*, WJE 13:330.

reason within the Enlightenment were already evident among the New England clergy. In any case, he condemned the accusations leveled toward proslavery as hypocrisy. Rebounding from their charges, Edwards suggested that the proto-abolitionist, those criticizing all who owned slaves, were just as guilty and "partakers of a far more cruel slavery than that which they object against in those that have slaves."[52] Whereas those who opposed slavery were not "immediate partakers"—people who did not directly participate in slave owning—they were in fact indirectly supporting the slavery and the enterprise by profiting from its labor and consuming goods it produced. As far as Edwards was concerned, they simply had "their slaves at the next step," and protesting the slave trade while reaping its benefits only increased the demand for slaves.[53] Here, Edwards is implying that if the "hypocrites" are going to be "partakers"—beneficiaries—of the slave trade, they might as well fully participate in slave owning, or at least not be so quick to criticize slaveowners. If the hypocrites won, the only realistic option Edwards foresaw happening was a complete dissolution of the slave trade by boycotting, thus, putting a large enough dent into the economy to alter the upper class and to sway their minds. By the eighteenth century, the entire New England economy was dependent upon the African slave trade and the products it produced—including several major seaports that were deeply involved in the transatlantic slave business.[54] Edwards knew it was not likely, nor was he ready to side with those who opposed slave owning. Moreover, he did not see eliminating slavery as necessary at a rational level.

Edwards also appealed to the natural—and necessary—experience of eating in his logic in favor for slavery. Referring to the sin of gluttony, Edwards stated the actions of "eating and drinking tends to sin" and that a "world of iniquity" is the

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[52] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:72.

[53] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:72.

[54] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 258; Thomas S. Kidd, *American Colonial History: Clashing of Cultures and Faiths*, 173. Kidd also notes that "In the northern colonies, slavery never became as integral to the domestic farming economy as it did in the regions to the south. But norther seaport merchants invested in the Atlantic slave trade, and slaves continued arriving in those seaports—usually coming from the Caribbean, rather than direct from Africa—in small numbers through the beginning of the Revolution."

result of food consumption.[55] This analogy might seem a bit odd, but Edwards saw the potential for both to become necessary evils. While eating and drinking could potentially lead to the sin of gluttony, they were both necessary for sustaining one's health. Edwards viewed slavery just the same. Even though the institution of slavery could lead to the evils of "cruel labor," he did not see its potential immorality compelling enough to "abstain from sin."[56] Slavery in and of itself, like food and drink, was not sin, but could possibly lead to sin if handled incorrectly. Because slavery as an institution was handed down in a fallen world, like the necessity of eating and drinking, he concluded it was "the practice that prevails."[57]

It is important to note that not once did he make a reference to slavery as sin. As an institution, Edwards always viewed it from a hierarchical perspective, and not as a reflection of one's spiritual standing. Continuing in his argumentative method, Edwards proceeded to use the Bible in his simultaneous defense of slavery and denouncement of the slave trade.

Denouncement of The Slave Trade

False Biblical Precepts

Edwards denounced the slave trade, claiming it was based on false biblical precepts. Often, proponents of the trade drew a parallel to the Exodus of the Hebrew out of Egypt, in which God gave permission to the former slaves to plunder the wealth of the Egyptians in Deuteronomy 15:6.[58] In the minds of pro-slave traders, this biblical narrative gave them precedent forcibly to remove people from their native land and place them in a life of submissive servitude. But for Edwards this was a

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[55] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74. For biblical examples of gluttony as sin, see Prov. 23:1-2, 20-21, and Gal. 5:19-21.

[56] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16: 74.

[57] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

[58] This biblical narrative may be found in Ex. 12:33-41. The permission God granted the ancient Israelites to take from the Egyptians in Deut. 15:6 states, "For the LORD your God will bless you, as he promised you, and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow, and you shall rule over many nations, but they shall not rule over you."

"blasphemous" excuse to "disfranchise" people from the African nations.[59] The question Edwards sought to answer was, "Is it biblically permissible to enslave people—and in this particular case, non-Christians?" In opposition to the biblical defense of the slave traders, Edwards replied that "God might, by special interpretation, execute punishment on a people and make men the executioners," but "to make it an established rule in all cases… is a monstrous supposition," and in itself "unreasonable."[60] He came to believe it was unjustifiable to take people from their homes against their will, place them in bondage, and that it "would have much greater tendency to sin, to have liberty to disfranchise whole nations."[61] Rather than making what would become a popular parallel between America and Israel, Edwards saw discontinuity between the two—at least in this scenario—and did not view his fellow American Christians of the New Testament as the same as the Israelites under the Old. Edwards saw this as a moral issue and contended that "All of God's rules" have "moral equity in them," and, therefore, robbing entire peoples of their freedom, liberty, and privileges is in opposition to what the Bible teaches.[62] "A special precept," as Edwards stated, "for a particular act is not a rule."[63] Coming out against the slave trade, Edwards was similar to earlier figures like Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall.

Definition of Neighbor

Another reason for Edwards' denouncement of the slave trade derived from his understanding of "neighbor." Giving special attention to this term, Edwards exposed the deceitful hermeneutic slave traders were using to justify their commercial slave-enterprise. Those in favor of the slave trade understood "neighbors" in a very narrow sense. The slave owners limited their view of the biblical neighbor, as in Matt. 7:12, 22:37-40, James 2:8, and Rom. 15:20, to other

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[59] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:73.

[60] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

[61] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

[62] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

[63] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

fellow Christians, those of the same racial and social strata. Therefore, the questionable treatment of non-Christians was permissible. In other words, this tribalistic interpretation allowed White Christians to enslave Africans regardless of means, and all without sinning.

To combat this very exclusive definition of neighbor, Edwards quoted Exodus 20:16, and asserted that even during the time of the ancient Israelites, "All mankind were their neighbors then."[64] The pro-slave trade definition of neighbor undermined the true moral law Christians were instructed to obey, and to hold this definition made the "Scripture contradict itself."[65] Referring to Acts 17:30, Edwards noted that God had permitted certain practices of the Israelites beforehand—during "those times of darkness"—but that God does not "wink at such things now under the Gospel."[66] Within his definition of neighbor, Edwards argued that the Israelites, their exceptional "chosen-ness," and God's partiality toward them had ended with the old covenant, and that all peoples, regardless of race, nation, or culture were subject to the same moral law of the New Testament. Certain sinful practices that God had allowed prior to the inclusive knowledge of salvation found in the New Testament were no longer permissible. In this way, Edwards dismissed the notion of America being the new chosen ones of God, or the new Israel, and placed all people as neighbors to one another without distinction.

This is not to say Edwards reckoned America on a par with the other countries of the world. Indeed, he saw America as something "special" at some level. The discovery of the North American Continent was put into a "new earth" framework as he compared it to the "old versus new" biblical motif. Edwards observed that, "God has made as it were two worlds here below, the old and the new (according to the names they are now called by), two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other. The latter is but newly discovered; it

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[64] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:74.

[65] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:75.

[66] Edwards, *Draft Letter on Slavery,* in *Letters and Personal Writings,* WJE 16:75. Acts 17:30 states, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."

was formerly wholly unknown, from age to age, and is as it were now but newly created." He continues, "[I]t has been till of late wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world."[67] This phrase "newly created" to describe the North American continent with its English colonies, in correlation to the "new heavens and new earth" anticipated there was something spiritually great to come unlike in the Old Testament. Edwards writing during the Great Awakening says, "This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the new heavens and new earth."[68]

Earlier in his life, Edwards referred to the new heavens and the new earth as a "spiritual renovation" where the creation of the new world would coincide with the new millennium, and this new millennium required all people to view one another as "neighbors." It is obvious then, that Edwards, while he did not think the Christians of the New Testament living in North America had an excuse to sin because of divine right, believed they had a divine duty—more important than Israel of the Old Testament—to fulfill the biblical commandments in a land not known to Christianity. This also shows that Winthrop's "City upon a hill" idea was still alive during Edwards' time. For Edwards, he looked forward to a new millennium described in the New Testament which made him "plainly to point out America, as the first fruits of that glorious day."[69]

The Millennial Vision

Most of Edwards' denouncement of the slave trade argument rested on his interpretation of the "millennial vision," which was much different than that of his predecessors.[70] The formation of his theological concepts, such as experience,

[67] Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, WJE 4:354.

[68] Edwards, *Notes on the Apocalypse*, WJE 5:151.

[69] Edwards, *The Great Awakening*, WJE 4:354.

[70] Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade": 828; For more information on Edwards and his millennial views see McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society*, 37-92; David Brion

conversion, and eschatology, were developing during the awakenings of the 1730's and 1740's—a time when revivalist fervor was at its peak. It was in this context that Edwards began looking forward to the "glorious times" in which the church would experience an extended period of peace and tranquility before the Last Judgment.[71] He had thought the revivals were proof for this oncoming "millennia," and he anticipated in *A History of the Work of Redemption* a time of "great light and knowledge," when "Negroes and Indians will be divines, and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Turkey."[72] Spurred with zeal that the revivals of New England had brought, Edwards expected a time when non-Westerners would accept Christianity, and contribute to the proclamation of the Gospel through preaching and great "books of devotion."[73] ." Indeed, Edwards thought that the revivals and missionary work was the necessary "spiritual progress that would gradually bring a reign of peace and harmony" into the souls of all people.[74]

In reading Isaiah 25:7, Edwards saw Africans—along with Native Americans, and other non-Christianized nations—under "a veil now cast over the bigger part of the world that keeps 'em in darkness; but then this veil shall be destroyed."[75] Once God had lifted the veil, Christianized countries would see "all countries and nations, even those that are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and knowledge."[76] He found Jeremiah 31:34 conducive to his millennium view that

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Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornel University Press, 1975), 285-299.

[71] Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards on Slavery and the Slave Trade," 828.

[72] Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption,* WJE 9:480.

[73] Edwards, *The "Miscellanies": (Entry Nos. a-z, aa-zz, 1-500),* WJE 13:212.

[74] Frances Fitzgerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 20; Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1966) 61-65.

[75] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:480. Is. 25:7 ESV reads, "And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations."

[76] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:480.

"Knowledge then shall be very universal among all sorts of persons."[77] In Edwards' thinking, the progress of the Gospel to the African nations as a moving piece toward the "glorious times" he awaited and hoped was being stunted by the transatlantic slave trade. Therefore, he saw the injustice of "disfranchising" people from their homeland, combined with the maltreatment they suffered traveling to the Americas, prevented any type of revival experience among them—an event very close to Edwards' mind and heart. Any hope for Africans to accept the gospel meant that the slave trade had to end. The strife between Europeans and the Americas, as well as the warring African nations, was creating a milieu contrary to the Christian message.[78] Moreover, the Northampton revivals, which included the conversion of both the Indians and Africans had already signaled the beginning of this milieu. Edwards excitedly acknowledged these events as evidence of prophecy being fulfilled and thought that "The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many that have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed of the Indians and Negroes… The New Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth."[79]

Edwards' definition of neighbor contradicted the false biblical precept slavers were using to justify the slave trade. His choice to not explore that definition in its application to the oppressed in the social hierarchy led him to believe abolishing slavery was unnecessary. At the very least, this shows how much the revivals influenced Edwards' eschatological thought of the coming "millennium," and his position on the African slave trade.

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[77] Edwards, *History of the Work of Redemption*, WJE 9:480. Jer. 31:34 reads, "And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord."

[78] Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout, *The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740-1865*, *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 1, (June 2005): 50.

[79] Edwards, *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival,* in *The Great Awakening,* WJE 4:346.

Conclusion

For Jonathan Edwards, the revivals he experienced in New England, coupled with the first-hand experiences of slavery in his ministry, caused him to have second thoughts about slavery in general, which in turn led him to avoid discussing it as much as possible. He was immersed in a Christian culture in which civil slavery placed one's body under the law, and the soul under the law of God; Edwards was only concerned about liberating the soul. His dualism was muddled when confronted with the increasing notions among abolitionists that body and spirit were unified, and so to liberate one meant greater chances of liberating the other.

As seen in his purchase of Venus and his later listing his "negro boy" Titus among his livestock inventory, Edwards saw African slaves—at least their bodies—as property, and something that was not necessarily in need of liberty. There is no record of him manumitting any of his slaves, although he and Sarah became financial sureties for a manumitted couple in New Haven who were owned by Sarah's stepmother.[80] From his and Sarah's personal correspondence, it is evident he continued to own slaves for his entire ministry despite the cruelty he alluded to in his sermon after witnessing the slave markets in New York and Newport. The corporeal side of his dualism was manifested more visibly in his allegiance to the British world hierarchy. As his *Draft Letter on Slavery* has shown, Edwards was willing to defend a slave-owning minister with whom he at theological odds and was motivated to protect the social strata of his evangelical partners as New England's elites. He did not see the issue with Doolittle, or slavery itself, so much as a theological matter but a civil one, even though it concerned a minister. Slavery was not the ideal situation for the world, but in a fallen one, Edwards believed that slavery was a station in the hierarchical system ordained by God as a result of depravity. It truly was the "practice that prevails." Until the milieu of Christ's reign

[80] Connecticut State Library, New Haven Deeds, vol. 11, p. 222. This document states that James, Joseph, and Hezekiah Pierpont of New Haven (Sarah's brothers), William Russell of Middletown (her brother-in-law), and Jonathan and Sarah Edwards, "for and in consideration of the faithfull and good service that Jethro Negro and his wife Ruth did and performed for our Honoured Mother their late Mistress do by these presents fully and absolutely give them their freedom and liberty.

on earth, certain necessities, like partaking of food and drink, made slavery at the very least permissible.

The reasons he defended the institution of slavery seem to be at odds with his denouncement of the slave trade. Edwards did not hesitate to call out the false precepts of slave traders disfranchising Africans, nor did he shy away from including Africans—and all people—as "neighbors" in the biblical sense. Perhaps the most important reason the slave trade needed to end was that it prevented the spread of Christianity to the heathen nations and created hostility toward missionary efforts. Unfortunately, Edwards' strong convictions about the slave trade, and his desire for its end, was not enough to lead him to free his own slaves, nor prevent him from continuing to purchase them—which he did for much of his life and ministry. He used words like "blasphemous," "monstrous," and "abominable" to describe the slave trade, but neither described it, nor slavery explicitly as "sin." Edwards' dualism caused slavery to remain a civil matter because it only concerned the social status of the body. While his sermons and exegesis reflect his urgent concern for freeing all people from spiritual slavery, Edwards' limited himself to suggesting that the biblical motif of slavery should be applied to actual African slavery.

Edwards did not follow the logical end of his conviction about the future millennium. If the prophetical fulfillment of Christianity covering the entire earth was prevented by the slave trade, it would have been reasonable for Edwards to not only call for its elimination, but to also stop buying and selling slaves altogether. The continuation of the maritime slave trade depended on the demand for them in the colonies. By his repeated practice of slavery, he knowingly supported the slave trade. The civil-spirit dualistic views he held led to an inconsistent theology and praxis. His stark contrast of promoting slavery, ending the slave trade, and keeping the social structure of the old Puritan world was in direct conflict with theological beliefs for evangelizing the world. Since civil slavery and spiritual slavery were separate matters, Edwards could not link the way African slavery was being conducted to the idea of it preventing spiritual liberty.

This also means that Edwards' position on slavery, and as a slave owner, does not necessarily qualify him as a "racist." There is nothing definitive in

Edwards' writings that suggests his defense of slavery was racially motivated. Therefore, his defense of slavery—and even owning slaves—was not necessarily an expression of racism; rather, it was an attempt to preserve a dying Puritan hierarchical worldview that favored a social order believed to be established by divine providence. However, that is not to say he was without racial prejudices. His racism stemmed from an inherited idea of religious supremacy that placed Whites at the top and Africans and Natives at the bottom as noted in Chapter 2. Edwards is guilty of racism because of his prejudices toward non-Whites that suggested their inferiority to predominate Western cultural characteristics such as learning capacities, language, literary skills, and Christianity.

While Edwards' position is odd and dated compared to any modern standards, his approval of slavery but denunciation of the slave trade represents an intermediate stage between the general acceptance of slavery a century prior and the pivotal shift that led to the abolitionist movement among Edwards' disciples, the New Divinity. Edwards as a transitional figure between these two movements does not give him an excuse for being conflicted in his position, but it does reveal the importance of his role in the origins of the antislavery movement in America through the influence he had on later abolitionists. In this light, Edwards finds himself a conservative who turned himself against the new tendencies concerning slavery. He defended the old order only to have his followers eventually take his theological doctrines and repel against slavery, to which this study now turns.

CHAPTER 5

Destruction and Benevolence: The New Divinity and the Origins of Abolitionism in Edwardsean Tradition

"All I have said upon the slave trade to show the unrighteousness, the cruelty, the murder, the opposition to Christianity and the spread of the gospel among the Africans, the destruction of whole nations and myriads of souls which are contained in this horrid practice..." – Samuel Hopkins

Introduction

During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and for the better part of the eighteenth centuries, the majority of Western Christianity—whether Protestant or Roman Catholic—did not concern itself with slavery or racial issues, nor was it one of the main points of clerical contention. Primary debates were over theological and ecclesiastical matters. Moreover, the sheer lack of discussion of slavery and the racial divide between Whites, Africans, and Native Americans in Edwards' writings reflect how little the issue was a concern in the early eighteenth century.

But for Edwards' followers, the tension between Whites and Africans had come to the forefront of both political and religious conversation on a national level. Antislavery sentiment combined with ideas of reform and revolution gave way to a new theological movement that would favor abolitionism. Unlike Edwards himself, his followers published sermons and literature in full opposition to both slavery and the slave trade—making his theological heirs quite different. Scholars over the last century and a half have "generally characterized the New England Theology as continuous" and "any changes being consistent with Edwards' own intentions," but "critics have tended to discover discontinuity" and "each development within the tradition [is] viewed as a departure from Edwards' Calvinism."[1] Over the last

[1] Douglas A. Sweeney, "Edwards and His Mantle: The Historiography of the New England Theology," in *The New England Quarterly* 71, No. 1 (March 1998): 100.

several decades, the subject of Edwards' influence within the New England theological tradition has received much attention.[2] However, accounts of his thought and impact on the New Divinity in abolitionism, as well as into the nineteenth-century, has been fairly unknown until recently, and the most current scholarship on Edwards' legacy concerning slavery has focused only on him as a slave owner—giving only minimal treatment to his followers, such as Samuel Hopkins.[3] To understand the New Divinity as abolitionists, one must understand Edwards as a precursor to later eighteenth and nineteenth-century thought. As the historian George Bancroft famously put it: "He that would know the workings of the New England mind in the middle of the last century, and the throbbings of its heart, must give his days and nights to the study of Jonathan Edwards."[4]

By and large, in both popular thought and academic study, figures in the American slavery narrative have fit into either two distinct categories: slave owning pro-slavery advocates or liberating antislavery abolitionists. The logical self-description of both being that those who owned or bought slaves were expressing their pro-slavery position, and those who had liberated their slaves, or refused to buy any, were expressing their antislavery abolitionism. But as always with Edwards, his thought makes this more complicated than a simple dichotomy. Having studied with Edwards and his writings after his death, the New Divinity brought new perspectives to his theology concerning true virtue and benevolence.

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[2] For examples of on Edwards's influence on New England theology see George Nye Boardman, *A History of New England Theology* (New York, NY: A.D.F. Randolf Company, 1899); Joseph A Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1981); Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, "All Things Were New and Astonishing: Edwardsian Piety, the New Divinity, and Race," *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons*, ed. David W. Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003) 121-136.

[3] For information on Hopkins and ethics, see Stephen G. Post, *Christian Love and Self-Denial: An Historical and Normative Study of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins, and American Theological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 1987); Todd M. Brennenman, "Samuel Hopkins," in *Dictionary of Early American Philosophers*, ed. John R. Shook (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 551-55.

[4] George Bancroft, "Jonathan Edwards," in *New American Cyclopedia* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858), 7:20.

As it evolved from its Edwardsean origin, the New Divinity's doctrine of disinterested benevolence became a socio-religious ethnic rather than simply an ecclesiastical doctrine, thus questioning the established pecking order of the British-colonial ethos. New Divinity figures have rarely been given attention in regards to their role in the history of ant-slavery, and at the most, newer studies are merely noting their presence in the narrative.[5] This chapter will systematically trace Edwards' theological legacy of abolitionism from his death up through the New Divinity in the early nineteenth century. It will also demonstrate how Jonathan Edwards' legacy in the areas of slavery is reaches farther than just his slave owning, and that he does not perfectly fit in either category of a strict pro-slavery or of an abolitionist, but instead, represents a transitional stage between the two positions.

To do so, this chapter will serve five different purposes. The first will be to offer a brief overview of the reception of the New Divinity in its scholarly context. The second will introduce the main figures in the New Divinity who we can best position as Edwards' theological heirs and their connection to him concerning slavery. The third part will consider the New Divinity's argument against slavery and the slave trade. The fourth will discuss how New Divinity figure Samuel Hopkins built upon—and yet differentiated between—Edwards' doctrines of true virtue and disinterested benevolence. As will be shown, those two key theological loci would be the point at which the New Divinity pushed Edwards' doctrine forward into humanitarian, or practical, application. By tracing the theological heritage of the New Divinity's social reform, the fifth and final part will consider Edwards as an abolitionist forerunner, and even as a harbinger for emancipation.

The New Divinity

Definition and Terms

Jonathan Edwards probably did not have any intention of starting a lasting theological movement. In his mind, he knew the revivals of the Great Awakening

[5] For an example, see C. Bradley Thompson, *America's Revolutionary Mind: A Moral History of the American Revolution and the Declaration that Defined It* (New York, Encounter Books, 2019), 138-139.

were special and providential but saw the doctrines he harbored as nothing more than a continuation of orthodox Christianity. Regardless, Edwards left behind a legacy that would eventually give rise to a social reform movement through his followers known as the "New Divinity."[6] This term was first ascribed to his followers by the "old Calvinists," those who rejected Edwards' notions of will, regeneration, and affections, and accused Edwardseans of preaching a "new divinity."[7] Another common term referring to Edwards' following during the late 1700's was "Hopkinsian" (from Samuel Hopkins), but Hopkins himself declared his teaching was simply "consistent Calvinism."[8] Years later in the early nineteenth century, Yale graduate Nathaniel William Taylor referred to this tradition as "New Haven Theology." A further title coined in a well-known essay by Amasa Park was "New England Theology," which for Park "was not merely a name but an interpretation that construed the century-long development from Jonathan Edwards to Nathaniel William Taylor as a single, internally diverse, yet interconnected movement."[9] Perhaps the best definition so far is offered by Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo:

> We use "New England Theology" (as it was used in the nineteenth century) to refer to the Edwardsean tradition or school of thought: the tradition beginning with Edwards, running through the New Divinity from Samuel Hopkins and Joseph Bellamy to Nathanael Emmons, and extending to more

[6] For work on the New Divinity see, Douglas A. Sweeney, "New Divinity." In *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*. Edited by Harry S. Stout, 400-4; "Evangelical Tradition in America," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 217-238; Joseph A. Conforti, "Inventing the Great Awakening: Edwardsian Revivalistic Tradition from the New Divinity to New Measures," in *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 11-35; Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 601-624;

[7] William Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," in Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 194.

[8] See William Breitenbach, "The Consistent Calvinism of the New Divinity Movement," *The Williams and Mary Quarterly* 41, No.2 (April 1984): 241-264.

[9] Edwards Amasa Park, "New England Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 9 (January 1852): 170-220; McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 601.

> ambiguous figures who nevertheless claimed a linkage to Edwards, from Nathaniel W. Taylor, Lyman Beecher, and Charles G. Finney to the last of the school's stalwarts, Andover's Edwards Amasa Park.[10]

For purposes in this chapter, the term "New Divinity" will refer to his immediate followers, and "Edwardsean(s)" will be the broader term used to describe those whose theological traits possessed strong similarities to Edwards. Additionally, this study will limit itself to prominent figures closest to Edwards. By most estimations there were several hundred Edwardseans in New England by the turn of the nineteenth century.[11] Here, we will focus on some key representative figures.

The New Divinity, as it is most commonly known, was comprised of a number of New England religious figures—Sarah Osborn (1714-96), John Smalley (1734-1820), Stephen West (1735-1819), Nathan Strong (1748-1801), Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1840), Asa Burton (1752-1836), Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), Nathaniel Taylor (1786-1858), Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), and Edwards Amasa Park (1808-1900) among others. Most notably for our purposes were Edwards' close friend Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), his son, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., (1745-1801), Joseph Bellamy (1719-90), and the first African ordained minister, Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833). Unlike previous theological movements on the other side of the Atlantic, the New Divinity did not confine themselves to a particular creed, nor was it defined by a single doctrine. Instead, subscribed to the new flavor of Calvinism that Edwards taught. While there were slight differences between them, at the core of their doctrinal similarities was their distinction between the natural and moral inability to convert and live a life that pleased God, and a thoroughgoing insistence on an immediate repentance (based on natural ability).[12] All of the other doctrines that the New Divinity taught derived from this basic Edwardsean theological idea. This also held true for those who were of the

[10] Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C, Guelzo, *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing, 2006), 15.

[11] Henry F. May, "Jonathan Edwards and American," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, eds. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 21; Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 175-90.

[12] Sweeney, "The New Divinity," 400-1.

Edwardsean tradition outside of the New Divinity such as Richard Furman in the American South, and Andrew Fuller in Great Britain.[13]

As like-minded ministers, many of them Yale graduates, and with the same level of spiritual fervor, the New Divinity possessed everything they needed to promote their theological mentor. Efforts in education, church reorganization, publication, and cooperation gave them the means to lead social reform and endorse abolitionism in the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century. Sermons, associations, and literature were the tools the New Divinity used to force the issue of slavery, which eventually made its way to congress. The tightly knit theological correspondence, and publishing networks they established made it possible to thrust the movement from New England onto the main stage of national controversy.

Reception of Scholarship

Nineteenth-century New England theologians confessed that "The Theology of New England is not one simple, well-defined system."[14] Scholarly reception of the New Divinity has offered multiple interpretations. Tragically, in some works, the mention of the New Divinity has been reduced to a footnote, or omitted completely.[15] In the same way that Edwards claimed to "call no man father," some

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[13] For examples see, Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*, Studies in History of Christian Thought (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2012); Obbie Tyler Todd, "The Influence of Jonathan Edwards on the Missiology and Conversionism of Richard Furman," in JESJ 7, No. 1 (2017): 36-54; "Did Edwards Inspire the Modern Missionary Movement?" in *A Collection of Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, eds., Matthew V. Everhard and Robert L. Boss (Fort Worth, TX: Jonathan Edwards Society Press, 2016): 33-47.

[14] Edward Beecher, quoted in David Alexander Wallace, *The Theology of New England: An Attempt to Exhibit the Doctrines Now Prevelant in the Orthodox Congregational Churches of New England*, (Boston, MA: Crocker and Brewster, 1856), 26. Wallace stated that the editors of the Boston Congregationalist made this statement, and that he believed it was the senior editor, Edward Beecher.

[15] Sweeney and Guelzo brings this issue to light: "Just how an intellectual and theological movement of such vitality and scope could disappear almost entirely from the attention of American historians and theologians is a curious question. It stems, first, from the almost-entire failure and disappearance of the Edwardseans after the passing of Edwards Amasa Park and the capture of the New England Theology's most important citadel, Andover Theological Seminary, by the Andover liberals in the 1880's." *The New England Theology*, ed. Sweeney and Guelzo, 19. For examples of works on history of religion in America in which the New Divinity has minimal or no mention at all, see, Denis Lacorne, *Religion in America: A Political History*, trans. George Holoch (Columbia, NY:

scholars have suggested that he had no theological heirs.[16] The earliest historical account is Park's famous essay, "New England Theology" (1852).[17] A further early work is David Alexander Wallace's *The Theology of New England: An Attempt to Exhibit the Doctrines Now Prevalent in the Orthodox Congregational Churches of New England* (1856). Wallace's purpose was to trace "influences that operated in forming the prevailing theology of New England" up to his current day.[18] Later interpretations at the end of the nineteenth century, such as Enoch *Pond's Sketches of the theological history of New England* (1880), and George Nye Boardman's *A History of New England Theology* (1899), appear to have the same understanding of the development of New England theology.[19] For Pond, he assumed Edwards and his followers possessed the same theology and goals: "restore the doctrine and discipline of our churches to the state in which they were at the first settlement of the country."[20] His account is broad and thinks in terms of denominations, crediting Edwards and the New Divinity in the return of right theology, but also notes the splintering of New England churches as a result; the divisions and rise of new denominations such as separatist churches. Along with Pond, Boardman suggested that, since Edwards, there has been a continuation of Edwardseanism but that the "early theology of New England has not had a complete, unbroken sway since his day."[21] This work was to defend a traditional understanding of Edwardsean theology from the oncoming anthropocentric liberal criticism from Boardman's

Columbia University Press, 2011); William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1930); *Religion in Colonial America* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947).

[16] Edward H. Davidson, *Jonathan Edwards: The Narrative of a Puritan Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 134, 146.

[17] Edwards Amasa Park, "New England Theology," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 9 (January 1852): 170-220.

[18] Ibid., 31.

[19] Boardman, *A History of New England Theology*; Enoch Pond, *Sketches of the theological history of New England* (Boston, MA: Congregational Publishing, 1880).

[20] Pond, *Sketches of the Theological History of New England*, 35.

[21] Boardman, *A History of New England Theology*, 48.

peers. For him, "A study of the scheme of theology that appropriates the title *New England*, properly begins, therefore, with its Edwardean elements."[22]

Similarly, in twentieth-century scholarship, Sydney E. Ahlstrom has suggested that "Edwardseanism was no doubt a single, unified thing," but "the determining characteristic of the New Divinity is not so much its specific content as its categories, its vocabulary, and its conception of the problems."[23] Some saw the New Divinity as a failure to uphold Edwards' theology. They popularized a betrayal interpretation that "characterizes the Edwardsians as arid metaphysicians and austere hyper-Calvinists who systematized Edwards' thought, but in doing so drained it of its warm and vital piety."[24] Those along that same line of thought saw the New Divinity as "liberalizers and moralizers who were intent upon accommodating Edwards' Calvinistic creed to the humanitarian spirit of the day, even if that meant compromising the essentials of his faith."[25] In a more moderate perspective, Benjamin B. Warfield, described the New Divinity as an "exaggeration of his rational method."[26] A few years after Boardman's work, Frank Hugh Foster's *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (1907) became the classic text and suggested a strong continuing doctrine between Edwards, the New Divinity, and later Edwardseans.[27] That which began with Jonathan Edwards endured for over 150 years and ended with Edwards A. Park who Foster described as the "ripest fruit of New England… His theology summed up in the most perfect form the long line

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[22] Boardman, *A History of New England Theology*, 48.

[23] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "Theology in America: A Historical Survey," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, Vol. I Religion in American Life, eds, James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 247, 255.

[24] William Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," in eds. Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout, *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 177.

[25] Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism," 177.

[26] Benjamin B. Warfield, "Edwards and the New England Theology," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, V (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912): 227.

[27] Frank Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 107-186.

of her theological discoveries and ratiocinations."[28] Foster, however, also thought the later New Divinity regressed, became too conservative; the New Divinity failed to recognize New England Theology was "based on humanist principles and could no longer find adequate support in the scholastic structures of the older Calvinism."[29]

In an attempt to chronicle the major figures in the New Divinity movement, Robert C. Whittemore's *The Transformation of the New England Theology* (1987) offers a case for a consistent Christian orthodoxy, specifically "consistent Calvinism," between Samuel Willard (1640-1707) and Samuel Harris (1814-1899).[30] Whittemore argues that Christians today "being the same in substance as that still reverenced by the orthodox, is expressed in their thought with a degree of consistency not attained in more recent theologies" but from Calvinism rooted in New England Theology.[31] In a similar effort, Bruce Kuklick's *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (1985) challenged Frederick J.E. Woodbridge's notion that "New England thought was inadequate for the contemporary world" and that "Edwards had only antiquarian interest."[32] In his study he argues a lengthy continuation from Edwards to John Dewey (1859-1952).

In better known work, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology from Edwards to Taylor* (1932), Joseph Haroutunian set Edwards and his followers opposite of one another.[33] In Haroutunian's assessment, Edwards' followers had all but inherited his Calvinism, mainly because they "lacked either

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[28] Foster, *A Genetic History*, 471-2.

[29] Sweeney, *Edwards and His Mantle*, 104.

[30] Robert C. Whittemore, *The Transformation of the New England Theology*, American University Studies, Series VII Theology and Religion, Vol. 23 (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1987).

[31]Whittemore, *The Transformation of the New England Theology*, 6.

[32] Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Have, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), xv. For Woodbridge's argument, see Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, "Jonathan Edwards," Philosophical Review 13 (1904): 393-94.

[33] Joseph Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism: The Passing of the New England Theology from Edwards to Taylor* (New York, NY: Abington Press, 1932), xxii.

his profound piety, or his intellectual vigor, or both."[34] Claiming Foster was a direct Edwardsean descendant, Haroutunian concluded that, while "valuable as a guide," he was biased to the Edwardsean tradition. Foster was a student of Edwards A. Park, who was a student of Hopkins. Haroutunian claimed Foster's "aggressive belief in a certain theory of the 'freedom of the will,' evidently suggested by N.W. Taylor and E.A. Park, has prevented him from doing justice to the Edwardean Theology."[35] For most scholars who pitted Edwards against his followers, the New Divinity had failed to reconcile human responsibility and theocentric piety and "were wrecked on the horns of the old dilemma."[36]

William Breitenbach debunks this framework in his essay, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity" (1988).[37] He asserts that scholars like Haroutunian are wrong and "misunderstand the New Divinity because they obstinately continue to impose the piety-versus-moralism paradigm on eighteenth-century New England Religious History."[38] What's more, Breitenbach notes that Reformed theology was dominate in New England at the time did not set piety against moralism, but did the opposite and defended a tradition of "piety *and* moralism."[39] Joining the most common interpretation, Breitenbach states, "the

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[34] Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism,* xxii.

[35] Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism,* xxii. Haroutunian's explains "The Edwardean doctrines are presented in their relation to his psychology of the will, and criticized as inadequate or pernicious to the extent that they ignore or seem to vitiate this psychology. This is unfortunate, because the chief aim of the Edwardean Theology was not to formulate a theory of the will; it was inspired by a piety which sought to glorify God and His sovereignty over man." The best work to date on Bellamy is Mark Valeri's *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[36] Haroutunian, *Piety Versus Moralism,* xxiii.

[37] William Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, eds., Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988):177-204.

[38] Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," 178.

[39] Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," 178-79. Breitenbach also suggests that recent Puritan studies have called this model of piety versus moralism into question. Since this model, numerous scholars have done work on the variety of theological positions held by New England Puritans. He states, "This discovery of diversity makes older assumptions about the inevitable organic evolution of a universally accepted covenant theology into Arminian moralism seem to simplistic. For another thing, historians have recognized that Reformed Theology, even in

leading tendencies of Edwards' system can be discovered by tracing the trajectory of his ideas in the theology of his New Divinity successors."[40]

In a more popular interpretation, Sweeney portrays the New Divinity in The American Evangelical Story (2005) as victors over the "old Calvinists" through promotion of revival and Edwardsean doctrines of conversion, will, and true religion.[41] The New Divinity dominated associations, institutions, published, and organized their movement so much so, that "by the end of the eighteenth century the vast majority of New England's churches were Edwardsian; many separates, now satisfied with the fruit of Edwardsianism, pulled up stakes and rejoined the standing order."[42]

Scholarship on the New Divinity and Abolitionism

Over the past several decades, increased research on the New Divinity has probed new areas of Edwards scholarship. For example, Douglas A. Sweeney's *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (2002), Mark Valeri's *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America* (1994), Joseph A. Conforti's *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings* (1981), and Oliver Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney's *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New*

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its pristine formulations, did not set piety against moralism… The *dominant* New England theological tradition, the clerical orthodoxy, was one of piety *and* moralism. It is within this tradition that Edwards and the Edwardsians belong, extending a line that stretches forward to them from Beza to Perkins to Ames to Shepard. It is wrong to see Edwards as sweeping aside a compromised federal theology in order to restore a severe, uncorrupted, theocentric Calvinism. Rather, he and his followers occupied the familiar middle ground, defending it against the extremes of Antinomianism and Arminianism."

[40] Breitenbach, "Piety and Moralism: Edwards and the New Divinity," 178.

[41] Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story*, 60-1.

[42] Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story*, 60.

England Theology (2012) are all explorations of Edwards' legacy.[43] However, up until now, none has given a careful treatment of Edwards' legacy of abolitionism.

From these previous years of scholarship on the New Divinity has come a handful of key articles and book chapters narrating their roles within American antislavery history. However, the appalling tragedy of this sub-tradition of Edwardseanism is that it has received little attention and has not been given a proper place within the broader narrative of the American antislavery tradition. For the rest of the New Divinity members, their legacy in abolitionism has unfortunately been reduced to either a few paragraphs, a slight mention, or just a footnote in the overall antislavery accounts.

One of the most thorough studies of an Edwardsean and their association with abolitionism is Conforti's chapter on Hopkins, "True Virtue and Social Reform: Slavery and the Revolution."[44] His interpretation of Hopkins was a narrative of transformation from a theologian into a dedicated antislavery reformer in the context of American revolutionary ideas.[45] For Conforti, Hopkins's antislavery arguments were theologically Edwardsean and linked to the republican political thoughts of the Revolution.[46] Hopkins thought the social transformation that began with the Great Awakening would be completed by the American Revolution. An extension to Conforti's chapter is Richard Hall's, "The Abolitionism of Samuel Hopkins: An Application of Edwards' Doctrine of True

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[43] Douglas A. Sweeney, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, Religion in America Series (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002); Mark Valeri, *Law and Providence in Joseph Bellamy's New England: The Origins of the New Divinity in Revolutionary America*, Religion in America Series (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994); Joseph A. Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement: Calvinism, the Congregational Ministry, and Reform in New England Between the Great Awakenings* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1981); Oliver Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[44] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 125-141.

[45] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 126.

[46] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, 128.

Virtue."[47] Hall's study is strictly theological. He compares Edwards' and Hopkins' doctrine of true virtue, and suggests Hopkins built his upon Edwards' and that his antislavery arguments were its practical applications. More broadly in this area is Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe's chapter, "All Things were New and Astonishing: Edwardsian Piety, the New Divinity, and Race."[48] Focusing on Samuel Hopkins, Osborn, and Lemuel Haynes, Edwardsean theology connected Christianity and the issues of how White related to Africans. He argues the devotionalism of Edwardseans was responsible for carrying evangelical Christianity into the social setting of the Revolution, thus spurring on reform.[49] A key essay in the examination of this sub-tradition is Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout's, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 17-40-1865."[50] As Minkema and Stout argue, the study of the antislavery Edwardsean tradition demonstrates the intimate connections the New Divinity had with politics and religion. The Edwardseans show how a "tradition became part of mainstream culture and then reflected the larger cultural reaction against immediatism, and the vital role of the New Divinity voices and the doctrine of disinterested benevolence played in the world we have inherited."[51]

These pieces have laid the foundation for the study of Edwards' legacy in abolitionism which this chapter hopes to provide. Uncovering this part of the Edwardsean tradition will simultaneously add to the chronicles of emancipation and situate Edwards' legacy in that history. In no way is this chapter arguing that the New Divinity outweighed the contributions of others in antislavery histories; rather,

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[47] Richard Hall, "The Abolitionism of Samuel Hopkins: An Application of Edwards's Doctrine of True Virtue," in *The Global Edwards: Papers from the Jonathan Edwards Congress held in Melbourne, August 2015*, ed. Rhys S. Bezzant (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 296-313.

[48] Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, "All Things were New and Astonishing: Edwardsian Piety, the New Divinity, and Race," in, eds., David W. Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 121-136.

[49] Hambrick-Stowe, "All Things were New and Astonishing," 121.

[50] Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740—1865," in The Journal of American History 92, No. 1 (June 2005): 47-74.

[51] Minkema and Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate," 74.

it seeks to recognize the vital role the movement and its doctrine played in the events leading up to emancipation.

Origins of the Movement

The origins of the New Divinity are just as debatable. To simply denominate Edwards as the creator of the movement would be too vague. Scholars have argued for dates across the spectrum, beginning with Edwards' early life, while others suggest it did not begin until well after his death. Boardman stated, "It is impossible to give exact date to the rise of New England Theology, but a division of the ministry into parties which became, to some extent, coincident with the division between 'old lights' and 'new lights,' was occasioned by the great revival of 1740."[52] Going further, Boardman describes Edwards as the "eminently aggressive force" responsible for the movement, which decidedly began during Edwards' college days, when he resolved, "I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life."[53] Still earlier, Park concluded that the New England Theology began with Edwards' treatise *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue*. Even though it was not published until years after Edwards' death, it was read Hopkins and Bellamy by Edwards himself. For some scholars, Edwards' sermons on "Justification by Faith Alone" (1734), combating the spread of Arminianism, signified a "new theological movement."[54] This discourse "acquired an importance

[52] Boardman, *A History of New England Theology*, 32, 33.

[53] Boardman, *A History of New England Theology*, 33.

[54] Foster, *A Genetic History of New England Theology*, 3; "Justification by Faith Alone," in WJE 21:143-242; "Quaestio," in WJE 14: 48-67. For more scholarly work on Edwards and Justification by Faith Alone, see Hyun-Jin Cho, *Jonathan Edwards on Justification: Reformed Development of the Doctrine in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2012); Jonathan R. Huggins, *Living Justification: A Historical-Theological Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Justification in the Writings of John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, and N.T. Wright* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013); Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and Justification* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); George Hunsinger, "Dispositional Soteriology: Jonathan Edwards on Justification by Faith Alone" *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. 66 (2004), 107-120; Thomas A. Schafer, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 20 (Dec. 1951): 55-67; John H. Gerstner, *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1987), 69-84; *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. III,* (Powhatan: Berea Publications, 1993); Douglas A. Sweeney, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification: The Rest of the

for the whole Christian civilization when it became the molding force of a great part of the constructive religious work done in the United States of America."[55]

Joseph A. Conforti believes the New Divinity arose not to repel Arminianism, but repel the invasion of Methodist preachers pouring into New England. Sweeney and Guelzo emphasize what is probably the most popular opinion: the First Great Awakening sparked The New England theology, which took up where Edwards left off immediately after his death.[56] Similarly, McClymond and McDermott suggest the New Divinity began once they sought to venerate Edwards after his death, and at times their attitude was almost worshipful.[57] Edwards' "brand" of theology was so ingrained into New England that by the nineteenth century, many "had been brought up to believe that Edwards' doctrines or something like them were saving truth."[58]

In agreement with the same saint-like adoration, Mark A. Noll states that in "New England, Jonathan Edwards was a treasured possession."[59] For example, Timothy Dwight, New Divinity member and grandson of Edwards, called him "that moral Newton, and that second Paul" who "in one little life, the gospel more/Disclos'd, than all earth's myriads and kenn'd before."[60] Other scholars point to even earlier in Edwards' career as the origin of New England Theology. Perry Miller supposed Edwards' Boston lecture *God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, by the Greatness of Man's Dependence upon him, in the Whole of it* (1731) as the

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Story" in *Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee*, ed. Don Schweitzer (New York, NY: Peter Lang 2010), 151-174.

[55] Foster, *A Genetic History of The New England Theology*, 3.

[56] Sweeney and Guelzo, *The New England Theology*, 69-71.

[57] McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 602.

[58] May, "Jonathan Edwards and American," 24.

[59] Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards and Nineteenth-Century Theology," in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, eds., Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 263.

[60] Timothy Dwight, "The Triumph of Infidelity," (1788), in *The Connecticut Wits*, ed. Vernon Louis Parrington (New York, NY: 1969), 260.

turning point for New England theology.[61] He preached the sermon on 8 July 1731, and within the month it was printed and received high recognition among many other ministers. In the preface, two of the Boston Ministers, William Cooper and Thomas Prince, wrote, "And, as we cannot but wish and pray, that the College in the neighboring colony, as well as our own, may be a fruitful mother of many such sons as the author."[62] Contending for a much later day is Breitenbach, who states, "The New Divinity did not emerge as a distinct position until the 1760s, when some of the orthodox clergy grew disturbed by the way that Samuel Hopkins went about refuting Jonathan Mayhew's Arminian theories of regeneration."[63] He does not see the movement taking hold until Edwardsean Calvinism pushed against both the "old Calvinists" and countering Arminianism. Another event that is observed as a critical point in the development of Edwards' legacy was the publication of Samuel Hopkins's *System of Divinity* (1793). McClymond and McDermott suggest this first full-scale systematic theological publication by an Edwardsean represent a "point of maturation and set a new direction for Edwards' followers."[64] This point of publication will be dealt with more fully in the next section.

Considering the various conclusions on the nature of the New Divinity origins, it is safe to infer there is not a definitive point of origin. The beginning of "New England Theology" will depend on how one weighs the value of a particular event (i.e. the Boston lecture, the Great Awakening, or Edwards' death). As one scholar has summarized, "Edwards' theological legacy, like the larger religious tradition to which it was attached, emerged as complex, ambiguous, and contested, not monolithic, fixed, stable, and consensual."[65] Therefore, at the very least, it is undeniable that a "historically a new period begins with him," and "later New

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[61] Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1949), 15. Edwards, *God Glorified in Man's Dependence*, in *Sermons and Discourses, 1730-1733,* WJE 17:164-217.

[62] Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 15.

[63] William Breitenbach, "Consistent Calvinism of the New Divinity Movement," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 41, No. 2 (April 1984): 244.

[64] McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 603.

[65] Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, & American Culture*, 5.

England theology, so far as it is recognized as orthodox and evangelical, points back to him as the radiating centre."[66]

The New Divinity as Edwardseans

As seen in the reception of scholarship of the New Divinity, there has been a gamut of interpretations advocating different starting points for the Edwardsean Tradition. But for the purpose of this study, it appears that the most logical and closest interpretation would be the one that posits limited continuation—that is, by broad definition, the New England theological movement began with Jonathan Edwards, was carried on by his immediate followers such as Hopkins, Edwards, Jr., Bellamy, and various ministers influenced by him, carrying on up through Timothy Dwight, the later President of Yale College, and finally ending with Edwards A. Park as the last Edwardsean. This also seems to be the most popular among modern scholars. In order to trace this Edwardsean legacy, it is important briefly to assess why the New Divinity should be considered Edwards' theological "offspring." While there are several reasons why the New Divinity should be considered as Edwards' heirs, we can focus on two that appear to be the most relevant.

First, the New Divinity unapologetically claimed to be the heirs of Edwards and of a new tradition. They understood their doctrine was distinctly different from the old Calvinists, Arminians, and Antinomians, and claimed to be successors of the new movement. In claiming the New England mantle that Edwards had left behind, the New Divinity "exploited historical and theological ties to the era of the colonial awakening to appropriate a revivalistic legacy, which they defined as a tradition of sober, clerical-directed, local revivals."[67] Their theological ties to history gave them authority, thus, seeing themselves along the same line as Edwards.

Second, Edwards affirmed his students as his theological successors, and in turn, they promoted Edwards' theology by publishing his works. Before Edwards died, he wrote the *Preface* to Joseph Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated* (1750)—

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[66] Boardman, *A History of New England*, 48.

[67] Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, & American Culture*, 17.

the first publication by one of Edwards' disciples—thus giving his stamp of approval on Bellamy's treatise, and consequently solidifying the work in the Edwardsean tradition. Edwards declared, "From the intimate acquaintance with him, which I have been favored with for many years, I have abundant reason to be satisfied that what has governed him in this publication, is no vanity of mind, no affection to appear in the world as an author, nor any desire of applause; but a hearty concern for the glory of GOD, and the kingdom and interest of his Lord and Master, JESUS CHRIST."[68] After Edwards' death, Hopkins published some of his unfinished works, like *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue* and *A History of the Work of Redemption Comprising an Outline of Church History* (both 1765). This not only encouraged the spread of Edwardseanism, but also showed they were Edwards' disciples.[69] By the time he died, he was already a legend in the mind of his students. Publishing his works were a way for them to keep him alive, and to reaffirm their current doctrine was in accord with their teacher. Conforti goes so far as to assert that Edwardseans "canonized" his texts in order for their own means.[70] Praising Edwards' genius in the preface to these dissertations, Hopkins exclaimed,

> [M]any theorems, that appeared hard and barren to others, were to him pleasant and fruitful fields, where his mind would expatiate with peculiar ease, profit and entertainment. Those studies, which to some were too fatiguing to the mind, and wearing to the constitution, were to him but a natural play of genius; and which his mind without labor would freely and spontaneously perform.[71]

The esteem Hopkins had for Edwards could be said for all the New Divinity. The hope was for their theology was to mirror Edwards'. As Frank Hugh Foster explained, "To agree with Edwards was still the high ambition of them all; and

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[68] Jonathan Edwards, "Preface," in *WJB* 1: v.

[69] Edwards, *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, in *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:401-537, and *A Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue*, in WJE 8:539-628.

[70] Conforti, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, & American Culture*, 32-35.

[71] Edwards, *Concerning the End for which God Created the World*, in *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:402.

when they consciously disagreed, as did [Nathaniel William] Taylor, they thought they were only expressing better Edwards’ true meaning.”[72]

For much of the New Divinity’s theology, Foster’s statement holds true. Figures like Hopkins, Edwards, Jr., and Bellamy, read Edwards’ theology of virtue, holiness, and benevolence, and when writing their own theological work, thought they were merely adding to or explaining Edwards’ intentions. But when comparing the practical outworking of their theologies with Edwards’, they appear quite different. Edwards’ complex view of slavery and the slave trade did not translate to his followers. Owning slaves while condemning the slave trade was not enough for the New Divinity’s ethics. Wielding Edwards’ doctrine and the uprising ideas of revolution, the New Divinity advocated full-blown abolitionism for Africans and solidified their voice among other emancipators in the American colonies. To be fair, antislavery theology had begun decades before Edwards was born, but by the late eighteenth-century, a new theological movement in New England was advocating for abolitionism and at its helm was the New Divinity.

The New Divinity on Slavery and the Slave Trade

The New Divinity movement began with Jonathan Edwards, but it would take on a radically different form by the end of the eighteenth century. They came to differ from Edwards in that they represented a melding of political and religious convictions birthed out of a Calvinistic tradition and into a single antislavery movement that promoted equalitarianism among all races. While the literature they published contained both political and theological arguments for ending chattel slavery, the root of their abolitionism was their Edwardsean Calvinism which in turn informed their politics. The New Divinity had read—and some had even lived with—Edwards, and in their minds were taking the next steps toward a “consistent Calvinism” by promoting a new breed of socio-religious ethics that was distinctly Edwardsean—and at the same time not Edwardsean at all. Whereas Edwards had disapproved of the slave trade but kept slaves and promoted slavery as an institution, the New Divinity who owned slaves freed them, and thought it their

[72] Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology*, 369.

Christian duty, whether by using the political climate to their advantage or through theological conviction, to help liberate all African slaves from across the young American republic. Even though Edwards' doctrines of virtue and benevolence were well received among his disciples, the argument here will be that they applied these doctrines much differently than their mentor, and manifested a changed direction for ethics within New England theology—specifically toward equalitarianism in the abolishment of slavery, and a reconciliation of hostilities between Whites and Africans and the gospel.

I will discuss four ways in which the New Divinity re-directed Edwards' ethics. First, they used basic arguments of reason and common morality to condemn slavery. Observing the inhumane treatment of African slaves and exposing the fallacies within the arguments justifying man-stealing led to the moral conversion of the New Divinity. Second, the New Divinity unashamedly exploited Revolutionary philosophy in the cause of human equality. The political notions of "freedom," "equality," and the like, were concepts they easily used to further ideas of emancipation for slaves and equality among all races. Third, the New Divinity saw slavery, in addition to the slave trade, as contrary to the Christian message. As far as the New Divinity was concerned, the maltreatment Africans were receiving was the only impression they had of Christianity. Fourth, and the most important of the three, was their interpretations of Edwards' doctrine of true virtue and holiness, and of disinterested benevolence. Edwards' doctrines aimed benevolence and the selflessness toward God; while in agreement with Edwards, the New Divinity, particularly Hopkins and those under his immediate influence, emphasized that showing benevolence and selflessness toward God meant that one would in turn show the same toward others—in this case, African slaves. For the New Divinity, to fully practice Christian virtue—and even more, "to be" a Christian—meant to operate with disinterested benevolence and selfless good not only God as Edwards suggested, but toward all beings including those who needed it most—the oppressed in slavery. This will be treated in the following paragraphs.

Rational Observations

Obvious Cruelty

There is no doubt that for the New Divinity the most important rules for social governance were derived from the Bible, but it was not the only tool they used to fight slavery. Nearly every essay they published contained two arguments: the appeal to basic morality—as a result of observing the cruelties and inhumanity of the slave trade and of slavery itself—and exposing the logical fallacies in justifying man-stealing. Many members of the New Divinity had seen first-hand the buying and selling of Africans from the slave ports of New England and their brutal treatment aboard the vessels coming into the colonies. It is important to recognize this aspect of the New Divinity’s antislavery argument, because it is the same sights that Jonathan Edwards chose to ignore when he bought his slaves from Newport market. Moreover, Edwards never described anything he saw about the slave trade, but Hopkins and Edwards, Jr. both described the horrors they had seen and made it their lived experiences a tool in calling for the abolition of slavery. At the same time, the New Divinity were in agreement with Edwards that “man-stealing,” or, in Edwards’ term, “disfranchise,” was not only unbiblical, but could not be justified even with logical reason.

The hottest firebrand among Edwards’ followers was undoubtedly Samuel Hopkins. Hopkins was born in Waterbury, Connecticut on 17 September 1721 to Christian parents.[73] At sixteen years of age he entered Yale under the tutelage of Elisha Williams. Upon graduating in 1741, Hopkins had originally made plans to stay with Gilbert Tennent, a follower of George Whitefield, but later heard Jonathan Edwards preach *The Distinguishing Marks of the Spirit of God* while in New Haven and made arrangements to live with him instead.[74] He continued to study under Edwards until 28 December 1743, when he was called to pastor the Second Congregational Church of Sheffield in Housatonic, later named Great Barrington

[73] Edwards Amasa Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:12. Edwards A. Park has been the only biographer of Hopkins.

[74] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:18-19.

in western Massachusetts.[75] He would remain there for the next twenty-six years and also minister to the Six Nations Native Americans and Mahicans of Stockbridge just miles from his house. His contemporaries would "often find him preaching to the tribes of the red men collected at Stockbridge, about an hour's ride from his own home."[76] Among the Native Americans, Hopkins first saw racial oppression by his fellow White colonials. As a result, he became an advocate for their political rights and made efforts to educate Native American youth.[77]

Hopkins would carry this concern for the oppressed for the rest of his life, and it would spark religious and revolutionary ideas of abolition years later. After some controversy with his church in Great Barrington he left in 1769 and accepted a call from the First Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, on 11 April 1770.[78] He had already seen the mistreatment of Native Americans in Stockbridge, but it was there at Newport where Hopkins witnessed the brutality and cruel treatment of slaves being imported from the West African coast—the very same location where Edwards purchased his slave Venus four decades earlier. Hopkins observed that Newport had become a large commercial center for "negro trafficking," owning fifty-nine of the 202 slave ships carrying African up and down the colonial coast.[79] The slave business was quite lucrative. But the financial greed only added to the disgust Hopkins had for the chattel treatment of human beings. The majority of Newport's residents gained their wealth one way or another from its deep involvement with the slave system. It truly was the "Great slave market of New England" and Hopkins knew it.[80] Hopkins wrote of his attitude toward the city:

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[75] Plato, *Samuel Hopkins,* 305.

[76] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:44.

[77] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:45.

[78] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:79-83; Conkin, "Samuel Hopkins," 315; Plato, "Samuel Hopkins," 305.

[79] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:115.

[80] Wilkins Updike, *A History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett Rhode Island Including a History of the Other Episcopal Church in the State* (Boston, MA: The Merrymount Press, 1907), 170-174.

> The inhabitants of Rhode Island, especially those of Newport, have had by far the greater share in this traffic of all these United States. This trade in the human species has been the first wheel of commerce in Newport, on which every other movement in business has chiefly depended. That town has been built upon, and flourished in times past, at the expense of the blood, the liberty, and happiness of the poor Africans; and the inhabitants have lived on this, and by it have gotten most of their wealth and riches.[81]

Park recorded that Hopkins "often looked upon the cargoes of Africans who were landed at the wharves near his meeting-house and parsonage."[82] Hopkins was disgusted It was moments like these that sparked the New Divinity's conviction to end slavery.

Hopkins' efforts to convince the American colonies of its sin are found in four different texts, two addressed to the Continental Congress, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the African* (1776), *An Address to the Owners of Negro Slaves in the American Colonies* (1776), *A Discourse upon the Slave Trade and the Slavery of the Africans* (1793) and *The Slave Trade and Slavery* (1787). Addressing Congress, Hopkins strained to describe the brutalized lives of slaves:

> But it is in vain to attempt a full description of the oppression and cruel treatment these poor creatures receive constantly at the hands of their imperious, unmerciful, worse than Egyptian taskmasters. Words cannot utter it. Volumes might be written, and not give a detail of a thousandth part of the shockingly cruel things they have suffered, and are constantly suffering. Nor can they possibly be conceived by any one who has not been an eye witness. And how little a part does he see! They who are witnesses to any part of this horrid scene of barbarous oppression scene but feel the truth...[83]

In hopes of convincing Congress and the American people of the "open and gross violation" of slavery, Hopkins's recalled observations such as these and concluded that even on the basis of human rights, slavery was an abomination—moreover, a

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[81] Hopkins, *The Slave Trade and Slavery*, WSH 2:615.

[82] Park, *Memoir,* WSH 1:115.

[83] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans showing it to be the Duty and Interest of the American Colonies to Emancipate all the African Slaves. With an Address to the Owners of such Slaves. Dedicated to the Honorable Continental Congress*, WSH 2:555-56.

heinous sin. He asserted, "It is, therefore, become a national sin, and a sin of the first magnitude—a sin which righteous Heaven has never suffered to pass unpunished in this world."[84]

Jonathan Edwards, Jr. possessed the same attitude and also described the grotesque world of slavery in his *Injustice and Impolicy of the Slavery and of the Slave Trade* (1791). He wrote,

> [T]he inhumane manner in which they are transported to America, and in which they are treated on their passage and in their subsequent slavery, is such as ought forever to deter every many from acting any part in this business, who has any regard to justice and humanity.
> They are crowded so closely into the holds and between the decks of vessels, that they have scarcely room to lie down, and sometimes not room to sit up in an erect posture; the men at the same time fastened together with irons by two and two; and all this in the most sultry climate.[85]

Even if Africans survive the voyage, their suffering does not end. Edwards, Jr. described the brutal treatment of African slaves from their overseers on American plantations.

> By these masters they are supplied with barely enough to keep them from starving, as the whole expense laid out on a slave for food, clothing and medicine is commonly computed on an average at thirty shillings sterling annually. At the same time, they are kept at hard labor from five o'clock in the morning, till nine at night, excepting time to eat twice during the day… they receive the lash, the smack of which is all day long... not only to lacerate the skin, but to eat our small portions of the flesh at almost every stroke. This is the general treatment of slaves.
> Many are knocked down; some have their eyes beaten out; some have an arm or leg broken, or chopped off; and many for a very small or for no crime at all, have been beaten to death merely to gratify the fury of an enraged master or overseer.[86]

[84] Hopkins, *The Slave Trade and Slavery*, WSH 2:614-15.

[85] Jonathan Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy of the Slave Trade, and of Slavery*, WJEJ 2:77.

[86] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:78-79.

Edwards, Jr. continued to describe all of the horrific scenes of how slavery was conducted in his *Injustice and Impolicy*; mentioning all of the bloody violence, murder, and all of the destruction that came with it. After describing its practice, he asked, "[W]ho can hesitate to declare this trade and the consequent slavery to be contrary to every principle of justice and humanity, of the law of nature and of the law of God?"[87] It was clear to Edwards, Jr. that slavery—not just the slave trade—was sinful.

Hopkins and Edwards, Jr. spearheaded the New Divinity strategy against slavery and the slave trade. It's important to note here that initially they did not see it necessary to invoke theological conviction—even though they eventually did—for everything pointed to slavery's evil. For the New Divinity, unlike Edwards, Sr., simply observing the cruel practices was enough to condemn slavery and the slave trade, and recognize it as a sin.

Man-stealing as Irrational and Unbiblical

Describing the obvious horrors of slavery led New Divinity spokespersons, such as Hopkins and Edwards, Jr., to expose the fallacies of pro-slavery advocates. There were several angles that slavers used to defend themselves against their protesters, but for each of the popular arguments for slavery, the New Divinity has a ready answer. For them, there was not a sufficient argument to excuse robbing people of their liberty and reducing them to a life of submission, whether by reasoning or by the Bible.

As their teacher came to see, the New Divinity held that taking people by force from their native land as unjust. Even if the slave holders in America were not violent toward the slaves themselves, they too were continuing the unrighteousness and violence exercised by means of enslaving them. Hopkins argued that they have "never forfeited their liberty or given any one a right to enslave and sell them," and, "have yet as much a right to their liberty as ever they

[87] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:79.

had, and to demand it of him who holds them in bondage."[88] Further arguing against man-stealing, Edwards, Jr., posed the question: If there was any just cause simply to remove Africans from their home, what unjust cause would there be for any other nation to come to America and do the same to them? He stated,

> Should we be willing, that the Africans or any other nation should purchase us, our wives and children, transport us into African and there sell us into perpetual and absolute slavery? Should we be willing, that they by large bribes and offers of a gainful traffic should entice our neighbors to kidnap and sell us to them, and that they should hold perpetual and cruel bondage, not only ourselves, but our posterity through all generations? Yet why is it not as right for them to treat us in this manner, as it is for us to treat them in the same manner?[89]

To take away a person's liberty and reduce their humanness was just as vile as robbing or murdering them. Edwards, Jr. said, "Their color indeed is different from ours. But does this give us a right to enslave them?"[90] The fact that White Anglo-Westerners were somehow superior to darker skinned people was illogical. "The nations from Germany to Guinea have complexions of every shade from the fairest of white to a jetty black; and if a black complexion subject a nation or an individual to slavery, where shall slavery begin, or where shall it end?"[91] For the New Divinity, the color of skin did not denote racial superiority or inferiority, and, therefore, Whites who forced darker-skinned peoples into subjection was unjust. Here, the New Divinity triumphed over two things by challenging man-stealing; they exposed the blatant inconsistency of the pro-slavery argument about the slave trade and rejected outright racial prejudices.

In addition to tearing down rational justifications of slavery, a large portion of the New Divinity's antislavery writing engaged biblical defenses of slavery and the slave trade. Well before the New Divinity, the Bible had been used to both

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[88] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:560.

[89] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:76.

[90] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:76.

[91] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:76.

defend and denounce slavery in America, as we saw in the Saffin and Sewall debate in Chapter 1. But ministers, like the New Divinity men, felt the need to address the misuse of scripture that was propagating a national evil. They believed that "the scriptures were never designed to be a system of politics," Therefore, while they thought practical Christian ethics should transcend any culture, they knew slaveholders would attempt to twist ethics in favor of slavery.[92] They readily gave answers to what they felt was the poor hermeneutics defending White superiority over Africans.

Noahic Curse as an Assumption

In their polemics against slavery, the New Divinity addressed what they perceived as several misinterpretations of both Old and New Testament texts. A common view was that Africans were the blood descendants of Ham, who many interpreters argued, had been condemned to slavery by Noah in Genesis 9:25: "And he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." By this curse, many Americans thought it was their God-given right to put Africans into servitude. In response, Edwards, Jr. wrote, "It is indeed generally thought that Ham peopled Africa; but that the curse on Canaan extended to all the posterity of Ham is a mere imagination."[93] He cited the lineage in the following verses in Genesis10:15-19, which made no reference to any of the African countries nor any connection. "This curse then of the posterity of Canaan, had no reference to the inhabitants of Guinea, or of African in general… Therefore, this curse gives us no right to enslave the Africans, as we do by the slave trade, because it has no respect

[92] Baldwin and Edwards, Jr., *Some Observations*, 296.

[93] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:82.

to the Africans whom we enslave.”[94] With no real biblical support, Edwards, Jr. found it easy to expose this reason as merely as an assumption.[95]

As far as the New Divinity was concerned, the Bible was “infinitely far from justifying the slavery under consideration.”[96] Hopkins considered the injunction of the Apostle Paul in Colossian 4:1: “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. The slaveowner who conformed to this rule would not only treat his servants with equity in all instances, but would set at liberty all who were evidently unjustly enslaved, and therefore had a right to their freedom.”[97] Moreover, he added, “The master is also implicitly required to set him at liberty, if there be no insuperable impediment in the way… and the church to which the servant belongs, and every member of it, ought to do all in their power to procure the freedom of every such servant.”[98] The Bible demanded that masters set their slaves free if there was no infraction on the slave’s part. This was fundamentally different from Edwards, who never encouraged the liberation of slaves, but only their due treatment as human beings; although he did oversee the manumission of his uncle’s slaves upon his death.[99]

Owning Slaves still Supports the Slave Trade

One of Edwards Sr.’s argument against the slave trade was taken up by New Divinity disciples, namely, merely owning slaves supported the slave trade.

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[94] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:83. Gen. 10:15-19 (KJV) reads, “And Canaan begat Sidon his first born, and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.”

[95] Edwards made comments on these biblical passages that his son used, but it only described the dispersion and settlements on nations. Edwards chose not to comment on chattel slavery in relation to these verses.

[96] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:566.

[97] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:567.

[98] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:567.

[99] [Need Reference. Ask Minkema].

Hopkins argued that holding "blacks in a state of slavery is a practical justification of the slave trade, and so brings the guilt of that on that head of him who so far partakes."[100] Hopkins saw the financial greed that motivated the slave system, and discerned that while slave holders knew it was evil, they still continued to uphold it. To the slaver owners, Hopkins called out their lust for wealth: "By keeping these slaves, and buying and selling them, they actually encourage and promote the slave trade; and therefore, in this view, keeping slaves and continuing to buy and sell them is to bring on us the guilt of the slave trade, which is hereby supported."[101] The slave industry was one of supply and demand. Even those who did not directly buy slaves were still reaping the benefits from the goods they produced, and Hopkins was not hesitant to bring that to light:

> "By partaking with these robbers in receiving the goods at their hands, you practically justify their conduct, and must share with them in their guilt. For by this means you encourage them, and are determined to go on to encourage them in this violence and rapine; and by condemning them, you equally condemn yourselves, and must remain under this condemnation till you restore the goods we demand, and resolve never to purchase any thus taken from us by violence."[102]

Anyone that aided the cause of defending the slave trade were just as responsible as those who purchased slaves.

Applying Revolutionary Philosophy

The New Divinity ministers did not limit their political opinions to church doors nor did they believe politics should be divorced from religion. In fact, as Edwardseans, faith and politics went hand-in-hand—one's politics was simply an outworking of one's doctrine. After all, what made the New Divinity unique was applying their New England theology to social ethics and, thus, formulating a particular political agenda. There have been several studies that argue Evangelical

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[100] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:560.

[101] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:560.

[102] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:561-62.

Calvinism as the underlying cause of the American Revolution, and as Mark Valeri has shown, the New Divinity was much more directly engaged with politics than has previously been assumed, and building upon that idea, the New Divinity exploited revolutionary philosophies of the time to reinforce their abolitionism.[103] Namely, their abolitionism coincided with Revolutionary ideas of freedom in two distinct dovetailed ideas: they likened the oppression of slaves as to the oppression from Great Britain, and to the equality for all people regardless of race.

During the New Divinity's crusade to end slavery and the slave trade in America, the Declaration of Independence began the war between Great Britain and her Thirteenth Colonies and had all but ravaged the new country. However, the language of the Declaration of Independence was ammunition for the New Divinity to use for the equality and right of humanity for African slaves. Prior to the Revolutionary War, the New Divinity had already begun making the comparison of oppression between the colonies and England and Whites and Africans. In a series of essays in 1773, Edwards, Jr. stated that "while we in the Americans colonies, have been so jealous of our own liberties, and so cautious to guard against every encroachment upon them from our mother country; we have been inattentive to our own conduct in enslaving the Negroes."[104] For the White American colonists to war against their oppression from Britain and at the same time oppress Africans, in Hopkins's mind, was a "wicked contradiction."[105] He argued, "Is it possible that the Americans should, after all this, and in the face of this light and conviction, and after they had obtained liberty and independence for themselves, continue to hold hundreds of thousands of their fellow-men in the most abject slavery?"[106] In one sense, King George was the master over the colonists just as the colonists were masters over their African slaves.

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[103] Mark Valeri, "The New Divinity and the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46, No. 4 (October 1989): 741-769.

[104] Jonathan Edwards, Jr. and Ebenezer Baldwin, *Some Observations upon the Slavery of Negroes, October 1773*, ed. Roger Bruns, in *Am I Not a Man and a Brother: The Antislavery Crusade of Revolutionary America 1688-1788* (New York, NY: Chelsea House Publishers, 1977), 291-92.

[105] Hopkins, *The Slave Trade and Slavery*, WSH 2:617.

[106] Hopkins, *Slave Trade and Slavery*, WSH 2:618.

No matter the scale of oppression, the New Divinity remained slavery as a sinful practice. Sermon texts were filled with how nations should see divine moral government, and that the oppression from Great Britain was unrighteous act. From the pulpit on 16 May of 1776, Joseph Bellamy exclaimed to his congregation, "The British Empire is ripe for destruction."[107] The God who loves righteousness and hates sin would, in their minds, favor patriots and the fight to free themselves not only from England, but free Africans as well. Therefore, sermons exhorted Americans that to fight against England's oppression for equality was a Christian duty.

The underlying philosophy for America's new-found freedom was that God had created all people with the same equality. However, they did not immediately apply the same concept when it came to their African slaves. In the spring of 1776, shortly before the Declaration of Independence, Hopkins thought he might use the opportunity to discuss emancipation while the hot ideas of freedom where being discussed between Congress. He tied the American cause of liberty, and its struggle, to the holding of Africans in bondage. He urged Congress to become the "happy instruments of procuring and establishing universal liberty to white and black."[108] "The sons of liberty oppressing and tyrannizing over many thousands of poor blacks who have as good a claim to liberty as themselves, they are shocked with the glaring inconsistence, and wonder they themselves do not see it."[109]

If the leaders of the New Divinity hoped that the American struggle for independence would lead to the immediate emancipation of Africans, they were sorely disappointed. The "truths to be self-evident" that were given by God to

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[107] Valeri, *Law and Providence*, 140. For more biographical information on Bellamy, see both unpublished dissertations, Glenn Paul Anderson, *Joseph Bellamy 1719-1790: The Man and His Work*, Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, 1971; Michael P. Anderson, *The Pope of Litchfield County: An Intellectual Biography of Joseph Bellamy, 1719-1790*, Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1980.

[108] Hopkins, *Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:550.

[109] Hopkins, *Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:571.

Americans, that "all men are created equal," had only been applied to Whites.[110] Even after the war, the New Divinity was still openly criticizing the slavery and treatment of Blacks. Edwards, Jr. declared, "It is a principle, the truth of which hath in this country been generally, if not universally acknowledged, ever since the commencement of the late war, *that all men are born equally free*."[111] He continued to make the comparison and essentially called Americans hypocrites for refusing to give Blacks their freedom when they were fighting for the same freedom. "We all dread political slavery, or subject to the arbitrary power of a king or of any man or men not deriving their authority from the people. Yet such a state is inconceivably preferable to the slavery of the negroes… So that Great Britain in her late attempt to enslave American committed a very small crime indeed in comparison with the crime of those who enslave Africans."[112] The "unalienable rights" for humans to freely seek "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" as the Declaration had avowed were still denied to Africans. The infuriated Hopkins continued publicly to attack slavery, and reasoned, "This leaves in our minds no doubt of your being sensible of the equal unrighteousness and oppression, as well as inconsistence with ourselves, in holding so many hundreds of thousands of black in slavery, who have an equal right to freedom with ourselves, while we are maintain this struggle for our own and our children's liberty."[113]

The New Divinity viewed Americans that continued to hold Africans in bondage and who, at the same time, fought for independence as charlatans. As patriots, they were generally satisfied with result of the war, but it was still tainted with disgust that the "great and public sin" of slavery was still tolerated in the new nation that boasted liberty and justice.[114] While the outcome of the war was a victory, it felt more like a defeat for the New Divinity and their cause for

[110] The full quote from the Declaration of Independence is as follow, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

[111] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:76.

[112] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:88-89.

[113] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:549.

[114] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:551.

abolitionism. In the end, the abolishment of the "free system of English Laws" was biased toward skin color and led to an inequalitarian and contradictory American-ethos that favored Whites and denied Africans the very equality that was fought for in the war.

Slavery Contrary to the Christian Message

A ubiquitous argument in favor of slavery and the slave trade was that Africans, who were heathens and lived in a land unknown to Christianity, were through their enslavement, being provided access to the Christian message. Many pro-slavery activists boasted that they brought "slaves from a heathen land to places of the gospel light, and so put them under special advantages to be saved."[115] While it was undoubtedly true that Africans who previously lived in an environment without access to the Bible or contact with Christians were being geographically relocated where their salvation was possible, most knew, including the New Divinity this argument was only to justify slavery and the slave trade. Slavery as a tool for evangelism was an abhorrent idea to them. The New Divinity viewed slavery in complete opposition to Christianity for two main reasons: first, labeling the slave trade as a missionary effort was hypocritical, since there was little to no effort to Christianize them once they had arrived in America; and second, slavery destroyed any hope of Africans converting to Christianity because it created animus and distrust toward it.

For most, including Hopkins, it was quite obvious that evangelism was never the goal of slavery and that Africans were not being evangelized once brought to North America. In fact, Africans did not have any benefits from being enslaved let alone salvation. Hopkins posed, "Have they any instruction more than if they were beasts? So far from this, that their masters guard against their having any instruction to their utmost."[116] He continued in his tirade:

> "[I]t is right for us to enslave them, that we may bring them into this land of the gospel light, and convert them to Christianity… The argument is nothing

[115] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:556.

[116] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:556.

> to the purpose of justifying our conduct. If it be, it only shows, *We do evil that good may come*. For where is the warrant in scripture to use such means to propagate the gospel of *peace* and *liberty*? Was this the method that Christ and his apostles took?[117]

Hopkins and the New Divinity, saw the "slavery for evangelism" argument as nothing more than an excuse to justify their selfish gain. Hopkins did not see any scripture that warranted slavery or made it permissible to evangelize the heathens. Hopkins again argued that,

> "[T]his method to Christianize them would be a direct and gross violation of the laws of Christ. He commands us to go and preach the gospel to all nations, to carry the gospel to them, and not to go and with violence bring them from their native country without saying a word to them, or to the nations from whom they are taken, about the gospel or any thing that relates to it.[118]

Edwards, Jr. echoed Hopkins in his objection of slavery as a tool to Christianize Africans. His opponents inferred that Africans "are much more happy; that therefore to hold them in slavery is so far from a crime, that it is a meritorious act."[119] To which Edwards, Jr. answered, "It would be ridiculous to pretend, that this is the motive on which they act who import them, or they who buy and hold them in slavery… Neither our Lord Jesus Christ, nor any of his apostles, has taught us this mode of propagating the faith."[120]

Moreover, where pro-slavery apologists argued that slavery was a means of the Christianization of Africans, the New Divinity argued that it was doing the exact opposite. Slavery was completely contrary to the Christian message. Blacks were largely staying out of the white churches, and indeed began to form their own denominations in the post-Revolutionary period. Africans developed prejudices against Christianity to the point where they did not expect equality at conversion. The American discourses of freedom, justice, liberty, and independence were far

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[117] Baldwin and Edwards, Jr., "Some Observations upon the Slavery of Negros," 294.

[118] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:557.

[119] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:93.

[120] Edwards, Jr., *The Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:94.

from anything Africans experienced in America. From the moment Africans were torn from their native homeland, or were born to enslaves parents in the Americas, they experienced the utmost violence, cruelty, and merciless brutality from so-called White Christians.

Hopkins imagined thoughts in the minds of slaves: "But now, instead of this, what has been done on that coast by those who pass among the negroes for Christians, has only served to produce and spread the greatest and most deep-rooted prejudices against the Christian religion, and bar the way to that which is above all things desirable—their coming to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved."[121] Hopkins knew that the maltreatment Africans suffered at the hands of White Americans would only breed hate toward Christianity. Going further, Hopkins argued:

> "No wonder they are unteachable and get no good by the gospel, but they have imbibed the deepest prejudices against it from the treatment they receive from professed Christians… And all the poor creatures learn of Christianity from what they see in those who call themselves Christians, only serves to prejudice them in the highest degree against the Christian religion."[122]

To disguise the slave trade as evangelism was simply to justify the selfish profit made by merchants and the slave owners. The horrors that Africans saw and experienced from American Christians would only grow deep prejudices toward Christianity and prevent any type of awakening among them. For Samuel Hopkins, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and the rest of the New Divinity, slavery and the slave trade were not only incompatible with Christianity, but was working against the Christian religion, and inhibiting the oncoming millennium described by Jonathan Edwards.

Jonathan Edwards and the New Divinity, Disinterested Benevolence and True Holiness.

When comparing Jonathan Edwards' transitional views on slavery and slave trade to the New Divinity's immediate abolitionism, one would think they have very

[121] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:557.

[122] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:556-7.

little, if anything, in common. Moreover, how could these former-students-turned-abolitionists exonerate the teachings of their slave-owning mentor? The reasons we have previously explored to explain why the New Divinity sought freedom for Africans stemmed from a foundational doctrine that connects Edwards to his abolitionist followers: the doctrine of disinterested benevolence.[123] While all of Edwards' students had this doctrine handed down to them, it impressed none of them as much as it did Hopkins. His practical interpretation of Edwards' conception of virtue "presented Hopkins with opportunities to demonstrate his disinterested love of Being in general and to call for the reform of American society."[124] Here, I shall first look at Edwards' *Charity and Its Fruits* (preached 1738) and *Nature of True Virtue* (1765) to understand his definition of benevolence, and secondly, compare and contrast Hopkins' conception of it in, *True Holiness* (1773).[125] In

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[123] For other works on Hopkins and disinterested benevolence, see Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement*, Chapter 6, "Disinterested Benevolence: A Theology of Social Reform," 109-124; Oliver Wendell Elsbree, "Samuel Hopkins and His Doctrine of Benevolence," *The New England Quarterly* 8, No. 4 (December 1935): 534-550. Hall, *The Abolitionism of Samuel Hopkins*, 303-313.

[124] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins*, 123.

[125] Jonathan Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue, Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:539-627; Samuel Hopkins, *True Holiness*, *WSH* 3:5-138; For more information on Edwards and *The Nature of True Virtue*, see Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, *Receptive Human Virtues: A New Reading of Jonathan Edwards's Ethics* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Virginia A. Peacock, *Problems in the Interpretation of Jonathan Edwards' The Nature of True Virtue*, Studies in American Religion Series Vol. 47 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990); Stephen A. Wilson, *Virtue Reformed: Rereading Jonathan Edwards's Ethics* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2005); "Jonathan Edwards's Virtue: Diverse Sources, Multiple Meanings, and the Lessons of History for Ethics," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, No. 2 (Summer, 2003): 201-228; Richard B. Steele, *Gracious Affection and True Virtue According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1994); William J. Danaher, Jr., "Beauty, Benevolence, and Virtue in Jonathan Edwards's *The Nature of True Virtue*," *Journal of Religion* 87 (2007): 386-410; Ki Joo Choi, "The Role of Perception in Jonathan Edwards's Moral Thought: The Nature of True Virtue Reconsidered," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, No. 2 (June 2010): 269-296; William C. Spohn, "Union and Consent with the Great Whole: Jonathan Edwards on True Virtue," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 5 (1985): 19-32; Sovereign Beauty: Jonathan Edwards and the Nature of True Virtue," *Theological Studies* 42, No. 3 (1981): 394-421; Roland A. Delattre, "The Theological Ethics of Jonathan Edwards an Homage to Paul Ramsey," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Special Focus Issue: The Ethics of Paul Ramsey (Fall, 1991): 71-102. Richard A.S. Hall, "The Religious Ethics of Joseph Bellamy and Jonathan Edwards." *Utopian Studies* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1997):13-31.

doing so, we shall see Edwards' theological formulation of disinterested benevolence as it pertained to true virtue, and how Hopkins applied his interpretation as an ethical practice for abolitionism. In this way, Edwards, even though he was a slaveowner who did not call for abolition, as the progenitor of antislavery thought in the New England theological tradition, as well as responsible for the abolitionist passion held by his followers as embodied in his most devout student, Hopkins, who "spent much of his life in defending and applying this theory of virtue."[126] It was certainly most evident in both Edwards' and Hopkins's interest to distinguish true virtue, and religion, from the false. Edwards' theory of virtue held God as the ultimate recipient of one's benevolence, and Hopkins stressed the importance of demonstrating Edwards' teaching by directing benevolence to God *and* all people—including Africans as equal recipients of Christian love. By directing benevolence toward all people, as well as God, Hopkins's humanitarian application of Edwards' doctrine led him to become a zealous abolitionist and patriot of American freedom. In all of his convictions, Hopkins along with the New Divinity, never wavered: "All I have said upon the slave trade to show the unrighteousness, the cruelty, the murder, the opposition to Christianity and the spread of the gospel among the Africans, the destruction of whole nations and myriads of souls which are contained in this horrid practice."[127]

Edwards on True Virtue and Disinterested Benevolence

In his *Religious Affections* (1746), Edwards posed a question than which, in his estimation, there was no "greater importance to mankind, 'What is the nature of true religion?'"[128] Put another way: "What does it mean to be a true Christian?"

[126] Park, *Memoir*, WSH 1:218. There is a minor dispute which suggests that Hopkins is the one who instructed Edwards on the doctrine of benevolence. A member of Hopkins's congregation, William Ellery Channing, in Newport, RI believed that "President Edwards was a good deal indebted to Dr. Hopkins for his later views of religion, especially for those which we find in his essays on 'Virtue,' and on 'God's End in Creation.'… Dr. Hopkins had not the profound genius of Edwards, but was he not a man of a freer and bolder mind?" William H. Channing, ed. *Memoir of William Ellery Channing, with Extracts from his Correspondence and Manuscripts*. Vol. 1 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Wm Crosby and H.P. Nichols, 1850).

[127] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:559

[128] Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE 2:84.

The effort to answer this question reverberates throughout Edwards' writings; one that would he would spend the rest of his life answering. His *Religious Affections* was written during the height of the Northampton revivals in the 1740s, a time when distinguishing true religious conversion and affection from false enthusiasm was vital to defend the legitimacy of the Great Awakening against its opponents such as Charles Chauncy.[129] For Edwards, true religion and its affirmation resided in the greatest affection—love. He recounts, "The Scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in love."[130] Going on, he says, "Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of moral excellency of divine things."[131] Love is not simply an expression of true religion; it is also an act of benevolence toward others.

To understand Edwards' concept of virtue and benevolence, and how it operated in regard to slavery and race, it is vital to know how he both defined and used these terms. To begin, the foundation of how and what Edwards means by benevolence—or "benevolism" as McDermott and McClymond has coined it—is found in the opening chapter of *Charity and Its Fruits* entitled "Charity, or Love, the Sum of All Virtue." Using 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Edwards determined that "*love*, or *that disposition or affection whereby one is dear to another;* and the original (ἀγάπη), which is here translated "*charity*," might better have been rendered

[129] For an example of opponents of the Great Awakening questioning the legitimacy of religious conversion through examination of affection, see Charles Chauncy, *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against* (Boston, MA: J. Draper, 1742). For more information on "enthusiasm" in its religious context, see Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); Michael Heyd, "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards an Integrative Approach," in *The Journal of Modern History* 53, No. 2 (June 1981): 258-280; Lionel Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm: Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2015). For more information on Charles Chauncy, see Norman B. Gibbs, *The Life and Thought of Charles Chauncy (1705-1787)*, ed. Lee W. Gibbs (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2012); Charles H. Lippy, *Seasonable Revolutionary: The Mind of Charles Chauncy* (Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1981); Edward M. Griffin, *Old Brick: Charles Chauncy of Boston, 1705-1787* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); John Corrigan, *The Hidden Balance: Religion and the Social Theories of Charles Chauncy and Jonathan Mayhew* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[130] Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE 2:106.

[131] Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJE 2:253.

"love."[132] From there Edwards brands *charity* (ἀγάπη) as synonymous with showing love, or benevolence toward God. He further states "that what is called *charity* in the first verse, is called *loving God* in the third, for the very same thing is evidently spoken of in the two places [in the passage]."[133] For Edwards, charity is Christian love, "whether it be exercised towards God or our fellow-creatures."[134] This particular love is not two different works by the Spirit brought by conversion, rather there is one "same divine temper thus wrought in the heart, that flows out in love to both God and man."[135] Therefore, Christian love, or charity, infused in a person by the Spirit will produce love to both God and fellow human beings. Writing in opposition to the moral-sense theorists, such as Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), he affirmed this definition later in *True Virtue*: "It is abundantly plain by the Holy Scriptures, and generally allowed not only Christian divines but by the more considerable Deists, that virtue most essentially consist in love" and that "the general nature of true virtue is love."[136] Therefore, love is the centrifuge of true virtue, and true virtue is the essence of benevolence. Edwards' benevolism ran down two avenues: first and foremost was benevolence expressed to God, and the second was benevolence expressed to other human beings—"neighbors," broadly conceived.

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[132] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits,* WJE 8:129. Edwards had composed fifteen different sermons in 1738 that make up *Charity*. 1 Cor. 13:1-3 (KJV), "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 533. McClymond and McDermott state that Edwards lived in an "world dominated by "benevolism"—the idea that human beings are naturally benevolent because of their altruism or "moral sense." Edwards in opposition to this suggest that true, or the highest, virtue is divine and not natural to humans.

[133] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:130.

[134] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:130.

[135] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:133.

[136] Edwards, *Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:541, 609. For more information on Edwards and the moral sense theorists see Richard A.S. Hall, "*Did Berkeley Influence Edwards?* Their Common Critique of the Moral Sense Theory," in *Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1996), 100-121.

First, since Edwards thought that benevolence should be demonstrated toward the highest good, then it would be natural for it to be shown to God as Being in general. As Elizabeth Agnew Cochran has pointed out, "Edwardsean virtues are best understood as representations of divine qualities." Love, or benevolence, begin with God, because they are essentially part of who God is, and is the source of any real virtue demonstrated toward others.[137] "True virtue," Edwards explains, "does primarily and most essentially consist in a supreme love to God; and that where this is wanting, there can be no virtue."[138] Therefore, it "consists in benevolence to "Being in general."[139] It is apt, then, that Paul Ramsey suggests that Edwards' benevolence can be defined as the "consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in a general good will."[140] The moral-sense theorists had similar notions of benevolence. They thought all of humanity should be the chief recipient, but argued that humans had a natural, moral sense for virtue and love, guided by their internal desire for, or judgement of, beauty. For example, in Francis Hutcheson's *An Inquiry Into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), he claims,

> The AUTHOR of Nature *has much better furnish'd us for a virtuous Conduct, than our* Moralists *seem to imagine, by almost as quick as powerful Instructions, as we have for preservation of our Bodys. He has made* Virtue *a* lovely Form, *to excited our pursuits of it; and has given* us strong Affections *to be the Springs of each virtuous Action*.[141]

Additionally, Hutcheson suggests that "Love, or Benevolence, is the Foundation of all apprehended Excellence in social Virtues, let us only observe, That amidst the diversity of Sentiments on this Head among various Sects, this is still allow'd to be the way of deciding the Controversy about any disputed Practice, to enquire

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[137] Cochran, *Receptive Human Virtues*, 3.

[138] Edwards, *Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:554.

[139] Edwards, *Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:540.

[140] Edwards, *Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, WJE 8:540.

[141] Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London, 1725), xv.

whether this Conduct, or the contrary, will most effectually promote the publick Good."[142]

Therefore, for moral sense theorists, such as Hutcheson, benevolence is not the underlying foundation for virtue, nor is it proper to God's being, but instead an external quality that began internally. As Joseph T. Cochran has explained "The crux of [humanist] benevolism argued humanity had been naturally endowed to apprehend beauty and attain a virtuous life"—without the need for a divine intervention.[143] Many scholars think this metaphysic represents an area in which Edwards rejected Enlightenment thinking on autonomy, individuality, and moral independence, and held fast to Puritan ethics. But for Edwards, benevolence will rightly be directed toward the pinnacle and source of all moral excellency—God himself. Hammering away at this concept away in *True Virtue*, he claims,

> [T]he primary object of virtuous love is Being, simply considered; or that true virtue primarily consists, not in love to any particular beings, because of their virtue or beauty, nor in gratitude, because they love us; but in a propensity and union of heart to Being simply considered; exciting "absolute Benevolence" (if I may so call it) to being in general.[144]

This *disinterested* benevolence is predicated on the notion that it is not motivated by *self-interest*, rather its interest is concern for the maximum, or highest, good of all beings. It is also important, as Richard Hall notes, to recognize that Edwards' conception of benevolence "is much broader than that of the moral sense theorists. It encompasses not only humanity as its proper object, but God and angels, as well as the whole of animate nature."[145] While this broad scope includes everything in the chain of being, God remains at the highest, and therefore, is due one's benevolence before and above anything in the created order.

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[142] Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London, 1725), 165.

[143] Joseph T. Cochran, "Jonathan Edwards and Hebrews: A Harmonic Interpretation of Scripture," Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2021.

[144] Edwards, *Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:544.

[145] Hall, "The Abolitionism of Samuel Hopkins," 305.

Second, even if Edwards intentionally downplayed benevolence toward "neighbors" in order to elevate the position of Being in general, as some scholars have suggested, he was still very clear that the disposition of benevolence should also be extended to them. Edwards stated, "If men have a sincere love to their neighbours, it will dispose them to all acts of justice towards those neighbours—for real love and friendship always dispose us to give those we love their due, and never to wrong them (Rom. Xiii. 10)—'Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.'"[146] Moreover, Edwards' disinterested benevolence coincided with Matthew 7:12 (commonly called the "golden rule") which he was referring to: "For real and dear love will dispose men to high thoughts of them; and Christian love disposes men to think other better than themselves. Love will dispose men to honor one another."[147]

Applying this virtue, he offered examples of what it would look like in different relationships. Specifically, on the master-slave relationship, Edwards explained, "Love would dispose to those duties which they owe one another in their several places and relations… servants to be obedient to their masters to exercise gentleness and goodness towards their servants."[148] Servants, or slaves, were still considered neighbors and were included as persons worthy of benevolence. For enslaved persons to show benevolence toward their masters, they were obligated to obey them in love, and the masters showed them benevolence by treating them with gentleness and goodness. He reiterates this in *True Virtue* after considering that benevolence should be sought to the "*highest good* of Being in general" and that it should also "seek the good of every *individual* being unless it be conceived as not consistent with the highest good of Being in general."[149] This disinterested benevolence was not only meant to be shown to God—but it was also meant for Christians to show "ἀγάπη," or to seek the welfare, of every individual person without reserve.

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[146] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:135.

[147] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:135. Matthew 7:12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

[148] Edwards, *Charity and its Fruits*, *Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:136.

[149] Edwards, *The Nature of True Virtue*, *Ethical Writings*, in WJE 8:545.

Edwards did not make a distinction in his doctrine of benevolence between outworking’s of virtue to God and to humans as separate qualities; rather, he viewed them as a causal behavior in the Christian life. Namely, the love (ἀγάπη) of Spirit dwelling within a Christian will show benevolence to Being in general (God) as the source, and will also in turn show benevolence to all human beings. One could not exist without the other. His doctrine remained highly theocentric, insofar as the greatest affection, that is love, was to be used a virtue to demonstrate disinterested benevolence to the highest object which is God. If persons demonstrated a sincere love toward God, it would naturally cause them to demonstrate benevolence toward other human beings. But for Edwards, first and foremost, was that benevolence should first be due to God. [See JE’s Ethical writings. Search: Seek the good].

Hopkins on True Holiness and Disinterested Benevolence

Samuel Hopkins was in complete agreement with Edwards on his doctrine of disinterested benevolence. However, the implications Hopkins drew would make his views on slavery much different from Edwards. Edwards’ notions of love and virtue were ripe for Hopkins to use to contest slavery, and by believing he was only explaining Edwards more fully, Hopkins declared virtue was acknowledged by one’s “love to God and our neighbor.”[150] Hopkins’s argument in his *True Holiness* was nearly identical to the one in Edwards’ *True Virtue*; however, Hopkins’ intentions were to expound on Edwards in light of the criticisms *True Virtue* received from the moral sense theorists and opponents of Edwardseanism, such as William Hart in his *Remarks on President Edwards’ Dissertation concerning the Nature of True Virtue* (1771).[151] While both Edwards’ and Hopkins’ works sought to distinguish true religion from the false, and to describe how basic Christian behavior should function, Hopkins traded the word *virtue* for *holiness*.

[150] Hopkins, *System of Doctrines*, WSH 3:380.

[151] William Hart, *Remarks on President Edwards’s Dissertation concerning the Nature of True Virtue* (New Haven, CT: T. and S. GREEN, 1771).

Like Edwards, Hopkins argued that the true Christian life was marked by how believers displayed love. Hopkins prioritized the term *holiness* because he saw the "law of God" as "the standard of all moral rectitude or holiness."[152] His interpretation turned Edwards' *virtue* into a religious ethic: holiness. After quoting Matthew 22:37-40, Hopkins argued, "Here all obedience to the law of God is reduced to one thing—love; love to God and our neighbor, including ourselves. This is the whole that is required; therefore, this is the whole of true holiness; it consists in this love, and in nothing else."[153] Again, going in the same theological direction as Edwards, he came to the same conclusions about benevolence:

> Love has been usually distinguished into love of benevolence, or good will, love of complacence, or delight, love of esteem, and love of gratitude. The love of benevolence is good will to beings capable of good, or happiness, and consists in desiring and pursuing their good, or rejoicing in their possessing it. By benevolence is, I suppose, most commonly meant that good will which is exercised towards other beings, in distinction from self-love.[154]

Hopkins agreed with Edwards that "universal benevolence" should be oriented to God, the "the highest happiness," "the true good," and "highest good of the whole," as the ultimate object.[155] And like Edwards, he also concluded that benevolence toward God would cause one to enact it toward other intelligent beings as well. "St. John teaches us," Hopkins argued, "that love to God and to our brother or neighbor is inseparable; that he who loves one of these, certainly and necessarily loves the other."[156] Moreover, both of their benevolisms were disinterested—seeking the good will and interests of other intelligent beings before self-love. Self-love, those who love themselves "only exercise good will towards themselves." Instead, benevolence should cause one to seek in "wishing well to others" so that they "taste

[152] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:13.

[153] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:14.

[154] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:15.

[155] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:17; 35.

[156] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:35

and relish for the good of others, as *theirs*, and a delight in it when they are seen possessed of it."[157]

Notably, Sarah Edwards' influence on Hopkins proved to be similar to that of Jonathan. While studying to become a minister himself, he spent a period with the Edwards family in Northampton and "opened up to Sarah as he had not been able to with others."[158] The conversations of true religion he had with Sarah and observing her led to an admiration for her virtues which included a more than ordinary beautiful person; of a pleasant, agreable countenance; of an amiable, courteous conversation and behaviour: the law of kindness was in her tongue." The impact of Sarah's piety and their exchange in theological conversation brought him much "spiritual comfort."[159] More so, was the spiritual transformation he underwent as he spent time with Jonathan and Sarah in their household. As Edwards A. Park recounts this period, Sarah's "train of reflections would *now* be termed Hopkinsian."[160]

The point at which Hopkins and Edwards differed was with their notions of "Being in general." Whereas Edwards identified Being in general as God as the head of a system, Hopkins went further and interpreted his idea as a socio-religious ethic that could be manifested among "God and our neighbors."[161] By rejecting any type of self-love and promoting the utmost disinterested sort of benevolence, Hopkins presented a very strict doctrine that left no middle ground for self-love that disregarded the interest of other people. His theological mentality assumed that every aspect of the Christian life should be vested in the interest of others, and any type of self-motivation for one's own happiness was rooted in sin. So, Hopkins suggests that "the love to our neighbor, which God's law requires, is certainly universal, disinterested good will, since it is a love which will dispose us to do good

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[157] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:15.

[158] Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards,* 250.

[159] Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards* (Boston, 1765), Appendix 2, 94. Edwards A. Park, *Memoir*, WSH 1:21.

[160] Edwards A. Park, *Memoir*, WSH 1:22.

[161] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins*, 117.

unto all men.”[162] By expanding Edwards’ definition of true virtue—extending benevolence toward, not only the head of Being in general, but to the entire system of being—Hopkins saw this as an ethic that applied to all, especially those oppressed in bondage.

Applying his new, expanded definition of benevolence, Hopkins’s abolitionism became the practical implication he found rooted in Edwards’ teaching. Hopkins read Edwards’ “Being in general” as “God and our neighbors,” thereby creating a more humanitarian perspective on the doctrine. The most obvious way—at least to Hopkins and the New Divinity—to demonstrate their disinterested benevolence was to help Africans by promoting their freedom from slavery and equality with Whites. This new definition included Africans as neighbors, which meant they should be equal recipients in benevolence and brotherly love. Logically, then, disinterested benevolence concerning slavery would cause masters to free their slaves from such a harsh station. He argues, “The following precept of our Lord and Savior, ‘All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,’ which is included in loving our neighbor as ourselves, will set at liberty every slave.”[163]

While both Edwards and Hopkins had similar theologies of love, it was Hopkins who had suffered public ridicule for his views. Park records that “the opposers of Dr. Hopkins have supposed him to be devoid of mental versatility” and that “he also subjected himself to more of personal suffering, than did the great majority of those who assailed the slave system… He sacrificed property and immediate reputation. He was ridiculed and hated by many of his townsmen.”[164] However, the fruit of Hopkins’s evangelization efforts with the slaves came on May 5, 1801, when he helped form the Missionary Society of Rhode Island and served as its first president. At its heart, the society was “to promote the gospel in any part of the State where there may by opportunity for it and to assist Africans in coming

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[162] Hopkins, *True Holiness*, WSH 3:35.

[163] Hopkins, *A Discourse upon the Slave Trade and the Slavery of the Africans delivered before the Providence Society for Abolishing the Slave Trade, Etc. at their Annual Meeting, May 17, 1793.* WSH 2:601.

[164] Park, *Memoir*, WSH 1:38; 161.

to a knowledge of the truth in any way which may consist with our means and advantages."[165] Hopkins believed that by crusading for the freedom of African Slaves he was living out his doctrine of disinterested benevolence and fulfilling the greatest biblical commandment in Matt 22:36-39.[166]

Conclusion

Other than attempting to explain his mentor to contemporary critics, Hopkins's charge was to abolish slavery in order to end the unbiblical treatment of Africans, so that they might convert to Christianity. His intentions were never to abolish slavery simply for its own sake, but to take away any hurdle that might prevent Africans from criticizing Christianity for its behavior toward their fellow human beings. For Edwards, disinterested benevolence and slavery could coexist, so he did not see any reason to argue against slavery as a system itself.

There were three main ways in which Hopkins built upon Edwards' theology. First, he expanded Edwards' notion of "Being in general" to include not only God as the head of the system, but all intelligent beings within that system. This expanded definition allowed disinterested benevolence to become inclusive rather than exclusive, and took Edwards' orientation of love aimed at God and broadened it to the entire created order. For Edwards, strictly speaking, a person's chief end was to glorify God (which includes demonstrating benevolence to God), because if that was not first, nothing else virtuous would follow. Hopkins, however, thought that loving other beings manifested how you show benevolence to God, because they were part of the system. While Edwards would have certainly agreed with Hopkins in this regard, he chose not to apply it to the oppression of slavery.

Therefore, Hopkins expanded Edwards' theology by applying it as a social ethic. Secondly, Hopkins constructed a way to connect virtue and holiness. He took Edwards' ethical term and made it synonymous with a religious one. To have true virtue was not only to be engrossed with love and caught up in the glory of God,

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[165] Oliver Wendell Elsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America, 1790-1815* (Porcupine Press, 1980), 66.

[166] Hopkins, *The Nature of True Holiness*, WSH 3:13.

but to display the glory of God by showing love to others—for Hopkins, that was the "whole" of true holiness. Abolitionism was a means of glorifying God. Thirdly, Hopkins found a way to become a humanitarian without becoming a humanist and giving up his Calvinism. The humanists wanted to commend self-love and loving others as a separate and mutually exclusive thing. Hopkins thought that exclusive self-love was evil, but when a being loves others as themselves, they are showing benevolence to the system of being because they are also part of it. He was not a bipartisan figure trying to appease humanists and keep in step with Edwardsean tradition, nor was he trying to break from Edwards' theology. Hopkins was able to explain Edwards' doctrine in such a way that helped the African slaves and simultaneously still hold fast to his inherited Calvinism. Edwards and Hopkins were in agreement on benevolence as a virtue that began with God, and the direction to whom one was to display it—in an inward sense (to God) and an outward sense (to others). Hopkins' point of difference with Edwards was in application. Hopkins' application of disinterested benevolence included all people, which meant everyone's best interests should be considered regardless of skin color or social status. This was also a way of holiness. Abolitionism was a way to demonstrate love to God by showing it to others—an application that Edwards did not make.

Additionally, this was also contrary to the popular *pur amour*, or "pure-love," movement among philosophers of the seventeenth century, such as François Fénelon (1651—1715) and later made popular by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712—1778) and William Godwin (1756—1836) in the eighteenth century. Similar to other humanists, they believed that virtue directly followed from a love stripped of self-interest without the fear of punishment or hope of reward.[167] This redefining of self-love did not direct any reference God at all, but instead a disinterested love that went beyond anything else. Hopkins would disagree entirely.

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[167] For more information on Fénelon, Rousseau, Godwin, and the pure love movment, see Benjamin Thompson and Robert Lamb, "Disinterestedness and Virtue: 'Pure Love' in Fénelon, Rousseau and Godwin," in *History of Political Thought* 32, No. 5, Special Issue: Passions and Virtues in Early Modern Europe (Winter 2011): 799-819.

However, some scholars, like Conforti, suggest that Edwards would not have recognized Hopkins’s concept of Being in general, or his Calvinism.[168] But after examining how both men understood the biblical view of “neighbor,” it seems Edwards would have approved of how Hopkins built upon his doctrine. As seen in Edwards’ *Draft Letter on Slavery* which we discussed in Chapter 2, Edwards’ biblical exegesis defined neighbor as all of humankind Hopkins followed suit. Both would have agreed that Whites, Africans, Native Americans, and other peoples are all neighbors, and deserving of benevolence as participants in Being in general. It is also through the same biblical definition of neighbor that both ministers denounced the slave trade for its unbenevolent actions toward other humans, and for thwarting the conversion of Africans. In the end, both Edwards and Hopkins counted African slaves as neighbors and retained a theocentric view of virtue and holiness—they both stressed the importance of benevolence toward God; Edwards directly to God, and Hopkins to God by serving others. Examining the connection between Edwards and the New Divinity not only challenges the historical dichotomy that all elite whites were either pro-slave racists, or abolitionists, but it reveals that Edwards (while a slaver holder) is credited for providing the necessary theological foundation Hopkins and the New Divinity needed to become abolitionists.

[168] Conforti, *Samuel Hopkins*, 110.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Introduction

In the last letter Jonathan Edwards wrote from Stockbridge before making the permanent move to Princeton, New Jersey, he wrote to Gideon Hawley. He described the choice to leave the Indians and take up the Presidency at the College of New Jersey as a "great and arduous [task]."[1] Edwards made his way to Princeton in January of 1758 where he received inoculation for small pox and died shortly after. Having never freed any of his African slaves, nor changing his position on slavery before his death, he still became fond of his American Indian congregation, thereby, demonstrating two things: first the consistency of his biblical exegesis—in which he rejected the slave trade, but approved of slavery as an institution not based on race; and second, the conflict between his theology and praxis. At this juncture, it is appropriate to review the thesis and the subsequent questions that prompted this study in the first place.

The purpose of this study has been to investigate the thought of Jonathan Edwards regarding the enslavement of Africans and regarding race as it pertained to Native Americans. It has sought to answer several questions: IN what historical and theological context did Jonathan Edwards develop his understand of slavery and race? How did Edwards' understanding of race manifest in his life and ministry? How did Edwards' ideas of slavery develop in his life time? And finally, how did Edwards' thoughts on slavery and race influence his New Divinity followers, so that they would move from a traditional Calvinist standpoint on slavery to full-throated supporters of abolitionism?

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[1] Edwards, "To the Reverend Gideon Hawley," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:738. Edwards tells Hawley "by the will of God about to set out on my journey in a few days" from Stockbridge.

Summary of Findings

Here, at this study's close, it would be helpful to review which points have been made and the evidence and arguments that have been brought forth to support them. Further, it will be helpful to reflect on what this study means within a larger scholarly context.

Slavery and Race in Historical and Theological Context

As we have seen in Chapter 2, Edwards was born into a colonial British America context, which was not new to the clash of Christianity with the social issues of slavery and race. Slavery of Africans as well as Native Americans had already existed in North American for over two centuries with the coming on Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci.[2] Additionally, missionary work by both Roman Catholics and Protestants created interracial relationships between Whites, Africans, and Native Americans. As Kenneth C. Davis has put it, "Columbus's arrival also marked the beginning of one of the cruelest episodes in human history."[3] The clashing of faiths and skin colour had caused rifts between these different peoples that eventually led to extreme violence on both small and large scales, as was seen in Indian raids on colonial settlements and wars between various Native American federations, France, Spain, and England. All the while, Christians were attempting to understand the relationship between their religion and slavery, and how exactly race fit into their biblical narrative.

Edwards was born into this world. While an extraordinary thinker, he was by no means unique in having to reconsider ideas of racism and ethnocentrism in the proselytization of Africans and Native Americans, nor was the relationship sorted out after him. In fact, his predecessors saw it as their task "to redeem

[2] For more information on Columbus and Vespucci, see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Amerigo: The Man who gave his Name to America* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2007); David Boyle, *Toward the Setting Sun: Columbus, Cabot, Vespucci, and the Race for America* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2008). Although Europeans had introduced African slavery in North America for over two centuries by Edwards' time, it had only existed for half that long within British colonies.

[3] Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much About History: Everything You Need to Know About American History but Never Learned* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2012), 5.

Christendom, to restore the medieval unity of Europe by bringing all men under the Reformed Protestant banner" and was also the idea during the Great Migration of Puritans before him.[4]

The mixing of several different faiths, races, languages, and customs, in such a short period of time resulted in religious and racial supremacy of Whites over people of colour. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, John Winthrop, as well as other Puritans, had created a divide between themselves and the heathens they had come to save. Before stepping off the boat, the Puritans believed the "New World" presented a mission of divine appointment. Because they were carriers of the gospel message, they were superior, chosen by God. Having possession of truth and heaven's commission to deliver it to the heathens gave them a sense of dominance, which gave them an excuse to carry out the expansion of English Protestant culture by any means necessary.

Since religion was so closely associated with language and culture, it was convenient for White Puritans to develop racist notions toward African and Native American slaves. As was demonstrated by Morgan Godwyn's travels and observations in his *Advocate for Negro's and Indians* and in his *Supplement*, White plantation owners of the early eighteenth century had started making Negros and Indians synonymous with unconverted heathens and Whites with Christianity. In doing so, Puritans had created a racial hierarchy that mirrored a religious one. Even though Puritans like Winthrop, Godwyn, and Mather had full intentions of converting Africans and Native Americans to Christianity, they were creating a unique American ethos that contained both a religious and racial hierarchy.

Chapter 2 further demonstrated that antislavery sentiments were alive and well before Edwards was born. As the Sewall and Saffin pamphlet debate has shown, antislavery was seriously being considered among the Puritan elites in the American Colonies. But as noted, Edwards still had received racist notions—at

[4] Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 34. Bremer notes that it was John Foxe's Book of Martyrs that convinced Puritans there were five distinct periods of church history. The first four had passed beginning with the persecution under the Roman Empire followed by the support under Constantine, up through the Norman Conquest, and to the fourth which was the reign of Pope Hildebrand as the antichrist. The fifth had started at the Protestant Reformation up until the present day of the Puritans.

least of Native Americans—from his uncle's *Redeemed Captive* and from his own family, which owned African slaves. The *Selling of Joseph*, issued at the turn of the eighteenth century, had signaled a challenge to religious and racial supremacy as well as the compatibility of Christianity and slavery—the main concern being whether or not Christians should own enslaved African slaves if they became converts. While Sewall, the antislavery advocate, and Saffin, the proponent of slavery, represented the two major competing views at the time in New England, Sewall exemplified how most antislavery positions in Edwards' time were not free from racism. Sewall's reasons for freeing African and Native American slaves were driven by racist notions of White religious supremacy, including anti-miscegenation. This was the world of Edwards.

Engaging Race on the American Frontier

In Chapter 3, we looked at how Jonathan Edwards' notions of race were shaped by interracial, as well as intercultural, life among Native Americans. Edwards encountered other "races" besides Africans and Native Americans, such as Jews and probably Arab Muslims trading on the eastern coast, but it was mostly by the Stockbridge Indians. Engaging a different race in his daily life, along with his family, was something new to Edwards when he lived in the frontier settlement. When he was younger, his with negative outlook toward Native Americans were reinforced; in part by the memory of the Deerfield raid of 1704 that resulted in the deaths of several relatives, as told in the *Redeemed Captive*, no doubt read to Edwards as a child. So, from the time he was a boy, the fear of Indian life was instilled into his mind.

Despite negative tones and beliefs about Native Americans, Edwards was interested in evangelism among them as we saw in his admiration for his friend David Brainerd. Both the frontier mission work he published in *The Life of David Brainerd* and the support he provided in the early 1730's for the Stockbridge mission culminated in an interest in Native Americans, which lasted the rest of his life. However, Edwards quickly learned that reading about mission work among the tribes of New England, and actually doing the work, living among them, could be quite different.

No doubt Edwards said some blatantly racist things about the American Indians, but as discussed in Chapter 4, he and his family became very warm-hearted to them during his time at Stockbridge, while aiding them against the White English. The relationships with the Indians were "far better than expected," so much so that, he began to identify as one of them describing the Stockbridge Indians as "my people." Whatever racist notions Edwards held before coming to Stockbridge had apparently decreased appreciably. He became a political and social advocate on behalf the Indians in his congregation who were being taken advantage of and duped into unfair land contracts from his own kin. The chapter offered several different examples of Edwards writing to government officials and benefactors explaining the mistreatment the Stockbridge Indians were receiving at the hands of the Williams clan. Many times, he had to intercede on behalf of the Indians in order to mediate scenarios of injustice, such as the murder of one of the neighboring Indians by two Englishmen. In addition to pastoral care, he offered to his congregation, Edwards also advocated for the education of Indian boys and girls.

From his arrival to the end of his tenure there, Edwards was constantly fighting with the Williams family to properly allocate funds to support the education of Indian children. By the end of his time in Stockbridge, his perspectives on Indians had changed, and were still changing.

At the beginning of this study, I noted some of the racist notions of superiority from New England Calvinists, such as Cotton Mather, Samuel Sewall, and John Saffin. After taking into account Edwards' dealings with the Indians and changed opinion of them, it is clear he is unlike his predecessors. Circumstances might have certainly been similar for each of them (living in a White Protestant dominated world while non-Whites were considered less). But for Edwards, his dissolution of negativity toward Indians was caused by him living closely among them.

Aside from helping the Indians from the obvious mistreatment and racism from the English, Edwards was most interested in race because the Bible was interested in salvation for all races. Thereby prompting Edwards to change his preaching methods. The use of an interpreter already presented its own challenges

and the Stockbridge Indians' process of learning added to Edwards' difficulty to communicate the gospel. Composing new sermons was not a trouble for him, but to an extent he developed a new strategy that involved story-telling and natural imagery. Using an abundance of metaphors and analogies to exegete biblical texts, Edwards was able to devise new sermons that catered to Indian pedagogy; a turn from the formal, structured, and academic sermonic form. In this way, he tried to be sensitive to the way his Indian congregation absorbed audible information, so that they might understand and obey the gospel, which was something close to Edwards' heart. His method was especially innovative, considering that at that time developing new ways of doing missionary work was not a high priority. Already by the 1750's, ideas of a revolution were forming, a process in which the souls of Native Americans came last. As Winslow noted,

> Stockbridge and the salvation of Indian souls were far remote from the daily thought of New England in the 1750's. She was already girding herself for a new struggle in which man's freedom on earth would become more important than his heavenly crown, and village disputes over doctrine and quarrels with the minister would be forgotten in the need for unity in a common cause.[5]

This chapter also showed how Edwards' sermons were expressions of his theology of race. For Edwards, mission work, or "the propagation of the gospel," was the driving force behind the task for God to glorify Himself among the "nations." In order for that to happen, there must be Native Americans converted to worship God, thus, fulfilling the biblical mission of Christianity covering the earth. As he was writing some of his deepest theological treatises on the frontier, Edwards began to develop several ideas of race while thinking about their theological implications. One of the examples we explored was ascribing total depravity to all people in *Original Sin*. Edwards viewed everyone with the same level of need for salvation and every race equally damned and, therefore, also equally necessary for God's Elect to be saved in redemptive history. Therefore, the work of redemption offered through Christ is commanded to be preached to all people without provision or priority of race, culture, or language.

[5] Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards*, 248.

The Bible and African Slavery

As stated in the introduction, one of the purposes of this study was to clear the ambiguity surrounding Edwards and his dealings with slavery. Most contemporary conversations are clouded by misinformation about his actual participation in slavery, or, worse, misinterpret his writings on the subject. Chapter 4 gave full attention to Edwards' personal thoughts and his public theology on African slavery in order to remedy the confusion.

In review, I argued that Edwards struggled with a civil-spiritual dichotomy when trying to express his thoughts on African slavery. Unlike Edwards, other antislavery sentiments had pointed out the brute treatment of enslaved Africans and Indians and identified a person's body and soul as one unified but equally valued component as Whites. Edwards inherited a worldview that reinforced a providential hierarchy that approved of slavery as an institution and at the same time condemning the inhumane, moreover, unchristian, practice of the slave trade. This paradoxical view was difficult to express. In one sense, slavery was a civil matter concerning one's personhood. The other was a spiritual concern expressed in the preaching of the gospel to save persons from damnation. This crisis, or conflict, was made evident in several examples.

Despite keenly denouncing the slave trade, Edwards purchased an enslaved girl in a slave-trading epicenter of Newport as shown by the receipt for Venus. Proof of buying directly from a slave trading center is only proved by the instance with Venus. The later receipt for Titus was from a person in an interior town. The other slaves could have been as well, but there is no way of knowing without further evidence. Even if Edwards did not continue to buy slaves coming directly off the ships, he continued to support it by buying and selling others. Reducing the identity of his African slaves was also evident in his Last Will when Titus was listed among the livestock along with pigs, cows, and other animals. Edwards' executors put his inventory together, but he would certainly not have objected to the use of those categories.

Spiritually speaking, Edwards was concerned for the souls of enslaved African. For Edwards, Africans were spiritually equal. As mentioned in the Chapter

3, Edwards saw all races equally depraved and need of salvation which included Africans. He was the first minister at Northampton to baptized Africans, but they were still required to sit in the back and not allowed to vote in church matters. Africans could achieve spiritual equality with Whites, but race was still a barrier for civil equality.

In the only formal document in which Edwards expressed his own personal views about slavery, he defended slavery but denounced the slave trade. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this was not a novel position to hold at the time, but it was still unusual none the less. In the *Draft Letter on Slavery*, Edwards stated his views in two parts. The first was his defense of slavery as an institution. The reason he was composing this letter in the first place was to defend an Arminian minister who was receiving criticism from his congregation about owning slaves. By defending a minister that he adamantly disagreed with theologically, Edwards chose to uphold the current hierarchy, and placing it above his own biblical convictions as a Calvinist. The reasons given for defending slavery were that the "master-slave" relationships described in the Bible made it permissible as an institution. While it may lead to sin, in and of itself, is not sinful. His example of such a thing is eating food. Although it is not a sin to eat, it may lead to gluttony which is a sin. Since slavery—in Edwards' mind—was not sinful if conducted appropriately (assuming that masters were Christians and fulfilling their duty to evangelize and treat them fairly), and because it was necessary component to his hierarchical culture, he stated it was the "practice that prevails."[6]

The second part to Edwards' view on slavery was the slave trade. Most knowledge of Christianity and its relationship to American slavery outside of scholarly studies has at one point or another assumed that colonial American figures who denounced the slave trade also denounced slavery altogether. Discussing this at the end of this study, it would, however, be safe to assume that Jonathan Edwards, as observed, in fact did not support both slavery and the slave trade.

At the end of Chapter 3, we examined the three reasons why he condemned the slave trade enterprise. In sum, he saw that the slave trade was being justified on

[6] Edwards, "Draft Letter on Slavery," *Letters and Personal Writings*, in WJE 16:74.

false biblical precepts; slave traders were not treating Africans like biblical neighbors; and prevented his idea of the millennial vision. Pro-slave traders used biblical texts like Deut. 15:6 to justify the capture of people from their countries. Edwards saw this reasoning for "man-stealing" as a blasphemous use of scripture to disfranchise people from their homeland. Robbing other people, even of another race, of their freedom, liberty, and privileges is not what the Bible taught. Additionally, the slave trade did not encourage the biblical definition of "neighbor" and held a very inclusive definition that limited "neighbors" to Christians. Railing against poor hermeneutics, Edwards argued that this interpretation made the "Scripture contradict itself"—something very offensive to him—and that the true, biblical definition of neighbor incorporated all people of every race, and therefore, are due the same benevolence as Christians. Lastly, Edwards thought the slave trade contradicted the millennial vision—a time of mass revival all over the earth bringing a time of peace. He awaited a time foretold in Scripture where people from Ethiopia, Turkey, and Asia would be divine and write great "books of devotion" to God. With all of its brutishness toward Africans, the slave trade was hindering the fulfillment of Scripture; namely, the domineering treatment by *some* Whites that resulted in theft, rape, and murder, of millions of Africans was preventing African nations from accepting the gospel.

Jonathan Edwards, the New Divinity, and the Road to Abolitionism

In the final chapter, we looked at Jonathan Edwards' influence on New Divinity figures and the theological impact on their abolitionist views. His closest disciple, Samuel Hopkins, along with others like Edwards' son, had taken Edwards' theology and turned it into a socio-religious ethic and applied it to slavery. Using Edwards' theology with a much different application, the New Divinity was able to approach antislavery with more nuanced Calvinism than previous antislavery sentiments in New England. This was shown in the chapters through four different reasons.

First, the New Divinity made an argument for basic humanity, much like Edwards did. The inhumane treatment Africans suffered was an obvious cruelty, acts abhorrent for any Christian to display, and one like Samuel Hopkins witnessed with his own eyes in Newport. Compelled to address the Continental Congress and

the American people on the eve of revolution, Hopkins appealed to their moral conscious and described the violence toward the "poor Africans" in the slave trade. The colonies had flourished at the "expense of the blood." Because Africans were also neighbors, fellow humans, and should be treated humanely, Edwards, Jr. stated that the man-stealing, the slave trade, and slavery itself was "contrary to every principle of justice and humanity, of the law of nature and of the law of God."

Second, the New Divinity used revolutionary philosophy as part of their arsenal to fight for abolitionism. Among them were the ideas of freedom and individual equality for all people. Broadly speaking, the American Revolution sought the freedom from the oppression of England and the governance from one "master," the king. Edwards, Jr. questioned the right Americans would have to seek the welfare and liberty for themselves without considering the same for the "oppressed Negros" of the colonies. To hold Africans in state of bondage while seeking freedom was a "wicked contradiction."[7] The New Divinity hoped that the American victory for freedom would trickle down to the Africans in slavery, but it did not. Disappointed, but still full of abolitionist passion, Hopkins, Edwards, Jr. and others, continued to criticize chattel slavery boasting that "all men are born equally free."[8]

The third argument the New Divinity men held, much like Edwards' reason to end just the slave trade, was that slavery altogether—not just the trade enterprise—was contrary to the Christian message. A common defense for slavery was that Africans, as heathens, were somehow being done a favor by Whites to bring them to a land where they could hear the gospel. In a way, it was true that Africans would not have a chance to obey the gospel if they stay in their homeland, however, once they were brought to America, the manner in which they were brought, and the fact they were not being evangelized once they had arrived, completely defeated their argument. As the New Divinity pointed out, they were not "any instruction more than if they were beasts" once in the "land of the free."[9]

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[7] Hopkins, *The Slave Trade and Slavery*, WSH 2:617.

[8] Edwards, Jr., *Injustice and Impolicy*, WJEJ 2:76

[9] Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, WSH 2:556

Moreover, the terrible treatment of Africans would only cause bitterness toward Christians and hinder their conversion and understanding of the gospel.

The fourth aspect of the New Divinity's abolitionism was the use of Edwards' doctrine of disinterested benevolence which was the foundation for all of the other reasons they defended Africans in slavery. Edwards' concepts of virtue and benevolence stemmed from his understanding of love. This section examined *Charity and Its Fruits* and *True Virtue* which found his "benevolism" as a demonstration of love to the highest good or Being in General. Benevolence is "supreme love" that is first and foremost shown toward God, not only because He is worthy of such actions, but because He is the source of all love and "moral excellency." Hopkins took Edwards' doctrine of benevolence and amplified its "disinterestedness" so it could be applied to *all* people. Believing he was explaining Edwards' Calvinism further, Hopkins declared that biblical benevolence, that is a true virtue (from Edwards) is expressed to God and to one's neighbors (all people). Having redefined Edwards' *benevolism*, Hopkins and the New Divinity had made his doctrine an applied socio-religious ethic that made their Calvinism call for social reform for all races and abolitionism in their new country.

In the first, third, and fourth, ways here, Hopkins and the New Divinity nearly mirrored Edwards' theological viewpoints. Edwards did not live long enough to see the oncoming American revolutionary ideas; therefore, he could not have interacted with them as did Hopkins, Edwards, Jr., or Joseph Bellamy. It is likely he would have agreed with Hopkins' *True Holiness*. However, the New Divinity departed from Edwards' spiritual and temporal dualism. While Edwards sought to liberate a slave's soul from sin, he did not see a need to liberate a slave from their station in life. For Hopkins, the two were indivisible, therefore, leaving Edwards' duality. Edwards would have certainly agreed that loving one's neighbor was to care for them, but to Hopkins, caring for the slave's overall well-being was to care for their soul.

In Edwards' mind, to love God was to delighted his creation—especially the non-material things like the created order, and society (as well as its hierarchy). Hopkins disregards this notion. Seeing the treatment of enslaved people while living in Newport influenced him to emphasize the benevolence toward other

humans rather than the social order. However, this is not to say Hopkins abandoned Edwardsean Calvinism for a worldly Christianity or prosperity type of gospel. Hopkins disregards the social hierarchy—not because he discredits God's creation—but because he sees the hierarchy as an oppressor to God's creation, the enslaved Africans.

The advocacy of the Stockbridge Indians, but the support of African slavery, further tells us that Edwards was concerned for the created order. The Stockbridge Indians were not enslaved. Therefore, Edwards advocating on their behalf did not disrupt a social hierarchy like he would have in the Doolittle episode in Northampton. Albeit, when Edwards defended the Stockbridge Indians, he was living among them and had grown to enjoy his time with them.

Theologically, Edwards and the New Divinity were somewhat similar in how they defined benevolence. It is was their application of how to love one's neighbored that played out differently. Simply put, Edwards' practical Calvinism represented a benevolence that was limited to the divinely appointed hierarchy, while Hopkins' Calvinism represented a benevolence that was disinterested, not only with one's self, but also disinterested in any societal limitations that restricted demonstrating love to those oppressed.

Evaluations and Contributions

Now that a summary of the material has been presented, it is necessary to evaluate whether or not the subsequent questions have been answered. Initially, the first question this study sought to answer was: What was the historical and theological context in which Edwards developed his understanding of race and slavery? As Chapter 2 presented, the first thing we can assess about Edwards' position about slavery and race is that it was not innovative—even though it was slightly different than some. As an inheritor of Puritan theology, Edwards' defense of slavery and the religious hierarchy was something that Cotton Mather, Samuel Sewall, John Saffin, and William Perkins would have definitely agreed with. Additionally, the world Edwards inherited placed White Christians above people of color, denominating them as "heathens." This was seen in Morgan Godwyn's observations of African

and Indian slaves as well as in *The Redeemed Captive*, which exemplified the racist literature widely available when Edwards was young.

In regards to race, and specifically Native Americans, subsequently it was asked: What was the relationship between Edwards' understanding of Scripture and his practice as a missionary in Stockbridge? For the evaluation of Chapter 3, it can be seen that Edwards' reading of Scripture and theological beliefs did not become static. Although he stayed true to his Calvinist convictions, Edwards changed preaching methods for a Native American audience that emphasized natural imagery. It can be said that in his early life, Edwards held very negative views about the Native Americans as a race, even though he desired to see them come to a salvific knowledge of the gospel. Still holding racist views, he became the missionary-pastor in Stockbridge to mostly an Indian congregation. At that late stage in Edwards' life, it would have been common for him to be "set in his ways" so to speak, but whatever racist notions toward the Indians he brought with him dissolved after time there on the frontier. The time there was "far better than expected." He had come to enjoy the company of the Stockbridge Indians and allowed some of them to live in his house, hold tribal meetings, and the sort in his daily life. Some of his children's best friends were other Indian children and spoke better Mohican than English. During his time there, Edwards found himself in conflict—but not with the English. Time after time, and letter after letter, Edwards defended the interests of the Stockbridge interests from his own family that was attempting to take advantage of them in land allocation, and financial fraud from benefactors in Boston. As a missionary and by living among the Indians, Edwards' racist notions had dissipated. So much so, whenever he was called to Princeton, he did not want to leave.

So, how did Edwards' understanding of Scripture concerning race and slavery develop during his lifetime? While the worldview Edwards' inherited had already tied race to slavery and into a hierarchy, he found himself struggling to hold onto old Puritan ideas and at the same time exercise doctrines of charity and virtue from texts like 1 Cor. 13. By separating the body and spirit in a civil-matter dualism, Edwards was able to speak of one's station in life and their soul in completely different matters. Slaves could be spiritual equals, but still unequal in civil value.

Doing so allowed Edwards to keep in step with his Puritan heritage and still fulfill biblical commandment of "propagating the gospel" to all races—which is also the reason why he never labels slavery as a sin. Moreover, Edwards never explicitly stated—at least from the documents that have been discovered thus far—that Africans were to be subdued, or they were inferior, simply based on their skin colour. However, that does not mean it was not implied in his actions. In examining his doctrines of virtue and benevolence he appears contradictory in his support of slavery in general since it in turn supported the slave trade. Edwards sought revival among all peoples as he looked toward the future millennium, and admitted the slave trade stunted these events, but continued to purchase enslaved peoples that supported the human trafficking.

After having a proper understanding of Edwards' own views of slavery and race, it is then appropriate to evaluate the question: How did the New Divinity appeal to Edwards' understanding of Scripture and practice? As Chapter 5 saw, the New Divinity and Jonathan Edwards were quite different in application of Edwards' doctrine. Samuel Hopkins, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., and the rest of the first generation of New Divinity men were in complete agreement with Edwards' Calvinism. Doctrines of original sin, depravity, salvation, the Trinity, and holiness, were well received among Edwards' followers into what they called "consistent Calvinism." But what set them apart was their application of Edwards' doctrine of disinterested benevolence. While both Edwards and the New Divinity were appalled by the slave trade and the mistreatment of Native Americans, it was the New Divinity whose pragmatic doctrine of benevolence led them to manumit their slaves which Edwards never did. The call for full abolition for Africans and the proper treatment of Native Americans created a socio-religious ethic which signaled a deviation from the traditional Calvinism promoted by the previous generation of early evangelicals.

Assessment and Trajectory

This study, of course, could be taken in several different directions, exploring the development, further impact, and avenues, that is found in the various historical figures and concepts mentioned within the disciplines of American philosophy, history, and theology. In no particular way was this designed to be and exhaustive

study of slavery and race to Edwards' disciples, or the influence he had on his other political and social connections. Other insights and discoveries within the disciplines of American thought in relation to Edwards, slavery, and race are still yet to be traced.

For example, this study opens the door to explore how Edwardseans in the American South differed from those immediate predecessors of Edwards in the North on the issues of slavery and race. While this study has shown that Edwards' legacy in the New Divinity were abolitionists in New England, there is much work to be done on the Southern Edwardseans, in the southern colonies, and how they used traditional Edwardsean theology to justify slavery and continual Indian removal.[10] In the nineteenth century, the New England Theological tradition had made its way into Calvinist churches in South Carolina and their ministers, such as Richard Furman (1755—1825), were both unapologetically Edwardsean and pro-slavery.[11]

Likewise, in the American North, most of the post-revolutionary Edwardseans had succumbed to racism despite the antislavery and antiracist tirades from the likes of Hopkins, Edwards, Jr., and Bellamy. Minkema has pointed out that "New Divinity adherents devolved from revolutionary immediatism to Edwardsean reactionary and gradualist positions on slavery, as did nearly all the major figures who claimed to be influenced by Edwards."[12] Many of those who identified with the New England Theological tradition during the post-

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[10] An example of this is Obbie Tyler Todd's *Southern Edwardseans: The Southern Baptist Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, New Directions in Jonathan Edwards Studies, Volume 8 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022).

[11] For example, see Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists Relative to the Coloured Population of the United States in Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 1823). For more information on Richard Furman, see James A. Rogers, *Richard Furman: Life and Legacy* (Mercer, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001); Harvey T. Cook, ed., *A Biography of Richard Furman* (Greenville, SC: Baptist Courier Job Rooms, 1913). For an example of scholarly work done to connect Furman and Edwards, see Obbie Tyler Todd, "The Atonement in the Writings of Richard Furman," Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

[12] Ken Minkema and Harry S. Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740-1865," *The Journal of American History* 92, No. 1 (June., 2005): 62.

revolutionary years began to revert back to Northern antebellum sentiments of approved Christianized slavery. More students of the New Divinity, and in one sense, Edwards himself, feared a country of "mixed races" and gradually leaned toward the slavery of Africans. John Saillant has noted that "After the Revolution, the most prominent New Divinity men expressed their anxiety as they turned the Revolutionary-era arguments condemning slavery and the slave trade against black Americans themselves. Although the most influential New Divinity men presented their expatriationist proposals within the context of a strict understanding of God's oppositional use of sin, their other writings on race suggest that their theology and their racism nourished each other."[13]

In a similar academic direction, studies are needed that outline the theological change and how it affected the complete theological structure of New Divinity from Edwards' traditional Calvinism. How the New Divinity viewed the church's relationship to the world appears to be starkly different from Edwards'. Edwards' duality between the church and society appears to be classical, Augustinian, while Hopkins (even as a direct disciple of Edwards) seems to loosen those ideas to a structure that is much different.

Studies that go into those directions would be adding to the narratives of antislavery, race, and early evangelicalism, under the umbrella of American religious history. The various directions in which this topic offshoots and intersects with others also demonstrates its implications and limitations. The implications of this study, and Jonathan Edwards, slavery, and race in particular, naturally ask questions of *how* and *why* pertaining to the histories and theologies prior to Edwards. And as the aforementioned areas of research suggest, there are several different ways this study could lead after Edwards—the theological descendants of Edwards both in the North and the South of the United States. Studies both before and after Edwards would serve to better understand Edwards himself as well as the overarching narrative of Puritan and Evangelical history.

[13] John Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence in New England Calvinism: The New Divinity and a Black Protest, 1775-1805" *The New England Quarterly*, 68, No. 4 (Dec., 1995): 596-597.

A few things must be said, however, about the limitations of this study. The new directions previously described signal the study's limitations of gathering the full legacy of Edwards, slavery, and race. The problems of African and Indian slavery, and the removal of Indian lands as seen in Chapter 3 continued well after Edwards' death in 1758. But in addition to those limitations, there was lack of direct primary source material from Edwards speaking directly to these issues. Much of Edwards' notions of slavery and race were gathered from other parts of treatises, legal documents, and personal correspondence. Those works were then used to piece together a larger thought process of Edwards' mind. Only a few of those pieces did Edwards directly address the issues of slavery and race.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the only time Edwards ever spoke directly to issue of slavery was in a letter to a body of other ministers. It was not a theological treatise, nor a socio-religious history like Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*. It was simply a short letter defending slavery and denouncing the slave trade in several hundred words—but still enough to divulge a full position. Likewise, Edwards did not write a treatise on "race" per say. However, the overabundance of letters, sermons, and legal documents contained plenty of historical data to construct the various attitudes had towards Native Americans as well as other races. It would be ideal if Edwards composed an entire treatise specifically on Native Americans and what he believed to be their history. He touched on this, somewhat, in his *History of the Work of Redemption*, but it was in more of a general sense in which he spoke of *all* races which include American Indians.

Final Thoughts

This analysis has attempted to examine the issues of slavery and race in the thought and context of Jonathan Edwards—specifically in his own personal life and ministry within the theological and social framework of the eighteenth century. This study as a whole will buttress the work on Edwards in the disciplines of social history as well as historical theology. The previous chapters in this study have hopefully filled the gaps of history and theology that have been so long unanswered for many readers of Edwards both in and outside of the academy. Moreover, as this

study hopes to add to the larger fields of slavery, race, and religion in America, its students will gain a better understanding of early evangelicalism, antislavery narratives, and their relationships.

Edwards' mind is usually thought of as a litmus test for other theological—and more broadly, intellectual—figures in American history and for the Reformed tradition on both the American and European continents in general. Whether resulting in continuity or discontinuity, for good or for ill, or simply for clarity, the truths brought forth from the evidence in this study will settle some of the disputes over Edwards' dealings with Africans and Native Americans. For some, having explained Edwards' paradoxical position and contradictory actions will not be satisfactory for a proper understanding, and therefore will come to the same unreasonable conclusion of lumping him with the rest of his Puritan forebears and the stigmas that Bernard Rosenthal warned about.[14] It would be hastily wrong to place Edwards in either categories of pro-slave Puritanicalism or enlightened abolitionism. Nor has the attempt here to suggest that Puritanism equals abolitionism.

It is often a temptation to quickly organize one's theology and values—especially with historical figures in this case—with only a peripheral understanding of the context from which it emerged, let alone the actual beliefs themselves. But as a reminder, Edwards' thought must be contextualized in a progressive—that is, an ever evolving—theological and historical backdrop in order to understand his versions of justice/injustice, virtue/vice, benevolence/hate, and so forth. Those concepts of context are certainly not parameters for truth; however, they are factors that influence how truth is understood and manifested in one's practical theology—individually and corporately (for themselves and the church). So, if Puritanism and Evangelicalism is to be blamed for the atrocities of slavery and the creation of racism (which has been done almost *ad nauseum*) it should also be acknowledge that Puritanism, even if it was minute, also possessed strong affections for abolitionism. Edwards possessed both.

[14] Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience of Slavery," 81.

Appendix A

EDWARDS' SLAVES

Venus: Purchased in Newport, Rhode Island, June 7, 1731. See Appendix D.

Leah: Most likely she was Venus, but was given a biblical name. Baptized in 1736.

Rose and Joab Binney: Edwards married the two in 1751. Once Edwards left for Princeton, the couple stayed. These two are considered Edwards' slaves, and he may have bought them at one point, however, it is certain they were both regular slaves that worked in Edwards' home.

Titus: Possibly the Son of Rose, but unknown. See Appendix B and E. Freed by Edwards' eldest son, Timothy Edwards and served in the American Revolutionary War in 1780. He purchased land in Lenox, Mass., in 1772 and 1784, and in Pittsfield, Mass., in 1806, and may have been given land by Timothy Edwards in Tioga County, New York, around 1800. Died in 1822 in Pittsfield between sixty-five and seventy.

Joseph and Sue: Sold in 1759. Edwards had already died in Princeton.

Appendix B

LAST WILL AND INVENTORY OF ESTATE

An Inventory of the Estate of the Rev'd Mr. Jonathan Edwards late of Stockbridge, deceased appraised by Mess. Jos. Woodbridge, Sm[l] Brown, & Josiah Jones.

Quick Stock

A Negro Boy Named Titus	£30	0	0
Horse	3	6	8
Yoke of Oxen	11	0	0
Yoke of Steers	6	10	0
Two Cows at £3,—	6	0	0
Four D at 50s	10	0	0
Two Heifers at 30s	3	0	0
One Calf		16	0
Six Hogs	3	12	0

Appendix C

DRAFT LETTER ON SLAVERY

If they ben't partakers of the slaves, they are of their slavery, wherein the injustice, if there be any, consists. Their slavery mainly consists in that slavish cruel labor they are put to.

~~They are partakers of that which is undoubtedly cruel.~~ They are partakers of a far more cruel slavery than that which they object against in those that have slaves here.

That which is almost altogether by their slavery […]

How ill does it suit for a man to cry out of another for taking money that is stolen, and then taking it of him in that wherein the injustice consists.

If the slaves are unjustly theirs, then their slavery is unjustly theirs, and this they are partakers of.

All the difference there can be, is that they are not so immediate partakers, that it is a step farther off.

No more are we so immediate partakers.

Their argument, if it carries anything, implies that we ought not to be partakers, neither immediately nor remotely. We ought not to be partakers at all. If they don't mean so, but only mean by so many steps, they would do well to fix the number of steps.

And besides, they don't know but that they are partakers as immediately as we. They may have their slaves at next step.

Either let them answer them, or let 'em own the matter is well proved, and not go on pretending that those arguments are of no force which they can't or at least don't see cause to answer, only to make disturbances and raise uneasiness among people against their minister, to the great wounding of religion. If they do it, and yet don't answer.

Reproaching their pastor as though he lived in notorous iniquity and indulgence of his lusts–a sin that has no more to be said for it than robbery in the highway–and that which he was not able to vindicate, and had nothing to say for, worth the mentioning. The pastor of the church that has thus been reproached may well insist

upon it that his reasons, every one of them, be answered, or otherwise that they be silent for the future. And not only [so], but confess that they were too sudden and rash in casting such reproaches on their pastor, to the great wounding of religion.
Let them also fully and thoroughly vindicate themselves and their own practice in partaking of negroes' slavery, or confess that there is no hurt in partaking in it, or else let 'em cease to partake in it for the future, one of the three. For if they still continue to cry out against those who keep negro slaves as partakers of injustice in making them slaves, and continue still themselves notwithstanding to be partakers of their slavery, let 'em own that their objections are not conscientious, but merely to make difficulty and trouble for their neighbors. Whether or no other nations have any power or business to disfranchise all the nations of Africa. And if they should, whether or no this would not be a greater encroachment on their liberties than even the opposers of this trade themselves do suppose this trade, making those slaves which they offer to sale.
It would have a much greater tendency to sin, to have liberty to disfranchise whole nations.
And let the answers be in writing, that everybody that is so disposed may see what they be, and know whether there be just cause for their boasts when they go about and say the pastor of the church could not answer 'em, could say nothing that was worth a-saying. 'Tis an easy thing for a man thus to boast of his victory in a dispute that nobody heard but him, and so is not able to contradict him.
If men are such notable disputants, and have such invincible reasons to offer, and are so able to baffle their minister, let it appear that they are so by their great arguments being written down, to be read by all.
Don't let some things only be answered and others slipped over in silence.
The practice that prevails in the world of eating and drinking tends to sin, and a world of iniquity is the consequence of it, but we are not therefore to abstain from sin.
And if he should compel him to make a number to sell, will any say that he came honestly by them, or that they were honestly his?
If[3] God's observing and giving leave for a thing prove that it is not unreasonable in its own nature.

God might, by a special interpretation, execute punishment on a people and make men the executioners. But to make it an established rule in all cases so to treat all mankind, and that after they were become his own people, is a monstrous supposition, if it be in itself unreasonable. All God's rules that respect treatment of men and war have moral equity in them, otherwise why is it said, "All this law" which is so righteous as "I set before you" [*Deuteronomy 4:8*]? A special precept for a particular act is not a rule.

To give leave for a special punishment of the injuriousness of the Egyptians to borrow is quite a different thing from establishing it as a rule that his people might borrow and not pay in all ages

Nothing in itself unlawful. 'Tis unlawful for a man to speak ill of God. 'Tis unlawful for a man to sell those things. They are in their own nature unlawful to be the subject of commerce.

Woe pronounced against him that uses his neighbor's work without wages. This makes the Scripture contradict itself.

All mankind were their neighbors then. Especially all of the same religion. Christ reproves the corrupt interpretation of the Pharisees, who thought otherwise.

Neighbor. By this there is no rule that respects the treatment of any of mankind in the moral law, but only the children of Israel.

Hence it was not against any command of the moral law for the Jews to commit adultery with the wives of men of other nations, or to steal from them, or to bear false witness against them. 'Tis said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" [*Exodus 20:16*].

With respect to the glorious times, it does not follow, because things shall be settled in peace. Here is another admirable […].

Lay down this: If it were once lawful, but now unlawful, and not made unlawful by any new positive law that was not in force then when it was lawful, then it must be because 'tis unreasonable in its own nature. But if it be unreasonable in its own nature […].

He says we must know in order to any injury to a man. Then we must know in order to killing a man in war, for there is a personal injury.

I say its not being forbidden under such circumstances, expressly allowed before, and so great a crime in it and so general in the world, is a good argument, because 'tis not conceivable that […]. No other sin generally prevalent that is not expressly mentioned and strictly forbidden. The Apostle speaks of God's winking at some things that were early[6] was of old, in those times of darkness, which intimates that [God] don't wink at such things now under the gospel. But this would be to wink at it in the highest degree conceivable.

There is no action without circumstance. But circumstances are included in the very word. Killing a man is not in itself unlawful, but murder is in itself unlawful. So taking away from our neighbor is not in itself unlawful, in itself reasonable or unreasonable.

I answer, no more of a contradiction than it is that an inanimate commodity may be justly taken out of the hands of the right owner and yet justly kept out of his hands.

It supposes that God gave a law that did tend greatly to encourage iniquity in all the nations round about Canaan by his own pleasure.[9] So that instead of their being a light in the earth, a blessing in the midst, it was dangerous for other nations to live near God's people, which would be a blasphemous way of talking.

The[1] law supposes that they were theirs of whom they bought them, by directing them to buy who were not under laws peculiar to the Jews, and which way came they by them. Otherwise, why did God direct them buy? Why did he not direct them to buy the service of the persons themselves?

It is less supposeable a great deal, than if God had given 'em leave to go and take others at all times. But to buy a thing is to come by [it] in a way of valuable consideration, in a way of commutative justice, and supposes that person possessed. To give liberty to take those that were *sui juris* what they pleased, is to put 'em into a state of war with all nations.

This supposition, that God gave such a law for a standing rule to his people for a great many ages, is a great reflection on the wisdom, holiness and goodness of God and ought to be abominable to all Christians.

[Jonathan Edwards]

Appendix D

RECEIPT FOR SLAVE VENUS (1731)[514]

KNOW ALL MEN by these presents That I Richard Perkins of Newport in County of Newport & Coloby of Rhode Island &c Marriner For & in Consideration of the Sum of Eighty pounds of lawful Current money of said Colony To me in hand well & truly paid at & before the ensealing & delivery hereof by Jonathan Edwards of Northampton in the County of Hampshire & Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England Clerk, The receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge and thereof & of every part and parcel thereof do exonerate aquit & Discharge the said Jonathan Edwards his heirs Exec^{rs} Adm^{rs} & Assigns by these presents HAVE bargained sold & delivered. And I the said Richard Perkins do hereby bargain sell & deliver unto the said Jonathan Edwards a Negro Girle named Venus ages Fourteen years or thereabout, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said Negro girl named Venus unto the said Jonathan Edwards his heirs Exec^{rs} & Assigns and to his & their own proper Use & behoof for Ever. AND I the said Richard Perkins do hereby for my Self my heirs Exec$^{rs \&}$ Adm^{rs} covenant promise & agree to & with the said Jonathan Edwards his heirs Exec^{rs} & Adm^{rs} & Assigns by these presents That I the said Richard Perkins at the ensealing & delivery hereof have in my own Name good Right, full Power & lawfull Authority to bargain sell & deliver the said Negro Girl named Venus unto the [the said Jonathan Edwards] in manner & form aforesaid. And shall & will warrant & defend the said Negro Girle named Venus until the said Jonathan Edwards his heirs Exec^{rs} & Adm^{rs} & Assigns against the lawfull Challenge & Demand of all manner of Persons whatsoever Claiming or to claim by from or under me or otherwise howsoever. IN WITNESS whereof I the said Richard Perkins have hereunto set my hand & Seal the Seventh day of June in the Fourth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second by the grace of God of Great Britain France & Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c Anno Dm 1731.

[514] "Receipt for Slave Venus (1731), in *A Jonathan Edwards Reader,* ed. John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 296-97.

Rich[d] Perkins
Sealed & Delivered
in the presence of us
John Cranston
Jas. Martin

APPENDIX E

RECEIPT FOR SLAVE TITUS (1756)

Know all men by These presents that I Hezekiah
Griswold of Windsor In Hartford County for ye sum
of twenty two pounds & Ten shillings lawfull mony
To me In Hand payd or secured to me In ye law by The
Revrd Mr Jonathan Edwards of Stokbridge In ye County
of Hampshire & province of the Massachusetts bay
In New England do give grant bargain sell & make
Over Convey & Confirm unto ye sd Mr Edwards & to
his Heirs forever one certain Negro boy Named Titus
about 3 years old of which I have been ye owner
for some Time To have & to hold ye above sd Negro
And I ye sd Hezekiah Do Covenant for my self &
Heirs that at signing & sealing of This Instrument
I have good Right to see ye above sd Negro & do by
These presents promise for myself & Heirs to warrant ye
above sd Negro unto him ye sd Mr Edwards & to his
Heirs for Ever against All Claims or demands from me
or any under me or any body Else. In wittness whereoff
I have set to my self hand & fixd my seal This 24th
day of May A. D: 1756

signed sealed & Deliverd Hezekiah Griswold

In presents of
Samll Tudor
Joseph Woodbridge

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Abstract

During the seventeenth century, and for the better part of the eighteenth century, the majority of New England Christianity did not concern itself with slavery or racial issues, nor was it at the main point of clerical discussion. Its primary debates were over theological and ecclesiastical issues. Moreover, the sheer lack of discussion of slavery and the racial divide in Jonathan Edwards' writings indicate how little concern it was in the early eighteenth century. But for his followers, the tension between Whites and Africans had become the forefront of both political and religious conversation. Antislavery sentiment combined with ideas of reform and revolution gave way to a new theological movement that would favor abolitionism. Unlike Edwards himself who was proslavery, the New Divinity, including his student Samuel Hopkins, and son, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., published sermons in full opposition to both slavery and the slave trade—making him and his theological heirs quite different. Scholars have generally characterized the New England Theology as continuous, and any changes being consistent with Edwards's own intentions. However, recent studies have discovered discontinuity, and its development within the tradition as a departure from Edwards himself. This dissertation focuses on that discontinuity. It first considers the historical and theological context in which Edwards emerged. By Edwards's time, there were competing antislavery and proslavery ideas, as well preconceived notions of race. Second, this dissertation examines Edwards's conception of race, specifically during his time with Native Americans on the Massachusetts frontier. Living among the Natives influenced how he thought of race, and eventually the oncoming millennium. Third, it explores Edwards's ideas on slavery and the slave trade. Peculiar, but not a novel idea, Edwards was against the slave trade, but advocated slavery as a God-ordained institution. Finally, this dissertation compares Edwards and his theological heirs. Although they were his direct theological descendants, the New Divinity became ardent abolitionists. This chapter investigates how Edwards's followers used his teachings to move from a traditional, Calvinist standpoint on slavery to become abolitionists. In doing so, it challenges previous scholarly assumptions of the New England theological tradition.

Curriculum Vitae

John T. Lowe (b. 1985) lives in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. In 2009, he earned a Bachelor of History from the University of Louisville. In 2015, he completed a Master of Divinity from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary followed by a Master of Theology in Church History and Historical Theology in 2016. He's contributed to a number of academic journals and encyclopedias including the *Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*, *Trinity Journal*, and the *American Religious History: Society and Belief through Time*. Currently. He teaches as a Lecturer in the History Department at the University of Louisville. Lowe is married to Mary E. Lowe, and together, have three children; Isaac, Mary, and Grace.